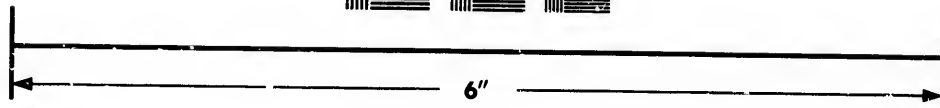
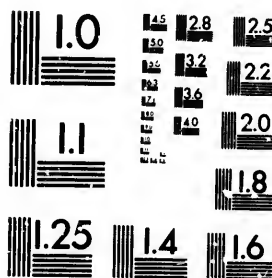


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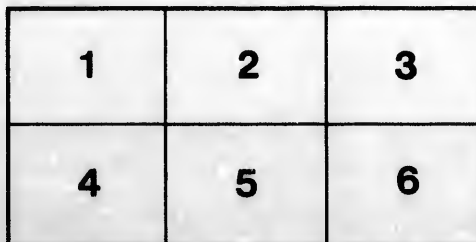
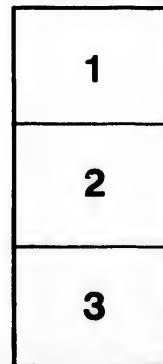
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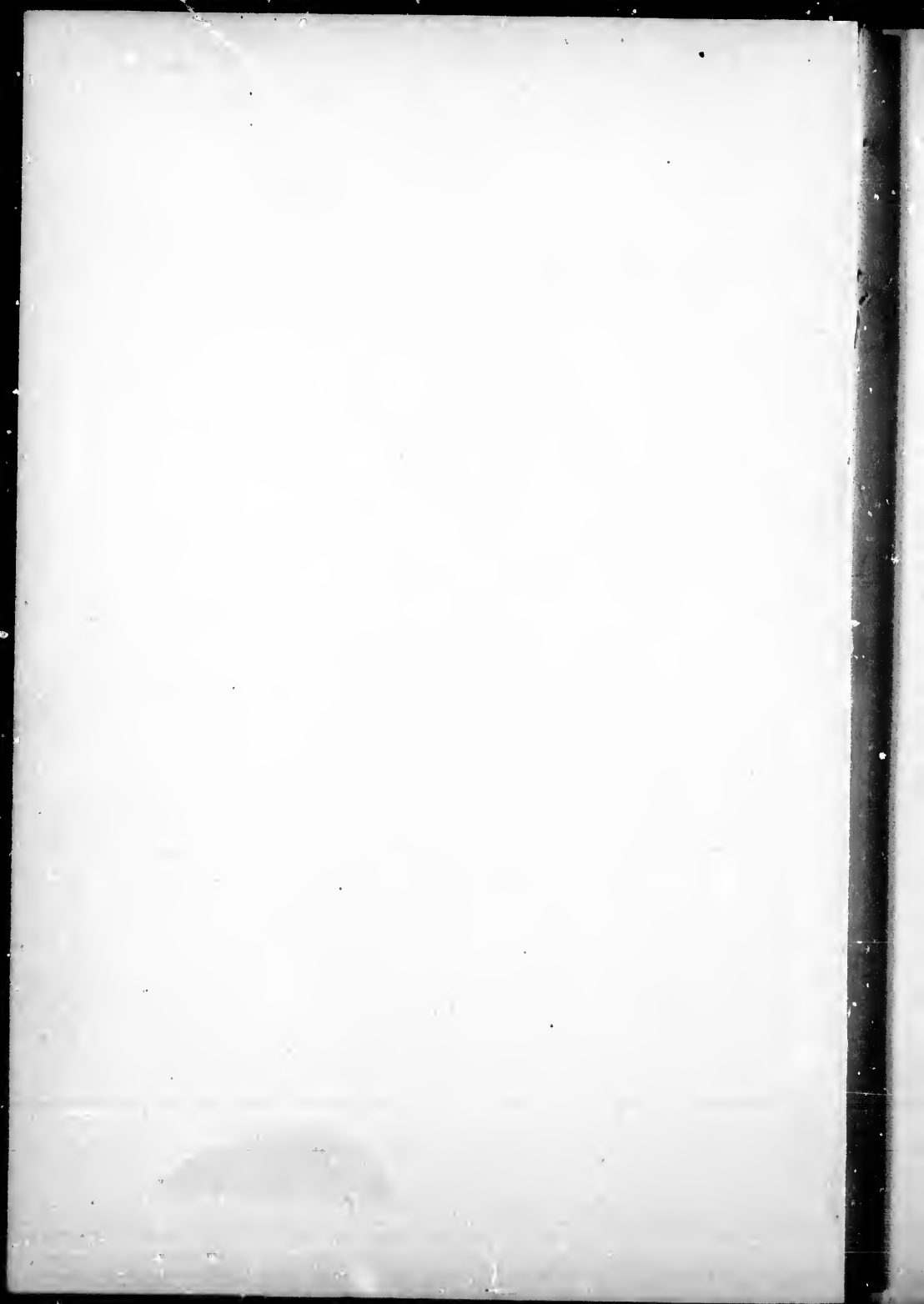
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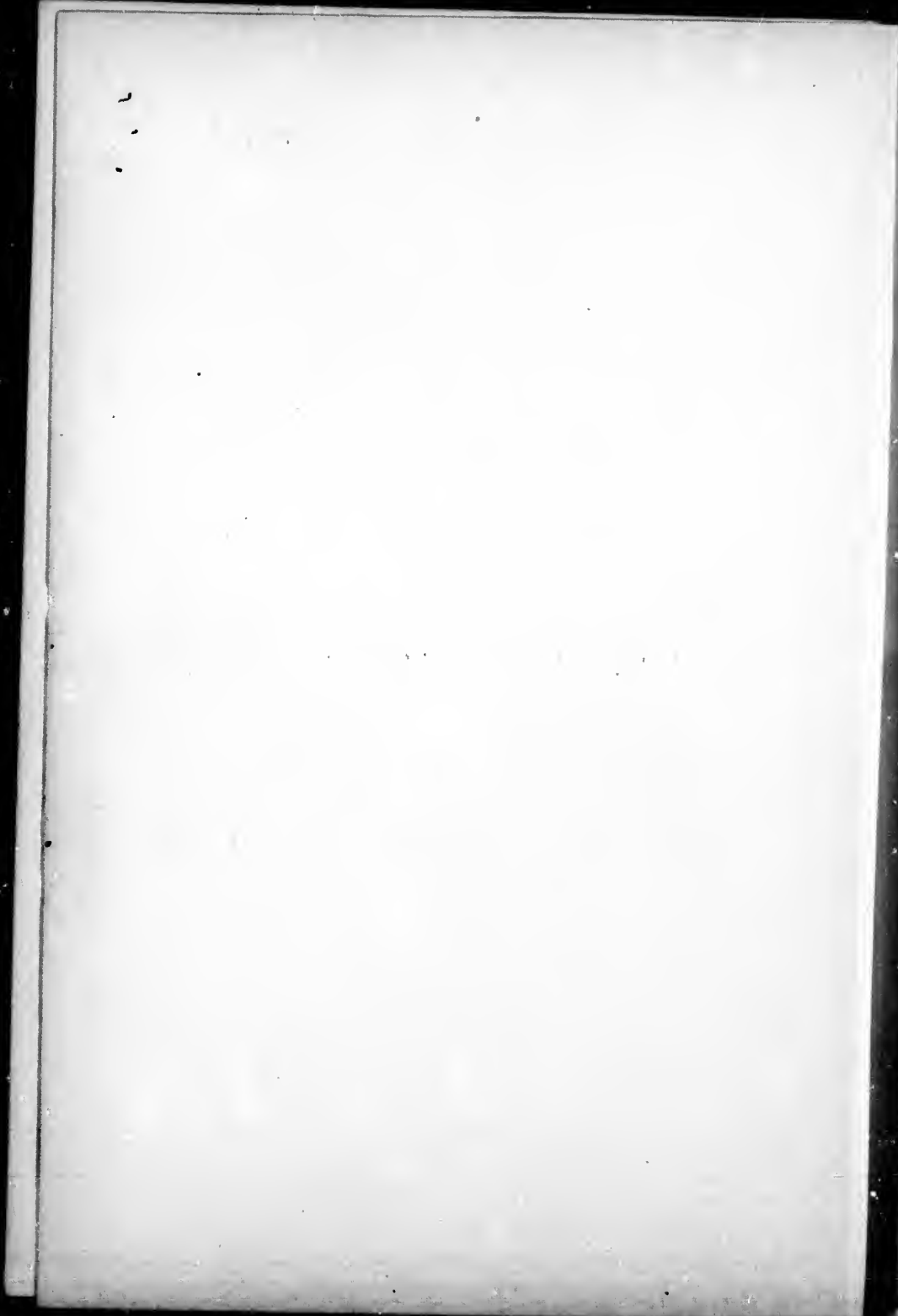
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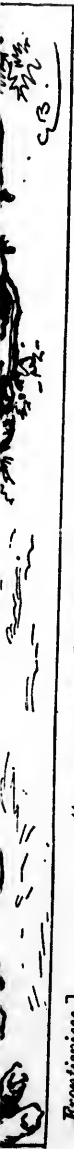
TAVISTOCK TALES





Frontispiece.]

"YES, I HAVE A LETTER FOR YOU FROM HER."



Frontispiece.]

"YES, I HAVE A LETTER FOR YOU FROM HER."

Page 43.





FIG. 1. LEVA & L'ALTRA FIG. 1. LEVA & L'ALTRA

Fig. 1. Leva & l'altra

TAVISTOCK TALES

BY

Gilbert Parker Luke Sharp
Lanoe Falconer Rose Metcalfe Michael A. Morrison
G. B. Burgin Blanche Atkinson H. Guthrie-Smith
A. M. Cameron A. S. Boyd

With Thirty-two Illustrations

BY

Gordon Browne
W. D. Almond R. Barnes W. Rainey
W. Lockhart Bogle A. S. Boyd,

NEW YORK
TAIT SONS AND COMPANY
31 UNION SQUARE NORTH
1893

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THE MARCH OF THE WHITE GUARD.

By GILBERT PARKER.



“SK Mr. Hume to come here for a moment, Gosse,” said Field, the Chief Factor, as he turned from the frosty window of his office at Fort Providence, one of the Hudson Bay Company’s posts. The servant, or more properly, Orderly-Sergeant Gosse, late of the Scots Guards, departed on his errand, glancing curiously at his master’s face as he did so. The Chief Factor, as he turned round, unclasped his hands from behind him, took a few steps forward, then standing still in the centre of the room, read carefully through a letter which he had held in the fingers of his right hand for the last ten minutes as he scanned the wastes of snow that stretched away beyond Great Slave Lake to the Arctic Circle and the Barren Grounds. He meditated a moment, went back to the window, looked out again, shook his head negatively, and with

a sigh, walked over to the huge fireplace. He stood thoughtfully considering the floor until the door opened and Sub-factor Jasper Hume entered. The Factor looked up and said, "Hume, I've something here that's been worrying me a bit. This letter came in the monthly batch this morning. It is from a woman. The Company sends another commending the cause of the woman and urging us to do all that is possible to meet her wishes. It seems that her husband is a civil engineer of considerable fame. He had a commission to explore the Copper Mine region and a portion of the Barren Grounds. He was to be gone six months. He has been gone a year. He left Fort Good Hope, skirted Great Bear Lake, and reached the Copper Mine River. Then he sent back all of the Indians who accompanied him but two, they bearing the message that he would make the Great Fish River and come down by Great Slave Lake to Fort Providence. That was nine months ago. He has not come here, nor to any other of the forts, nor has any word been received from him. His wife, backed by the H.B.C., urges that a relief party be sent to look for him. They and she forget that this is the Arctic region, and that the task is a well-nigh hopeless one. He ought to have been here six months ago. Now how can we do anything? Our fort is small, and there is always danger of trouble with the Indians. We can't force men to join a relief party like this, and who will volunteer? Who would lead such a party and who will make up the party to be led?"

The brown face of Jaspar Hume was not mobile. It changed in expression but seldom ; it preserved a steady and satisfying character of intelligence and force. The eyes, however, were of an inquiring, debating kind, that moved from one thing to another as if to get a sense of balance before opinion or judgment was expressed. The face had remained impassive, but the eyes had kindled a little as the Factor talked. To the Factor's despairing question there was not an immediate reply. The eyes were debating. But they suddenly steadied and Jaspar Hume said sententiously, "A relief party should go."

"Yes, yes ; but who is to lead them ?"

Again the eyes debated.

"Read her letter," said the Factor, handing him it.

Jaspar Hume took it and mechanically scanned it.

The Factor had moved towards the table for his pipe or he would have seen the other start, and his nostrils slightly quiver as his eyes grew conscious of what they were looking at. Turning quickly, Jaspar Hume walked towards the window as if for more light, and with his back to his superior he read the letter. Then he turned and said, "I think this thing should be done."

The Factor shrugged his shoulders slightly : "Well, as to that, I think so too, but thinking and doing are two different things, Hume."

"Will you leave the matter in my hands until the morning ?"

"Yes, of course, and glad to do so. You are the

only man who can arrange the affair, if it is to be done at all. But I tell you, as you know, that everything will depend upon a leader, even if you secure the men. . . . So you had better keep the letter for to-night. It may help you to get the men together. A woman's handwriting will do more than a man's word any time."

Jaspar Hume's eyes had been looking at the Factor, but they were studying something else. His face seemed not quite so fresh as it was a few minutes before.

"I will see you at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, Mr. Field," he said quietly. "Will you let Gosse come to me in an hour?"

"Certainly. Good night."

Jaspar Hume let himself out. He walked across a small square to a log-house and opened the door, which creaked and shrieked with the frost. A dog sprang upon him as he did so, and rubbed its head against his breast. He touched the head as if it had been that of a child, and said, "Lie down, Jacques."

It did so, but it watched him as he doffed his dog-skin cap and buffalo coat. He looked round the room slowly once as if he wished to fix it clearly and deeply in his mind. Then he sat down and held near the firelight the letter the Factor had given him. His features grew set and stern as he read it. Once he paused in the reading and looked into the fire, drawing his breath sharply between his teeth. Then he read it to the end without a sign. A pause, and he

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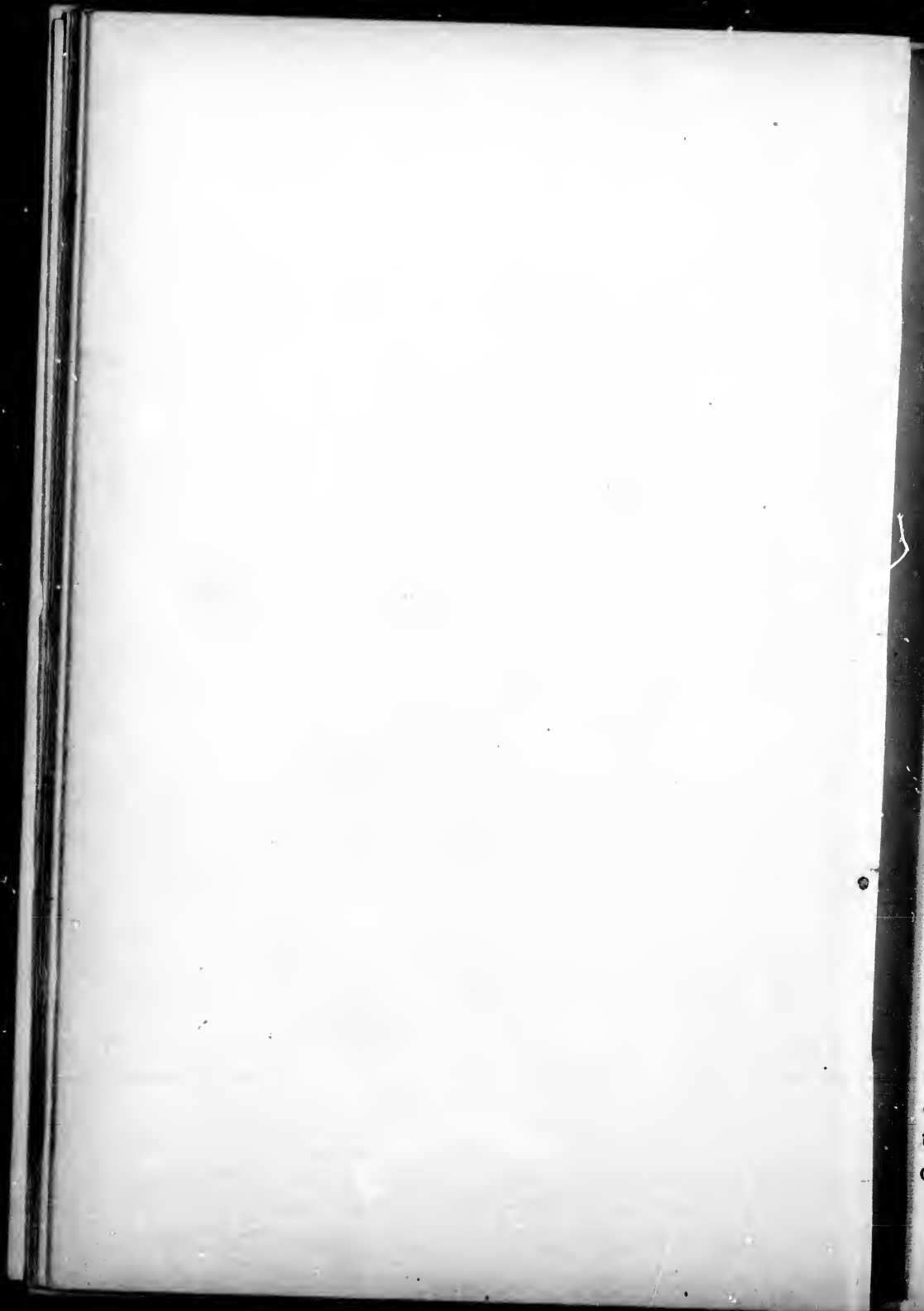
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“WITH HIS BACK TO HIS SUPERIOR HE READ THE LETTER.”





said, "So this is how the lines meet again, Varre Lepage!" He read the last sentence of the letter aloud :

"In the hope that you may soon give me good news of my husband, I am, with all respect,

"Sincerely yours,

"ROSE LEPAGE."

Again he repeated, "With all respect, sincerely yours, Rose Lepage."

The dog Jacques looked up. Perhaps it detected something unusual in the voice. It rose, came over, and laid its head on its master's knee. Jaspar Hume's hand fell gently on the head, and he said to the fire, "Rose Lepage, you can write to Factor Field what you dare not write to your husband if you knew! You might say to him then, 'With all love,' but not 'With all respect.'"

He folded the letter and put it in his pocket. Then he took the dog's head between his hands and said: "Listen, Jacques, and I will tell you a story." The dog blinked, and pushed its nose against its master's arm.

"Ten years ago two young men who had studied and graduated together at the same college were struggling together in their profession as civil engineers. One was Varre Lepage and the other was Jaspar Hume. The one was brilliant and persuasive, the other was persistent and studious. Varre Lepage could have succeeded in any profession; Jaspar

Hume had only heart and mind for one. Only for one, Jacques, you understand. He lived in it, he loved it, he saw great things to be achieved in it. He had got an idea. He worked at it night and day, he thought it out, he developed it, he perfected it, he was ready to give it to the world. But he was seized with illness, became blind, and was ordered to a warm climate for a year. He left his idea, his invention, behind him—his complete idea. While he was gone his bosom friend stole his perfected idea—yes, stole his perfected idea, and sold it for twenty thousand dollars. He was called a genius, a great inventor. And then he married *her*. You don't know *her*, Jacques. You never saw pretty Rose Varcoe, who, liking two men, chose the one who was handsome and brilliant, and whom the world called a genius. Why didn't Jaspas Hume expose him, Jacques? Proof is not always easy, and then he had to think of *her*. One has to think of a woman in such a case, Jacques. Even a dog can see that."

He was silent for a moment, and then he said, "Come, Jacques. *You* will keep secret what I show you."

He went to a large box in the corner, unlocked it, and took out a model made of brass and copper and smooth but unpolished wood.

"After ten years of banishment, Jacques, he has worked out another idea, you see. It should be worth ten times the other, and the world called the other the work of a genius, dog."

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Then he became silent, the animal watching him the while. It had seen him working at this model for many a day, but had never heard him talk so much at a time as he had done this last ten minutes. Jaspas Hume was generally a silent man; decisive even to severity, careless carriers and shirking under-officers thought. Yet none could complain that he was unjust. He was simply straightforward, and he had no sympathy with those who were not the same. He had carried a drunken Indian on his back for miles, and from a certain death by frost. He had, for want of a more convenient punishment, promptly knocked down Jeff Hyde, the sometime bully of the Fort, for appropriating a bundle of furs belonging to a French half-breed, Gaspé Toujours. But he nursed Jeff Hyde through an attack of pneumonia, insisting at the same time that Gaspé Toujours should help him. The result of it all was that Jeff Hyde and Gaspé Toujours became constant allies. They both formulated their oaths by Jaspas Hume. The Indian, Cloud-in-the-Sky, though by word never thanking his rescuer, could not be induced to leave the Fort, except on some mission with which Jaspas Hume was connected. He preferred living an undignified, an un-Indian life, and earning his food and shelter by coarsely labouring with his hands. He came at least twice a week to Jaspas Hume's log-house, and, sitting down silent and cross-legged before the fire, watched the Sub-factor working at his drawings and calculations. Sitting so for perhaps an hour or more,

and smoking all the time, he would rise, and with a grunt, which was answered by a kindly nod, would pass out as silently as he came.

And now as Jaspar Hume stood looking at his "Idea," Cloud-in-the-Sky entered, let his blanket fall by the hearthstone and sat down upon it. If Jaspar Hume saw him or heard him, he at least gave no sign at first. He said in a low tone to the dog, "It is finished, Jacques; it is ready for the world."

Then he put it back, locked the box, and turned towards Cloud-in-the-Sky and the fireplace. The Indian grunted; the other nodded with the debating look again dominant in his eyes. The Indian met the look with stoic calm. There was something in Jaspar Hume's habitual reticence and decisiveness in action which appealed more to Cloud-in-the-Sky than any freedom of speech could possibly have done.

Jaspar Hume sat down, handed the Indian a pipe and tobacco, and, with arms folded, watched the fire. For half an hour they sat so, white man, Indian, and dog. Then Jaspar Hume rose, went to a cupboard, took out some sealing-wax and matches, and in a moment melted wax was dropping upon the lock of the box containing his Idea. He had just finished this as Sergeant Gosse knocked at the door, and immediately after entered the room.

"Gosse," said the Sub-factor, "find Jeff Hyde, Gaspé Toujours, and Late Carscallen, and bring them here." Sergeant Gosse immediately departed upon

this errand. Jaspar Hume then turned to Cloud-in-the-Sky, and said, "Cloud-in-the-Sky, I want you to go a long journey hereaway to the Barren Grounds. Have twelve dogs ready by nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

Cloud-in-the-Sky shook his head thoughtfully, and then after a pause said, "Strong-back go too?" (Strong-back was his name for Jaspar Hume.) But the other either did not or would not hear. The Indian, however, appeared satisfied, for he smoked harder afterwards, and grunted to himself many times. A few moments passed, and then Sergeant Gosse entered, followed by Jeff Hyde, Gaspé Toujours, and Late Carscallen. Late Carscallen had got his name "Late" from having been called "The Late Mr. Carscallen" by the Chief Factor because of his slowness. Slow as he was, however, the stout Scotsman had more than once proved himself sound and true according to Jaspar Hume's ideas. He was, of course, the last to enter.

The men grouped themselves about the fire, Late Carscallen getting the coldest corner. Each man drew his tobacco from his pocket, and, cutting it, waited for Sub-factor Hume to speak. His eyes were debating as they rested on the four. Then he took out Rose Lepage's letter, and, with the group looking at him now, he read it aloud. When it was finished Cloud-in-the-Sky gave a guttural assent, and Gaspé Toujours, looking at Jeff Hyde, said, "It is cold in the Barren Grounds. We shall need much

tabac." These men could read without difficulty Jaspar Hume's reason for summoning them. To Gaspé Toujours' remark Jeff Hyde nodded affirmatively, and then all looked at Late Carscallen. He opened his heavy jaws once or twice with an animal-like sound, and then he said, in a general kind of way,

"To the Barren Grounds. But who leads?"

Jaspar Hume was writing on a slip of paper, and he did not reply. The faces of three of them showed just a shade of anxiety. They had their opinions, but they were not sure. Cloud-in-the-Sky, however, grunted at them, and raised the bowl of his pipe towards the Sub-factor. The anxiety then seemed to be dispelled.

For ten minutes more they sat so, all silent. Then Jaspar Hume rose, handed the slip of paper to Sergeant Gosse, and said, "Attend to that at once, Gosse. Examine the food and blankets closely."

The five were left alone.

Then Jaspar Hume spoke: "Jeff Hyde, Gaspé Toujours, Late Carscallen, and Cloud-in-the-Sky, this man, alive or dead, is between here and the Barren Grounds. He must be found—for his wife's sake." He handed Jeff Hyde her letter. Jeff Hyde rubbed his fingers before he touched the delicate and perfumed missive. Its delicacy seemed to bewilder him. He said in a rough but kindly way, "Hope to die if I don't," and passed it on to Gaspé Toujours, who

did not find it necessary to speak. His comrade had answered for him. Late Carscallen held it inquisitively for a moment, and then his jaws opened and shut as if he were about to speak. But before he did so the Sub-factor said, "It is a long journey and a hard one. Those who go may never come back. But this man was working for his country, and he has got a wife—a good wife!" He held up the letter. "Late Carscallen wants to know who will lead you. Can't you trust me? I will give you a leader that you will follow to the Barren Grounds. To-morrow you will know who he is. Men, are you satisfied? Will you do it?"

The four rose, and Cloud-in-the-Sky nodded approvingly many times. The Sub-factor held out his hand. Each man shook it, Jeff Hyde first; and he said, "Close up ranks for the H.B.C.!" (H.B.C. meaning of course Hudson's Bay Company.)

With a good man to lead them they would have stormed, alone, the Heights of Balaklava.

Once more Jaspar Hume spoke: "Go to Gosse and get your outfits at nine to-morrow morning. Cloud-in-the-Sky, have your sleds at the store at eight o'clock, to be loaded. Then all meet me at 10.15 at the office of the Chief Factor. Good night."

As they passed out into the semi-arctic night, Late Carscallen with an unreal obstinacy said, "Slow march to the Barren Grounds—but who leads?"

Left alone the Sub-factor sat down to the pine

table at one end of the room and after a short hesitation began to write. For hours he sat there, rising only to put wood on the fire. The result was three letters : the largest addressed to a famous society in London, one to a solicitor in Montreal, and one to Mr. Field, the Chief Factor. They were all sealed carefully. Then Jasper Hume rose, took out his knife and went over to the box as if to break the red seal. He paused, however, sighed, and put the knife back again. As he did so he felt something touch his leg. It was the dog. Jasper Hume drew in a sharp breath and said, "It was all ready, Jacques ; and in another three months I should have been in London with it. But it will go whether I go or not—whether I go or not, Jacques." The dog sprang up and put his head against his master's breast.

"Good dog ! good dog ! it's all right, Jacques ; however it goes, it's all right !"

Then the dog lay down and watched the man until he drew the blankets to his chin, and sleep drew oblivion over a fighting but masterly soul.

II.

At ten o'clock next morning Jasper Hume presented himself at the Chief Factor's office. He bore with him the letters he had written the night before.

The Factor said, "Well, Hume, I am glad to see you. That woman's letter was on my mind all night.

Have you anything to propose? I suppose not," he added despairingly, as he looked closely into the face of the other.

"Yes, Mr. Field, I propose this: that the expedition shall start at noon to-day."

"Shall—start—at noon—to-day?"

"In two hours."

"But, who are the party?"

"Jeff Hyde, Gaspé Toujours, Late Carscallen and Cloud-in-the-Sky."

"And who leads them, Hume? Who leads?"

"With your permission, sir, I do."

"You, Hume! You! But, man, consider the danger! And then there is—there is, your invention!"

"I have considered all. Here are three letters. If we do not come back in three months, you will please send this one, with the box in my room, to the address on the envelope; this is for a solicitor in Montreal, which you will also forward as soon as possible; this last one is for yourself; but you will not open it until the three months have passed. Have I your permission to lead these men? They would not go without me."

"I know that, I know that, Hume. I hate to have you go, but I can't say no. Go, and good luck go with you."

Here the manly old Factor turned away his head. He knew that Jaspas Hume had done right. He knew the possible sacrifice this man was making of

all his hopes, of his very life; and his sound Scotch heart appreciated the act to the full. But he did not know all. He did not know that Jaspar Hume was starting to look for the man who had robbed him of youth and hope and genius and home.

"Here is a letter that the wife has written to her husband in the hope that he is alive. You will take it with you, Hume. And the other she wrote to me, shall I keep it?" He held out his hand.

"No, sir, I will keep it, if you will allow me. It is my commission, you know." And the shadow of a smile hovered about Jaspar Hume's lips.

The Factor smiled kindly as he replied, "Ah, yes, your commission—Captain Jaspar Hume of—of what, Hume?"

Just then the door opened and there entered the four men whom we saw around the Sub-factor's fire the night before. They were dressed in white blanket costumes from head to foot, white woollen *capotes* covering the grey fur caps they wore. Jaspar Hume ran his eye over them and then answered the Factor's question: "Of the White Guard, sir."

"Good," was the reply. "Men, you are going on a relief expedition—one in which there is danger. You need a good leader. You have one in Captain Jaspar Hume."

Jeff Hyde shook his head at the others with a pleased I-told-you-so expression; Cloud-in-the-Sky grunted his deep approval; and Late Carscallen

smacked his lips in a satisfied manner and rubbed his leg with a school-boy sense of enjoyment. The Factor continued: "In the name of the Hudson's Bay Company I will say that if you come back, having done your duty faithfully, you shall be well rewarded. And I believe you will come back, if it is in human power to do so."

Here Jeff Hyde said, "It isn't for reward we're doin' it, Mr. Field, but because Captain Hume wished it, because we believed he'd lead us; and for the lost fellow's wife. We wouldn't have said we'd do it, if it wasn't for him that's just called us the White Guard."

Under the bronze of the Sub-factor's face there spread a glow more red than brown, and he said simply, "Thank you, men"—for they had all nodded assent to Jeff Hyde's words—"Come with me to the store. We will start at noon."

And at noon the White Guard stood in front of the store on which the British flag was hoisted with another beneath it bearing the magic letters, H.B.C.: magic, because they have opened to the world regions that seemed destined never to know the touch of civilisation. The few inhabitants of the Fort had gathered; the dogs and loaded sleds were at the door. The White Guard were there too—all but their leader. It wanted but two minutes to twelve when Jaspar Hume came from his house, dressed also in the white blanket costume, and followed by his dog, Jacques. In a moment more he had placed

Jacques at the head of the first team of dogs. They were to have their leader too; and they testified to the fact by a bark of approval. Punctually at noon, Jaspas Hume shook hands with the Factor, said a quick good-bye to the rest, called out a friendly "How!" to the Indians standing near, and to the sound of a hearty cheer, heartier perhaps because none had a confident hope that the five would come back, the March of the White Guard began.

III.

It is eighteen days after. In the shadow of a little island of pines, that lies in a shivering waste of ice and snow, the White Guard camp. They are able to do this night what they have not done for days—dig a great grave of snow, and building a fire of pine wood at each end of this strange house, get protection and something like comfort. They sit close to the fires. Jaspas Hume is writing with numbed fingers. The extract that follows is taken from his diary. It tells that day's life, and so gives an idea of harder, sterner days that they have spent and will spend, on this weary journey.

"*December 25th.*—This is Christmas Day and Camp twenty-seven. We have marched only five miles to-day. We are eighty miles from Great Fish River, and the worst yet to do. We have discovered

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no signs. Jeff Hyde has had a bad two days with his frozen foot. Gaspé Toujours helps him nobly. One of the dogs died this morning. Jacques is a great leader. This night's shelter is a God-send. Cloud-in-the-Sky has a plan whereby some of us will sleep well. We are in latitude $63^{\circ} 47'$ and longitude $112^{\circ} 32' 14''$. Have worked out lunar observations.

Have marked a tree $\frac{JH}{27}$, and raised cairn No. 3.

We are able to celebrate Christmas Day with a good basin of tea, and our stand-by of beans cooked in fat. I was right about them : they have great sustaining power. To-morrow we will start at ten o'clock."

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The writing done, Jaspar Hume puts his book away and turns towards the rest. Cloud-in-the-Sky and Lato Carscallen are smoking. Little can be seen of their faces ; they are muffled to the eyes. Gaspé Toujours is drinking a basin of tea, and Jeff Hyde is fitfully dozing by the fire. The dogs are above in the tent, all but Jacques, who to-night is permitted to be near his master. The Sub-factor rises, takes from a knapsack a small tin pail, and puts it near the fire. This operation is watched by the others. Then he takes five little cups that fit snugly into each other, separates them, and puts them also near the fire. None of the party speak. A change seems to pass over the faces of all except Cloud-in-the-Sky. He smokes on unmoved. At length the Sub-factor speaks cheerily : "Now, men, before we turn in we'll do something in honour of the day. Liquor we

none of us have touched since we started ; but back there in the Fort, and maybe in other places too, they will be thinking of us ; so we'll drink a health to them though it's but a spoonful, and to the day when we see them again !”

The cups were passed round. The Sub-factor measured out a very small portion to each. They were not men of uncommon sentiment ; their lives were rigid and isolated and severe. Fireside comforts under fortunate conditions they saw but seldom, and they were not given to expressing their feelings demonstratively. But each man then, save Cloud-in-the-Sky, had some memory worth a resurrection, and hearts are hearts even under all uncouthness. Jaspar Hume raised his cup ; the rest followed his example. “To absent friends and the day when we see them again !” he said ; and they all drank. Gaspé Toujours solemnly, and as if no one was near, made the sign of the cross ; for his memory was with a dark-eyed, soft-cheeked peasant girl of the parish of Saint Gabrielle, whom he had left behind five years before, and had never seen since. Word had come from the parish priest that she was dying, and though he wrote back in his homely patois of his grief, and begged that the good father would write again, no word had ever come, and he thought of her now as one for whom the candles had been lighted and masses had been said.

But Jeff Hyde's eyes were bright, and suffering as he was, the heart in him was brave and hopeful. He

was thinking of a glorious Christmas Day upon the Madawaska River three years ago; of Adam Henry, the blind fiddler; of bright, warm-hearted Pattie Chown, the belle of the ball, and the long drive home in the frosty night.

Late Carscallen was thinking of a brother whom he had heard preach his first sermon in Edinburgh ten years before. And Late Carscallen, slow of speech and thought, had been full of pride and love of that brilliant brother. But they, in the natural course of things, drifted apart; the slow and uncouth one to make his home at last not far from the Arctic Circle, and to be this night on his way to the Barren Grounds. But as he stood with the cup to his lips he recalled the words of a newspaper paragraph of a few months before. It made reference to the fact that "the Reverend James Carscallen, D.D., preached before Her Majesty on Whitsunday, and had the honour of lunching with Her Majesty afterwards." And Late Carscallen rubbed his left hand joyfully against his blanketed leg and drank.

Cloud-in-the-Sky's thoughts were with the present, and his "Ugh!" of approval was one of the senses purely. Instead of drinking to absent friends he looked at the Sub-factor and said, "How!" He drank to the Sub-factor.

And Jaspar Hume, the Sub-factor, what were his thoughts?

His was a memory of childhood; of a house beside a swift-flowing river, where a gentle widowed

mother braced her heart against misfortune and denied herself and slaved that her son might be educated. He had said to her that some day he would be a great man, and she would be paid back a hundredfold. And he worked hard at school, very hard. But one cold day of spring a message came to the school, and he sped homewards to the house beside the dark river down which the ice was floating—he would remember that floating ice to his dying day—and entered a quiet room where a white-faced woman was breathing away her life. And he fell at her side and kissed her hand and called to her; and she waked for a moment only and smiled on him, and said, "Be good, my boy, and God will make you great." And then she said she was cold. And some one felt her feet—a kind old soul who shook her head sadly at the mother and looked pityingly at him; and a voice rising out of a strange smiling languor murmured, "I'll away, I'll away to the Promised Land—to the Promised Land! It is cold—so cold—God keep my boy!" And the voice ceased, and the kind old soul who had looked at him pityingly folded her arms about him, and drew his brown head to her breast and kissed him with flowing eyes and whispered, "Come away, dear, come away."

But he came back in the night and sat beside her, and would not go away, but remained there till the sun grew bright, and then through another day and night until they bore her out of the little house by

the river to the frozen hill-side. And the world was empty and the icy river seemed warmer than his heart.

And sitting here in this winter desolation Jasper Hume beholds these scenes of twenty years before and follows himself, a poor dispensing clerk in a doctor's office, working for that dream of achievement in which his mother believed; for which she hoped. And following further the boy that was himself, he saw a friendless first-year man at college, soon, however, to make a friend of Varre Lepage, and to see always the best of that friend, being himself so true. And the day came when they both graduated together in science, a bright and happy day, succeeded by one still brighter, when they both entered a great firm as junior partners. Then came the meeting with Rose Varcoe; and he thought of how he praised his friend Varre Lepage to her, and brought that friend to be introduced to her. He recalled all those visions that came to him when, his professional triumphs achieved, he should have a happy home, and a happy face, and faces, by his fireside. And *the* face was to be that of Rose Varcoe, and the others, faces of those who should be like her and like himself. He saw, or rather felt, that face clouded and anxious when he went away ill and blind for health's sake. He did not write. The doctors forbade him that. He did not ask her to write, for his was so strong and steadfast a nature that he did not need letters to keep him true; and he thought

32. *THE MARCH OF THE WHITE GUARD.*

if she cared for him she must be the same. He did not understand a woman's heart, how it needs remembrances, and needs to give remembrances.

Looking at Jaspar Hume's face in the light of this fire it seems calm and cold, yet behind it is an agony of memory, the memory of the day when he discovered that Varre Lepage was married to Rose Varcoe, and that the trusted friend had grown famous and well-to-do on the offspring of *his* brain. His first thought had been one of fierce anger and determination to expose this man who had falsified all trust. But then came the thought of the girl, and, most of all there came the words of his dying mother, "Be good, my boy, and God will make you great," and for his mother's sake he had compassion on the girl, and sought no revenge upon her husband. Rare type of man, in a sordid, unchivalric world! And now, ten years later, he did not regret that he had stayed his hand. The world had ceased to call Varre Lepage a genius. He had not fulfilled the hope that was held of him. This Jaspar Hume knew from occasional references in scientific journals.

And he was making this journey to save, if he could, Varre Lepage's life. And he has no regret. Though just on the verge of a new era in his career—to give to the world the fruit of ten years' thought and labour, he had set all behind him that he might be true to the friendship of his youth, that he might be loyal to his manhood, that he might be clear

of the strokes of conscience to the last hour of his life.

Looking round him now, the debating look comes again into his eyes. He places his hand in his breast, and lets it rest there for a moment. The look becomes certain and steady, the hand is drawn out, and in it is a Book of Common Prayer. Upon the fly-leaf is written, "Jane Hume, to her dear son Jaspar, on his twelfth birthday."

These men of the White Guard are not used to religious practices, whatever their past has been in that regard, and at any other time they might have been surprised at this action of Jaspar Hume. Under some circumstances it might have lessened their opinion of him, but his influence over them now was complete. They knew they were getting nearer to him than they had ever done; even Cloud-in-the-Sky appreciated that. He spoke no word to them, but looked at them and stood up. They all did the same, Jeff Hyde leaning on the shoulders of Gaspé Toujours. He read first, four verses of the Thirty-first Psalm, then followed the prayer of St. Chrysostom, and the beautiful collect which appeals to the Almighty to mercifully look upon the infirmities of men, and to stretch forth His hand to keep and defend them in all dangers and necessities. Late Carscallen, after a long pause, said "Amen," and Jeff Hyde said in a whisper to Gaspé Toujours, "That's to the point. Infirmities and dangers and necessities are what troubles us."

Immediately after, at a sign from the Sub-factor, Cloud-in-the-Sky began to transfer the burning wood from one fire to the other until only hot ashes were left where a great blaze had been. Over these ashes pine twigs and branches were spread, and over them again blankets. The word was then given to turn in, and Jeff Hyde, Gaspé Toujours, and Late Carscallen lay down in this comfortable bed. Each wished to give way to their captain, but he would not consent, and he and Cloud-in-the-Sky wrapped themselves in their blankets like mummies, covering the head completely, and under the arctic sky they slept alone in an austere and tenantless world. They never know how loftily sardonic Nature can be who have not seen that land where the mercury freezes in the tubes, and there is light but no warmth in the smile of the sun. Not Sturt in the heart of Australia with the mercury bursting the fevered tubes, with the finger-nails breaking like brittle glass, with the ink drying instantly on the pen, with the hair falling off and fading, would, if he could, have exchanged his lot for that of the White Guard. They are in a frozen endlessness that stretches away to a world where never voice of man or clip of wing or tread of animal is heard. It is the threshold to the undiscovered country, to that untouched north whose fields of white are only furrowed by the giant forces of the elements; on whose frigid hearthstone no fire is ever lit; a place where the electric phantoms of a nightless land pass and repass, and are never still; where the magic needle

points not towards the north but darkly downward, downward!—where the sun never stretches warm hands to him who dares confront the terrors of eternal snow.

The White Guard sleeps!

IV.

“No, Captain; leave me here and push on to the Manitou Mountain. You ought to make it in two days. I’m just as safe here as on the sleds and less trouble; a blind man’s no good. I’ll have a good rest while you’re gone, and then perhaps my eyes will come out right. My foot is nearly well now.”

Yes, Jeff Hyde was snow-blind. This, the giant of the party, had suffered most.

But Jaspas Hume said, “I won’t leave you alone, my man. The dogs can carry you, as they’ve done for the last ten days.”

But Jeff replied, “I’m as safe here as marching, and safer. When the dogs are not carrying me, nor any one leading me, you can get on faster; and that means everything to us; now don’t it?”

Jaspas Hume met the eyes of Gaspé, Toujours. He read them. Then he said to Jeff Hyde, “It shall be as you wish. Late Carscallen, Cloud-in-the-Sky, and myself will push on to Manitou Mountain. You and Gaspé, Toujours will remain here.”

Jeff Hyde’s blind eyes turned towards Gaspé

Toujours, and Gaspé Toujours said, "Yes. We have plenty of tabac."

A tent was set up, provisions were put in it, a spirit-lamp and matches were added, and the simple *ménage* was complete. Not quite. Jaspar Hume looked round. There was not a tree in sight. He stooped and cut away a pole that was used for strengthening the runners of the sleds; fastened it firmly in the ground, and tied to it a red woollen scarf, which he had used for tightening his white blankets round him. Then he said: "Be sure and keep that flying, men."

Jeff Hyde's face was turned towards the north. The blind man's instinct was coming to him. Far off white eddying drifts were rising over long hillocks of snow. When Jeff turned round again his face was slightly troubled. It grew more troubled, then it brightened up again, and he said to Jaspar Hume, "Captain, would you leave that book with me till you come back—that about infirmities, dangers, and necessities? I knew a river-boss who used to carry an old spelling-book round with him for luck. It had belonged to a schoolmaster, who took him in and did for him when his father and mother went into Kingdom Come. It seems to me as if that book of yours, Captain, would bring luck to this part of the White Guard, that bein' out at the heels like has to stay behind."

Jaspar Hume had borne the sufferings of his life with courage; he had led this terrible tramp with no

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tremor at his heart for himself; he was seeking to perform a perilous act without any inward shrinking; but Jeff's request was the greatest trial of this momentous period in his life. This book had not left his breast, save when he slept, for twenty years. To give it up was like throwing open the doors of his nature to such weaknesses that assail and conquer most men at some time or other in their lives.

Jeff Hyde felt, if he could not see, the hesitation of his chief. His rough but kind instincts told him something was wrong in his request, and he hastened to add, "Beg your pardon, sir, it ain't no matter; I oughtn't to have asked you for it. But it's just like me; I've been a chain on the leg of the White Guard this whole tramp."

The moment of hesitation had passed before Jeff Hyde had said half-a-dozen words, and Jaspur Hume put the book in his hands with the words, "No, Jeff Hyde, take it. It *will* bring luck to the White Guard. Put it where I have carried it, and keep it safe until I come back."

Jeff Hyde placed the book in his bosom, but hearing a guttural "Ugh" behind him, he turned round defiantly. The Indian touched his arm and said, "Good! Strong-back book—good!" Jeff was satisfied.

At this point they parted; Jeff Hyde and Gaspé Toujours remaining, and Jaspur Hume and his two followers going on towards Manitou Mountain. There seemed little probability that Varre Lepage would be

found. In their progress eastward and northward they had covered wide areas of country, dividing and meeting again after stated hours of travel, but not a sign had been seen ; neither cairn nor staff nor any mark of human presence.

Jaspar Hume had noticed Jeff Hyde's face when it was turned to the eddying drifts of the north, and he understood what was in the experienced huntsman's mind. He knew that severe weather was before them, and that the greatest difficulty of the journey was to be encountered. Yet, somehow, the fear that possessed him when the book was taken from his breast had left him, and he reaped in his act of self-sacrifice a larger courage and rarer strength than that which had heretofore stayed him on this cheerless journey.

That night they saw Manitou Mountain, cold, colossal, harshly calm ; and jointly with that sight there arose a shrieking, biting, fearful north wind. It blew upon them in cruel menace of conquest, in piercing inclemency. It struck a freezing terror to their hearts, and grew in violent attack until, as if repenting that it had foregone its power to save, the sun suddenly grew red and angry and spread out a shield of blood along the bastions of the west. The wind shrunk back and grew less murderous, and ere the last red arrow shot up behind the lonely western wall of white, the three knew that the worst of the storm had passed and that death had drawn back for a time. What Jaspar Hume thought we shall gather

from his diary ; for ere he crawled in among the dogs and stretched himself out beside Jacques, he wrote these words with aching fingers :—

“*January 10th: Camp 39.*—A bitter day. We are facing three fears now : the fate of those we left behind ; *his* fate ; and the going back. We are thirty miles from Manitou Mountain. If he is found, I should not fear at all the return journey ; success gives hope. We trust in God.”

Another day passes and at night, after a hard march, they camp five miles from Manitou Mountain. And not a sign ! But Jaspar Hume knows that there is a faint chance of Varre Lepage being found at this mountain. His iron frame has borne the hardships of this journey well ; his valiant heart better. But this night an unaccountable weakness possesses him. Mind and body are on the verge of helplessness and faintness. Jacques seems to understand that, and when he is unhitched from the team of dogs, now dwindled to seven, he goes to his master and leaps upon his breast. It was as if some instinct of sympathy of prescience, was passing between the man and the dog. Jaspar Hume bent his head down to Jacques for an instant and rubbed his side kindly ; then he said, with a tired accent, “It’s all right, dog ; it’s all right !”

Jaspar Hume did not sleep well at first that night, but at length oblivion came. He waked to feel Jacques tugging at his blankets. It was noon. Late Carscallen and Cloud-in-the-Sky were still sleeping—

inanimate bundles among the dogs. In an hour they were on their way again, and towards sunset they had reached the foot of Manitou Mountain. Abruptly from the plain rose this mighty mound, blue and white upon a black base. A few straggling pines grew near its foot, defying latitude, as the mountain itself defied the calculations of geographers and geologists. A halt was called. Late Carscallen and Cloud-in-the-Sky looked at the chief. His eyes were scanning the mountain closely. Suddenly he paused. Five hundred feet up there is a great round hole in the solid rock, and from this hole there comes a feeble cloud of smoke! Jasper Hume's hand points where his eyes are fixed. The other two see. Cloud-in-the-Sky gives a wild whoop, such a whoop as only an Indian can give, and from the mountain there comes, a moment after, a faint replica of the sound. It is not an echo, for there appears at the mouth of the cave an Indian, who sees them and makes feeble signs for them to come. In a few moments they are at the cave. As Jasper Hume enters, Cloud-in-the-Sky and the stalwart but emaciated Indian who had beckoned to them speak to each other in the Chinook language, the jargon common to all Indians of the West.

Jasper Hume saw a form reclining on a great bundle of pine branches, and he knew what Rose Lepage had prayed for had come to pass. By the flickering light of a handful of fire he saw Varre Lepage—rather what was left of him—a shadow of

energy, a heap of nerveless bones. His eyes were shut, but as Jaspar Hume, with a quiver of memory and sympathy at his heart, stood for an instant and looked at the man whom he had cherished as a friend and found an enemy, the pale lips of Varre Lepage moved and a weak voice said, "Who—is there?"

"A friend."

"A friend! Come—near—me,—friend!"

Jaspar Hume made a motion to Late Carscallen, who was heating some liquor at the fire, and he came near and stooped and lifted up the sick man's head, and took his hand.

"You have come—to save me—to save me!" said the weak voice again.

"Yes; I have come to save you." This voice was strong and clear and true.

"I seem—to have—heard—your voice before—somewhere before—— I seem to—have——" But he had fainted.

Jaspar Hume poured a little liquor down the sick man's throat, and Late Carscallen chafed the delicate hand—delicate in health, it was like that of a little child now. When breath came again Jaspar Hume whispered to his helper, "Take Cloud-in-the-Sky and get wood; bring fresh branches; clear one of the sleds, and we will start back with him in the early morning."

Late Carscallen, looking at the skeleton-like figure, said, "He will never get there."

"Yes," said Jaspar Hume; "he will get there."

"But he is dying."

"He goes with me to Fort Providence."

"Ay, to Providence he goes, but not with you," said Late Carscallen, sadly but doggedly.

Anger flashed in Jaspar Hume's eye, but he said quietly, "I shall take him to his wife; get the wood, Carscallen."

And Jaspar Hume was left alone with the starving Indian, who sat beside the fire eating voraciously, and the sufferer, who now mechanically was taking a little biscuit sopped in brandy. For a few moments thus, and his sunken eyes opened and he looked dazedly at the man bending above him. Suddenly there came into them a look of terror. "You—you—are Jaspar Hume," the voice said in an awed whisper.

"Yes;" and the hands of the Sub-factor chafed those of the other.

"But you said you were a—friend, and come to save me."

"I am come to save you."

There was a shiver of the sufferer's body. This discovery would either make him stronger or kill him altogether. Jaspar Hume knew this, and said, "Varre Lepage, the past *is* past and dead to me; let it be so to you."

There was a pause.

"How—did you know—about me?"

"I was at Fort Providence; there came letters from the Hudson's Bay Company, and from your

wife, saying that you were making this journey, and were six months behind——”

“My wife, my wife! Rose!”

“Yes, I have a letter for you from her. She is on her way to Canada. We are to take you to her.”

“To take me—to her!” He shook his head sadly, but he pressed the letter that Jaspar Hume had just given him to his lips.

“To take you to her, Varre Lepage.”

“No, I shall never—see her—again.”

“I tell you, you shall. You can live if you will. You owe that to her—to me—to God!”

“To her—to you—to God. But I have been true—to none. To win her I wronged you doubly—and wronged her too; and wronging—both of you, I wronged That Other One. I have been punished. I shall die here.”

“You shall go to Fort Providence. Do that in payment of your debt to me, Varre Lepage. I demand that.”

In this sinning man there was a latent spark of honour, a sense of justice that might have been developed to great causes, to noble ends, if some strong nature, seeing his weaknesses, had not condoned them, but had appealed to the natural chivalry of an impressionable, vain, and weak character. He struggled to meet the eyes of Jaspar Hume, and doing so he gained confidence and said, “I *will* try to live. I will do you justice—yet. But, oh, my wife!”

"Your first duty is to eat and drink. We start for Fort Providence to-morrow morning."

The sick man stretched out his hand: "Food! Food!" he said.

In little bits food and drink were given to him, and his strength sensibly increased. The cave was soon aglow with the fire that was kindled by Late Carscallen and Cloud-in-the-Sky. There was little speaking, for the sick man soon fell asleep. Varre Lepage's Indian told Cloud-in-the-Sky the tale of their march—how the other Indian and the dogs died; how his master became ill as they were starting towards Fort Providence from Manitou Mountain in the summer weather; how they turned back and took refuge in this cave; how month by month they had lived on what would hardly keep a rabbit alive; and how at last his master urged him to press on with his papers; but he would not, and stayed until this day, when the last bit of food had been eaten, and they were found!

v:

THE next morning Varre Lepage was placed upon a sled and they started back, Jacques barking joyfully as he led off, with Cloud-in-the-Sky beside him. There was light in the faces of all, though the light could not be seen by reason of their being muffled so.

All day they travelled, scarcely halting, Varre Le-page's Indian being strong again and marching well. Often the corpse-like bundle on the sled was disturbed, and biscuits wet in brandy and bits of preserved venison were given.

That night Jaspas Hume said to Late Carscallen, "I am going to start at the first light of the morning to get to Gaspé Toujours and Jeff Hyde as soon as possible. Follow as fast as you can. He will be safe if you give him food and drink often. I shall get to the place where we left them about noon; you should reach there at night or early the next morning."

"Hadn't you better take Jacques with you?" said Late Carscallen.

The Sub-factor thought a moment, and then said, "No, he is needed most where he is."

At noon the next day Jaspas Hume looks round upon a billowy plain of sun and ice, but he sees no staff, no signal, no tent, no sign of human life: of Gaspé Toujours or of Jeff Hyde. His strong heart quails. Has he lost his way? He looks at the sun. He is not sure. He consults his compass, but it quivers hesitatingly, and then points downwards! For awhile wild bewilderment which seizes upon the minds of the strongest, when lost, masters him, in spite of his struggles against it. He moves in a maze of half-blindness, half-delirium. He is lost in it, is swayed by it. He begins to wander about; and there grow upon his senses strange delights and reeling agonies. He hears church bells, he catches at butter-

flies, he tumbles in new-mown hay, he wanders in a tropic garden. But in the hay a wasp stings him, and the butterfly changes to a curling black snake that strikes at him and glides to a dark-flowing river full of floating ice, and up from the river a white hand is thrust, and it beckons him—beckons him! He shuts his eyes and moves towards it, but a voice stops him, and it says, "Come away! come away!" and two arms fold him round, and as he goes back from the shore he stumbles and falls, and What is this? A yielding mass at his feet! A mass that stirs! He clutches at it, he tears away the snow, he calls aloud—and his voice has a faraway unnatural sound—"Gaspé Toujours! Gaspé Toujours!" Yes, it is Gaspé Toujours! And beside him lies Jeff Hyde, and alive! ay, alive! Thank God!

Jaspar Hume's mind is itself again. It had but suffered for a moment what comes to most men when they recognise first that they are being shadowed by the awful ban of "Lost."

Gaspé Toujours and Jeff Hyde had lain down in the tent the night of the great wind and had gone to sleep at once. The staff had been blown down, the tent had fallen over them, the drift had covered them and for three days they had slept beneath the snow; never waking.

Jeff Hyde's sight was come again to him. "You've come back for the book," he said; "you couldn't go on without it. You ought to have taken it yesterday"; and he drew it from his bosom.

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“No, Jeff, I’ve not come back for that : and I did not leave you yesterday : it is three days and more since we parted. The book *has* brought us luck, and the best ! We have found *him* ; and they’ll be here to-night with him. I came on ahead to see how you fared.”

In that frost-bitten world Jeff Hyde uncovered his head for a moment. “Gaspé Toujours is a Papist,” he said ; “but he read me some of that book the day you left, and one thing we went to sleep on : it was that about ‘Lightenin’ the darkness, and defendin’ us from all the perils and dangers of this night.’” Here Gaspé Toujours made the sign of the cross. Jeff Hyde continued half apologetically for his comrade, “It comes natural to Gaspé Toujours—I guess it always does to Papists. But I never had any trainin’ that way, and I had to turn the thing over and over, and I fell asleep on it. And when I wake up three days after, here’s my eyes as fresh as daisies, and you back, Captain, and the thing done that we come to do !”

He put the book into the hands of Jaspas Hume, and Gaspé Toujours at that moment said, “See !” And far off, against the eastern horizon, appeared a group of moving figures !

That night the broken segments of the White Guard were re-united, and Varre Lepage slept by the side of Jaspas Hume.

VI.

To conquer is to gain courage and unusual powers of endurance. Napoleon might have marched back from Moscow with undecimated legions safely enough, if the heart of those legions had not been crushed. The White Guard, with their faces turned homeward and the man they had sought for in their care, seemed to have acquired new strength. Through days of dreadful cold, through nights of appalling fierceness, through storm upon the plains that made for them paralyzing coverlets, they marched. And if Varre Lepage did not grow stronger, life at least was kept in him, and he had once more the desire to live.

There was little speech among them, but once in a while Gaspé Toujours sang snatches of the songs of the voyageurs of the great rivers; and the hearts of all were strong. Between Jacques and his master there was occasional demonstration. Jacques seemed to know that a load was being lifted from the heart of Jaspar Hume, and Jaspar Hume, on the twentieth day homeward, said with his hand on the dog's head, "It had to be done, Jacques; even a dog could see that!"

And so it was "all right" for the White Guard. One day when the sun was warmer than usual over Fort Providence, and just sixty-five days since that cheer had gone up from apprehensive hearts for brave men going out into the Barren Grounds, Sergeant Gosse, who every day and of late many

times a day, had swept the north-east with a field-glass, rushed into the Chief Factor's office, and with a broken voice cried, "The White Guard! The White Guard!" And pointed towards the north-east. And then he leaned his arm and head against the wall and sobbed. And the old Factor rose from his chair tremblingly, and said "Thank God," and went hurriedly into the square. But he did not go steadily—the joyous news had shaken him, sturdy old pioneer as he was. As he passes out one can see that a fringe of white has grown about his temples in the last two months. The people of the Fort had said, they had never seen him so irascible, yet so gentle; so uneasy, yet so reserved; so stern about the mouth, yet so kind about the eyes as he had been since Jaspar Hume had gone with his brave companions on this desperate errand.

Already the handful of people at the Fort had gathered. Indians left the store and joined the rest; the Factor and Sergeant Gosse set out to meet the little army of relief. God knows what was in the hearts of the Chief Factor and Jaspar Hume when they shook hands. To the Factor's "In the name of the Hudson Bay Company, Mr. Hume," there came "By the help of God, sir," and he pointed to the sled whereon Varre Lepage lay. A feeble hand was clasped in the burly hand of the Factor, and then they fell into line again, Cloud-in-the-Sky running ahead of the dogs. Snow had fallen on

them, and as they entered the stockade, men and dogs were white from head to foot.

The White Guard had come back! They were met with cries of praise, broken by an occasional choking sound, from men like Sergeant Gosse. Jaspas Hume as simply acknowledged his welcome as he had done the God-speed two months and more ago. He with the Factor bore the sick man in, and laid him on his own bed. Then he came outside, and when they cheered him again, he said, "We have come safely through and I am thankful. But remember that my comrades in this march deserve your cheers in this as much as I. Without them I could have done nothing in the perils that lay between here and the Barren Grounds."

"In our infirmities and in all our dangers and necessities," added Jeff Hyde; "the luck of the world was in the book!"

In another half-hour the White Guard was at ease, and four of them were gathered about the great stove in the store, Cloud-in-the-Sky smoking placidly, and full of guttural emphasis; Late Carscallen moving his animal-like jaws with a sense of satisfaction; Gaspé Toujours talking in Chinook to the Indians, in patois to the French clerk, and in broken English to them all; and Jeff Hyde exclaiming on the wonders of the march, the finding of Varre Lepage at Manitou Mountain, and of himself and Gaspé Toujours buried in the snow.

VII.

IN Jaspar Hume's house at midnight Varre Lepage lay asleep with his wife's letters—received through the Factor—clasped to his breast. The firelight played upon a face prematurely old—a dark disappointed face—a doomed face, as it seemed to the Factor.

“You knew him, then,” the Factor said, after a long silence.

“Yes; I knew him well, years ago,” replied Jaspar Hume.

Just then the sick man stirred in his sleep, and said disjunctedly, “I'll make it all right to you, Jaspar.” Then came a pause and a quicker utterance, “Rose—I—love you—Forgive—forgive!” The Factor rose and turned to go, and Jaspar Hume, with a despairing, sorrowful gesture, went over to the bed.

Again the voice said, “Ten years—I *have* repented ten years—My wife—Don't, don't!—I dare not speak—Jaspar forgives me, oh, Rose!”

The Factor touched Jaspar Hume's arm. “This is delirium,” he said. “He has fever. You and I must nurse him, Hume. You can trust me—you understand.”

“Yes, I can trust you,” was the reply. “But I can tell you nothing.”

“I do not want to know anything. If you can watch till two o'clock I will relieve you. I'll send

the medicine chest over. You know how to treat him."

The Factor passed out and the other was left alone with the man who had wronged him. The feeling most active in his mind was pity, and as he prepared a draught from his own stock of medicines, he thought the past and the present all over. He knew that however much he had suffered, this man had suffered more. And in this silent night there was broken down any slight barrier that may have stood between Varre Lepage and his complete compassion. Having effaced himself from the calculation, justice became forgiveness.

He moistened the sick man's lips and bathed his forehead, and roused him once to take a quieting powder. Then he sat down and wrote to Rose Lepage. But he tore the letter up again and said to the dog, "No, Jacques, I cannot; the Factor must do it. She needn't know yet that it was I with the White Guard who saved him. It doesn't make any burden of gratitude for her, if my name is kept out of it. And the Factor mustn't mention me, Jacques—not yet. And when he is well we will go to London with It, Jacques, and we needn't meet *her*; and it will be all right, Jacques: all right!"

And the dog seemed to understand; for he went over to the box that held It; and looked at his master. And Jaspar Hume rose and broke the seal and unlocked the box and opened it; but he heard the sick man moan and he closed it again and went

over to the bed. The feeble voice said, "I must speak—I cannot die so—not so—Jaspar."

And Jaspar Hume murmured, "God help him." And he moistened the lips once again, and put a cold cloth on the fevered head, and then sat down by the fire again. And Varre Lepage slept. As if some charm had been in that "God help him," the restless hands grew quiet, the breath became more regular, and the tortured mind found a short peace. With the old debating look in his eyes, Jaspar Hume sat until the Factor relieved him.

VIII.

FEBRUARY and March and April were past and May was come. Varre Lepage had had a hard struggle for life, but he had survived. For weeks every night there was a repetition of that first night after the return: delirious self-condemnation, entreaty, and love of his wife, and Jaspar Hume's name mentioned now and again in shuddering remorse. With the help of the Indian who had shared the sick man's sufferings in the Barren Grounds, the Factor and Jaspar Hume nursed him back to life. Between the two watchers, no word had passed after the first night regarding the substance of Varre Lepage's delirium. But one evening the Factor was watching alone, and the repentant man from his feverish sleep

cried out, "Hush, hush; don't let them know—I stole them both from him—and the baby died because of that; God took it—and Rose did not know! She did not know!"

The Factor rose and walked away. The dog was watching him. He said to Jacques, "You have a good master, Jacques—too good and great for the H.B.C."

IX.

It is the 10th of May. In an arm-chair made of hickory and birch-bark by Cloud-in-the-Sky, sits Varre Lepage reading a letter from his wife. She is at Winnipeg, and is coming west as far as Regina to meet him on his way down. He looks a wreck; but a handsome wreck! His refined features, his soft black beard and blue eyes, his graceful hand and gentle manners, one would scarcely think belonged to an evil-hearted man. He sits in the sunlight at the door, wrapped about in moose and beaver skins. This world of plain and wood is glad. Not so Varre Lepage. He sat and thought of what was to come. He had hoped at times that he would die, but twice Jaspas Hume had said, "I demand your life: you owe it to your wife—to me—to God!" And he had pulled his heart up to this demand and had lived. But what lay before him? He saw a stony track, and he shuddered. The Bar of Justice and Restitution

raised its cold barriers before him; and he was not strong!

As he sat there facing his future, Jaspar Hume came to him and said, "If you feel up to it, Lepage, we will start for Edmonton and Shovanne on Monday. I think it will be quite safe, and your wife is anxious. I shall accompany you as far as Edmonton; you can then proceed to Shovanne by easy stages, and so on east in the pleasant weather. Are you ready to go?"

"Yes! I am ready."

x.

On a beautiful May evening Varre Lepage, Jaspar Hume and the White Guard are welcomed at Fort Edmonton by the officer in command of the Mounted Police. They are to enjoy the hospitality of the Fort for a couple of days, before they pass on. Jaspar Hume is to go back with Cloud-in-the-Sky and Late Carscallen, and a number of Indian carriers; for this is a journey of business too. Gaspé Toujours and Jeff Hyde are to press on with Varre Lepage, who is now much stronger and better. One day passes, and on the following morning Jaspar Hume gives instructions to Gaspé Toujours and Jeff Hyde, and makes preparations for his going back. He is standing in the Barracks Square, when a horseman rides in and inquires of a sergeant standing near, if Varre Lepage

has arrived at the Fort. A few words bring out the fact that Rose Lepage is nearing the Fort from the south, being determined to come on from Shovanne to meet her husband. The trooper thinks she is now about eight or ten miles away ; but is not sure. He had been sent on ahead the day before, but his horse having met with a slight accident, he had been delayed. He had seen the party, however, a long distance back in the early morning. He must now ride away and meet Mrs. Lepage, he said. He was furnished with a fresh horse and he left, bearing a message to the loyal wife from Varre Lepage.

Jaspar Hume decided to leave Fort Edmonton at once, and to take all the White Guard back with him ; and gave orders to that effect. He entered the room where Varre Lepage sat alone, and said, "Varre Lepage, the time has come for us to say good-bye. I am starting at once for Fort Providence."

But the other replied, "You will wait until my wife comes. You must." There was pain in his voice.

"I must not."

Varre Lepage braced himself for a heavy task and said, "Jaspar Hume, if the time has come to say good-bye, it has also come when we should speak together for once openly : to settle, in so far as can be done, a long account. You have not let my wife know who saved me. That appears from her letters. She asks the name of my rescuer. I have not yet told her. But she will know that to-day, when I tell her all."

"When you tell her *all*?"

"When I tell her all."

"But you shall not do that."

"I will. It will be the beginning of the confession which I shall afterwards make to the world."

"By Heaven you shall not do it. Coward! Would you wreck her life?" Jaspar Hume's face was wrathful, and remained so till the other sank back in the chair with his forehead in his hands: but it softened as he saw this remorse and shame. He began to see that Varre Lepage had not clearly grasped the whole situation. He said in quieter, but still firm tones, "No, Lepage, that matter is between us two, and us alone. She must never know—the world therefore must never know. You did an unmanly thing; you are suffering a manly remorse. Now let it end here—but I swear it shall," he said in fierce tones as the other shook his head negatively: "I would have let you die at Manitou Mountain, if I had thought you would dare to take away your wife's peace—your children's respect."

"I have no children; our baby died."

Jaspar Hume again softened; "Can you not see, Lepage? The thing cannot be mended." Just then his hand touched the book that he still carried in his bosom, and as if his mother had whispered to him, he continued, "I bury it all, and so must you. You will begin the world again—old friend—and so shall I. Keep your wife's love and respect. Henceforth you will deserve it."

Varre Lepage raised moist eyes to the other and said, "But you will take back the money I got for *that!*"

There was a pause, then Jaspar Hume replied, "Yes, upon such terms, times and conditions as I shall hereafter fix. And you have no child, Lepage?" he gently added.

"We have no child; it died with my fame."

Jaspar Hume looked steadily into the eyes of the man who had wronged him: "Remember, Varre, you begin the world again. I am going now. By the memory of old days, good-bye;" and he held out his hand. Varre Lepage took it and rose tremblingly to his feet, and said, "You are a good man, Jaspar Hume. Good-bye!"

The Sub-factor turned at the door. "If it will please you, tell your wife that I saved you. Some one *will* tell her; perhaps I would rather—at least it would be more natural, if you did it." He passed out into the heat of sunshine that streamed into the room and fell across the figure of Varre Lepage, who sat and said dreamily, "And begin the world again."

Before Jaspar Hume mounted, almost immediately after, to join the White Guard now ready for the journey back, Jacques sprang upon him and pushed his nose against his master's heart. And once again, and for the last time that we shall hear it, Jaspar Hume said, "It's all right, Jacques."

And then they started for the north again. As they were doing so, a shadow fell across the sunlight

that streamed upon Varre Lepage. He looked up. There was a startled cry of joy, an answering exclamation of love, and Rose Lepage was locked in her husband's arms.

A few moments after and the sweet-faced woman said, "Who was that man who rode away to the north as I came up, Varre? He reminded me of some one, but I can't think who it is."

"That was the leader of the White Guard, the man who saved me, my wife." He paused a moment and then solemnly said, "That man was Jaspar Hume!"

The wife rose to her feet with a spring. "He saved you! He saved you! Jaspar Hume!—oh, Varre!"

"He saved me, Rose!"

Her eyes were wet: "And he would not stay and let me thank him! Poor fellow: poor Jaspar—Hume! Has he then been up here these ten years?"

Her face was flushed, and pain was struggling with the joy she felt in seeing her husband again.

"Yes, he has been up here all that time."

"He has not succeeded in life, Varre!" and her thoughts went back to the days when, blind and ill, Jaspar Hume went away for health's sake, and she remembered how sorry then she felt for him, and how grieved she was that when he came back strong and well, he did not come near her or her husband, and offered no congratulations. She had not deliberately wronged him. She did not know he wished her to be his wife. She knew he cared for her:

but so did Varre Lepage. A promise had been given to neither when Jaspar Hume went away ; and after that she grew to love the successful, kind-mannered genius who became her husband. Even in this happiness of hers, sitting once again at her husband's feet, she thought with a tender and glowing kindness of the man who had cared for her eleven years ago ; and who had but now saved her husband.

"He has not succeeded in life," she repeated softly.

Looking down at her, his brow burning with a white heat, Varre Lepage said, "He is a great man, my wife."

"I am sure he is a good man," she added.

Perhaps Varre Lepage had borrowed some strength from Jaspar Hume, for he said almost sternly, "He is a *great* man."

His wife looked up half-startled at the tone and said, "Yes, dear ; he is a good man—and a great man."

The sunlight still came in through the open door. The Saskatchewan flowed swiftly between its verdant banks, an eagle went floating away to the west, robins made vocal a solitary tree a few yards away, troopers moved back and forwards across the square, and a hen and her chickens came fluttering to the threshold. The wife looked at the yellow brood drawing close to their mother, and her eyes grew wistful. She thought of their one baby asleep in an English grave. But thinking of the words of the captain of the White Guard, Varre Lepage said, "We will begin the world again, my wife."

She smiled, and rose to kiss his forehead as the hen and chickens hastened away from the door, and a clear bugle call sounded in the square.

"Yes, dear," she said, "we will begin the world again."

* * * * *

XI.

ELEVEN years have gone since that scene was enacted at Edmonton, and the curtain rises for the last act of that drama of life which is connected with the brief history of the White Guard.

A great gathering is dispersing from a hall in Piccadilly. It has been drawn together to do honour to a man who has achieved a triumph in engineering science. As he steps from the platform to go he is greeted by a fusilade of cheers. He bows calmly and kindly. He is a man of vigorous yet reserved aspect; he has a rare individuality. He receives with a quiet cordiality the personal congratulations of his friends. He remains for some time in conversation with a royal Duke, who takes his arm and with him passes into the street. The Duke is a member of this great man's club, and offers him a seat in his brougham. Amid the cheers of the people they drive away together. Inside the club there are fresh congratulations, and it is proposed to arrange an impromptu dinner, at which the Duke will preside. But with modesty and honest thanks the great

man declines. He pleads an engagement. He had pleaded this engagement the day before to a well-known society. After his health is proposed he makes his adieus, and leaving the club, walks away towards a West-end square. In one of its streets he pauses and enters a building called "Providence Chambers." His servant hands him a cablegram. He passes to his library, and standing before the fire, opens it. It reads: "My wife and I send congratulations to the great man."

Jaspar Hume stands for a moment looking at the fire, and then says simply, "I wish my poor old Jacques were here." He then sits down and writes this letter:—

"My dear Friends,—Your cablegram has made me glad. The day is over. My last idea was more successful than I even dared to hope; and the world has been kind. I went down to see your boy, Jaspar, at Clifton last week. It was the 13th, his birthday, you know, ten years old, and a clever, strong-minded little fellow. He is quite contented. As he is my god-child I again claimed the right of putting a thousand dollars to his credit in the bank—I have to speak of dollars to you people living in Canada—which I have done on his every birthday. When he is twenty-one he will have twenty-one thousand dollars—quite enough for a start in life. We get along well together, and I think he will develop a fine faculty for science. In the summer, as I said, I will bring

him over to you. There is nothing more to say to-night except that I am as always,

“Your faithful friend,

JASPAR HUME.”

A moment after the letter was finished the servant entered and announced “Mr. Late Carscallen.” With a smile and hearty greeting the great man and this member of the White Guard meet. It was to entertain his old Arctic comrade that Jasper Hume had declined to be entertained by society or club. A little while after, seated at the table, the ex-Sub-factor said, “You found your brother well, Carscallen?”

The jaws moved slowly as of old. “Ay, that, and a grand minister, Captain.”

“He wanted you to stay in Scotland, I suppose.”

“Ay, that, but there’s no place for me like Fort Providence.”

“Try this pheasant. And you are Sub-factor now, Carscallen!”

“There’s two of us Sub-factors—Jeff Hyde and myself. Mr. Field is old and can’t do much work, and trade is heavy now.”

“Yes; I hear from the Factor now and then. And Gaspé Toujours?”

“He went away three years ago, but he said he’d come back. He never did though. Jeff Hyde believes he will. He says to me a hundred times, ‘Carscallen, he made the sign of the cross that he’d

come back from Saint Gabrielle ; and that's next to the Book with a Papist. If he's alive he'll come.' ”

“ Perhaps he will, Carscallen. And Cloud-in-the-Sky ? ”

“ He's still there, and comes in and smokes with Jeff Hyde and me, as he used to do with you, sir ; but he doesn't obey our orders as he did those of the Captain of the White Guard. He said to me when I left, ‘ You see Strong-back, tell him Cloud-in-the-Sky good Indian—he never forget. How ! ’ ”

Jaspar Hume raised his glass with smiling and thoughtful eyes : “ To Cloud-in-the-Sky and all who never forget ! ” he said.





SUNSHINE JOHNSON, MURDERER.

By LUKE SHARP.



SEEN the two men together and knowing that one of them was a murderer, there was one chance in a thousand that the visitor would pick out the right man as the criminal.

The white man sat on an easy canvas camp chair. He was a tall, thin man, with a stern, forbidding look on his face that might have been caused by remorse, but which, more probably, was caused by dyspepsia. There were certain inflexible lines about his mouth which showed him to be a man of great determination, and his firm-set lips were lips that appeared never to smile. His sharp eyes had a clear and steady look in them that went through a man, and few of those around him cared to meet those eyes when there was a spark of anger in them. He was such an unerring judge of character that he had come to believe he could not make a mistake, which is a dangerous state of thinking for a

man in his position, because a mistake made by him might mean death to somebody. Nevertheless he trusted people that no one else would think of trusting, and his trust was rarely taken advantage of. This man was J. S. Flint, the head of Tall Mountain Penitentiary.

The black man who stood beside him, and who was receiving some instructions from him, had the simple, trustful, childlike face which is so often found in the negro race. He seemed to have difficulty in keeping his broad mouth from relaxing into a smile; and only the fact that he was talking with the Master of the Penitentiary kept down his exuberant good-nature. No convict would take the liberty to smile while Jackson Flint talked to him, but this negro was a privileged character even if he wore the striped suit of an inmate of the Penitentiary. He was Sunshine Johnson, in for life, a murderer, yet on his arm rested Jackson Flint's little curly-headed daughter, aged six, and her arms were round the negro's black neck and her fair cheek was pressed close to his dusky face. The murderer was one of the convicts that Jackson Flint trusted. He had certainly an easy time of it; he waited on the table, took care of the children, and did any odd job about the house. The negro was called "Sunshine" by every one around the camp. Doubtless he had not been christened that name, but he had been called by it before he entered the Penitentiary, and by that name he was known on the books of the institu-

tion. If a visitor, attracted by his name, or his beaming countenance so full of good-nature and love of all humanity, asked the Superintendent who he was, Flint's brows would knit together in a frown as he answered, shortly, "A lifer;" if the visitor still



"A MURDERER."

pressed for information as to his crime, the frown grew deeper and the answer gruffer—"A murderer." Most people gave a gasp at this bit of information as they saw the negro playing with the pretty child of the Superintendent; but Jackson Flint was not a man any one would care to ask personal questions of,

and if the astonishing state of things caused a look of surprise to come over the visitor's face, the look was seldom translated into speech. Sometimes the inquisitive visitor sought information from Sunshine himself. When asked about his crime Sunshine always looked embarrassed and generally cast an appealing glance at his questioner. He stood on one bare foot and slowly rubbed the ankle of it with the toe of his other foot, while a look of perplexity came over his countenance.

"Foh de Lohd, boss, I dunno much about it, dat's de truf. I 'spects I killed de man. He's daed anyhow and somebody done it, and dey said it was me; yes, they proved dat at de Cohts. You see I was drunk at the time, and I dunno anything at all about it. 'Spects dat's de reason dey didn't hang me at the time. I'se very sorry I done it if I *did* do it." And then Sunshine would make an excuse to run away and play with his little charge.

The Penitentiary was little more than a camp composed of rough wooden buildings, and was situated on a spur of the mountain overlooking the great deep valley, from the bottom of which the turbulent little river sent up an unceasing roar. All around were the high peaks of the mountain range, closing the place in apparently without a break, although there was an unseen narrow rocky gorge through which the river escaped, and along whose banks the single line of railway track ran. The mountains all around were densely wooded, and not

a building was in sight anywhere except a large hotel at the bottom of the valley, which was a sort of summer resort, with broad verandahs. The eternal silence of its location was broken only by the brawling river that ran beside it, and by the occasional



“ON HIS ARM RESTED JACKSON FLINT’S LITTLE CURLY-HEADED DAUGHTER.”

trains which passed close to the hotel, as part of the big house was a station on the line. Passengers on the railway coming to this hotel, when they first caught sight of it, away down in the valley below them, generally made a motion to get their small bits of baggage gathered together preparatory to leaving,

but the conductor used to say to them good-naturedly,

“ We are not quite there yet ; I wouldn't make a move for a minute or two if I were you ; just watch that hotel.”

Then, looking out of the car window into this incomparably grand valley, the passenger found himself taken round and round the circumference of the great gulf. Now the hotel was directly below him, again he was looking at it from across the valley ; round and round the train went, getting gradually lower and lower, and it was nearly an hour after the passengers' first sight of the hotel that the train drew up under its very verandahs.

The convict settlement on the spur of the mountain was invisible from the railway track, but the convicts were there because the railway was there. They were hired out to the railway company by the State Government, and as the train dashed by, sometimes the passengers were shocked to see, standing close in by the cliffs beside the track, twenty or thirty black men in convict garments, some with ball and chain attached to their ankles. And then, as the train flashed on, white men with rifles on their shoulders were seen guarding the workers on the railway. Nevertheless, if a man had the choice of his prison this particular convict camp would be likely to be the one chosen if he knew about it. It had a glorious situation, the air was pure and clear, so much so that the locality was one of the noted

health resorts of America. A visitor was generally astonished when he examined the camp to find what little difficulty a convict would have in escaping from it. Here and there were tall board erections on which a man was stationed with a rifle or a shot gun. There was no wall around the camp, its only protection being a small picket fence, easily leaped over. But Nature guarded the prisoners. On almost every side the descent was steep, and even precipitous, but a convict would run no danger for life or limb in making the descent. But although a convict might easily have leaped the slender barrier, and might have dodged the shots from the men on the wooden towers, his escape was next thing to hopeless: he had to climb over the mountain to get away, and a telegraph station in the convict settlement quickly apprised all civilisation outside this wilderness that such and such a man had escaped. The usual result of an attempt to escape was that a week or ten days after the leap over the barrier a gaunt, starved man came out of the wilderness and gave himself up at the first place where he could get something to eat. Often he failed in scaling the mountain, and returned after a few days to the camp itself. The very frailty of the fence around the camp showed the utter hopelessness of attempting to escape.

On the particular day in summer to which this account relates there had been a furious storm of rain in the mountains. The clouds seemed to have

become entangled among the peaks, and they hung over the valley, unable, like the prisoners, to escape, and poured their floods into it until the little river had become a wild and raving torrent, gleaming here and there in white among the dark trees. Towards night the clouds succeeded in breaking away and floated over to the west, but the mutter of distant thunder showed that the storm was not yet over, while the heat seemed more oppressive than ever even after the terrible day's rain. When darkness set in the watery silver sickle of the moon hung over the valley and filled it with a weird, dim, tremulous light. The roar of the torrent, increased by the stillness all around, came up from the bottom of the valley on the night air.

The Master of the Penitentiary sat in a rocking-chair on the verandah of his wooden house, smoking his corn-cob pipe. What little coolness there was, was outside and not inside the house. Suddenly a burst of childish laughter broke on his ear, and looking to the left he saw his little girl lashing Sunshine Johnson as if he were a horse, while that good-natured individual trotted up and down with the child on his shoulders.

"Sunshine," cried the Master, "what are you doing with Dorothy out so late as this?"

The negro came to an instant stop at the sound of the Master's voice, and the child even hushed its laughter. Little Dorothy was much more afraid of her stern father than of the good-natured murderer.

"Well, you see, massa, it's like this," said the negro, deferentially. "Little Dot had to be in de house all de day on account of de rain, sir, and it's so warm inside dat her mother *she* thought we cud play a little before she goes to bed, and den little Dot, sir, *she* thought she'd like to axe you, sir, if she might stay up and see de midnight express."

"The midnight express, nonsense!" cried Flint. "Dorothy, you don't want to stay up so late as that?"

The little girl made no answer, but clung tighter with alarm around the negro's neck and whispered into his ear.

"She'd like very much to stay up, sah ; she hasn't seen it for a long time. I don't think it would do her any hawm, sah."

"Oh, she's whispered that to you, has she?"

The negro laughed a little and then checked himself. "Well, massa, I don't think it would do her any hawm, sah ; you see it's so warm dat de little gall she couldn't sleep at night, anyway, and perhaps after she sees de train den she goes to sleep, sah."

"Oh, very well," said Flint, "if her mother said it's all right, it *is* all right."

And then he took to smoking again, and perhaps wondered why it was his little girl preferred to whisper her request in the negro's ear rather than speak it out to him. But a man who has charge of a hundred desperate convicts is apt to lose that softness of demeanour which commends itself to children. The midnight express, he knew, was a great sight to see

on a dark night. The train appeared with its long row of lights from out a tunnel, and passing by the convict settlement, disappeared among the trees and through another tunnel. It came in sight again on the other side of the valley, its long line of lights appearing to crawl slowly around the mountain, while the roar of the train mingled with the roar of the torrent below. Thus it appeared and disappeared at different intervals and at different levels, sometimes going in one direction and sometimes in another, but always getting farther and farther down, like an enchanted train that had become entangled in the mountain slopes. It was alternately a row of lights and a roar, then darkness and silence, until it stopped at the station at the bottom of the valley and with a final shriek of the whistle, that echoed long after the train was gone, disappeared through the notch into the more open country beyond on its way to the Atlantic seaboard, which it would reach the next morning.

It was nearly the time for the train when Jackson Flint was startled by a cry from his child. What he saw the next moment simply paralyzed him for the time. Sunshine Johnson had picked up a lantern which stood on the platform in front of his quarters, and shouting to Dorothy, "*Run in de house, honey, run in de house,*" leaped the fence and made off into the woods. The little girl clung to the palings of the fence and cried for her comrade. The clear voice of Jackson Flint startled every one in the camp.

"Come back, you black scoundrel; where are you going?"

A wave of the lantern was the only reply.

Then Flint quickly put his hand to his hip and drew his seven-shooter. The sharp crack of the revolver clove the midnight air.

"Run in de house, honey, run in de house," repeated the negro at the top of his voice. And then the master noticed that his little crying, curly-headed girl stood in a line between him and the escaping convict.

As a general thing Flint was an unerring shot, but now his hand trembled as he fired over his little girl's head six times, and then threw the empty revolver on the ground. Every time he fired the rapidly disappearing negro swung the lantern over his head.

Flint shouted to the sleeping guards on the towers. "Why don't you fire? Fire at him with the shot-gun." Flint clinched his teeth and awaited the result. His command had been practically a sentence of death, and he knew it. The rifle sends one pellet of death, the shot-gun sends a dozen leaden messengers, each shrieking for a life.

Three men on the towers fired almost simultaneously from the shot-guns, whose scattering fire raked and tore through the bushes. Again the negro swung the lantern over his head, but this time there was a shriek of pain from him, although he never stopped in his headlong career, and the next instant was out of sight and hearing.

All the convicts had long ago been locked up in their quarters, and most of the officials had turned in, but now pale-faced men came hurrying up to the master. The Assistant-Superintendent hurried forward, partially dressed, and said to his chief—

“Anything wrong, sir?”

“Yes.”

“Any one escaped?”

“Yes.”

“Who is it, sir?”

“Johnson.”

“Not Sunshine?” said the Assistant, in amazement.

Flint turned on him savagely. “I said Johnson; what other Johnson is there here?” and he glared with clenched fists at his subordinate.

The other did not answer for a moment; then he said: “Shall I turn out the guard and search for him, sir?”

“No, go to bed.”

Little Dorothy, silent and frightened at the firing, clung gasping to the paling. Her mother came out and ran towards her, bending over her and trying to calm her fright, satisfying herself that the child was not hurt. With the little girl in her arms she approached her husband.

“Who was it?” she said in tremulous tones.

“Take that child in,” thundered the Master of the Penitentiary. “What is she doing out at this hour? And get inside yourself.”



“FIRED OVER HIS LITTLE GIRL’S HEAD SIX TIMES.”

Mrs. Flint turned without a word, for she knew her husband in this mood had better be left alone. He strode up and down the platform of the verandah muttering to himself. "He is sure to be caught and then—" Flint ground his teeth: and there was no question but it would go hard with the trusted convict when he was caught.

The bitterness of it all was that the whole camp—convicts and guards—knew how he had trusted Sunshine Johnson, and then he had fired at him, and missed him.

After an hour's walking back and forth Flint sat down again in his chair and covered his face with his hands, thinking over the startling events of the night. Suddenly a very soft and low voice made him spring from the chair to his feet.

"Massa Flint," said the voice. Sunshine with the lantern in his hand stood before him in a very dejected and crestfallen manner, his clothes torn by the bushes and brambles through which he had run.

"You scoundrel!" cried Flint, "what did you do that for?"

"Well, you see, massa," said the negro apologetically, "you didn't hear it, did you, sah?"

"Hear what?"

"Hear de land slide. I heard it rattle down on de track, and I knew I had to jump if I was to save that express—I saved it though. I'speck de rain loosened de bank in de new cut, der's a regular mountain ef gravel down on de track, sah."



“TI EN YOU SAVED THE EXPRESS.”

The hard eyes of the master filled with tears, and he placed both hands on the negro's shoulders, who, like a culprit, gazed on the ground. Flint struggled with his agitation for a moment, but seemed unable to say just what he wanted to say. Finally he spoke commonplace enough. “Then you saved the express, did you, Sunshine?” The negro looked up. The master had always called him Johnson. “Yes,

massa, and the kenuductor he's a-comin'. We need a shovelling gang out dar at onct."

"All right, Sunshine," said Flint. "You go and tell the Sub. to come here at once, and tell him to rout out a gang to clear away the dirt. Say, what's the matter with your arm?"

Sunshine's left arm hung limp by his side, and now that the lantern flashed upon it Flint saw blood trickling down his hand. Sunshine looked sheepish and guilty, and scratched his ankle with his bare toe.

"Well, you see, sah, I got hit a little on dat arm when they fired de shot-guns. Don't expect dey fired at me, you see, sah; guess dey wouldn't ah hit me if dey had, dey sort o' fired promiscuous like," he added, as if it were necessary to make an excuse for the men who had shot him. "Can't expect very good shooting, you know, for thirteen dollars a month, kin you?"

"Go into the house," said Flint; "I will rout out the gang myself, and I'll send the doctor to you at once."

At this moment the conductor with a lantern hanging from his elbow, and a breaksman, clambered up from the track into the convict camp. The conductor was a jovial fellow who knew Flint.

"Hullo," he said, "what's this you've been doing to us? Been trying to smash up the night express? Say, the whole side of a mountain seems to have come down over the track."

"Well," said Flint, gruffly, "you may be mighty glad you didn't get your train smashed up in it. You would have if it hadn't been for one of my niggers."

"Yes, I know that," said the other; who didn't know, however, the risk the negro had run in order to save the train. "But, say, how soon can we have this cleared away? We've got the Governor of North Carolina on board, and he's as mad as the mischief at the delay. If we had the Governor of South Carolina too it wouldn't be so bad because they could ask each other the celebrated question, but you see he's travelling alone in his private car."

Flint was a serious man and did not understand the bibulous joke connected with the names of the Governors of North and South Carolina, but he pricked up his ears at the mention of that official.

"Oh, he's on board, is he? Well, I'm glad of it. I want him to pardon a lifer."

"Well," said the conductor, scratching his head, "I wouldn't ask him just now if I were you, because he's not in the best of humour."

"I don't think he'll ever be in better humour to do what I want him to than now, because if it hadn't been for my lifer, his private car might be lying down at the bottom of the ravine with him smashed up in it."

"Oh, that's how the matter stands," said the conductor; "well, I guess the Governor 'll do it."

And the Governor did it.



THE WRONG PRESCRIPTION.

By LANOE FALCONER.



TOLD you so," said Miss Harrington. Her sister, Mrs. Marsham, writhed inwardly, but contradiction was impossible, so she held her peace.

"I told you so one day I called on you, about two weeks ago. You were making a cake in the kitchen. Do you remember?"

"I think I do."

"And Molly and Charles Hartley were on the lawn outside playing at tennis."

"But Annie and Tom were playing too."

"I did not say they were not. That very day I warned you that you were allowing Molly to see a great deal too much of Charles Hartley, unless you wanted her to marry a man who has not three hundred a year."

"Of course it is a wretched marriage for Molly with her looks."

"I should think it was. That is why I warned you. It is such a pity that some people will never listen to good advice till it is too late."

"Oh, I hope it is not too late, Anna!"

"Humph! what do you intend to do?"

"I don't know. Of course I can't afford to take Molly anywhere, but if she could go away I think the change would put it out of her head. He is wild about her, but I really don't think she cares very much for him yet."

"She ought to go where her mind might be opened, and her ideas elevated. Living in the poky way people do here, the girl has no idea what life is like in a really good house. She doesn't understand what she is throwing away by making such a bad marriage; she should spend a fortnight with the Templetons."

"I wish she could," cried Mrs. Marsham fervently, for of the splendour of the Templetons' establishment she had heard very often from her sister.

"I will arrange it," said this excellent aunt.

About ten days later Molly was driving up the long road that led from the lodge gates of Brennington Park to the house, her elation slightly chilled by the fact that she was seated in the village fly, instead of in one of those imposing equipages so often described by her aunt. Nothing, however, even in "Sybilla's" novels, could surpass her reception at the hall door by four powdered footmen, or the dazzling vista presented by the three resplendent drawing-

rooms through which she was piloted by the butler. In the last, the smallest, and the most luxuriously furnished of the three, Molly was received by Mrs. Templeton. She was an elderly woman, still pretty, as well as elegant, but her careworn expression curiously reminded Molly of her friend Mrs. Brown, whose life-work it was to bring up eight children on something like two hundred a year. Mrs. Templeton's manner, though plaintive, was kind, and having offered Molly some tea, she turned to a beautifully-engraved tray covered with exquisite china and silver, and poured it out in a rather hap-hazard fashion, putting in the cream which Molly refused, and leaving out the sugar which she had asked for. But that did not account for the quality of the beverage, which was unlike anything Molly had ever tasted. It is only served usually in the houses of the great, but can be made in the humblest dwelling by pouring tepid water on the tea leaves and allowing them to soak for hours.

The bread and butter which accompanied this was so thin as to be almost transparent, and, as such, failed to gratify Molly's plebeian taste. She habitually ate more at this meal than at any other, and her journey had made her unusually hungry, so she thought rather wistfully of the brown cakes and steaming cups now being handed about at home.

"I am so sorry," said Mrs. Templeton, "that I could not send the carriage to meet you, but I took rather a long drive yesterday, and Mr. Templeton

thought the horses must rest to-day, as they are the only pair in the stable which are not laid up at present. Horses are a great anxiety ; don't you think so ?”

Molly explained that it was one with which her family had not been burdened.

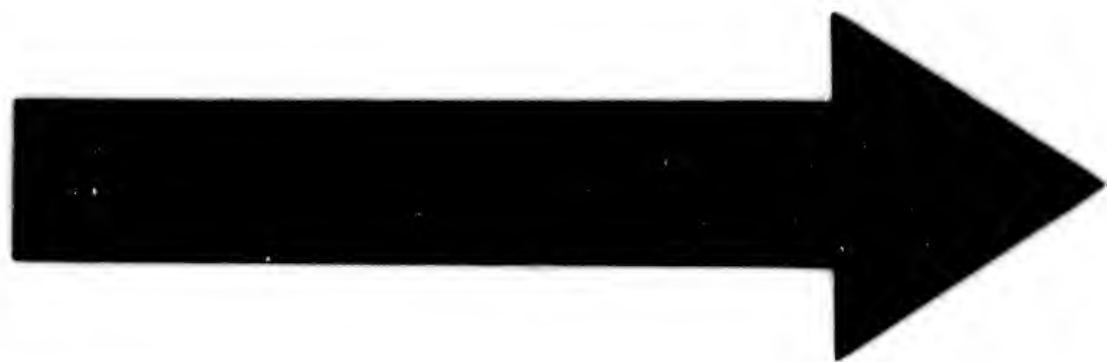
“You are most fortunate,” said Mrs. Templeton with real feeling. “We hire a great deal ; I wish we could do so more, only of course it seems rather extravagant, when we have ten or twelve horses of our own. But I dislike taking them out, for they are so often ill afterwards, and Mr. Templeton is very particular about them ; and yet I never go farther than Giles, the coachman, wishes me to go, and I always let him choose the road too, which is tiresome, for the hilliest drives are sometimes the prettiest, and of course he thinks the flat way best for the horses. What I should really like above everything would be a little donkey, that I might drive myself, and go out with whenever I liked, but Mr. Templeton will not hear of it. Will you have some more tea ? Perhaps you would like to see your room.”

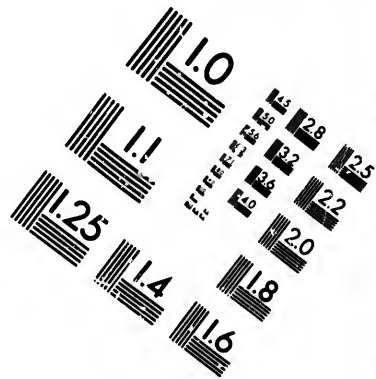
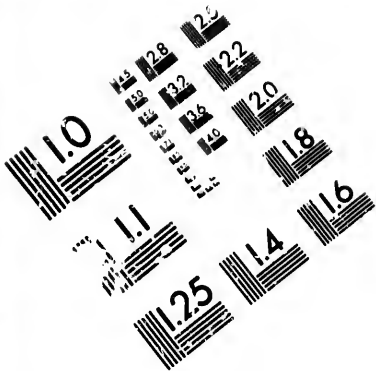
This room, which they reached by a palatial staircase and a long corridor lined with pictures, was so large that it rather overpowered Molly. As she stood in the centre of a great plain of carpet, and saw the yellow brocade curtains at one end faintly reflected in the cheval glass at the other, she felt a little solitary, and wondered anxiously what it would be like at night. Large as it was, however, Molly, who had an

inconvenient passion for fresh air, must needs open, or, at least try to open one of the great windows. The effort exhausted much strength and time, and finally in despair she ventured to ring the bell, or at least to pull the bell-rope, for though she did this with some vehemence five or six times, the maid who at last brought in her hot water denied having heard a sound. However, she at once fetched a footman, and, by their united strength, they managed at last to lower the heavy sash.

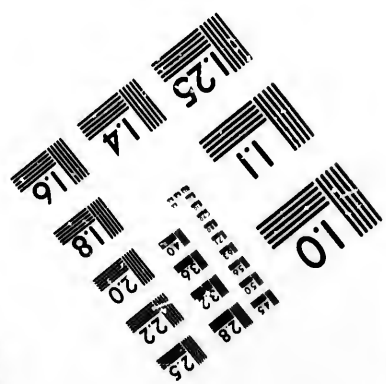
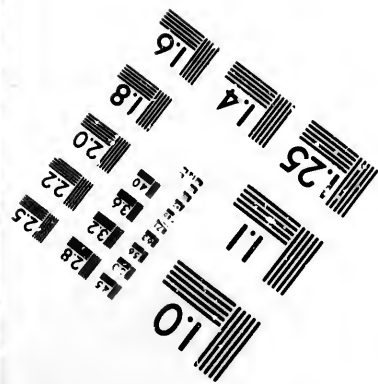
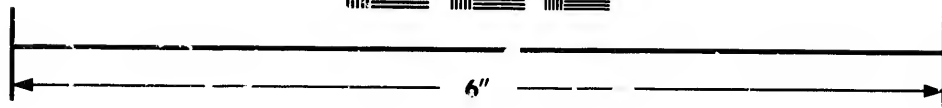
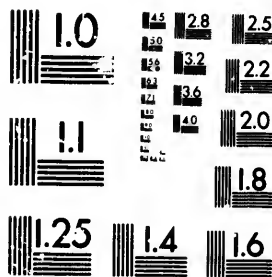
All this helped to pass away the time till eight o'clock, when the gong sounded, and Molly, all in white, went down to dinner. She was the only guest, and was thus conducted to the dining-room by Mr. Templeton, who was fatter and ruddier than his wife, but not much happier-looking. The dinner, served by five servants in what might have been called a banqueting-hall, was a triumph of gastronomic art. The *menu* alone would have made a gourmet's mouth water. Unfortunately it was rather wasted on those before whom it was spread.

Molly disliked everything rich and rare in the way of eating, and would have been much better pleased with bread and jam; Mrs. Templeton had no appetite, and Mr. Templeton, the only one capable of appreciating what was set before him, had been ordered by Sir Michael Smith to dine on a mutton chop and a plain boiled potato. One part of the repast, however, Molly did thoroughly enjoy: the large purple grapes handed to her at dessert. The





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mere sight of them seemed to disagree with Mr. Templeton.

"Emily," he cried in a sharp, peevish tone, leaning forward to see his wife's face, hidden from him by the gilt candelabra and massed orchids in the centre of the table, "where do these grapes come from?"

"I think they come from Brown's."

"From Brown's! How much does he ask for them?"

"I am not quite sure, but I think Mrs. Davis said they were two or three shillings a pound."

"Three shillings a pound! And I keep eight gardeners, and we use tons of coal a year in the vineries!"

"Yes, James, but we never have any grapes."

"The vines are covered with bunches of grapes."

"Yes, James, but they are not nearly fit to eat yet."

"Well, I should think you could wait till they are. I suppose you can live without grapes. I never heard of such extravagance in my life." This was only a form of speech, however, for it would seem that Mrs. Templeton had been guilty of many like extravagances, all of which her husband began now to remember and to recount, ending with the glaring instance of her having bought violets in spring.

"I haven't bought any since," said Mrs. Templeton meekly. "The little bunch in my boudoir Mrs.

Bennett gave me. I cannot think how it is ; they keep no gardener, only a man who comes in three times a week, and yet they always have such lovely flowers, and their grapes are ripe already."

Altogether the tone of the conversation was so depressing, that Molly was glad when they moved to the drawing-room, now brilliantly illuminated ; though even there the evening was not so gay as she had been accustomed to spend. Mr. Templeton slept behind his paper, and Mrs. Templeton rested her eyes while Molly played on the grand piano, which was a good deal out of tune.

"Thank you, my dear, you have a sweet touch," said Mrs. Templeton. "Do chose a nice, comfortable chair. Do you care for photographs ? There are some on that table. I do hope you won't find it dull. We are so quiet here."

"Don't you often have visitors ?" asked Molly, rather wistfully contemplating the rooms, which seemed specially designed and arranged for large numbers.

"No," said Mrs. Templeton ; "hardly ever. One at a time I like, but more than that is such an anxiety."

This sentence plunged Molly into a sea of conjecture as to whether it was a more anxious task to entertain in a house as large as an hotel, and as well provided with servants, than in a tiny abode like her own with one hired maiden and no spare room. As she was still wrestling with the puzzle whilst she

turned over the leaves of the photograph album, Mrs. Templeton spoke again.

“That is my son Algernon—our only child. He is in Australia. No, he is not a soldier. He is nothing in particular. He lives out there, because he likes the life. It is a most extraordinary thing, and a great grief to his father and me. Yes, he comes to see us sometimes. He came home two years ago, but he never stays long. He can't stand the life here. He seems to prefer living in a wooden hut, and making his own bread, and going about dressed like a common navvy. Is it not sad?”

Then the clock, supported by gold nymphs and cupids on the mantelpiece, struck ten, and Mr. Templeton woke up to go to bed, for at Brennington Park they observed the first clause of the old proverb. They were so far from carrying out the second injunction, that, before breakfast, Molly, seizing an opportunity her busy life at home did not afford, was able to indulge in a long reverie, of which Mr. Charles Hartley was the subject.

Mr. Templeton's first complaint at breakfast was that there was nothing to eat. Omelet, partridge, salmon, brawn, ham, and perigord pie he peevishly rejected, and decided at last to have an egg, plain boiled.

This, however, was not so easy.

“Why is it, Emily?” he cried in excusable indignation, “that with a man-cook and half-a-dozen kitchen-maids, I can never get an egg properly

cooked? Yesterday it poured over the plate when I broke the shell: this morning it is so hard you could play at football with it. Miss Marsham, are you going to eat nothing but bread?"

And indeed upon bread and marmalade she breakfasted, with an appetite which roused the wonder and envy of her hosts.

"How nice to be able to eat bread!" cried Mrs. Templeton. "I never dare touch it, my doctors have forbidden it so strictly. I think I could relish it better than anything else, but I have very little appetite. It must be a delightful thing to be hungry."

"You should take more exercise," said her husband. "Driving is no good; you should walk."

"So I do. I walk every day when the weather is suitable. Miss Marsham, do you feel inclined to take a walk with me this morning?"

Molly accepted this proposal with delight. A walk in the country — real country — like that round Brennington Park, was a rare and entrancing privilege. Hoping it might lead across fields and down, she donned her shortest skirts and her thickest boots, but when she joined Mrs. Templeton in the hall, she found her attired in a fur-lined paletot reaching to the heels—the high, tapering heels of her delicate kid shoes.

"I wonder if I shall be too warm, Simpkins?" said Mrs. Templeton, looking at Molly's little cape.

"Oh, no, madam," said a tall woman who stood

behind her holding her parasol and gloves. "The wind is chilly this morning, and you can only walk in the pleasure-grounds because it rained last night, and the Park road is quite damp."

Accordingly, to these ornate regions was their walk confined. Nothing in its own way could have been more admirable, for the head gardener, though indifferent to grapes or violets, took great pride in the pleasure-grounds, and lavished much time and work upon them. Not a stray leaf disfigured the lawns, smooth almost as polished stone were the gravel walks, and the blossom of the flower beds was as neat and compact as if it had been clipped like the tall box hedges. But all this seemed flat and tedious to Molly, pining for wild woods and stubble fields. They went at what seemed to her a funereal pace, and even then, the exertion was more than Mrs. Templeton could well support, and she was fain to pause and rest every ten minutes upon the rustic seats provided for that purpose, as, indeed, an athlete might have done if cloaked and shod in the same way. Molly, too, was very much exhausted at the end of the expedition, which, on the whole, did them both more harm than good.

"The doctors tell me to walk," said Mrs. Templeton, much discouraged, "but it never suits me. I cannot do it."

At three o'clock, there appeared before the door a brougham of the latest and most approved construction, and two roans that had cost Mr. Templeton

several hundred pounds to begin with. That gentleman came out to see the ladies start, and to display a flattering interest in the direction of their drive, not altogether on their account, however.

"It is all very well to talk of pretty country, but the road to Sleaton is not a good one, and Tracey is too far. That horse, you will please remember, has just got over his lameness, and I don't want to have another vet's bill to pay. You can't do better than drive along the high road to Venchurch. Take the horses along gently, Giles."

Giles carried out this order so conscientiously that Mrs. Templeton soon fell asleep, and Molly was left to meditate on the mysterious nature of pleasure. For what she had hitherto looked upon with envy, a drive in a fashionable carriage, proved to be not half so exhilarating as one she had taken at the seaside a few weeks ago in a peculiarly shabby fly, inelegantly filled to overflowing. True, her companions, no less than six in number, so far from being asleep, had been more than commonly awake, and in the highest spirits, so that they had laughed nearly all the way at nothing. Charles Hartley had been one of the party, but, indeed, had returned less cheerfully than he went, for Molly had snubbed him on the sands, where they took their luncheon. This treatment had been utterly undeserved, but only now, for the first time, did she recognise this.

"What a brute I was!" she thought. "Poor Charley! How I wish he were here now!"

"We have had a nice drive," said Mrs. Templeton, as the carriage stopped before the front door again. "There is nothing like taking the air. I feel quite refreshed."

This was especially fortunate, as a woeful reception awaited her. Her husband himself came to meet her with a face so gloomy that she uttered a cry of alarm, and Molly's thoughts turned instantly to the son in Australia.

"I have told you over and over again how it would be, Emily," said Mr. Templeton solemnly, "but you would have your own way. I advised you to lock up that Sèvres vase where nobody could possibly get at it, but you would not listen to me, and now your servants have broken it."

"Oh—not badly, James?"

"Smashed to atoms."

Mrs. Templeton sank upon one of the carved oak chairs in the hall, and subsided into tears. When she had recovered sufficiently to speak, she lifted up a voice broken with emotion to protest that, though she had been rash enough to leave this exquisite ornament where it might be seen, she had given strict orders that no member of her household should touch it, even with the corner of a duster.

Then a kind of court of inquiry was held, in which everybody from Mrs. Davis, the housekeeper, downwards, was examined and cross-examined. As to the actual culprit there was no doubt: it was the odd boy, but a more puzzling question—considering

he was hired to do the dirty work of the establishment—was how it came into his hands at all. The answer was still undiscovered at dinner time. Of tea nobody had time to think except Molly, who, having longed for it in vain, was now hungry enough for once to eat a respectable dinner. She was the only one who could. Mrs. Templeton merely sipped a little soup and wine, and, though Mr. Templeton partook of all that his Spartan diet did not forbid, he repeatedly explained that he could eat nothing. In the drawing-room afterwards, Mr. Templeton afforded himself and his wife a kind of melancholy pleasure by recalling and reciting the various excellences of their lost treasure: the form, the colour, and, above all, the mark; the price he had paid for it, and the still larger price he might have now received, had he chosen to part with it. Mrs. Templeton in her turn expatiated on the depravity of human nature as exhibited in the conduct of her servants, whose delight it was to disobey her orders, and to destroy everything that she most prized. Exhausted by grief they retired earlier than usual, and even Molly was glad to get to bed, though she dreamt lugubrious dreams all night, and awoke next morning with a vague impression that there had been a death in the family.

The bitterest sorrow cannot last for ever. By the day following, Mr. and Mrs. Templeton were more composed, and by the evening showed signs of reviving cheerfulness. One day more and all might

have gone well, had not the weather taken a perverse and most depressing turn. From early morning till late at night it rained unrelentingly, and for the first time in her life Molly was brought face to face with that demon of dullness whom hitherto she had known only by report. In her life as it sped at home there was never a vacant place where he could by any chance obtrude himself, least of all on a wet day, for that was always seized by the Marsham family as a fortunate time for getting through arrears of work that, where there was so much to do, often accumulated.

At Brennington Park it was a very different thing. There was nothing to do, and if there were, thought Molly, looking round her with mingled feelings in the drawing-rooms, how could it with decency have been done here? Could she there, or in Mrs. Templeton's no less exquisite boudoir, have trimmed a bonnet, or cut out a dress, or handled anything but the most useless of fancy work? She sewed at some embroidery till she was weary of it, and then turned to reading. There was a good collection of books in the library, but the key of the bookcases had unfortunately been mislaid for some time, and the books from the circulating library Molly had read long ago.

"It is a long time since they were changed, I know," said Mrs. Templeton candidly. "And I don't think I have read them all yet. I never have any time for reading."

In the afternoon the sky brightened and the rain

fell less heavily. Mrs. Templeton was tempted to take a turn in the grounds, but this project was at once crushed by Simpkins, who represented that by going out in such weather her mistress would inevitably ruin her clothes, if not her health. Molly for one moment was tempted to offer the loan of some of her own less valuable garments to Mrs. Templeton, but, remembering how that lady had walked under the most favourable circumstances, felt doubtful whether in wind and wet she could make any progress at all. She ventured forth herself, however, in an ulster which no weather could spoil, and after wandering for two hours at her own sweet will, returned in better spirits. But the glow of a quickened circulation seemed to fade when, dryshod once more, and in stainless skirts, she entered the lofty, magnificent, but cheerless drawing-rooms. Why were they so depressing? Molly, standing at one end and contemplating the whole gorgeous sequence, tried earnestly to discover. Were they too tidy? Could any room be that? At home she waged a constant war with Tom's disorderly ways; now she almost longed for his presence. A few chairbacks crumpled up, newspapers scattered here and there, and music showered wildly on or about the piano, might have had, she fancied, an enlivening effect. A wave of home-sickness came over her, and there rose before her a tantalizing picture of the little room in that tiny house in a suburban row, where now, while waiting for tea, they would have

gathered round the fire. Ah! the fire! Perhaps that was partly what she missed on this chill, sunless afternoon. At Mrs. Marsham's they lit the fire when it was cold; at Brennington Park they lit it from the first of November to the thirty-first of May, and never between those two dates, as undue expenditure of coal was peculiarly abhorrent to Mr. Templeton's frugal mind. These unprofitable musings were interrupted by the entrance—not of the tea-tray, as Molly had fondly hoped—but of Mr. and Mrs. Templeton, both somewhat perturbed in spirit.

Mr. Templeton, like Molly, had found the day long, but instead of passing the time in dozing, like Mrs. Templeton, he had devoted it to investigating that portion of the house shut off from the rest by a red swing door, which the servants consider especially their own. The result of this inquisition had been in no way agreeable. To begin with, the cook and the butler had both given warning.

"And what if they have?" said Mr. Templeton. "I suppose there are other cooks and butlers to be had."

"I don't know, I am sure," cried Mrs. Templeton, in the voice of one who is not to be comforted. "All I know is that when the butler goes, the footmen generally go too, and as to a cook, I don't know where we shall get one as nice as Lefranc. He may have been expensive, but he was always so obliging, and never once got the least tipsy."

"You can't say the same of your butler."

"No, of course he did take a little too much

sometimes, but he always kept sober when we had people to dinner."

"Well, I am not going to have things destroyed in this way. Lefranc by his mismanagement has utterly ruined that hot-water apparatus I put up in the spring."

"He never liked it."

"He never liked it? Hang his impertinence! Am I not to be master in my own house? And do you think it right that, when I have gone to the expense of having special trays and fittings made for the silver, the menservants will not use them. The fact is, the servants are allowed to do precisely what they like in this house, and everything goes to rack and ruin in consequence."

So saying Mr. Templeton angrily withdrew.

"That is always the end of everything with Mr. Templeton," said his wife, sitting down on her own particular easy-chair in a corner draped with tinted silks, and surmounted by mirrors and cupids of antique Dresden. "He offends the servants and then they give warning, and then he says it is my fault. Mrs. Davis, the housekeeper, says she is tired of finding servants, and so am I, for of course I have to read their characters and see them when they come, or Mr. Templeton says I am neglecting my duty. And what is the good of my seeing them? If they like us, they stay, and if they don't, they go away. There are plenty of better places, they say, and they call this very dull. And those new stoves and cup-

boards and chests which Mr. Templeton is fond of putting up, they don't like them, they always break them. Of course, it is a great waste of money, but what is the good of saying anything to them? They only go away, and then I have all the trouble of helping Mrs. Davis to get new ones, who do just the same. I feel so tired, and worried, and sick of life, I don't know what to do. I never seem to get any peace—enjoyment I don't expect—but I think at my time of life I might be allowed a little peace and rest; but I never have any, I am always so worried and bothered about the house and the servants. How cold it is! I wish they would bring us some tea, but they are all so put out, I don't know when we shall get any."

It was so dark now that colour and glitter had vanished from the gold, the silver, the marble, the porcelain, the rich draperies, and the embroidered stuffs, and Molly could only dimly discern the outlines of this splendour and of the desolate figure that sat in the midst of all, complaining.

"I often think," went on this victim of fortune, wiping the tears from her eyes, "how nice it would be if one might choose one's own place in this world. If I could live in a little cottage, and have just a few hundreds a year, I should be as happy as the day is long."

Two days after this Mrs. Marsham read, with feelings which need not be described, the following letter:—

"DEAREST MAMA,

"Please expect me to-morrow by the train which reaches the new station at 4.20 in the afternoon. I really can stand this no longer—it is so frightfully dull. I hope you will not be angry, dear mama, but I have written to Mr. Hartley and accepted him. I have been thinking things over a good deal since I came here, and I find I care for him more than I thought; besides I am sure from what I see here that I am not fitted to be a rich man's wife. With love to all,

Your affectionate daughter,

"MOLLY."





A PANSY STORY

By ROSE METCALFE.

“There is pansies, that’s for thoughts.”

I.



T St. Ydeuc, in Brittany, there is a crucifix which stands by the wayside in a winding road ; it has always been there, the people say, even before the Revolution, and hundreds of years before that—this *calvaire*, or another like it, stood on the same spot.

It is not a calvary properly so called, for there is but the cross with the one Figure which hangs there in the sunshine and the rain, in the wild winter nights and the spring dawn, and the summer dreaming and the autumn glory.

A little farther, upon the outskirts of the village, there stood, more than a hundred years ago, an old granite lime-washed cottage, with a poor little orchard

of apple-trees behind it and an unkempt garden in front, where half-wild roses and wallflowers grew, together with hyssop, thyme, and rue, in a tangled mass.

But the special feature of this garden was the profusion of pansies which grew unchecked in great clumps—purple and yellow, white and brown, blotched and streaked—untended but not ungathered, for, at the proper season, Sidonie, who lived in the cottage, picked them to make a drink good for agues, which she used to dispose of for a few sous to her neighbours not so fortunate as to possess pansy beds.

In this garden, one spring day, two little children were playing, and a strange thing happened. They played contentedly among the flowers in the afternoon sunshine; they were little girls of four years old, of exactly the same height and complexion, but one had the loveliest child-face that it is possible to imagine; the other looked like a spoiled copy of her companion, except that the eyes were of the same dark blue colour in both.

The children played on, happy and oblivious of everything but the warm sunshine, the spring flowers, the white butterflies that came dancing over the low garden wall like animated, wandering bean blossoms from the bean-field beyond the lane.

Then through the stillness there came the unwonted sound of carriage-wheels, the heavy roll of a travelling coach in the deep ruts of the road. At a few yards' distance from the cottage it halted, exactly opposite the calvary; one of the horses had

lost a shoe, and the servant went back a little way to search for it. The coach had only one occupant—a lady with a fair, wearied face, who, rousing herself at the sudden stoppage, sat up and looked out of the coach window, and came face to face with the crucifix by the wayside. A startled look passed across her face, then an expression which was almost fear; finally, for she was alone, she made the sign of the cross, and, clasping her hands, said a prayer which transformed the listless face into one of intense supplication. At that moment the servant, who wore a livery dress of about the middle of the reign of Louis XVI., returned with the shoe, and consulted the coachman as to the nearest smith's forge.

"This is the consequence of going out of one's way to take a new road to please a great lady's whims," he grumbled; then, approaching the coach window, he explained the situation to the lady, and the coach moved on a few paces to the garden wall, over which now, attracted by the sound of wheels, two children's faces were peering with wide eyes of amazement.

"With your pleasure, madame, I will ask here if there is a blacksmith in the village," said the servant, advancing up the garden path to the cottage door. But blacksmiths and horse-shoes were far from the lady's thoughts at that moment. At the sight of the children a sudden light had sprung into her eyes; it was as though the fine, sensitive face had suddenly leaped into light and animation.

"*Mon Dieu!* what a lovely child," she exclaimed. "What an angel of a child! Open the door; I shall alight here," and to the astonishment of the servants, in another moment she was kneeling on the garden walk and stretching out her arms to the children.

"Come here, you beautiful little one," she said; "come and tell me your name."



"COME HERE, YOU BEAUTIFUL LITTLE ONE, AND TELL ME YOUR NAME."

But the two little things, with eyes like those of startled fawns, clung together for protection, and the fairest child, taking the little blouse of the other, tried to bury her face in its folds; the plainer one, with a sort of motherly instinct, strove to further this innocent ruse, and, holding up a corner of the blouse, clutched with her dimpled fists at the other's long fair locks, as though to keep them from the

jewelled hand that was trying to caress them. The lady looked critically for a moment at this little sister, and then renewed her wooing of the fair little one, who began to cry beneath the other's pinafore.

"Ah, lovely little one! she will not come to me. Louise, bring me those sweetmeats," the lady called to the maid, who sat in the rumble of the carriage; and just then Sidonie, hearing the unwonted voices, came down the garden path in her high muslin cap. The lady raised herself from her kneeling posture, and confronted the peasant woman with a strange eagerness in her eyes.

"Ah, you are the mother, then! Has she a mother? Is it possible?" she exclaimed.

"I am aunt to these children, madame," answered Sidonie, bewildered. "Both their parents are dead. It is left to me to bring them up."

"And no doubt you find that a burden!" said the lady with renewed eagerness. "You are no doubt poor? And this little one with the angel face—what is her name?"

"This one's name is Jeanne; the other is called Pensée," said Sidonie.

"Pensée. What a beautiful name! After the flowers, I suppose."

"I do not know, madame," answered Sidonie, stolidly; "it was a fancy of their mother's; she was always a fanciful girl, and not of much good in this world, but she is in Paradise. The children are twins."

"But *this* one should be Pensée," said the lady ;
"Jeanne is too plain a name for her. Why, her eyes
are the very colour of the flower."

"Their eyes are just the same colour, madame."

"Yes, but I want to talk to you. I am going to
ask you something. You are not the child's mother,
and you are poor. You will have much care with
them when they grow older. Will you give this one
—Jeanne—to me?"

"Madame!" said Sidonie, breathlessly. She
glanced at the lady's fair face, her rich dress, her
jewelled hand, then at the children, and for a
moment she felt something like a thrill of love.
"No, madame, I cannot; their mother left them to
me to rear. They are only peasant children; and
besides they are twins, and cannot be separated
without ill-luck."

"Cannot!" The lady drew herself up to her full
height, and stood confronting the brown-cheeked
peasant woman. "Peasant! you do not understand
the offer I make you; it is greatly to your own interest,
you foolish woman. I am the Comtesse St. George
le Flaouet. I am on my way to Le Flaouet. I
offer to take this child, to adopt her, and if I see fit,
to provide for her as for a demoiselle of rank—in
fact, as though she were my own child, for I have
none. Now do you understand?"

Sidonie, overawed, glanced again at the ringed
fingers, and a greedy light sparkled in her eyes. The
two children were standing silently with their little

arms intertwined, and fair heads leaning against each other, gazing up with calm, solemn eyes at the dazzling stranger like two cherubs striving to understand the speech and ways of earth.

The lady saw Sidonie's wavering, and her manner changed to one of entreaty, but in a low tone of voice which was none the less passionate.

"Let me speak to you then simply as one woman to another. Oh, if I could make you understand!—I lost one—my only one—seven years ago—seven long years, think of it! since then my heart is dead; I am alone, I have nothing to love; Monsieur, my husband is much away; I want a child, I have prayed and prayed. See here, woman, listen to me; as I passed your calvary out there just now I made my petition again; this child is God's answer; it is a miracle, an answer to my prayer; you cannot refuse. Oh, I shall make it good to you, never fear—tell me only how much."

For answer, Sidonie, with a glance at the maid in the background, beckoned the lady to follow her into the cottage.

"We will talk it over here, madame, if you please," she said in her business way.

The carriage came back from the blacksmith's forge, and still waited in the lane, until the afternoon shadows began to creep down the garden walks, and the children, making friends with the maid, had plucked many pansy heads by way of nosegays for

her. At last the lady came to the cottage door, called the maid within, and whispered something to her.

"Now, come to me," she said, turning to Jeanne, and holding out her arms, stooping towards the child.

The little one, with her spirit-like eyes fixed on the pale, intent face, drawn as though irresistibly, slowly disengaged herself from her sister's arms, and approached the lady, to be folded in a passionate embrace. Then a shawl was wrapped round the child, and the lady, carrying her burden, went swiftly down the garden walk. In another moment the carriage was rolling away to the Dol road. Then silence fell once more, only to be broken by little Pensée's wild sobs. "Hush!" said Sidonie, staring before her as though dazed, while the child wept on her arm, "thou wilt bring all the neighbours here; silly child, thou dost not understand; Jeanne is gone to be a lady, and thou wilt know one day what that means."

But the sleepy little village having seen the carriage, was all on tip-toe to learn what had happened. "I shall have the whole village here before night, and M. le Curé into the bargain," said Sidonie to herself; "but I shall keep my own counsel." And with her stolid face she sat and answered her visitors' questions in as few words as possible. "Yes; Jeanne was gone to be brought up in the house of the great lady, Madame la Comtesse le Flaouet; it was for the

child's good, times were hard, as they knew, and as for the little sister, she was to visit Jeanne at the chateau every year, so madame had promised."

The visitors took the great news in differing fashion. "What a stroke of luck for Sidonie! She is a fortunate one; only imagine such a piece of fortune falling to her! what has the great lady paid her? but Sidonie is a shrewd one."

"She has sold the child for money, shame on her!—how could she part with the sweet little one?—and the other one—what will become of her? they are twins, and cannot be separated without ill-luck; something will happen to her."

Without, was the silent night: the moon, rising over the village, began to shed long tremulous rays upon the crucifix in the lane and through the cottage window panes upon Pensée's little tear-stained cheek sleeping alone on the pillow.

II.

THIRTEEN years had passed. The old cottage still stood in the lane at St. Ydeuc, and Sidonie, who looked much the same, still lived there. She was sitting outside the door, shelling peas into her lap: it was a fine afternoon in June—just such another as that one thirteen years before when the great carriage had come by and carried away Pensée's fair

twin, little Jeanne. And Pensée, now a young girl of seventeen, sat knitting by Sidonie's side. The late sunshine was sloping away down the little garden, leaving the bright pansies, which grew there in as great profusion as ever, in grey shadow as the sun sank away behind the trees.

"Well!" said Sidonie suddenly, in her rasping voice, "I suppose it is no use to ask where are your thoughts, Pensée, that you sit there without a word on your tongue to cheer a soul with—wool-gathering, I suppose, or with the saints in heaven? not that any good luck comes from that, that I can see: why did not your friends the saints prevent Dandon from souring her milk last week, or give a stir to your ungrateful lady sister's memory that Madame la Comtesse should have missed sending my pension money?—and it is high time that you go to milk Dandon, *pareseuse* that you are; if I were not tied by the foot like this I should have done the milking myself half an hour ago: you are not a fine lady like your sister that you can afford to idle your time away in this fashion!"

Sidonie ended with a groan partly caused by her rheumatism, which was really bad, and partly by ill-humour. Pensée, without uttering a word, laid down her knitting on the bench: upon her still face there passed no change; it was almost as though she did not hear Sidonie: taking her milking-pail and stool, she went away to the orchard where the little Breton cow was rubbing her sides against an old apple-tree,

and turning gentle brown eyes upon Pensée as she approached. Perhaps she did not hear Sidonie's rough words, any more than the saints whom Sidonie blasphemed; at all events they were quite natural and in the due order of things when Sidonie's foot pained her: her foot pained her, poor woman, but her words did not pain Pensée.

"Dandon, Dandon!" she said, stroking the creature's neck as she bent it towards the girl: then she took her stool and went to her work: her thoughts were not with the saints just then, but at their other resting place, the Château le Flaouet, with her sister, her earthly saint, her beautiful, brilliant twin-flower, of whom she herself was, as it were, but the dull shadow—that other Pensée, for so her adopted mother had called her, changing her name to her sister's almost from the first. It was three long years since Pensée had seen that sister. At first, while yet they were children, Madame le Flaouet had faithfully kept her promise, and every year Pensée had spent a day at the château—one wonderful day—clear-dawned, sun-crowned, star-closed, standing out from all the other days of the year like a rainbow in a grey sky. But the last three years, one excuse or another had come, and there was no invitation to the Château. Worst of all by far, in Sidonie's eyes, was the non-appearance of the accustomed sum of money which each year had regularly made its appearance on the anniversary of Madame le Flaouet's memorable visit. Only once in all those years had she

repeated that visit, and brought Pensée's sister to see her old home—a visit which had furnished gossip to the village for many months to come.

“Ah, Madame la Comtesse knew what she was doing when she carried off little Jeanne,” this was the general comment, “all the beauty and all the intelligence had gone to that one; as for the other she was a plain, stupid girl, always dreaming, and you had to repeat what you wished to make her understand before she took it in; all the same, she was a good girl, and would do well enough to take round the milk for Sidonie, now that she had a cow, provided that Pensée learnt the value of money.”

For Pensée was not brilliant, and knew neither how to read nor write; not that those were at all uncommon deficiencies at that time, but she was certainly not clever, and the village, having formed the opinion that she was stupid, held to it after the manner of villages.

Perhaps, unknown to itself, this opinion dated from one day in Pensée's little life when she was about seven years old. She was missed from the house, and when her bedtime came, was found at the foot of the crucifix in the lane trying to pull out the nails from the feet; she had only succeeded in chipping with a stone the head of one nail, which she could just reach by standing on a chair that she had dragged all the way from Sidonie's kitchen, and thereby injured one of its legs.

“Who is to pay for all this damage, I should like

to know, then?" asked Sidonie, wrathfully, of M. le Curé, who happened to be passing, and had interposed to prevent Sidonie from striking poor Pensée; "the child is incorrigibly stupid. I believe she will grow up an innocent," she said, tapping her forehead significantly. "Or a saint," said M. le Curé, "which is much the same thing." Sidonie would have liked to retort, but did not dare.

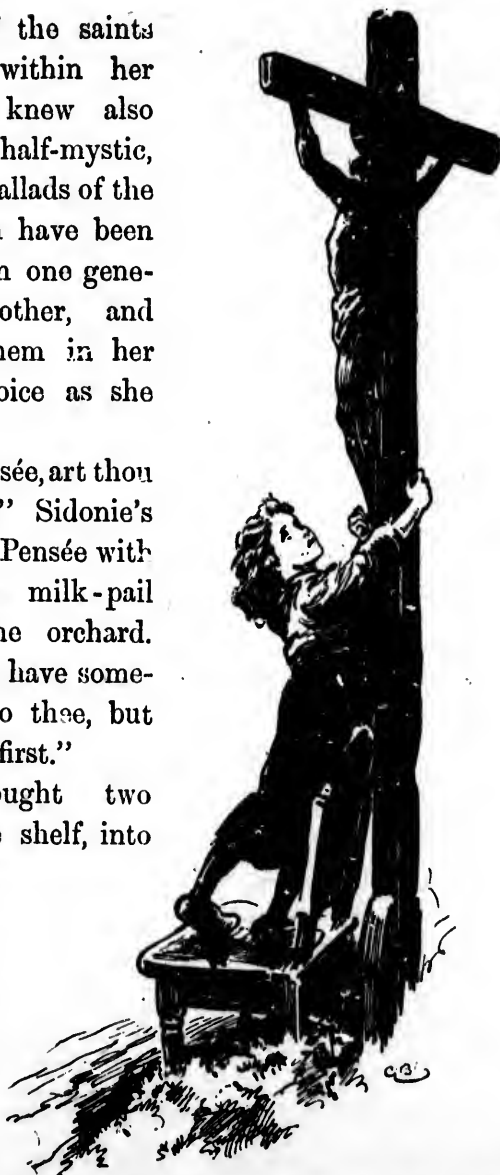
The calvary grew to be a part of Pensée's life. She loved it even better than the church: it was her church; there at its foot, after she was bereaved of her Jeanne, the lonely little child would play by the hour, and babble half to the weeds and grasses and little wild flowers that softly tapped their heads against her round cheek, and half to the great crucifix high overhead, to which now and then she lifted her face and her solemn baby eyes, and joining her hands together would kneel to say the queer, wonderful baby prayers that only God and the angels heard. Strange lights and shadows passed upon the sky, and crossed the still, sculptured face high above, bowed in the lonely majesty of love and death.

When she grew older, she came there every day to say her prayers, and no one, not even she herself, could have told all that the place became to her. Like things which influence us most, its roots lay far below the surface of life. So she grew up—silent, meditative, self-contained even beyond the general character of Bretons, living her own life, and thinking her own thoughts apart. She knew by heart all

the legends of the saints which were within her reach. She knew also many of the half-mystic, half-religious ballads of the country, which have been handed on from one generation to another, and would sing them in her sweet, small voice as she sat at work.

"Pensée, Pensée, art thou never coming?" Sidonie's voice called, as Pensée with her brimming milk-pail came down the orchard. "Make haste, I have something to say to thee, but get my supper first."

Pensée brought two basins from the shelf, into which she broke some pieces of bread, and lifting the *pot-au-feu* from the fire, poured the contents over the bread.



"AT THE FOOT OF THE CRUCIFIX IN THE LANE,
TRYING TO PULL OUT THE NAILS FROM THE FEET."

"Thou must go to bed early to-night," said Sidonie, with an air of mystery, "thou wilt have a long journey to-morrow; canst thou guess where? Yes, I have made up my mind to send thee to Le Flaouet to see whether they are dead or alive; I know of nobody who is going, but thou wilt easily walk it; it is only fifteen kilomètres by the high road, and thou wilt sleep there, and come back the next day."

Pensée's still face had lighted up: all the soul came into her eyes. "To Le Flaouet! to my Pensée!" she exclaimed.

III.

THE Château le Flaouet lay in the shimmering blaze of the noonday sun. All around, the chestnut woods spread themselves, league beyond league, wave beyond wave, of dim and billowy green; and over them was drawn an exquisite veil of quivering blue heat mist, enfolding them in a deep noontide hush.

The birds were asleep; the full orchestra of the morning hours had gradually died into this intense repose; only now and then, some voice breaking on the silence called, and was answered by another far away, deeper yet in the green twilight of the woods.

Nearer to the house were gardens with trellised or box-bordered paths opening upon stone terraces, squares of flowers, and walks with orange-trees and

magnolias at their intersections, and fountains and statues placed at intervals.

There was one square enclosure, however, which instead of being laid out in flower beds and walks was covered with turf soft as velvet, and bounded by a trellis of roses, whose luxuriance was trained over the narrow path in a long archway of light green leaves; their white blossoms made it look as though flaked with summer snow.

Through the long green light of this lovely vista, a young girl was sauntering listlessly; the leaves all around her throwing flickering shadows, and spots of sunlight upon her white dress as she moved, and beside her, a black poodle with coat clipped in the French manner, and a red ribbon for a collar, walked sedately.

The girl had a book in her hand but she was not reading; presently she left the rose walk, and came out upon the sward of the little lawn and stood there as though listening, with the sun glistening on her hair, and turned her face, which was as lovely as some fair flower on its stem, towards the distant terrace where a glimpse of one wing of the château, with its red-capped tourelles and green-shuttered windows, could be seen. Nothing broke the silence except the thin voice of the little fountain in the middle of the lawn, which threw up a silvery jet from the cup of a marble lotus flower which seemed to rock upon the water; or when a bee droned past laden with honey from the flower beds. All around

the young girl the flowers lifted their heads in the sunlight, and looked and listened with her.

Then her voice broke the stillness with an impatient tone.

"Oh, what *ennui*, what *ennui*!" she said, "it is too hot to read; if I could but see M. l'Abbé anywhere in the garden I would get him to come and read this stupid Molière to me."

But there was a step which now advanced unmistakably down the rose walk, and in another moment the figure of a peasant-girl emerged, and then stood still too upon the sward, as though petrified by the sight of the beautiful creature before her. A peasant-girl, with dusty *sabots* and travel-stained clothes, and a face not beautiful but with eyes that looked and looked, as though they could never be satisfied.

"Pensée!" exclaimed the young lady, recovering her self-possession.

The young peasant came forward with outstretched hands, saying too, "Jeanne!—pardon, mademoiselle I should say—is it really you—my sister, my beautiful sister?"

"Yes, it is I," answered the fair Jeanne, submitting to the embrace of the other; "but how is it that you come here without warning? Well, I was just wishing for some one to amuse me; let us sit down here, Pensée; you look as though you had walked some distance."

"I have walked all the way from home; I set off



“‘PENSÉE!’ EXCLAIMED THE YOUNG LADY.”

before sunrise,” said Pensée, sitting down beside her sister.

It was like Paradise to her : she had a vague sense of the beauty all around her, of the scent of the flowers, the music of the fountain, the blue, cloudless sky arching overhead and shutting all in ; but she had eyes for her sister only : all the fatigue of her long journey, her hunger and thirst, were forgotten in the satisfaction of the loved presence. She sat with her hands clasped, and gazed till Jeanne smiled :

"Well, Pensée, you look as if you were in church," she said.

"You have grown as beautiful as an angel—almost as Our Lady!" Pensée said.

A shadow fell across her lovely face. "How can you say such things? She was Mater Dolorosa," she said.

Then they talked of many things, of Jeanne's life at the château chiefly: "I am glad you are come, Pensée," she said, "for I am ready to die of *ennui* alone; you must stay with me a little. *Maman* is in Paris, and she has not written for so long; I wish she would come home, for the Revolution in Paris is getting worse, and the people are growing more and more wicked; have you not heard?"

"But I must go home to-morrow," said Pensée, "my aunt expects it."

So Pensée stayed that day at the château, and in the cool of the evening the two girls were in the garden again.

"Here are our flowers!" said Jeanne, laughing, standing near a large parterre full of nothing but pansies, which, highly cultivated, made a goodly show of rich hues.

"Oh, how beautiful! I wish I knew their names," said Pensée, clasping her hands.

A black-robed figure, reading a book, came slowly across the sward. "Here is M. l'Abbé," said Jeanne, "he will tell you, he knows everything: this is my sister, Pensée, whom you remember, M. l'Abbé," she

continued, "and we want to know the different names of our special flower, if you will be so good as to tell us."

"The pansies?" said the Abbé, smiling kindly at Pensée, who, dropping her curtsy in her peasant cap and gown, looked a striking contrast to her white-robed sister, and yet with the strange resemblance in the eyes plainly visible.

"They have many names; in Latin they are called *Viola Tricolor*, and also *Herba Trinitatis*, because of the three hues of the flower: in England," continued the Abbé, who was partly English, "they bear a beautiful name —

'Heartsease,' which means *La paix du cœur*, and in Lancashire, where I used to live, the people call them



M. L'ABBÉ.

'Cull me to you,' and 'Pansies,' which is the same as our Pensée."

"Yes," interrupted Jeanne, laughing, "that is the best name for Pensées here; she is always thinking good thoughts, I believe."

"And in some districts they are called 'Live or Love in idleness,'" the Abbé said, turning his eyes from Pensée, and letting them rest upon her sister for a moment.

"That is for me!" laughed Jeanne again, "but it is a bad name; love is never idle," she said, with a sudden turn of thought.

"These country names are very odd, certainly," said the Abbé; "there is another which will make you smile, and yet you can see how it fits the flower with its three foremost petals framed as it were by the others, and their little eyes looking up at you—'Three faces in a hood.'"

"Here are two!" said Jeanne, laughing lightly, and suddenly throwing the white shawl which she wore round her own and her sister's head. "Supposing that we were covered up like this, M. l'Abbé, and only our eyes were visible, could any one tell us the one from the other?"

No one spoke: only the soft monotone of the fountain, and the late bird voices calling to each other in the distant woods broke the stillness: the sun had set and the grey misty evening lay all around; only in the west there still lingered translucent opal lights like the calm closing chords of the great

symphony of colour with which the whole sky had been ablaze a while before : it was the hour, it seemed to Pensée, when Christ was taken down from the Cross.

Suddenly, in the pause, there came the ring of horse-hoofs upon the paved court of the château beyond the high garden wall. The Abbé went to see who it was, and came back after some time with an altered face.

“Something has happened,” said Pensée in her low voice.

“Mademoiselle,” said the priest gently to Jeanne, “I am sorry to have to tell you some bad news from Paris : a messenger has come from madame, your mother, who, I fear, is ill—she has sent this”—and he gave a note to Jeanne, who cried out : “*Maman* is ill, perhaps dying ; she implores me to go to her without delay. Oh, Pensée, what shall I do ? I am full of fears. Paris is in a terrible state, is it not, M. l’Abbé ?”

“Do not fear,” said Pensée, stepping to her side, “I shall go with you.”

The priest looked pitifully from one to the other.

“It is your duty to go, if possible, mademoiselle, and we shall find out whether it will be reasonable to enter Paris when we are nearer the city ; but ought you to come, my child ?” he said, turning to Pensée.

“I will never leave her,” she answered.

"Then I shall escort you; we will set off tomorrow morning; let us trust all to God and fear nothing."

IV.

THE shop of citizen Prévot, herbalist and apothecary, of the Rue Saint Honoré, was putting up its shutters for the evening. It was the month Vendémiaire of the Revolution—September, according to the old world's reckoning—of the year 1793. The "Law of the Suspect" had rendered any person liable to be arrested upon the mere suspicion of another.

A girl in the costume of a Bretonne peasant, but a worn one, and with a basket on her arm, stopped upon the pavement, and glancing up at the name over the door inquired of the boy who was putting up the shutters if a certain citizen Martin might happen to lodge there.

"Yes: would the citizenne enter? Citizen Martin lodged on the third floor."

In the shop was a small old man in spectacles and a velvet cap, who peered curiously at the girl upon her asking for his lodger.

"I have business with him; I come from the country," she said. They exchanged a glance; then the old man nodded and motioned the girl up-stairs: "Fear nothing," he muttered, "the citizen Martin is very well lodged with me."

On the third floor she stopped and tapped softly at the door ; it was opened by a man in working-dress, but whose face, though changed and worn, was recognisable as that of the Abbé Martin, *ci-devant* chaplain to the Comtesse le Flaouet. On seeing Pensée his face changed.

“Oh, my child ! you are then still in Paris ? How did you find me ?” he exclaimed.

“M. l’Abbé, I have found out many things,” said Pensée.

“Sit down, my child, you are spent.”

She sat down and waited a little. Her face, pale, steadfast, resolved, was no longer that of a peaceful, dreamy child ; in three months it had grown into a woman’s through the power of suffering.

The Abbé poured out a glass of water and handed it to her. “I have been hiding here for the last month,” he said, “in hopes of being of some service to Madame la Comtesse and to mademoiselle ; I know they are at the Luxembourg : have you any news of them ? And you, my poor child, where are you ?—how are you living ?”

“Yes, I have some news,” she answered, recovering herself. “Oh, for me, I sell lemons in the streets near the prison ; I hear much talk of the prisoners in this way ; M. l’Abbé, they are to be taken to the *Conciergerie* to-morrow.”

The priest sank into a chair, and covered his face. In a few moments he said : “Can it be true ?—is it possible ?—who told you ?”

"It is quite true," said Pensée, in the same calm voice. "I have a friend at the prison; she is the wife of one of the turnkeys—their names are on to-morrow's *fournée*; you know they take the prisoners in batches every night to the *Conciergerie*, and then the next morning——"

"I know but too well; we see them pass here every day."

"And they will be taken to-morrow night; let me think—this is Wednesday—ah! then it will be Friday morning."

Pensée stopped, then she went on quickly. "M. l'Abbé, will you promise to be on the road on Friday morning when the tumbrils pass, and lift your hand for absolution for their last consolation?"

The priest groaned. "Ah, yes, indeed; if it must really come to that; what hopes I have had to do something for them! but God's will be done. Why did you not find me out before?" he asked, suddenly turning upon her; "if I had only known that you had a friend at the Luxembourg, what might we not have done for them?"

Pensée looked up at him with wide eyes—eyes which looked as though sleep had been a stranger to them for many nights. "I have been trying to find you for the past month," she said. "I have walked all over Paris, but since you left your last hiding-place I have lost you; now, at length, just in time, I find you; God guided me, but oh! it is impossible to save them! all is impossible—all but one thing."

“And what is that?”

Pensée made no reply, and in the pause a step was heard on the stairs, and citoyen Prévot put his head in at the door.

“I think your visitor, the citoyenne, had better go now,” he said; “there is a searching party in the street, and who knows but they may take it into their heads to come here as well as anywhere else? I have brought you a pestle and mortar, for you to be at work on in case of a visit,” he said, putting them with a trembling hand before the Abbé, and vanishing.

“You must go, my child; I will be in the street without fail on Friday. Oh, *mon Dieu!*”

“I will tell them so,” said Pensée.

“You tell them so? What can you mean? How can you communicate with them?”

“I am going to try,” she said, standing looking at him with strange, steady eyes. Then she knelt—
“Please bless me, M. l’Abbé.”

He lifted his hands. “My child, what are you going to do?” he exclaimed suddenly, appalled by something in her look. But in a moment she was gone.

On the morrow evening, an hour before the time when the list of those who were to die on the following day was read at the prison gates, Pensée was crouching by what appeared to be a disused back entrance to the Luxembourg prison, *ci-devant* palace. It was about dark. She had waited a long while,

when at last a footstep was heard within, and a key began to grate in the rusty lock, and the door turned slowly upon its hinges. A woman's head looked out as Pensée sprang to her feet.

"You are there?" said a voice in a tremulous whisper. "He is drunk, and fast asleep; make haste, I am half-dead with fear."

"Oh, my good friend! you have the keys, then?" said Pensée.

"Yes, yes; be quick, my girl, for God's sake; I can only give you ten minutes, so your adieux must be short ones; this is as much as my head is worth, and all for love of that poor madame aristocrate."

"God will reward you," said Pensée.

They had hurried through several corridors. Now the woman stopped before a door, saying, "They are together in there—your sister and madame; only ten minutes, then I must come."

Pensée was in a small room, where by the light of one poor candle she could see two pale faces looking at her speechlessly, as though she were a visitant from another world.

"Yes, it is really I," she said, standing before them. "Oh, madame! oh, Jeanne! your names are down on to-night's *fournée*, and they will come for you directly; there is no time to lose. But, Jeanne, my well-beloved, you are not going to die; listen to me now attentively; you are to put on my clothes, and wrap your head in my shawl; you know we

are of the same height, and it is dark, nobody will see the difference; the turnkey's wife has let me in; she is kind, but she must not know this—nobody will know—only trust me, my beloved, and do what I say."

While she had been speaking she had unfastened her peasant's cap and shawl.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* no," exclaimed Madame le Flaouet, "I must not allow this; my child will die with me."

"In the name of God, no," Pensée said, "she will live, but be quick; oh, be quick! there is no time to waste."

The fair wan face of Jeanne had shrunk away from Pensée, putting up her hands as though to ward off a visible temptation. "Oh, I cannot!" she said. But after that first moment she made no further resistance, and the sweet eyes only looked piteously while Pensée dressed her in the peasant's dress, shawl, and cap. Both she and Madame le Flaouet seemed dazed, and Pensée, with that steady resolve in her eyes, was giving her directions.

"When she comes for me—you are *me*, you know, but you need not speak; put my basket on your arm—and if any one speaks to you, say you are a citizenne who sells lemons, and go straight to that street—" she said, putting a paper into Jeanne's hand; "it is the Abbé Martin's address, he will know what to do, and farewell, my beloved, God bless thee."

Madame le Flaouet was clinging to Jeanne, then the door opened again.

“Come, come quickly,” said the voice of the turnkey’s wife, and Jeanne, with the shawl wrapped round her head, her eyes looking back mutely to them both, was hurried away into liberty and life.

A few moments later the tramp of men’s feet was heard: “the *fournée!*” From the different rooms the prisoners flocked out to the prison gate to hear the list of the condemned read. The “widow le Flaouet and her daughter,” were two of the first on the list. Then, with the rest, they were hurried into the tumbrel and taken to the *Conciergerie* for the night.

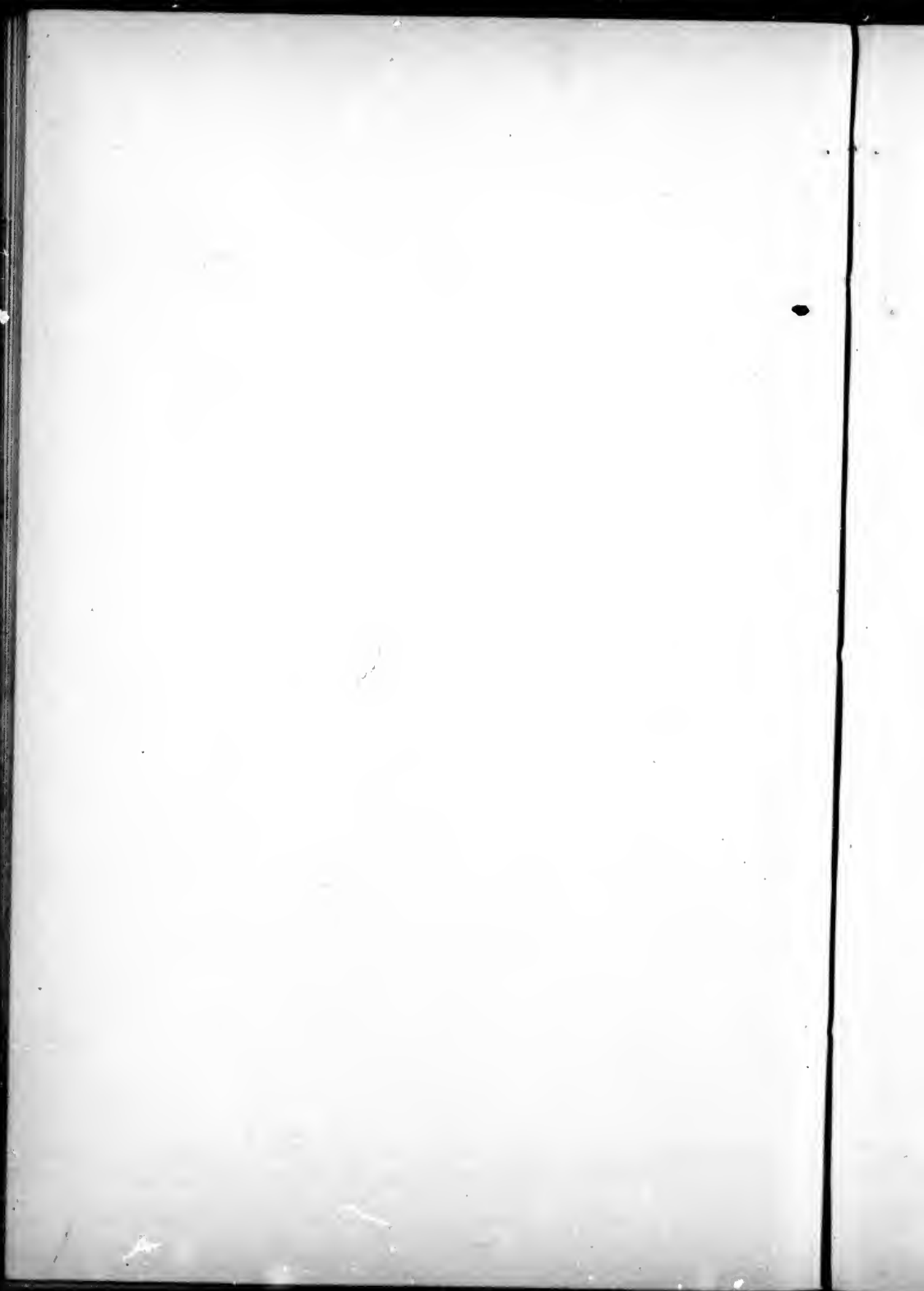
The clocks of the city were chiming eight on Friday morning, and the death carts were passing through the streets to the Place de la Révolution. The crisp autumn sunshine lay all about; the day was young, life was young, but it was passing quickly.

Pensée was shading her eyes with her hand and looking: these trees were pretty, with the pale autumn gold coming, like those at St. Ydeuc: some people with baskets were doing their morning shopping, and these were standing upon the pavement watching them; did they look kind? how strange it seemed to be going to die—she sat with clasped hands and looked: a little martyr of the people, swept ruthlessly away in that wild, terrible sweep of





THE TUMBREL.



terrible abuses. For some reason they had left upon her Jeanne's dress instead of the red Liberty gown which they had put on Madame le Flaouet: it was odd to be dressed like an aristocrat; the dress had ruffles at the neck and wrists; it was all white. Madame le Flaouet sat with Pensée's hand held in hers; she was seeing a cottage garden with flowers growing, and two fair children playing—and saying "Will you come to me, little one?"—yet it was not Jeanne, but Pensée who had come to die with her.

"Look, look, my child!" she said suddenly.

On the pavement's edge a man in an *ouvrier's* dress was standing, looking up at them with an earnest gaze; there was a mist between, but he lifted his right hand: the tumbril rolled on. After that, the mist seemed to be over everything, and she saw only the calvary in the lane at St. Ydeuc. It was easy to die, all the martyrs had died, and heaven was best: life was sweet, but what was life worth except for love and sacrifice? Jeanne, her beloved, would live. Yet that great public Place, and the crowd, and the soldiers, and that tall gaunt thing with its glittering axe against the fair morning sky, were terrible.

The crowd was humming all round: then came cruel shouts—"Vive la République, death to aristocrats!" Then they fell away into a dim murmur, though the sky was there still, and the mist fell: a name was called—"Le Flaouet, fille!" a rough

hand seized her, she looked up—it was not the tall, gaunt thing any more, but the calvary at home, and the pitying face was bending down to her. She went up.

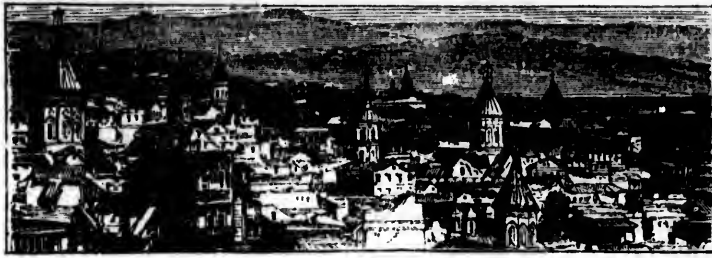
The Abbé Martin helped Jeanne to escape from Paris, and when the troubles of the Revolution were over, she returned to Le Flaouet, for she was Madame le Flaouet's sole heiress. She brought old Sidonie to live there as a sort of honoured pensioner, but it may be doubted if she was ever quite so happy as in the old granite cottage at St. Ydeuc.

Jeanne married happily, but all her life long there rested upon the fair face a haunting look of terror and pain—a shadow of some great sorrow.

In the little church of St. Ydeuc was a white marble cross with a crown of thorns sculptured, and Pensée's name: Jeanne used to visit the spot at certain seasons, especially on one day in the month of September.

“It is so strange,” she once said to the Curé, looking up wistfully with that haunting look—“the feeling that you have when you know that some one has died for you.”





A SAUL AND DAVID OF THE STEPPE.

By MICHAEL A. MORRISON.



N the right bank of the mighty Volga, about midway between the towns of Samara and Saratoff, a road leads away across the level and illimitable steppe to the lonely village of Sergéyevka. In dull November weather a traveller visiting this region, and looking only for the superficially picturesque, would be, perhaps, depressed by the dreary monotony of the landscape—interminable plains of brown grass, yellow stubble, and waste land, without a house or tree, without even a telegraph post to break the dead uniformity of nature; but if he were of a receptive humour, he might be impressed and interested by many a curious glimpse of life. He would pass an occasional Kalmyk shepherd—queer, slant-eyed, yellow-skinned heathens, trudging along

the road in their greasy sheepskins—perhaps dragging a camel after them ; he would see browsing on the stubble flocks of goats—haggard, weather-stained, and venerable beasts—the very goats for the foreground of some brown etching, dark with the passage of storm ; and as he approached Sergéyevka he would notice the flaxen-haired Russian children tending the cattle ; the leafless silver-stemmed birches round the little paddocks ; the young poplars and the willows beside the stream, and by the squat houses of the peasants ; the white-washed church with its sky-blue cupola adorned with gilded stars ; the bright head-dresses of the women and girls, over their sunburnt faces ; and the old men and *babui* sitting at the doors of their cottages, talking the everlasting small-talk of the village. Interesting enough scenes these for him who delights in the contrast of juxtaposition between what is familiar and what is remote and strange.

Count Pavl Kirilitch Levashoff was the owner of the village of Sergéyevka, the great man of the district. If the villagers were asked what they thought about Pavl Kirilitch they would answer by saying that he was a *tchudak*, a queer fellow, and would shrug their shoulders ; but when pressed for fuller information they would admit that they knew little or nothing about him ; that he kept himself remote from them in his big lonely house across the stream ; that they seldom saw him ; and that they were all afraid of the sombre, silent man whom they called

their *Barin*. They had no love for him. He took his dues, and evinced no interest in their concerns. The priest and the schoolmaster never ventured to approach him when the harvest turned out badly, and they wanted help to ward off hunger from the village. He had come to Sergéyevka to live five years ago, when his father died—the Lord rest his soul—people said from Petersburg. In all that time he had never left the village, and no one of his former friends ever visited him—perhaps he had no friends. An old *baba* kept house for him, and Simyon Andreitch was his house-servant and steward all in one; but never a word would *he* speak of the *Barin*. This was all the peasants could tell about Pavl Kirilitch.

But there was far more to tell. When Pavl Kirilitch arrived at Sergéyevka he was a man of thirty—a man young in years. But he was broken by dissipation; a ruined wretched creature, who had wasted all the fortune left him by his mother, and all his father's savings as well. His life in Petersburg had been so strange and disgraceful, that all his relations had quarrelled with him, and all decent people shunned him. Just as he was being driven out of the society of the reprobates he frequented, for a fraud at cards more than usually flagrant, his father died; and disgraced, covered with contumely, branded as a common cheat, ruined in pocket, in mind, and in body, he fled to Sergéyevka, and hid himself in shame—the horror of the memory of his past life

eating out his heart, and bringing him to the verge of madness.

Years of unutterable misery were now his portion. The memory of what he had been, the mordant thought of what he might have been, the ghosts of past crimes, the woful career of sin and shame—all this burdened the heart of Pavl Kirilitch with a load of anguish, from which he vainly sought release. Only one friend remained to him, old Simyon the steward. Every one else fled from the lowering eyes that could only express hate and contempt; from the man whose cynical laugh, cruel speech, and storms of ungovernable fury made him an object of terror. It was this faithful servant who would often steal into the room where the *Barin* was lying, face downward, on his bed, and remove his revolver, or his razor, or his rifle, fearing he would lay violent hands on himself in one of his fits of passion; or would try to still him as he would a child, when he lay moaning all through the night in the agony of his mind. Simyon Andreitch never heeded the hard words and black looks cast at him. He would say to himself: "The *Barin* is in great trouble;" or, "The *Barin* has a heavy cross to carry to-day;" or, "The Lord is smiting the *Barin* more than he can bear, but it will all come right—*vsye boodyet khorosh.*"

It happened during one of the *Barin's* "bad days" that old Simyon was in the little room that served him as office, a room adjoining his master's. He heard the swift, uneven steps of the conscience-

stricken man, as he paced his room like a caged animal, and he wished from the bottom of his heart that he possessed a salve to heal wounds that could cause such unending anguish. But he noticed that Pavl Kirilitch's movements gradually became slower and more regular, until at last he stopped in front of a small cabinet. Simyon Andreitch rose, and through the slightly opened door he saw his master take from one of the drawers of the cabinet an old flute that had lain there unused ever since they came to Sergéyevka, and wet it preparatory to playing. Pavl Kirilitch sat down on his bed and began to play an old Russian melody that all the peasants of the Volga know—that he must have learnt when he was a child, long before he went out into the world—a song about the rising sun. And as he played the tears rolled down his haggard cheeks. Starting up suddenly, he broke into peal after peal of horrible laughter, and, dashing the flute into the burning stove, he sank on the floor, sobbing as though his heart would break. The old steward crept into the room, and strove to soothe the stricken man; but for many a day after Pavl Kirilitch was as one dazed, as one from whom all consciousness had fled; silent, motionless, without either hope or passion of spirit.

Leaving the old *baba* in charge of his sick master, Simyon Andreitch one morning crossed the stream into the village, on some business connected with the estate. He was feeling sore at heart about the *Barin*,

revolving many things in his mind, thinking what could be done to alleviate the sufferings of the lonely and heartbroken man. As he drew near to Sergéyevka he noticed one of the village lads, perched on top of a ruined wall, singing, and playing an accompaniment on the roughly made mandolin so often seen in the hands of the Russian peasantry. Simyon Andreitch could not tell whether it was the melody itself, or the way in which it was sung, that fascinated him. He recognised it as the same simple air that the *Barin* had played on the flute; but it was sung with so sweet a voice, and the coarsely made instrument was touched with so skilful a hand, that the old man stopped in wonder to regard the boy closer.

An inspiration flashed into Simyon Andreitch's mind: "I shall have that boy up to the house to play for Pavl Kirilitch. I'll have him up this evening, and he'll sit in my room, and I'll open the door a little so that the *Barin* may hear him." Then, turning to the boy, "Meesha, little sonny, I want you to come over to the house this evening to sing me that song." And Meesha consented to go, provided Simyon Andreitch would not let the *Barin* see him.

At evening, Meesha and the old steward were sitting together in the little office, and the *Barin* sat in his chair before the fire sadly watching the dying embers. Meesha was not at his ease so near the *Barin*, but nevertheless, when Simyon Andreitch whispered to him to sing, he took up his old man-

dolin, and all his innocent confidence returned as he sang the quaint little peasant song :—

“ The sun is God’s lamp in the sky ;
And its light streams around us all day.
We rejoice as we work, as we play.

“ There are stars and the pale moon on high,
When the night closes round us at rest ;
And His lamp has gone down in the West.

“ The dear Lord with His care ever nigh,
Sends us all, gives us all, in large store ;
And is waiting to bless us with more.”

The voice of the singer was the voice of an angel, and the sick *Barin* heard it, and listened, and gave a deep sigh when the song was finished. Then he rose and closed the door into the steward’s room, and both Meesha and Simyon Andreitch thought they heard him weep. And when Meesha saw that Simyon Andreitch was also weeping, he stole away to his own home, and thought it all over to himself, and wondered.

Next evening, at the steward’s request, little Meesha again appeared at the great house. All his dread of the *Barin* had somehow vanished. When Pavl Kirilitch heard the first fingerings of the mandolin, he cried out, “Send that boy here.” And Meesha entered the room where sat the tortured man, who was passing through the valley of humiliation, and wrestling with the demon of remorse.

“Sing that song beginning, ‘The sun is God’s lamp.’”

Meesha sang it.

“Have you any more songs?”

Meesha smiled, “Many.”

“Sing another.”

Then the child struck some chords, and sang one of the sweetest of the Russian folk songs:—

“O rich black earth, all streaked with snow,
On cloudy April morning;
The green headlands, the fresh-turned row;
Young leaves the trees adorning.

“Spring, spring on earth, in sky, in air;
Spring that will ever waken
The saddest heart sunk in despair,—
Thinking itself forsaken.

“Spring! We will sing thy praise indeed,
And bless thy welcome coming;
And raise our hearts for ever freed
From winter's drear benumbing.”

Pavl Kirilitch leaned forward, and with his two hands drew the boy's head close to him, looking long and fixedly with his stormy, heavy eyes on the bright and fearless young face. Then he passed his great hand slowly through Meesha's auburn curls, gazing wistfully; and still closer he drew the boy's head, and kissed his lips. Meesha loved the *Barin*, and sank on his knees beside him.

“Your name is Meesha; isn't it? Come to-morrow, Meesha”—and the man's voice was hoarse, and choked and broken—“but, before you go, sing me one more song, Meesha, Meeshurka.”

Meesha rose. He was solemnised by the strange scene through which he was passing. He remembered

that when he lost his mother a year ago, the school-master, whom he loved, came to his father's *izba* and sang some beautiful words, which he afterwards taught him. Meesha remembered how the school-master's song had cheered him in his sorrow, and he thought that if the *Barin* is in great trouble, perhaps it might do him good also.

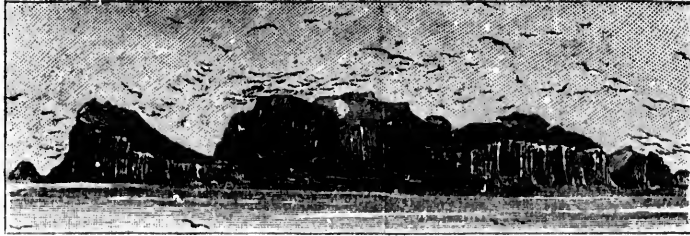
So Meesha sang—his great blue eyes wide open and gazing intently at the *Barin* :—

“When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we saw as in a dream. Then our mouth was filled with rejoicing, and our tongue with song. Then said they among the nations : The Lord hath done great things for us : we rejoiced. Turn back, O Lord, our captivity, as the streams at noonday. Those that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. Sowing in tears the seed, he shall return with joy, bearing the sheaves.” *

These are the grand old words sung by the Russian boy : and as he sang, sunlight entered the soul of Pavl Kirilitch. His captivity was turned ; and his stony heart, so long filled with hatred, with the memory of sin, began diffidently to hope that there was perhaps a place of repentance for him, if he sought it carefully through tears and humiliation and prayer.

* Translated from the ancient Slavonic.






THE MAN FROM THE FOUR CORNERS.

By G. B. BURGIN.

I.

AL, Charles Henry, I brought you inter the world, an' I'm mighty feared thar's no sendin' of you back agin," said Mrs. Henry Hawkins in tones which betokened anything but Christian resignation. "Thar's some burdens sorter piled onter us—burdens of shiftless critters like you—thar's no gittin over—burdens which stick closer than a chestnut shuck, an' is about as wearin'."

"I'm one-and-twenty, mother," returned Charles Henry, "and I hanker after seein' the world, and——"

"Don't tell me," said his mother;—"don't tell me what you're hankerin' after. I know 'ithout any tellin'. It's the fleshpots you've got your eye on. The fleshpots of Egypt! That's what you're after.

You're about as fit as a spring chicken is to see the world. Jest about as fit to come up to the scratch, you poor innocent. You quit this foolishness, an' set to work sawin' wood. 'That's what Nature meant you to do, an' if you go agin Nature, she'll git even with you, you bet your bottom dollar. Thar's a deal of solid religion in sawin' wood, 'specially when it ain't dry."

Charles Henry jingled his pocket suggestively. It was full of dollars. Then he walked to the window and gazed at the mighty Ottawa. "I'm sick of this old hen-roost," he said irritably, with a look of defiance in his ordinarily mild blue eye.

Mrs. Henry Hawkins reached over and jerked him back to the breakfast-table. "Whiles you're in this hen-roost, Charles Henry," she said in tones which did not admit of dispute—"whiles you're in this hen-roost, I calculate you'll have to finish up the provender set before you by the old hen that runs it."

Charles Henry meekly went on with his breakfast, but there was an obstinate look in the youth's face as he did so. Mrs. Henry Hawkins waited until he had finished, and then severely eyed him once more.

"It ain't no good, mother," said Charles Henry. "It ain't no good. It's time for me to go forth out of the wilderness, so to speak, and have my little whack. I want to see what's goin' on in the world, I do."

"You want to see what's goin' on in the world!

Most people wants to snut their eyes to what's goin' on in the world. You let the world alone," said his mother. "It's been tumblin' about a good many years 'ithout your help. I reckon your head's turned



"I'M SICK OF THIS OLD HEN-ROOST."

jest because your uncle Jabez left you that four hundred dollars."

Charles Henry again jingled his pocket.

"Wal," said the old lady, with subdued irony, "I

reckon it's too much for you. You're off your base. You want to go an' mingle with the fleshpots an' painted Isabels an' fleetin' joys of this world, an' spend all your money an' then come back like the prodigy son. But you may jest make up your mind, Charles Henry, jest as sure as you're born (I'm sure I don't know where Providence located your mind—what thar is of it), thar'll be precious little veal on the premises for you when you git tired of runnin' free, an' comes crawlin' home full of husks after the manner of the Scripters."

"I never was great on veal," said Charles Henry indifferently. "Not me! It's no use, mother. I'm like the birds when the cold snap starts—I've got to get out."

"A jay bird's the only sort of bird you're like," returned his strong-minded parent. "You're jest fit to sit on a bough and screech, an' git other birds to lay your own eggs for you."

Charles Henry had never before asserted himself. Now, he had money in his pouch; and when a man has money in his pouch—especially a man of one-and-twenty—he is bound to assert himself. "Look here, mother," he said deliberately, "you've cooped me up all my life. I haven't even been down on a raft to Montreal. The boys in Millar's store are always flinging it at me. I might be a chipmunk under a tree for all the good I get out of life. I can't keep still. I've got to move on. I want to see things for myself. What's it matter if I spend the

money? What's anything matter? D'you want me to die because I'm sick of things? I hear voices calling me away into the world—the great, glorious world yonder beyond this little village. I want to see it, taste it, to find out what it's like; and then I'll settle down and saw wood and do chores, but I'm blamed if I'm going to do it till I've had my little whack."

"Go on," said his mother grimly. "Go on, Charles Henry. Have your little whack! Heap dust an' wood ashes on your sorrowin' parent."

"I don't want to heap wood ashes on anybody," said the literal Charles Henry. "But can't you understand? I feel like a sugar maple when the sap begins to rise, and——"

"Thar's precious little sugar in you, Charles Henry. Precious little. An' if you go away you'll be bled like a sugar maple. That's what'll happen to you, my son."

"Well," said Charles Henry indifferently, "what's it matter?"

Mrs. Hawkins was staggered. "You're past praying for," she ejaculated. "A whole mourners' bench couldn't save you."

Charles Henry asserted himself. His tones were those of repressed passion. "You let me go my own way, mother. I daresay it's all true. But you can't understand—you can't understand. I must see it all. I want to go to London and have a look round and get it all fixed."

"Oh, you'll git fixed," said the old lady. "You'll git fixed in a police barracks. That's where you'll bring up."

"Let me start, mother," the youth pleaded. "I'll have to. It's in my blood. I'll go mad if I don't. I see it all—feel it—hear it. Dream of it nights. I must see what it's like. I'll come back again, mother. I'll come back. But I must go. It's a living grave here."

Mrs. Henry Hawkins gazed out of the window on the swollen Ottawa as it thundered past. A patch or two of snow betokened that winter had barely fled behind the mountains on the opposite shore. But the sun blazed fiercely out upon the little Canadian village, gay with glittering tin spires and brightly-hued wooden houses. Most of the inhabitants were making up their gardens for the summer. The potato-bug, clad in a triple mail, which had withstood the fierce frost of winter, perched upon the cedar rails and sunned himself until returning life warmed his airy wings. There was a hum in the air of newly-born mosquitoes seeking whom they might devour. The grass sprang greenly by the roadside or along the edges of the little creek where booming batrachians bellowed forth their tale of love to coy fair ones half buried in the mud. Here and there a rooster, his comb scarred and frost-bitten, strutted proudly up and down or flapped his wings and crowed defiance to the world—that world which Charles Henry found too cramped for his wants.

Habitants, driving brightly-bedizened ponies, dashed through the village or thronged into the stores with the first eggs of the season. The sky was a brilliant cloudless blue. The tall elms which lined the village road had burst into buds in a single night. Winter had taken his stern grip from the throat of all things. There was a murmur of summer in the air, a rustle amid the growing grasses, the arrowy flight of myriad swallows over the roofs of the houses, the bickering of innocent robins as they flew about laden with straws and twigs for their nests. Over all, was the w'ld sweet joy of the sun-warmed air; and away in the distance the mighty trees of the Bush showed greenly against a grim background of mountain. The world was agog with life. Pulses quickened, the unutterable joy of it filled every heart—every heart save those of Charles Henry and his irate parent.

“Wal,” said the old lady, in answer to Charles Henry’s last remark (her glance fell lingeringly upon the wide expanse of river and then turned to the mountain beyond), “if this is the place you last mentioned, I kin stand a good deal of it. But here’s Phenisby Anne. Come in, Phenisby Anne, and stop his foolishness.”

A young girl entered the room and stood carelessly swinging her sun bonnet by its strings. She was splendidly handsome; as vigorous as a panther; with dark hair coiled in a glorious mass of ebon light and shade at the back of her firmly modelled head. Her blue eyes gazed questioningly at Charles Henry

as he stood still jingling his dollars. Charles Henry did not look at her again. There was that within Phenisby Anne's eye which was not meant for him to see until he deserved to see it. She was clad in a pretty blue woollen dress, and looked about twenty. In addition, she stood three inches taller than Charles Henry, and could have lifted him up with one of her large, beautifully-shaped hands.

Phenisby Anne leaned against the door-post, her face paling a little as she realised the situation. "You needn't tell," she said to Mrs. Hawkins. "He's got the fidgets again. He'll have to go."

Mrs. Hawkins looked surprised. She had reckoned on an ally.

"Yes," said Phenisby calmly; "it's no use stopping him, Mrs. Hawkins. Let him go. He'll be glad enough to come back again."

Charles Henry did not meet Phenisby's eye.

"Wal," said Mrs. Hawkins resignedly, "if you say it, Phenisby, I s'pose he'll hev to go. Don't cry out about it afterwards when he's seen some one else. Hasn't he said anything to you yet, Phenisby?"

The girl's cheek flamed for a moment. She drew herself up with a superb gesture. "If he sees any one he likes better than me," she said, "he's welcome to." There was a touch of scorn in her voice which roused Charles Henry. What his mother's reproaches could not effect, Phenisby Anne had done in a second. "If you want me to stay," he said, humbly approaching her, as the sunlight played

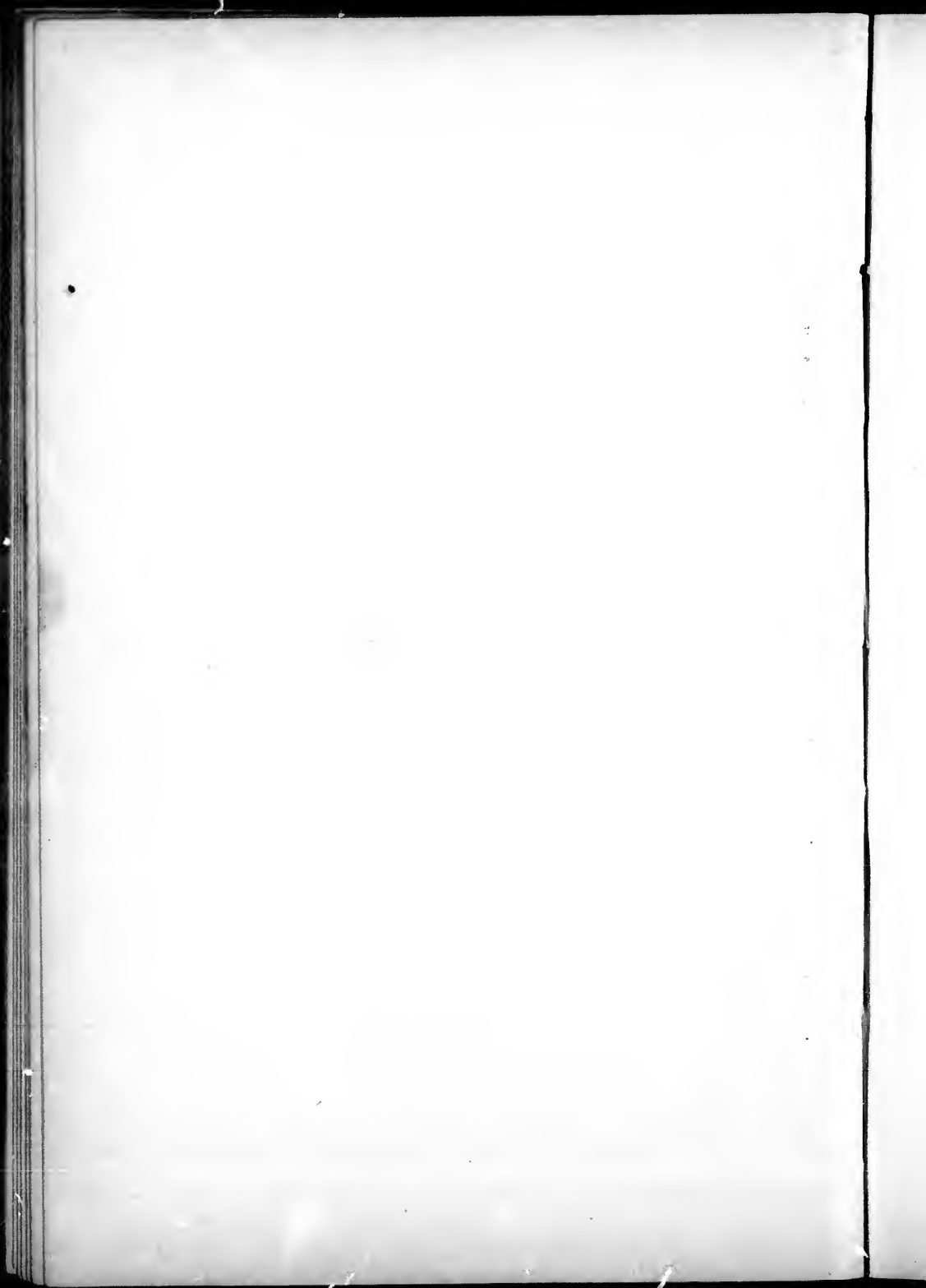
upon her hair—"If you want me to stay, I'll do it, Phenisby."

There was an air of pathetic entreaty in Mrs. Hawkins' iron-featured face. The girl hesitated for a moment. Then she laughed low and musically, displaying splendid teeth as she did so. She threw out her arm with a gesture of renunciation. "When I want you it will be easy enough to come after you. Go and see the world, Charles Henry Hawkins. You won't find anything like me in it."

And so it was arranged. Charles Henry fared forth from the Four Corners with four hundred dollars in his pocket, and a gripsack on his back. A procession of fellow-townsmen escorted him to the wharf, and one old lady gave him a bottle of raspberry vinegar as a remedy against sea-sickness. Charles Henry tried it in mid-Atlantic but preferred the sea-sickness. Phenisby Anne declined to see him off. "You've got to go," she said, "and have your little whack, and get it over. Good-bye." And then she disappeared. She disapproved of Charles Henry's tour, but knew that it was inevitable. "Our distinguished fellow-townsmen," said the *Four Corners News*—"Our distinguished fellow-townsmen, before leading Miss Phenisby Anne Jenkins to the hymeneal altar, is about to make the European tour. We congratulate him on this opportunity of conversing with the crowned heads of Europe, and setting them right as to the Annexation question. We don't want to annex the United States. We've enough to do to

"IF HE SEES ANY ONE HE LIKES BETTER THAN ME," SHE SAID, "HE'S WELCOME TO."





keep our own politicians straight. It is an opportunity which is rarely afforded to our fellow-citizens of acquiring the *je ne sais quoi*, the *ne plus ultra* of English culture. We shall await the home-coming of Mr. Hawkins with much interest, and love him for the dangers he has passed. We understand that Mr. Hawkins is under vow to return in three months' time. 'When the robins nest again, and we gather in the grain,' we shall expect him—expect him full to the brim and running over, not with the lightning-rod whiskey, the distillation of which so disgraces this fair land of the maple and beaver, but with the elegance and accumulated wisdom of that little isle beyond the seas to which we Canadians owe our being. We wish the young man well, especially as he has subscribed to our justly-renowned organ for three months in advance."

But after Charles Henry had departed, Phenisby Anne's assumed composure gave way. She flung herself into Mrs. Hawkins' arms and wept bitterly. "Why did you let him go if you sot such store on him?" asked the old lady, dissembling her delight. "He's that stubborn, he's bound to get into mischief, an' then we'll have to fool round an' fetch him out of it. He's promised to write to me where he's stayin'. If he ain't back on time, you know me, Phenisby Anne?"

"Yes," said Phenisby Anne, drying her splendid eyes.

"Wal, we'll jest take after him, an' fetch him

back," said Mrs. Hawkins, with grim determination, "He's the only son of my old age, an' his mother's a widow, an' ain't going to put up with all this high-toned squanderin' an' little whackin'."

"But, if he won't come?" asked Phenisby.

"Then I'll yank him on board the steamer," said Mrs. Hawkins defiantly, "an' tote him home before he can say 'shucks.'"

But the weeks and the months went by. One, two, three months. Charles Henry made no sign after having once written to state that he was revelling, metaphorically speaking, in the fleshpots of the old world. Mrs. Hawkins sent for Phenisby. "Pack your trunk an' git ready to start to-morrow," she said. "It's time this hankerin' after fleshpots was put an end to." And Phenisby Anne made ready.

Mrs. Hawkins had never been down to the sea in ships before. She was dismayed for a moment by the upheaval of the waters. "Does it allers keep a wabblin' up an' down like this?" she asked the steward.

"Yes, madam," replied that functionary, as the frowning citadels of Quebec faded away in the distance, and a few gulls wheeled with wild and piercing cries round the vessel's stately sides.

"Wal, nen, I ain't got no use for it. Tell the stewardess to make me some catnip tea, and call me when we git thar," said Mrs. Hawkins firmly, and retired to her cabin prepared for the worst.

Over the sorrows that ensued, Mrs. Hawkins loved

to dwell in after-years. "What was it like?" she retorted to an inquiring Christian friend. "What was it like? Wal, you know how it is when you want to git religion an' can't throw up Satan, try all you can?" "Yes," said the friend expectantly. "Wal," said Mrs. Hawkins, "I was wrestlin' to throw up Satan the whole way thar an' back, an' Satan got ahead of me."

II.

CHARLES HENRY roused himself from his couch, and gazed apprehensively at the grey, grimy dawn, as it streaked in through the tattered blinds of his simply-furnished garret. With Spartan manliness he had refrained from decking that apartment—he had but one—with costly triumphs of the upholsterer's art. The bedstead was of iron, and supported a flock mattress with a painful tendency to knobiness. The wind whistled shrilly up through the carpetless floor. A three-legged chair without a back, a wash-handstand of deal, in whose coy embrace reposed a cracked basin which had evidently seen better days, and a dissipated-looking deal table comprised the somewhat unornamental surroundings with which he had been compelled to content himself. Actuated by a desire to pass his enforced leisure in artistic pursuits, Charles Henry had himself designed the mural decorations of his apartment with a piece of charcoal.

The most striking feature in the scheme of decoration was an effigy of Charles Henry, suspended from a branch of lofty pine by a hempen rope. Underneath this motionless figure were written the words, in Charles Henry's characteristic handwriting :

*"Charles Henry Hawkins. Born 1st of
April, 1871.
Did for himself 1st April, 1892.
He was a DUM FOOL."*

Charles Henry got out of bed and surveyed the effigy with grim satisfaction. As he gazed, his sternness relaxed and a humorous twinkle took its place. "Well," he said with a sigh, "I've had a bully time, and no mistake. Westminster Abbey, Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, and the Tower—all the places I've read of at school—seen 'em all. They've been waiting for me ever since they were built, and I've seen 'em. What did I want to go and play cards' for with confidence men and bunko steerers, and dissipate my substance—four hundred dollars—in riotous living? I dunno. I 'spose it was part of the time. But I ain't got a red cent left. And I've had nothing to eat 'cept an orange for two days. I can't live on Buckingham Palace and Westminster Abbey, and chew a slice out of the Tower. No, sir, I've got to get something to eat, or peg out. I can't cable mother because nobody will lend me the money. Wonder if there is anything I *can* pawn?"

He felt his pockets in a perfunctory way as if

knowing what the result must be. "Waistcoat went last week," he said, addressing the effigy. "Last week. What am I to do now? There's a good deal in that Prodigal Son business of mother's. I reckon I'm emptier than *he* ever felt. But I *have* had a good time."

He dipped his curly head in a basin of water, and looked round for his boots. They were not to be seen. "I couldn't have pawned them in my sleep," he said, staggering against the wall. "I'm beginning to see double. Wouldn't mother crow over me if she could see me now?"

Suddenly his face brightened. "I promised her to get back a month ago, and she said if I didn't turn up on time she'd come and fetch me. Wonder if she'll do it. She'll have to come quick or there won't be enough of me to make a shadow."

He fell to counting the days. "She'd give me a week extra or a fortnight, and then rear up and come straight along," said Charles Henry reflectively. "Oh, yes, she'll come. But how am I to get along now? I've been to the Canadian consul, and he wouldn't do anything. Suppose I try the editor of *Montreal Scraps*. He's got an office down Fleet Street, for I passed it in my pride on a car one day. My! I'd give anything for a good breakfast. It's a dreadful thing to be hungry and have all your internal arrangements crying out for work. Let me see. I'd begin with hash and coffee, and wind up with biscuits and maple syrup and buckwheat cakes, with a few eggs,

and a hunk of cold venison, and some fowl, and cranberry jam and cream to finish. Then I'd begin all over again. And then? Well, then I'd try a fresh lot."

Charles Henry licked his lips in anticipation. They felt hot and dry. He drank a tumbler of water, but it made him shiver. Then he looked round for his boots, and some one knocked at the door.

Charles Henry reeled slightly as he opened the door. "It's you, is it?" he said to the grimy "slavey," a girl of about sixteen, with tangled red hair, and a profusion of blacklead and boot-polish impartially spread over her expressive features.

"Yus, it's me," the girl said. "Who else did yer think it was? The Parish Beadle? 'Ere's yer boots. Missus cribbed 'em when you wos asleep last night and toid me to lock 'em up."

Charles Henry received his boots with a forlorn attempt at jocosity. "She was afraid I'd spoil them with too much walking?" he asked in a whisper.

"Yus," said the slavey. "And she says to Mrs. Parker, wot lives next door, if you don't pay up to-morrer she's a-goin' to chuck yer."

"She's strong enough," said Charles Henry, sighing.

The slavey produced a big slice of bread and butter from under her apron. "You ain't a bad sort," she said. "Ketch 'old and tuck into it."

Charles Henry was very hungry, but he was also proud. "It's your breakfast, isn't it?" he said.



“WITH A DEXTEROUS MOVEMENT THE SLAVEY REPOSSESSED HERSELF OF CHARLES HENRY’S BOOTS.”

“No,” said the slavey, lying hard, “it’s for you. I ’ad corfee and sassidges hours and hours ago.”

“D’you think,” said Charles Henry—“d’you think,

you poor little coon, I'm going to rob you of the food you *do* get? Never. Don't lie like that."

With a dexterous movement the slavey repossessed herself of Charles Henry's boots. "If you don't eat," she said, "I'll lock 'em up again."

Charles Henry was forced to comply. He ate ravenously. "I should like to have the honour of shaking hands with you," he said solemnly when he had finished. "I have renewed my strength like the eagle."

"Orl right," said the slavey. "Your beak's gettin' very like a neagle's. Shake." And they shook.

It was only nine o'clock when Charles Henry left his lodging-house and started for Fleet Street. He passed the office of the *Montreal Scraps* and crawled on until he came to the Law Courts. There, he sank languidly down on a seat and watched the busy gardeners as they levelled turf and carted away heaps of stones. Plump pigeons strutted about under his feet. Their very fatness was an insult. Oh, if he could only get one in a pie—with rump steak and eggs and gravy! The warm sun came out and made him hungrier than before. With feeble steps he crawled back to the *Scraps* office and asked for the editor.

The great man had arrived, and was opening his letters. Charles Henry waited for half-an-hour, and was then admitted to the editorial sanctum. A red flush mounted to his brow. He, a free-born Canadian, had come to beg alms lest he should die of

hunger. Still he recalled the good time he had had. Nothing could take that away.

The great man was reading a daily paper. Charles Henry felt instinctively that his shrewd, handsome face belonged to a clever man. Somehow his tale went very lamely. Even to himself he couldn't help admitting that it was bad.

The editor wheeled round in his chair and confronted Charles Henry sternly. "See here," he said. "Do you expect me to believe all this? What did you come over here for?"

"Pleasure!" said Charles Henry lamely. "Pleasure! And I was a dum fool!"

"And you're strapped?"

"Clean broke, dead broke, stoney broke," idiomatically and comprehensively, if somewhat tautologically, answered Charles Henry. "I've come to ask you to help me. I'm hungry."

"What in the name of thunder do you mean by springing such a yarn on me?" inquired the editor. "Why don't you go to the Canadian consul?"

"I've been," said Charles Henry briefly. For the life of him he could not plead any more.

"See here," said the editor again. "I've helped fifty-seven people in the last five years who've come to me with tales as good as yours. If any one of them had had the decency to ever pay me back afterwards I'd have helped you. One man's riding in his carriage in Montreal now and passed me last time I

was over there without knowing me. You clear out. I'm busy."

Charles Henry's sense of humour had been rapidly educated during his European trip. "Seems those fifty-seven have been mighty rough on me," he said, moving towards the door. "Good day." And he went out.

The editor turned to his paper, but Charles Henry's thin, handsome face came between it and the words. Then he flung it down. "It *is* a terrible thing to be hungry," he said. "Gosh! he's right." He rushed to the door. "Hi, you, come back!" but Charles Henry had disappeared.

Charles Henry staggered heavily back to his garret. "I'll try to go to sleep," he said. "It will make the time pass quicker. It's a race between Death and mother; but I've had a good time anyhow; and when mother wades in she generally wins." He slept for an hour. Then he again awoke, with that terrible craving for food. "I've had enough of the world," he said to the effigy opposite. "If I once get back to the Four Corners I'll saw wood for the rest of my days. Who's there?" Some one had knocked.

"It's me," said a well-known voice.

Charles Henry dissembled his emotion, and tottered to the door. But Mrs. Hawkins could not dissemble hers. She drew him to her breast and cried over him, and patted his curly head, and nearly smothered him with kisses. Then she let him go,

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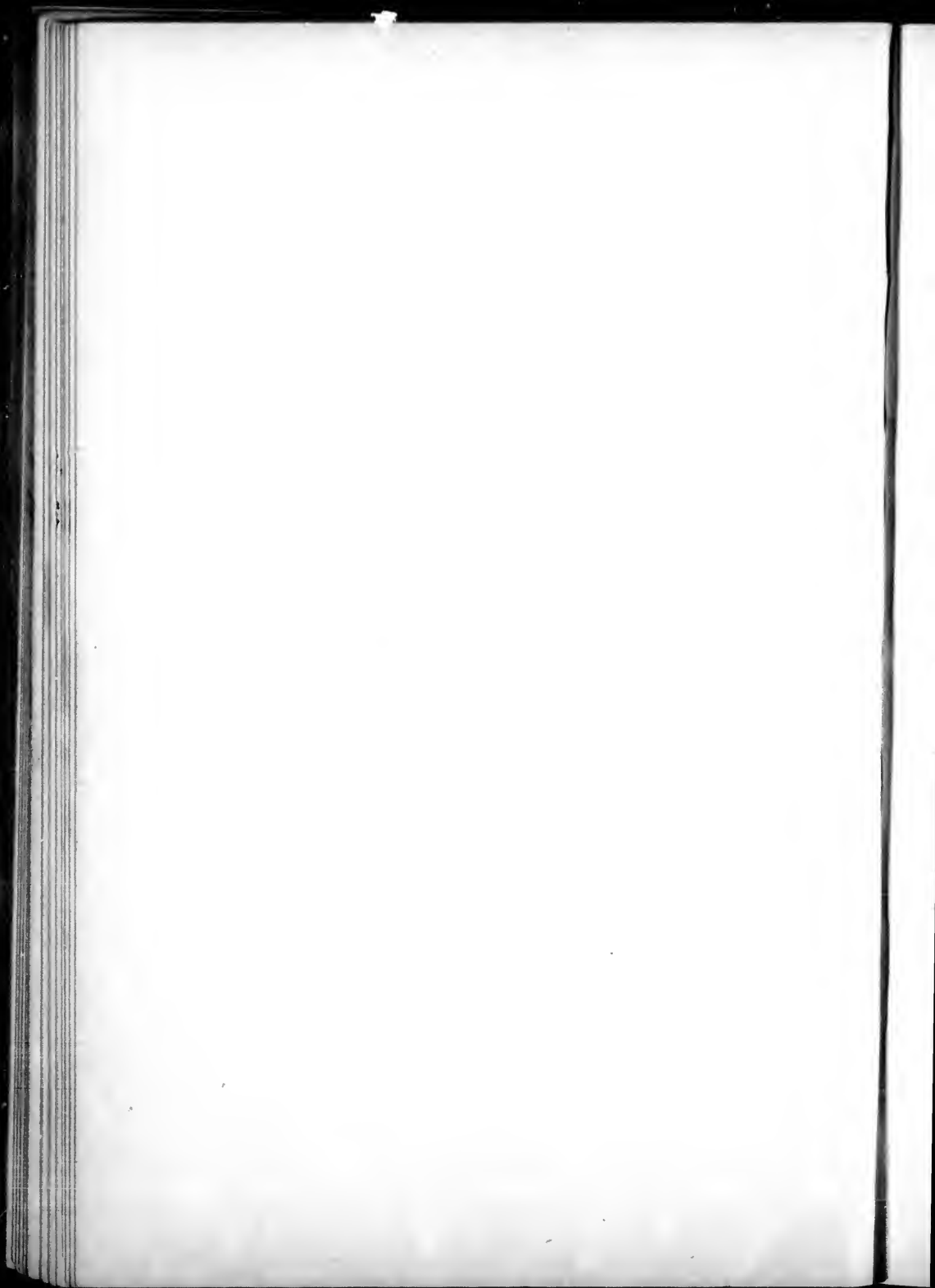
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"SHE DREW HIM TO HER BREAST AND CRIED OVER HIM."



and Phenisby Anne shyly advanced. "I told you I'd come and fetch you when I wanted you," was all she said; "and here I am."

Charles Henry, with one supreme heroic effort, momentarily staved off the pangs of hunger. "I *have* had a time," he said; "a bully time. Houses of Parliament, Madame Tussaud's, Salvation Army, the Tower, and Zoological Gardens. Sit down on the bed, mother, and I'll tell you all about it."

Phenisby Anne looked at his thin cheeks for a moment, as Mrs. Hawkins glanced round the barren den.

"Wal, you *are* a Prodigy Son!" Mrs. Hawkins began, ashamed to have let her feelings get ahead of her.

"Hush!" said Phenisby Anne. "You don't understand. It's the fashion in this country to get as high as you can, and the higher you get the more miserable you look. Charles Henry, you just go on telling your mother all about the sights, and I'll order dinner. Then we'll go round afterwards."

Phenisby Anne bustled about and achieved wonders. Ten minutes later, a table and two chairs appeared in front of the diminutive slavey. Twenty minutes later Charles Henry sat before a somewhat rude but plentiful meal, suffering exquisite tortures as he waited for his mother to commence. It was with difficulty that he could restrain himself from tearing the food with his fingers—from rending it like a wild

beast. Then he began to eat, and Phenisby Anne's tears ran down into the potatoes.

Mrs. Hawkins was too short-sighted to notice this gratuitous but temperate addition to the meal. "Seems to me with all that money you didn't ought to be lodged up here," she said. "I reckon 'tain't as good as our barn. How much have you got left?"

"More than two hundred dollars, I guess," said Phenisby Anne. "There's his purse lying on the bed half-open."

Mrs. Hawkins was mollified. "Sakes," she said; "if I didn't oughter 'pologise. Charles Henry, I'm proud of you. You're real level-headed. An' it ain't taken away your appetite neither."

Charles Henry tried to explain. Phenisby Anne put her finger to her lips, and Mrs. Hawkins never knew.

Phenisby Anne felt sorry for Charles Henry. Somewhere down in the depths of her shrewd intelligence lurked a similar desire to see the world, only she had not given it rein. Could she have put her feeling into words, she would have said that it is better to dream of what the world may be than to encounter it; better to live making it one vast illusion of fairy dwelling-places and beautiful and noble men and women than to come down to sordid realities and the squalor of everyday life; better to live beneath the shadow of the mighty Bush, with its pure, sweet pine odours, its waving ferns and trailing flowers, than to dwell high in a

garret the dusty panes of which shut out the blue sky. But Phenisby Anne knew not that there is something in the hearts of men—something which stirs the blood and fires the eye—something which leads them on to see and feel and endure all things. Some people call it curiosity ; others give it a nobler name. Be it what it may, it is part of that indescribable soul or mind which elevates us above the beast of the field, and makes us fare forth to see for ourselves the cloud-capped towers and lofty palaces of our race. Charles Henry had seen and felt ; he had squandered his substance in riotous living ; but he had enlarged his experiences—he had at length understood Phenisby Anne ; and at twenty-one to comprehend the complex workings of a woman's heart is a feat which few men achieve. Charles Henry "hankered" after the fleshpots no more. To saw wood for Phenisby Anne was happiness enough ; and when a man has grasped a truth like that, earth, air, and sky are his attendant ministers, who do his bidding and teach him all the joy of life.





FEELERS OF LOVE.

By ADELAIDE M. CAMERON.


“ Shall those smiles be called
Feelers of love? . . .
Such are they ;—and the same are tokens, signs,
Which when the appointed season hath arrived,
Joy as her holiest language shall adopt.”

WORDSWORTH.



HE was not a pretty old lady, certainly !
Not even an attractive-looking old lady,
soft, and plump, and motherly, as well-
conditioned old ladies should be ! No ;
the mistress of number twenty, so well
known by sight to the dwellers in that
London street, repelled rather than attracted the sym-
pathies of those who, passing by her door day after
day, and glancing up almost unconsciously as they
did so, saw always at the same window on the ground-
floor, the same figure seated in the same arm-chair.

For it was the figure of a woman, thin and spare,
with hard, unbending face ; a face on which age, and



care, and disappointment had set their mark ruthlessly and unerringly, without apparently having carried in their train the soft and healing touches of time, and patience, and submission.

It was a tired-out face, unilluminated by a smile ; a face that was the reflection of a jaded soul within worn out by long broodings over life's sorrows, sorrows bounded by the narrow limits of self alone.

Sometimes the neighbours saw her knitting, now and then, perhaps reading. But if so, the eyes were raised ever and anon from the book before her and allowed to wander aimlessly up and down the street, scanning the faces of the passers-by indeed, but in an idle desultory sort of way, as though they did so more from the force of long-acquired habit than from the expectation of any definite object to be gained thereby.

Except on Sundays, when she drove regularly, morning and evening, to the Dissenting chapel round the corner, she was rarely seen to cross the threshold of her door, and from week's end to week's end hardly a caller disturbed its quiet. Beggars had learnt that it was useless to raise the knocker or ring the bell of number twenty ; organ-grinders hugged their non-keys closer as they passed the house from whose windows no pennies were ever thrown ; and the muffin-men rang on their cheerful way without so much as a glance at the dwelling which could remain so utterly and persistently callous to the winter comforts of their tray.

Sometimes the busy doctor from the large house opposite ran quickly up the steps; but this was not often, for he had learnt never to come unasked, and chronic rheumatism calls more for patience than for physic. Now and again, too, the little clergyman from round the corner paid a pastoral visit to this lonely old sheep; but the visit was generally a very short one, and he always came away from it with a pained and baffled expression on his usually bright and cheery face.

"Not yet, Hester; still—patience, patience," he would say as she let him out; and Hester would sigh and shake her head sadly as she returned to the old lady within, who, in spite of soured heart and smileless lips, was still "Miss Anne" to her, the "Miss Anne" of half a century ago, and dear to her for the sake of many a fond association with the days that were long since past and gone. Her mistress had been handsome, and sought after, and smiling then; but the "then" was an old story now, a part of that far-off time before the light of her life had gone out, and joy had vanished from her heart. "Ah," thought Hester sometimes, "was it really God's hand that had extinguished that light? God's or Miss Anne's?"

As I have said, the tall house over the way belonged to the busy doctor, who seemed to possess the faculty of turning night into day with impunity. The bright face of his one little daughter was often to be seen at its windows, tending her pet plants, chirping to her birds, or—let us confess it—gazing

across frankly and fearlessly at her opposite neighbour ; for Joyce was honestly interested in number twenty.

Number twenty would sometimes watch the child for a few minutes too, but in an abstracted, indifferent fashion, and with as little interest as she watched most of the objects which appeared on her limited horizon.

Hester, being sociably inclined, knew something of her neighbours' affairs, and would occasionally let drop a word or two as to the ways of the doctor's household, but she might have saved herself the trouble so far as any interest her mistress evinced in the matter was concerned.

"Lights lit in the nursery, Miss Joyce must be going to bed ; they keep sensible hours with that child," remarked the old maid as she drew the heavy curtains closer one late October evening. But the attempt at conversation ending as usual in a monologue, she gave it up as hopeless and merely poked the fire to a brighter blaze before leaving the room.

Meantime, in the pleasant nursery of the house opposite, wrapped in her cosy blue dressing-gown, a tiny maiden was busily toasting her dainty toes while Jane brushed out the long, fair hair.

"Jane?" after a second or two of deep thought.

"Yes, Miss Joyce."

"I suppose you know a good many things, don't you, Jane?"



"TOASTING HER DAINY TOES WHILE JANE BRUSHED OUT THE LONG, FAIR HAIR."

"As many as most, miss, I fancy," replied the other modestly.

"Well, then, just tell me this, what's the meaning

of 'show yourself friendly'? Father said to-day that if people want to have friends they must show themselves friendly! Now what did he mean by that?"

"Bless the child! what will she want to know next?" exclaimed Jane, gaining time before committing herself to the perils of a reply.

"Well?" impatiently, as Joyce ran her fingers across the wires of the high nursery fender.

"Oh, I suppose it means pretty much what it says, Miss Joyce; if folks want friends they must just remind other folk that they're there sometimes, not hide themselves away. It's a saying, you know, miss, a sort of proverb like 'Æsop's Fables,' same as 'Out of sight, out of mind!'" and with pardonable pride in her powers of explanation Jane triumphantly knotted the ribbon at the end of the long plait, and began invitingly to turn down the sheets of the dainty cot.

Joyce obediently prepared to lie down in it but, considering the lucidity of the other's reasoning, her small face still wore a strangely puzzled expression.

"It hardly seems quite clear even now, does it, Jane?" she suggested politely, "because you see it was Mrs. Tyrol father was talking about, and she does show herself; she is always at that downstairs window. But never mind, Jane, it doesn't really matter. Good-night," and the blue eyes closed sleepily as the fair head nestled down among the pillows.

II.

THE doctor was starting on his rounds one sunny autumn afternoon, and the little figure in its green velvet pelisse that was, by way of special treat, to accompany him, noticed with keen satisfaction that the landau being open, they would get a good view of the world and its ways as they went along.

"It's not worth my while to get in, Joy," said her father, as he tucked the rug comfortably about her. "I'm due over the way first," and he flew quickly across the street, leaving Joyce and the landau to follow in more dignified fashion.

"Mrs. Tyrol isn't at her window to-day," she observed to herself. "Poor thing, I suppose she has got the measles or something, and father is keeping her in bed. I hope it isn't the mumps! Mumps hurt so. Anyway, it's rather hard on her, for she can't very well be expected to show herself friendly when she's made to keep out of everybody's sight like this."

However, it couldn't be helped, she supposed, and, accepting the inevitable, Joyce proceeded to turn her attention to something else.

Really, London streets were very delightful! Always so much to be seen in them! There were the two sweepers at the corner, for instance, the big brother who wore her father's old clothes and had fits, and the tiny brother with the merry face who did all the sweeping and kept the business together when the

other was at home having a fit. Joyce wondered what a fit looked like? It was rather disobliging of the big brother never to have had one just as she was passing and could have got such a good view of it! Then there was the little old man who sold chickweed, and announced the fact in a chant so like the one they used to the "Magnificat" on Sundays. And there were those milk-boys, horrid things, who barked at people's pet dogs, and tempted them to bark back again, till the neighbours complained of the poor creatures as a nuisance and hinted at poison, while all the time it was the milk-boys who deserved the poison! Oh yes, the street was very full of interest!

Why, surely this couldn't be father back already! He had hardly had time to feel Mrs. Tyrol's pulse or look at her tongue. No, it was someone else coming out of number twenty, an elderly gentleman, short and stout, and merry and rosy; a clergyman, though not one from the church Joyce went to.

He smiled as his eye fell on the little lady nestling so cosily amongst the furs, and, mindful of her manners, she smiled back again, and putting out her hand hoped he was quite well.

"Quite well, thank you, Miss Joyce. You see, I know your name better than you do mine. I've just seen your father in there, and he told me I should find you outside."

"Have you been calling on Mrs. Tyrol?" enquired Joyce, with interest.

"Yes, till your father came in and turned me out, reminding me that it was his turn now."



"HOPED HE WAS QUITE WELL."

"She isn't very ill, is she?"

Ill? Bless you, no, my dear! Almost herself again now. Why, is Mrs. Tyrol a great friend of

yours?" he asked, smiling down at the eager little face.

"Well, you would perhaps hardly call her a *great* friend," Joyce admitted, "because I've never spoken a word to her yet, but I pass her window or see her from over the way so often that I do seem to know her pretty well too. Sometimes she looks at me, but generally she turns away her head and only lets me see her back hair. Once I wanted to nod to her, but Jane wouldn't let me; she said Mrs. Tyrol looked as if she might bite. Do *you* think she would bite?"

"No, little woman, I don't." He was silent for a minute, thinking; then he said, "Miss Joyce, I want you to do me a favour. The next time that you see more of Mrs. Tyrol than just her back hair, will you promise me to give her a nod and a bright smile too? Never mind if she does not smile again at first; go on and see what happens. The smiles of little children sometimes carry messages from God, you know; isn't that a nice thought? Ah, here comes your father! Well, good-bye, tiny Joyce, and, remember, I shall count on your promise."

III.

SEVERAL weeks had passed away. The lingering glories of autumn had long since vanished. Winter, in the full zenith of his power, held sway.

For it was the time when, in the bright homes of

little children, joyful meetings and merry laughter most abound ; when even in the quiet places where sad folks dwell, sorrow is gently laid aside and bidden for a space be still. A time of blessed softening to many a long-hardened heart ; a time when, led by the gentle guiding of the Christ-child, many a far-off wanderer turns towards home.

Outside the snow fell thick and fast. The sweepers at the corner had long since given up their crossing in despair and trudged homewards ; whilst the policeman in the square near by tramped quickly up and down his beat and thought hard thoughts of his profession.

Meanwhile, in her fast-darkening room, before a glowing fire, Mrs. Tyrol sat alone, as usual, alone and thinking.

Her life was always a lonely one. If questioned or condoled with on the subject she would probably have answered that such had long ago been her choice, and that she felt no desire to have it otherwise now. And yet somehow this evening the loneliness was asserting itself with a definite persistency altogether strange. What could be wanting in her life to-night that had not been wanting there for many and many a long year past ? What was the meaning of this new sense of loss that oppressed her now as she sat, a lonely woman by her solitary fire, this snowy Christmas Eve ?

All vexed and impatient with her weakness as she was, the mistress of number twenty had nevertheless

for the last few days caught herself ever and anon glancing up almost involuntarily, and yet with a kind of restless expectancy, at the house over the way, from which of late no bright-faced little figure had emerged to smile and nod at her with unfailing regularity, undiscouraged, apparently, when all her friendly overtures met with little or no response, clearly delighted when they won for her the merest nod of recognition in return.

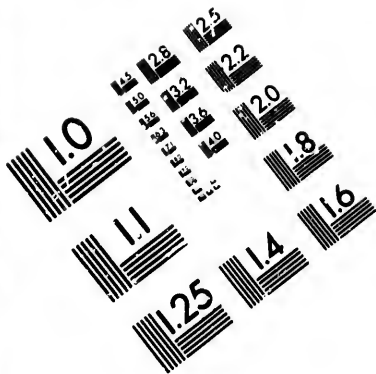
At first these same overtures had greatly astonished their stern recipient; she had even condemned the child as forward and impertinent. Gradually, however, she had come to take a sort of grim amusement in the daily pantomime, and even at rare intervals to bestow a short nod in acknowledgment thereof.

And now for several days past the nods and smiles had been withdrawn altogether. Now also, for some strange, inexplicable reason, Mrs. Tyrol was feeling lonely, very, very lonely.

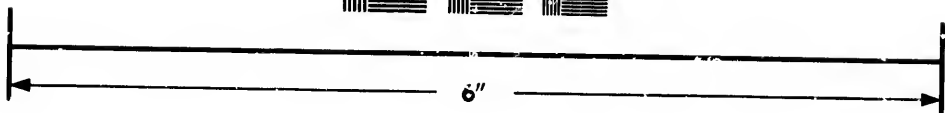
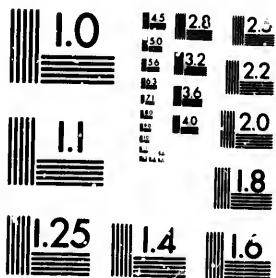
Darker and darker grew the room, sadder and yet more sad her thoughts. Presently she laid aside her knitting and sat still, gazing into the fire and thinking, ever thinking.

Not of the present! Oh no, the empty present was too desolate for that! Not of the future, for why anticipate what must be but a sadder and drearier present? Not even of the now far-distant days of her early widowhood, or of the time before her one little girl-child left her. No, for to-night her thoughts, steadily refusing all guidance or con-





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trol from her, chose only to dwell on the pages of a story old now by some twenty years and more, but whose dark chapters still stood out distinct and clear against the dim background of time.

Had she really been too hard on him, that son whom, God knows, she had loved more than all else on earth besides? Was it true, as they said, that her harshness rather than his sin had driven him from her side? What right had they to hint that the stern Calvinistic upbringing she herself had known should have been softened and relaxed for him? Over-strict, did they call her? Well, and if she had refused to have his noisy friends about her house or the smell of smoke within her walls, what of that? And how could she have refrained from condemning cards and play-going as the evil things they were, and yet herself have remained guiltless in the matter? And then she shuddered as she recalled the scene her horrified eyes had witnessed when, in the grey dawn of a winter's morning—a Christmas morning too—the babe she had borne, the boy she had loved and prayed for, the man from whose future she had hoped so much, reeled helplessly upstairs, too stupefied and confused to comprehend Hester's beseeching whispers to him to be quiet, that she—his mother—might not learn his shame.

Yet now, they said, forgive. Nay more—write, they urged, and call him home. The clergyman close by had, with some difficulty and labour, found

out his address ; the boy had not fallen past forgiveness, he pleaded, the man need not shame her now. But surely, surely, they expected too much ! Had she not watched for him year after year from that window, and watched in vain ? Should forgiveness be tendered unsought ? Ought not the first step towards reconciliation to come from the sinner rather than the sinned against ?

Just as she reached this sad point in her musings, there came all at once floating down the quiet, snow-clad street, sung in a woman's quavering voice to a well-remembered air, the words of an old familiar song, and the burden of that song was all of peace and mercy, of goodwill and forgiveness.

The words fell with a clear and startling distinctness on at least one listener's ear. Mrs. Tyrol moved impatiently in her chair. Such old-fashioned words ! She must have heard them some hundreds of times before, why should they haunt or trouble her now ? And yet to-night, try as she would to get rid of them, they kept ringing on over and over again in her ears, returning always with such a steady and untiring persistency that she could not choose but listen.

The singer's voice had long since died away in the distance, but the echo of the old song remained behind, and the soft whisper of its refrain was still the same, "peace and mercy, goodwill and forgiveness."

IV.

CHRISTMAS Day dawned bright and clear.

Hester's mistress had not rested well last night, and she came into her sitting-room this morning looking tired and jaded. What did the joy of Christmas mean to her? What blessing could the day have in store for one so lonely and sad as she?

Just then her eye fell on a table made bright by the beauty of a large bunch of late chrysanthemums. How foolish of Hester! Had she not forbidden her to waste money on flowers? But the latter, on being questioned, said—

“Miss Joyce sent them over early this morning with this card and her love, ma'am. She has been in the house for a day or two with cold, but is to be out again this afternoon, and hopes to see you at the window as usual.”

Mrs. Tyrol took the card and looked at it. A brilliantly painted angel with impossible wings, and underneath the words, “Peace and goodwill.”

Hardly glancing at the flowers she turned away her head so that the other saw nothing of a strange new light that had come into her mistress's eyes, could guess nothing of a yet stranger feeling that was struggling at her heart.

By-and-by she sat down in her old seat by the window, and to-day her eyes did not wander up and down the street, but watched closely though furtively the door of the doctor's house opposite. Before very

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“BLEW A KISS TO THE LONELY OLD WOMAN OVER THE WAY.”

long it opened, and out from it there tripped the doctor's little daughter, forming, in her bright scarlet cloak, a warm spot of colour against the white setting of the snow-world all round.

Pausing ere she descended the steps, she glanced quickly across the road, nodded, smiled; then, moved by some divinely guided instinct, suddenly raised one small hand to her rosy lips and blew a kiss to the lonely old woman over the way.

And then a wonderful thing took place. Across that hard, unbending countenance, over those stern, repressive lips, there broke all at once a smile, sweet, and soft, and gentle as little Joyce's own, lighting up with a strange radiance the tired-out face, making the worn features almost beautiful again. Then, the firm lips suddenly quivering, Mrs. Tyrol rose hastily and left the window.

But some one else besides Joyce had caught a vision of that smile.

Ever since early morning a man, more weary and worn-looking than old, had been haunting that street and neighbourhood, never very far from number twenty, yet unwilling apparently to approach quite close to its door, or to be seen from its windows.

But just at the moment when Joyce appeared, the man, moving with slow uncertain steps, ventured somewhat nearer to the house. Very hesitatingly, very doubtfully, he glanced towards the window where a sad woman sat alone; then, he too catching sight of the radiance of that sudden smile, saw the stern

face become soft and gentle, and hesitating no longer, a wanderer passed quickly up the steps of home, knocked, and was admitted.

A little later, Joyce, gazing across the darkening street to the fire-lit room of her friend, cried out—

“Why, mother, the old lady has got a visitor at last, and I do believe he is saying his prayers with his head in her lap.”

But the eyes of the doctor's wife were dim, as drawing near, she gently pulled the blind down.





TOTTIE.

A New Zealand Episode.

By HERBERT GUTHRIE-SMITH.



REMEMBER well the first occasion on which I met the father of Miss Mary Macpherson, for such was "Tottie's" real name.

It was in February, and we had been working from early morning weaning the lambs. Clouds of dust rising thick in the breezeless air had blotted out invidious distinctions of colour, and Maori and white man were alike brown.

Out of the cloudless sky of real New Zealand blue the sun shone with fierce heat, the wool of the sheep was burning to the touch, the dogs panted with dripping tongues, and the men felt to the full the primal curse—"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

In spite of the great heat, the sheep ran through the yards well, and by dint of shouting, and the

various grotesque and forceful movements necessary to frighten sheep, the mob was finished before noon.

The "billy" was then boiled and we sat down for lunch beneath the shade of a huge willow long ago planted by the early missionaries. The dogs too enjoyed the cessation of work. According to their various natures, they coiled themselves in shady spots or supplicated, with twisting of body and wagging of tail, for bones, watching their masters' movements with slobbering mouths, restless feet, and agitated ears. Pipes were next produced; tobacco was cut from junks and the pared chips rubbed to a suitable fineness between the palms.

The shepherds, leaning against the willow's wrinkled bole, bragged of their dogs, or discussed that subject which in pastoral communities takes precedence of the weather—sheep.

The talk proceeded to runs, thence to their owners, and finally I heard my new neighbour, Mr. Donald Macpherson, mentioned. He had acquired his run through a brother's death, and was reported among the shepherds to be ignorant of even the rudiments of ovine knowledge. I gathered from their conversation that, by reason of this very ignorance, he was likely to be easily convinced that his neighbours were bent on "having him." "Having," euphemistically expresses such advantages as may allowably, in pastoral ethics, be taken of a "new hand."

However, there was other work to do than listen to shepherds' chatter; ashes were knocked out of pipes

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“THE SHEPHERDS BRAGGED OF THEIR DOGS OR DISCUSSED SHEEP.”

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and the willow's pleasant shade was once more changed for the noonday heat.

The weaners had to be driven to their new paddock, and as there were about two thousand in the flock a couple of shepherds were sent on to prevent them spreading too widely while being counted out. The yard gates were then thrown open and the sheep spying green grass and liberty pressed to escape ; the counter, as each hundred passed, sang out "tally" to the "tally" keeper, who nicked it down on a rail or stick, thus losing no time.

As we set out with our rather troublesome mob, the sharp-sensed dogs barked at a stranger on a grey horse. He was coming down the clay cutting which in our district represents the high road of that Royal Lady whom the natives term Queen to Wike-toria.

Shortly after, when I got back to the yards, the stranger had arrived and was with the shepherds inspecting a crushed object which had been lifted from the drafting pens to the larger side yards, and which I guessed was a smothered sheep.

It was our new neighbour, as Scottish as his name, shrewd; cold outwardly lest the world should deem he had a heart and work on it, energetic and "dour." He had graduated in the true colonial school and had taken honours as ferryman, bullock-puncher, market-gardener, splitter, sawyer, and in half-a-dozen other employments. He was about fifty years of age, bronzed and grizzled, yet upright and stronger

than many a younger man. He rode an upstanding grey hack, and was followed by two collies, pup and patriarch, neither of which I judged to be of much use.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Macpherson," I said. "Will you ride on to the house, or will you wait until this small lot is drafted?" I pointed to an odd lot of woollies, strangers, &c. He preferred to wait. I glanced then at the dead sheep more closely. It happened, as luck would have it, to belong to Macpherson. "Hullo, your sheep!" I exclaimed, in surprise.

"Yes," he said, taking a long look at me, "my sheep."

There were still in the yards a number of undocked weaners similar to the one smothered. I turned to Scottie—our head shepherd—and said, "Catch any one of these Mr. Macpherson chooses and put his ear-mark on it; he can take it to-morrow with his other sheep." He had come for some that had got through a broken fence. Macpherson nodded assent, and with characteristic deliberation chose one—not the worst either, I noticed. However, I was justly responsible for my shepherd's carelessness, and besides was anxious to keep on friendly terms with my new neighbour. A few minutes later we rode over to the house, and a swim in the cool lake was a pleasant termination to a hot day's work.

After dinner, while we smoked the pipe of peace with that enjoyment which only hard work can pro-

duce, I was glad to discover that my companion was not a bad fellow at all, but that as he was tenacious of impressions once received, I might have had on very small grounds an exceedingly formidable person to deal with.

We talked at first on the usual subjects of sheep-farmers, turnips, lung-worm, the price of stock, the frozen meat trade, the respective merits of steel and galvanized wire. I discovered that he knew on these entertaining topics little of practical knowledge. His theories were gathered from English works on stock and farming, and were quite inapplicable to colonial surroundings. He was more at home speaking of his orchard and a vineyard he had just planted, but the soft spot in his heart was for his little girl, Tottie. She was about ten years of age, he informed me, and was about to go to school for the first time next month. He described with that eloquence that comes from the heart, how dear she was to him, how upon his return she would come running to meet him, and all her lovable ways and words. He said to me,

"You are a young man, and will be thinking that there is no love like that a man bears his sweetheart, but take an old fellow's word for it, no man loves his best until he loves a child. You will be coming down our way some of these days and we'll show you our little girl." There was an interval of silence; then he asked rather suddenly, pointing to a photograph of the girl to whom I was engaged,

“That will be your sweetheart’s picture?” He continued, “She’s bonnie and good, too, I’m sure; my own little lass has just got these very eyes.” We bade each other a very friendly good-night, and I determined to ride over some Sunday and see Tottie before she went to school.

Next morning Macpherson’s sheep were run into the yards by Scottie, and after an early breakfast I went over to see him safely off. My overnight’s doubt of the value of my friend’s dogs and of his own shepherd-craft was more than realised by the result. Instead of sending away his “leading” dog—the grey-muzzled old fellow—before the sheep were let go, he opened the gates. The sheep—mostly wild merino wethers—of course bolted for their lives; then, too late, he started his old dog who, after the manner of his race, finding he could not immediately overtake the sheep, yelped with exasperation and anxiety, thereby causing them to run even faster.

The pup, half broken, could not be restrained, but followed his companion. Finally Macpherson galloped off also, the whole episode being greatly enjoyed by the grinning shepherds and a couple of packmen who were loading up their horses. When I got over the first rise, however, the old dog had got them safely and the pup was running round him, licking his chops and evidently congratulating him on his extraordinary aptitude.

The sheep had spread to graze and were all there. It is, as perhaps the world in general may not know,

one of the most gross breaches of pastoral etiquette to offer to drive another man's mob for him. Of course therefore I could not volunteer my services until Macpherson himself expressed doubts of his capability to get the sheep over our ranges, rough with fern and scrub.

This he did, however. I took the sheep in hand, and after a troublesome drive we arrived safely at the boundary creek. There—sheep are like cats in their dislike to wet their feet—we had enough trouble to excuse in some degree the warmth of his thanks. He would not hear either of my not going home with him when so near. We rode on therefore on excellent terms with

each other. His undisguised admiration for my old yellow "leading" dog, "Spy," and "Mac," the best dog ever I had—let me sing their praises,



SCOTTIE.

am not I also a man and a shepherd?—had won my heart, for nothing is more gratifying to a shepherd's vanity than praise of his collies. We rode for a couple of hours along the gravelly, limestone creek till we approached the homestead. There the dogs set up their usual clamorous welcome. Macpherson's house stood in a fertile strath, through which the pretty stream meandered in long bends. From the verandah overlooking the small garden, bright with flowers, could be obtained a glimpse of the sea, and the thunder of the surf in heavy weather echoed far up among the green hills. Here and there weeping willows had been planted, and their leafy tresses trailed to the very water's edge. Our dogs, preceding us, splashed across the broad pebbly crossing, and shortly afterwards Tottie herself appeared in the garden. She was looking up at the zigzag track by which her father usually came home. He cooe'd, and she came running down the gravel path, and this was where I first saw my little girl.

I do not know that she was beautiful, except with such beauty as we confer upon those we love, and none could long know Tottie without loving her. She was rather tall for her age, with an upright, lithe little figure. She had on bronzed-clocked stockings, and I think wore a white frock, cool and summery with ribbons of some blossom colour, peach, medlar, or almond. My companion, who had quite forgotten me in his greeting to his little

daughter, now introduced me as his last night's host, and Tottie gravely welcomed me to Aranui. That evening it was pretty to see the old man's courtesy to his child ; he was evidently wrapped up in her, and no doubt but for her own sweet disposition she would have been utterly spoiled.

The previous evening her father had casually mentioned that she was fond of dominoes. When the evening meal was over, therefore, I proposed to her that we should play. She assented, and whilst the game proceeded I gathered from the little bush maiden how she passed her days. She rode up and down the valley, she told me, sometimes with her father but more often by herself. An observant little creature, she knew where the bush birds built, and the habits and names of the native flowers. She promised to show me the round white eggs of the native kingfisher ; a Maori urchin had taken the nest—probably a second one—from a hole in the river bank just before we arrived.

During the evening I was much struck with the absence in her of that egoism common to nearly all children. I remember after we had played a couple of games, unlike a child preoccupied with self, she inquired if I would not rather talk to her father, and evidently assuming after a third game I should be merely continuing to play out of complaisance, she gravely put away her ivory dominoes. "Thank you very much for having played with me," she said. She then took a book and read quietly till the clock

struck half-past eight, her bed-time. After kissing her father she put up a rosy little mouth to me also, and I felt my lips once more touched by a child's.

Next morning Macpherson helped me to catch my pony ; he said at parting, " My little girl likes you and I like you ; it does not look now as if I could ever help you ; I hope you will never need it, but ' I hae seen their coggie fou.' " He quoted Burns's lines with considerable feeling. " If ever that day comes, which God forbid, ask for Donald Macpherson." We shook hands warmly. I kissed Tottie, who presented me with a bunch of roses, and rode back thinking to myself how often kind hearts lie under rough speech and rude appearances.

When I got home, I put the flowers into a tin, meaning to keep them ; our Chinese cook, however, Ah Lee, a practical man not given to sentiment, and short of these useful utensils, threw them out next morning.

Our run was being broken in then, the bush felled, the swamps drained, and great blocks of fern country crushed by sheep. Our time was therefore very fully occupied, and what society we saw on the place was of the roughest kind. With the exception of the Macphersons, our only neighbours were two young fellows whom I had known at home. They were like ourselves, toilsomely occupied in transforming scrub, swamp, and fern into grass. Sometimes we would all ride down together to Aranui on Sundays.



"GOOD-NIGHT."

There, what I had feared had to some degree come to pass. My old friend had quarrelled on all sorts of petty details with his neighbours. The splitters, he asseverated, must be taking his sheep, they had six fat dogs and nothing to feed them on except

empty sardine tins. The mailman passing through the run left the gates open or threw them off their hinges; the drovers, travelling with mobs of sheep, took more than their fair share of grass. In fact, he had filled his life with petty angers and annoyances.

As Tottie grew older, however, a change came over the little valley by the sea. Gradually neighbours learnt to laugh and allow something for the brusque old Scotsman. A few words from Tottie subdued the recalcitrant mailman; she visited the splitters' camp on Sunday and discovered that their dogs were doing good service in keeping down the wild pigs. While we were there two of the men came in with buckets of honey taken from a hollow rata-tree. She accepted a portion of the amber comb, and afterwards, in some friendly form or another, returned the gift, and there was peace in the land. The drovers, if they still allowed their sheep to spread too widely, at any rate learnt to control their tongues. In such ways did Tottie bring peace and good-will to her little world. Little by little all we young fellows learnt to meet on Sundays at Aranui, and though I dare say at the time we did not fully realise it, yet the pleasure of presenting some spray of scarlet mistletoe or wreath of clematis to Tottie was a principal reason for our appearance. In the afternoons of those pleasant days we nearly always walked down to the cool sea-shore, when the tide was out along the base of the high limestone crags that faced the ocean.

To the busy world at home, where men lived fuller lives, it may seem strange, yet these strolls along the beach, where the shells looked whiter in the wet brown sand, were events in our narrow and contracted lives. There was no ladies' society in the neighbourhood, and the sweet refining influence of this little maiden no doubt recalled pleasant memories of home. Perhaps in part we loved Tottie for these memories which she awoke. Beside her once more perhaps we trod the heathery uplands where birches grow and bog myrtle scents the air, or strolled in dewy English lanes where nightingales build in the tall hedgerow weeds, and black sleek cattle chew their cud among deep anthered grass.

Our last Sunday with Tottie I remember well. It was in August, and only down by the sea were the first signs of spring visible. The thistles were still spread winter-flat on the damp earth yet unwarmed. The plumes of the toi-toi grass were wrinkled and pink, the clematis hung out no white flag to spring. Only the leafless kowhai bloomed, dull yellow in the sun. Across the firmament white fleecy clouds sailed lazily; their shadows chased each other slowly over pine-green bush and brighter grass; one or two earliest lambs bleated faintly on the hill-sides.

We sauntered along the rocky coast, where only a narrow riband of sand barred sea from cliff. We lingered long enjoying the calm of the sea and the constant ripple of the tide, and only when the short twilight began to fall slowly retraced our steps. As

we neared home, passing the laurel hedge, a brown bird glided out with the silence that seeks to conceal. and Tottie, ever observant, cried, "Oh, I am sure its nest is here." We searched accordingly, and found it; it was that of an English thrush, and greatly to Tottie's joy contained three blue eggs, dotted with jet at the thicker end. She asked me how long it would be before the eggs would hatch. I told her, and she replied, "Ah, that will be when I come back." She was going on a short visit to Auckland.

None of us ever saw our little friend again. About ten days afterwards my partner and myself, riding through the run, met young Fitzgerald coming down the long cutting. It was mail day, so we sang out the native welcome, "Haere Mai, Haere Mai," and cantered forward to meet him. Before we got up, however, we felt there was something wrong, his face but too vividly expressed bad news. "Good God, Fitz, what is it?" we cried together. "Tottie" was all he could say. "Tottie!" we exclaimed incredulously. "Is she ill?" He could not form his words; the tears that come so painfully to a man rolled down his sun-browned face. It was a deeper grief than hope allows. Our little girl had died in Auckland. We should never again see her bright little face, or hear her gentle voice. As we rode slowly homewards we heard what little Fitzgerald had to tell us. In town he had met the old man, who had wrung his hand and asked him to let us know. The funeral

was to-morrow at three o'clock. The bar at the river mouth had fortunately been open and the tug had been able to come in with the coffin, which had been brought down from Auckland. Every one had been most kind; the natives had offered their assistance to carry it had the bar been blocked. Such sympathy as man can give to man had been afforded. Next day we all rode down from the run, curiously, perhaps, dressed for a funeral, but with heavier hearts, I dare say, than black coats often hide.

The old man met us at the crossing by the willow-trees; we shook hands silently with him. He led us into the little sitting-room which had so often been brightened by the presence of our little girl. The coffin lay on the table, and beside it was a pair of worsted socks and half-finished carpet slippers, last evidences of Tottie's loving thoughtfulness. He pointed to them. "She was making them for my birthday. I shall never wear them now, I shall never wear them now."

Speaking a few words at a time, he told us she had died very suddenly from some illness incidental to her age. He had hardly arrived in time to say more than good-bye. He told us how, thinking of other's feelings to the very end, she had expressed sorrow for the trouble she gave, and lastly, when her voice failed, smiled her thanks. Not very far from the sea, close by a clump of native bush, her grave had been prepared. Walking slowly we carried the coffin along the winding track; we passed the laurels

where the thrush had built, and recalling Tottie's words; "Ah, that will be when I come back," I raised the leafy screen; the nest was gone, only some broken shells remained upon the ground. Little had changed in the fortnight since last we had been there, and every step recalled the happier past. Only a fuller spring had come; the golden dandelions bloomed on hollow slender stalks, the rye-grass gleamed, and the thistles, no longer flat, shot forth their prickly spikes. The air was sweet with the bush flowers' scent, birds sang, and multitudes of lambs were bleating to each other across the narrow valley. On such a day, so calm that we could hear from the sea the wash and bubble-break of lapping ebb and flow, we buried her.

As the earth was reverently filled in, the beautiful service for the dead blended in our ears with the sounds of May, of young life and happy growth.

Over the lonely grave is erected a marble cross. It is fenced off from the intruding cattle with strong rough rails. The few words graved thereon were chosen by her father.

"MARY MACPHERSON,
AGED THIRTEEN YEARS AND THREE MONTHS.
ERECTED BY HER FRIENDS AT
RANGIORA AND ARANUI."

The months slipped by and grew to years. Man in this brief span hastens to forget his griefs—and very soon we ceased to speak of Tottie, but sometimes,

even yet, curiously intruding amid thoughts of pleasure, ambition, and business, with the scent of the rangiora's bloom or the sound of soft sea music through the leafy trees, come back to me Tottie's bright face and gentle voice. At such moments, in spite of the mist in my eyes, a child of the fancy rises before my sight, and I see in unchangeable beauty and youth the little bush maiden again.



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MISS MALONEY'S PUBLIC-HOUSE.

By BLANCHE ATKINSON.



T often happens in this world that a square peg finds itself in a round hole. Miss Maloney, as she sat in the bar parlour of a low public-house, felt that this was sadly true in her case. She knew that she and her surroundings were incongruous. She knew that she could never learn to correspond with her environment. For she was young and pretty, and loved purity and refinement. When, distracted by troubled thoughts, she looked up from the volume of Matthew Arnold's *Essays*, which she was trying to read, her eyes drooped again quickly, and an expression of disgust gathered on her pale face. For she saw a dull, dirty room, square and ugly. Black horsehair-covered chairs stood round a square table which was littered over with *Sporting Chronicles* and *Shipping Gazettes*—tobacco- and beer-stained. There was a vulgarly coloured wall-paper, with publicans'

advertisements adorning it. A smell of mingled tobacco and drink permeated the dingy place ; sounds of rough voices and coarse words filled her ears, and all the while her heart was aching for the "Sweetness and Light" which had hitherto brightened her guarded life.

Only a few weeks before this, Miss Maloney's father had sat contentedly at that table, his glass before him, his Nymys, Bardolphs, and Pistols around him. Then, what they called conviviality had reigned in the now-deserted parlour. The table had been banged with applauding fists until the glasses danced, at the conclusion of song or speech. The company had grinned and roared over coarse jokes, or the stories of shady tricks on the turf or in the billiard-room. They had registered bets in dirty dog-eared books with earnest solemnity ; had backed horses and prize-fighters with all the enthusiasm which Englishmen consecrate to sport ; and sometimes ended their "Noctes Ambrosianæ" by a free fight, which in no wise diminished their good-fellowship when sobriety set in once more—or at least the quasi-sobriety which was the normal condition of old Maloney and his set.

The end to all this came suddenly. Maloney's daughter arrived in time to spend a few hours by her father's death-bed, and to comfort him with her ministrations and gentle words. She had never been in his home before, and had never loved him so much as now, when she saw from what he had shielded her. It had often troubled the girl that her rough

old father refused to let her live with him. But, bad as he had been, he had loved her too well to let her share the hideous and hateful life which had grown pleasant to him. All the better side of his nature showed itself in his treatment of his only child. When his pretty young wife, the daughter of a poor schoolmaster, died, he took his little Polly to a widowed aunt of her mother's, and asked her to take charge of the child. "Make her a lady, like yourself, ma'am," he said. "Polly will have plenty of money one of these days, so spare no expense. I'll find the needful."

He was as good as his word. He paid royally for his little Polly, and often came to see her with his pockets stuffed with sweetmeats and toys. But, as the girl grew up, she began to wish for more from her father than playthings. She wanted to love him, and share his daily life, and this he would not hear of. She knew nothing of him except as the generous giver of everything she wanted. Her own life was peaceful and pure, and of his she was absolutely in the dark.

But Maloney did not succeed in making money as fast as he had hoped to do. He spent a great deal on Polly. He gave a large sum for the public-house of which he was tenant, and immediately afterwards the neighbourhood began to "go down," for one of the mysterious reasons which now and then make neighbourhoods go up or down. His customers were not always profitable. He encouraged a class of

sporting gentlemen, and gathered about him a set of betting and prize-fighting blackguards, who helped to get him into many difficulties, but never saw any need for helping to get him out of them. So that when Miss Maloney sat alone in the dingy bar parlour, and tried in vain to comfort herself by reading Matthew Arnold's "Essays in Criticism," she knew that, far from having "plenty of money," she had only a few shillings in the world now that the funeral expenses and her father's debts were paid; and that she inherited from him nothing but this vile public-house, with its bad traditions and unsavoury notoriety.

At first, after her father's death, Mary Maloney had felt too desolate and too horrified with all about her to realise her position. She would not send for her aunt to come to her; she could not bear the thought that anyone in her old home should know where and how her father had lived. So she bore the wretchedness of it all as best she could, waiting impatiently until arrangements could be made to take whatever money was left, and fly back to the happy security of her dear aunt's home. She intended to place a manager in the public-house; or, if that could not be done, to find a tenant for it, who would take over the stock and furniture; and in a few weeks more she hoped to be at liberty to turn over this dark page of experience, and forget all about it.

Forget it—yes, that would be very necessary, for Mary knew that she could never be happy again in the innocent life of old, unless she could forget it.

To go back to the quiet village where she knew every face, and the uneventful history of every person ; to spend her days once more in delightful hours of study, and of intellectual talk with her aunt and her friends—in music, and drawing, and prettinesses of all sorts ; to visit the sick old women, and read the Bible to them between gifts of shillings and packets of tea administered as bribes ; to coddle the babies, and teach the rosy-faced boys and girls in the Sunday-school ; to cultivate her roses, and dress her garden, and love the sweet country lanes and the sunny fields with a satisfaction which had given life hitherto an idyllic charm—this was what she meant to do ; and to forget—to forget, as a horrible, unreal nightmare—these days passed in what had been her father's home.

And yet as Miss Maloney sat day after day in the bar parlour, and watched the new phase of life which was so ugly and revolting, she began to see that this, too, was *real*, and no nightmare, ugly as it was, and to fear that she would never be able to forget it. She watched, with a horrible fascination, the succession of wretched and degraded faces of men, women, and children, who passed in and out of her public-house, leaving their pence, or sometimes their shillings, in the till, which was emptied at night into her pocket. She watched while little children with white faces, and miserable rags for clothing, reached up to the barman cracked jugs and cups to be filled with poisonous beer or spirits ; she saw the women,



"SHE WATCHED WITH A HORRIBLE FASCINATION."

old and young, but draggled and dirty one and all, cajoling or abusing the men who treated them, or refused to do so. She saw weary-looking women come in and try to get their husbands away, and husbands dragging out half-drunken wives. She noticed the men who were regular customers, who

hung about all the evening, running up a score which was only partly wiped out every Saturday ; and, worst sight of all, she saw the tawdrily dressed, sometimes pretty, but shameless-faced girls who followed them in, and never shrank from drunken jest or oath. And Mary felt her cheeks burn, and her heart grew heavier. Very soon the conviction forced itself upon her that she could not live by money made in such a trade as this, and she determined to sell the public-house outright.

“Yes, Miss,” said the house agent whom she went to consult, “it’s a very good corner house, and will fetch a fair price. The licence can no doubt be transferred to a purchaser, and——”

“But,” interrupted Mary, “I will not sell it for a public-house. That is not what I mean ; I might as well keep it on myself, as do that.”

“In that case you will have to keep it, Miss, I’m afraid. There isn’t another business the neighbourhood could support, and no one would buy it, except for a pub,” said the agent.

And Mary saw that he was right, and went back and began to think. All sorts of thoughts came into her brain, and the burden of the world’s sorrow and sin, and the enthusiasm of humanity, gradually took possession of her. This low public-house, which she had heard called the curse of the neighbourhood, was her sole inheritance from her father. What if she could turn it into a blessing ?

She gathered together all the books she could find

on the Temperance Question, and began to study the various methods adopted in dealing with it. For three days she pored over them, like Don Quixote over his books of Chivalry. At the end of that time she flung them aside.

"I shall do nothing if I waste my time seeing what other people do," she said; "I'll just try a little common-sense."

First she called the barman.

"I mean to keep this house on myself," she said, "and will keep you too if you will do exactly as I wish. To begin with, I will sell nothing but pure beer and spirits."

He shook his head mournfully.

"I knew you wasn't the right sort to make it pay, Miss. I'll do anything in reason to please you, but——"

"I know you will," she said with a smile, which made the man her devoted slave for ever. "It is only because you know no better that you sell these poor people such poisonous rubbish. Then you must never have any dealings with children; thirdly, you must absolutely refuse to supply any man or woman with drink who has already had too much. And you can leave the rest to me."

"But you will be bankrupt in a month, Miss."

"Nonsense; I have few expenses here; you know that the profits are enormous, and I only want to pay my way, not to make a fortune out of these people."

The barman scratched his head, shook it more mournfully than ever, but said no more.

Then Miss Maloney made a few other changes. She brightened up her dingy bar parlour; made cocoa and coffee there, and had a supply of wholesome food for any customers who would have it. She provided also a supply of wholesome literature, but few of her customers cared for that, except sometimes the younger ones. Nevertheless Mary found that the set of men who had got into the habit of spending their evenings at "Maloney's" still came, and sometimes one would read the newspaper aloud to a select few; and often weary workers would creep into the warm, cheerful room, and sleep until they were turned out at closing time.

"They want something more rousing than books," said Mary, at last, and she sent for her piano, and told the barman to find her a good singer. When he was found Mary played while he sang, and the men and women came in numbers to listen to his fine old sea songs and plaintive ballads; and Mary grew more and more determined to keep on her public-house.

* * * * *

The Vicar of St. Matthias-in-the-Fields was speeding along the streets not far from "Maloney's" in passionate haste. "The Fields," as the title of the parish, was only a pathetic remembrance of the days when green meadows and golden grain were to be seen instead of squalid courts and dingy blocks of buildings. A population of ignorant and usually vicious

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"SOMETIMES ONE WOULD READ THE NEWSPAPER LOUD TO A SELECT FEW."





human creatures crowded the wretched dwellings ; and an almost hopeless mass of poverty and wretchedness weltered and suffered around St. Matthias-in-the-Fields. It was the lot of the Vicar to live in this scene of wretchedness ; to combat the vice and ignorance, and dispel, so far as in him lay, the gross darkness. And zealously—if sometimes with the zeal that lacketh knowledge—he threw himself into his work. He held advanced and rigid views on Church matters ; advocated the celibacy of the priesthood ; loved a florid ritual, and personally drilled his choir. His church was crowded on Sundays—not by the people who lived in his parish, but by a fashionable congregation, attracted by the fine music, the eloquent preaching, the well-known saintliness of the Vicar, and, perhaps in the case of fair devotees, by saintly admiration of the celibate priest.

The Rev. Algernon Lamote was of high birth, and had ample means. He was a tall, handsome man ; he had a beautiful voice, and the expression of an enthusiast. No wonder he bore the character of a saint ; no wonder if he was sometimes tempted to think his ways infallibly right, and all who in any manner thwarted him unquestionably wrong. But even saints, it may be presumed, have their bad days, and Mr. Lamote, as he strode along the dirty street, neither looked nor felt as if he deserved canonization. Refined and ascetic features have a tendency to look pinched and meagre on a cold day—and it was a very cold day. The biting east wind blew the tails of the

Vicar's coat about ; he bent his long neck to keep the low felt hat from being blown off his head ; the hail-stones made his ears tingle, and he was thoroughly uncomfortable. But this was nothing to the bitter storm which raged within his breast. If the Reverend Algernon had one vulnerable point (and all heroes have *one* at least) it was his choir. That was his hobby, his ewe lamb. On it he lavished the tender care and affection which more carnal-minded men bestow upon wife and children. If the Vicar had one enemy for whom he found it hard to pray, it was "old Maloney." He had been his chief adversary ever since he came to the parish. And now, though old Maloney, to Mr. Lamote's great satisfaction, was dead, the evil influence of his abominable public-house seemed to be more potent than ever. This morning the Vicar had heard news which had roused his righteous wrath. The daughter of old Maloney was keeping on the public-house, and not content with ruining the bodies and souls of his flock by her vile traffic, was capable of stretching forth unholy hands to rob his most precious and peculiar fold.

Everyone has heard of, or has met, at some time or other, a wonderful genius who *ought* to have been a Landseer, a Tennyson, an Irving, or a Mario, but who, through misfortune or frailty, poses before the world to the end as a melancholy "might-have-been." The Vicar of St. Matthias-in-the-Fields had been fortunate enough to discover a tenor singer whose voice was unequalled in tone and sweetness--a tenor afflicted

unhappily with a Panurgic thirst. However, the Vicar had secured him for his choir, and had expended unheard-of energy and watchfulness in coaxing and preaching Tom Grindley into a sufficient degree of sobriety to wear the white surplice on Sundays without scandal. The new tenor had brought extra fame to the services at St. Matthias, and the Vicar was proud of his *protégé*.

And now, two days before Christmas, the awful news had reached the Vicar's ears that Tom had been decoyed by Miss Maloney into singing every evening at her notorious public-house. The Rev. Algernon felt that such sacrilege could not be tolerated. As he sped along the streets his soul was hot within him. Though Apollyon himself withstood him, he felt strong to fight to rescue this brand, and when he reached "Maloney's," it was as though the spirit of a Hebrew prophet had descended upon him, and he was ready to scorch, with his burning words, the painted Jezebel who had dared to tamper with his precious possession. It never occurred to him for an instant that Miss Maloney could have any reasonable excuse to offer, nor that Tom Grindley was free to make any use he chose of his gift.

When the Vicar pushed open the swing door, the outer bar of the public-house was empty; but for the barman busy behind the counter, and two or three ragged children waiting with a dish for some broken meat. They shrank away from the Vicar—for even a saint looks ugly with the corners of his mouth

drawn down and his eyes fierce ; and Mr. Lamote pushed past them and entered the parlour. An old man, who many times had taken shelter there from a fireless home, crouched in a warm corner, and muttered something about "a d——d parson," as he caught sight of the tall, black figure. Mary, with the food for the children in her hands, nearly ran against the Vicar, and started and blushed "guiltily" —as he noticed, when he began, "Miss Maloney ! I have come to speak very seriously to you."

His voice was hard and rasping. As a rule chivalrous to a fault in his conduct towards women, he was just now too fiercely indignant with Miss Maloney to hide his scorn and anger. He did not remove his hat as he spoke. He looked her full in the face, and made a mental note of the painted cheeks, and frizzled hair, and bold eyes, which were what he had expected to find. Poor Mary blushed painfully, partly because it was the first time "a gentleman" had spoken to her since she began this new life, and she was conscious all at once that she was no more to be treated as "a lady." Her hair was always wavy, and of the colour Rossétti loved to paint ; and her clear, grey eyes had never learnt to droop or flinch for shame or fear. So she faced the clergyman, and he, for the first and last time in his life, so far forgot himself in his wrath, as to be rude to a defenceless woman.

"Miss Maloney ! are you not ashamed of yourself to enter upon this vile trade, at your time of life, and to make a living for yourself by being a curse to your

fellow-creatures? Do you ever think what this drink traffic means? Do you know that every penny you



"ARE YOU NOT ASHAMED OF YOURSELF TO ENTER UPON THIS VILE TRADE, AT YOUR TIME OF LIFE?"

take from these ignorant wretches who crowd your doors, is the price of their misery? Is it not possible

to waken you to the fact, that by making this infamous place attractive, you are luring men and women to their ruin, that your very existence here is a perpetual blight upon their existences, that your profit is their eternal loss?"

For an instant he paused, and Mary tried to speak, but he would not listen to one syllable.

"Look at these emaciated, stunted children. You do not even spare their innocence; you sell them drink. You are responsible that they grow up depraved and lost." Here the children turned and fled.

"You have no reverence for old age"—and his eyes fell upon the old man, who felt very uneasy, and relieved himself by curses not loud but deep—"all decent habits, all self-respect, all religion will be destroyed by you, and such as you, if these things go on unreprieved. But I, for one, will reprove, and will tell you face to face of your sins and hateful life, as long as I breathe. Woman, have you no feeling of right and wrong left? Even when the Prodigal, who has wasted his substance for years, creeps back to the fold, comes penitently to his Mother Church, and takes refuge in her arms" (the Vicar did not mean to misrepresent facts, but eloquence often carries one beyond the bare truth), "you tempt him away by your vile arts, and the gift of song, which he had consecrated to the service of Heaven, is made, by you, the means of dragging souls to Hell. Send Thomas Grindley back to me, to his one true friend. Give him up; let me save his immortal soul while there is

a chance, or otherwise, I warn you, his ruin will be laid to your charge in the Day of Judgment."

"Sir," Mary began—but the Reverend Algernon, having delivered his message, shook the dust of the place from off his feet (metaphorically speaking), and departed as suddenly as he had entered.

The next afternoon, when the choir met for practising after five o'clock Vespers, the Vicar admonished Tom Grindley. But the spoilt *protégé* was sullen under reproof.

"You'd no call to speak to Miss Maloney as you did," he said. "She's doing a lot more good down there than some folks I could mention, for all their preachin' and prayin'. And you've almost broken her heart. Women's such fools about what parsons says to 'em. She told me I wasn't to sing there any more; but I said if I give that up, I give choir up too. And I'm going to-night."

When the Vicar sat alone in his study that evening, he was very miserable. It was Christmas Eve. If Tom should not appear—and appear in decent condition—at the service next morning, what would become of all the beautiful music he had taken so much trouble to prepare, for the glory of God, and—well, yes, in some measure, for his own gratification? Tom's manner had been defiant, and his words rankled in the Vicar's soul. He did not believe in the possibility that Miss Maloney could do anything but harm. He did not think that she had ever been to church; certainly she had not consulted him, nor

offered to become a church worker under him. How was it possible she could do any good? No doubt poor Tom was deluded. The woman was pretty; who could tell how she might lure him to destruction? The Vicar grew restless, and at last determined to hover about Tom's path like an invisible guardian angel, and see him safe home, drunk or sober, when the orgies at "Maloney's" were over.

It was already growing late, but, full of enthusiasm, he once more rushed along the streets, and only stopped when he reached "Maloney's" corner.

The place looked busy and cheerful, compared with the miserable houses around. A warm light shone into the street through the red curtains across the window, and sounds of music could be heard some distance off. Mr. Lamote had passed more than a dozen other public-houses on his way to "Maloney's," but not one of them seemed to be so popular as this. He groaned in spirit, as he stood at the opposite corner and watched the people entering. Men and women of all sorts; many young lads; and even quite respectable-looking girls. Alas! alas! Suddenly, he quickly crossed the street, muttering, "Ah! what horrible desecration. I must put a stop to this."

He pushed open the door, let it swing to behind him, and stood still, unnoticed in the crowd. Had he made a mistake? Was this the place which he had often called the curse of the parish? it "dese-

eration " that sacred music should be sung to such an audience as this? For in the midst of the people stood Tom Grindley, and sang. Every face was turned towards him, and every face bore traces of poverty and toil, many of sin and shame also. There were figures bent with weariness, eyes bleared with tears; there were coarse and brutal faces in that strange crowd, and faces which had grown stolid in hopeless wretchedness; but as the Vicar looked, a wonderful gleam seemed to pass from face to face while in the lovely tones which often brought tears to the eyes of his sensitive congregation at St. Matthias, Tom sang, "And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places shall be made plain, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

It was the anthem chosen for Christmas Day. The Vicar felt a choking in his throat. If Tom could only sing in church to such an audience as this, it would be something to thank God for. But if such an audience would not come to church, what then?

The Vicar remained hidden behind the crowd and looked round, curiously moved. The place was orderly, and, at least while the music lasted, perfectly quiet. There were some few men smoking, but not many, because, as Tom afterwards explained, he had told them the tobacco got down his throat, and it was only new-comers who smoked during the singing. Many of the men had glasses before them, and there was the usual smell of beer and spirits, and unclean humanity; but through the opened folding-

doors Mr. Lamote could see that in the parlour men and women were drinking tea and coffee, and eating sandwiches and buns, and many others seemed to be waiting to take their places.

Just beside Tom was a piano, and a lady sat and played for him ; but Mr. Lamote had forgotten Miss Maloney for the moment, and it was only when the song was over, and the people began to move about that he saw her, and remembered with a quick sense of shame the words he had used to her.

Tom stepped forward once more to sing without music a Christmas carol, and as the people settled down again to listen, the Vicar's gaze rested on a fair woman, in a plain black dress, who stood in the centre of a group of girls, with a sleeping baby in her arms, and listened to the simple carol, with a tender smile on her lips, and an expression of loving compassion in her eyes as they wandered round the curious assembly.

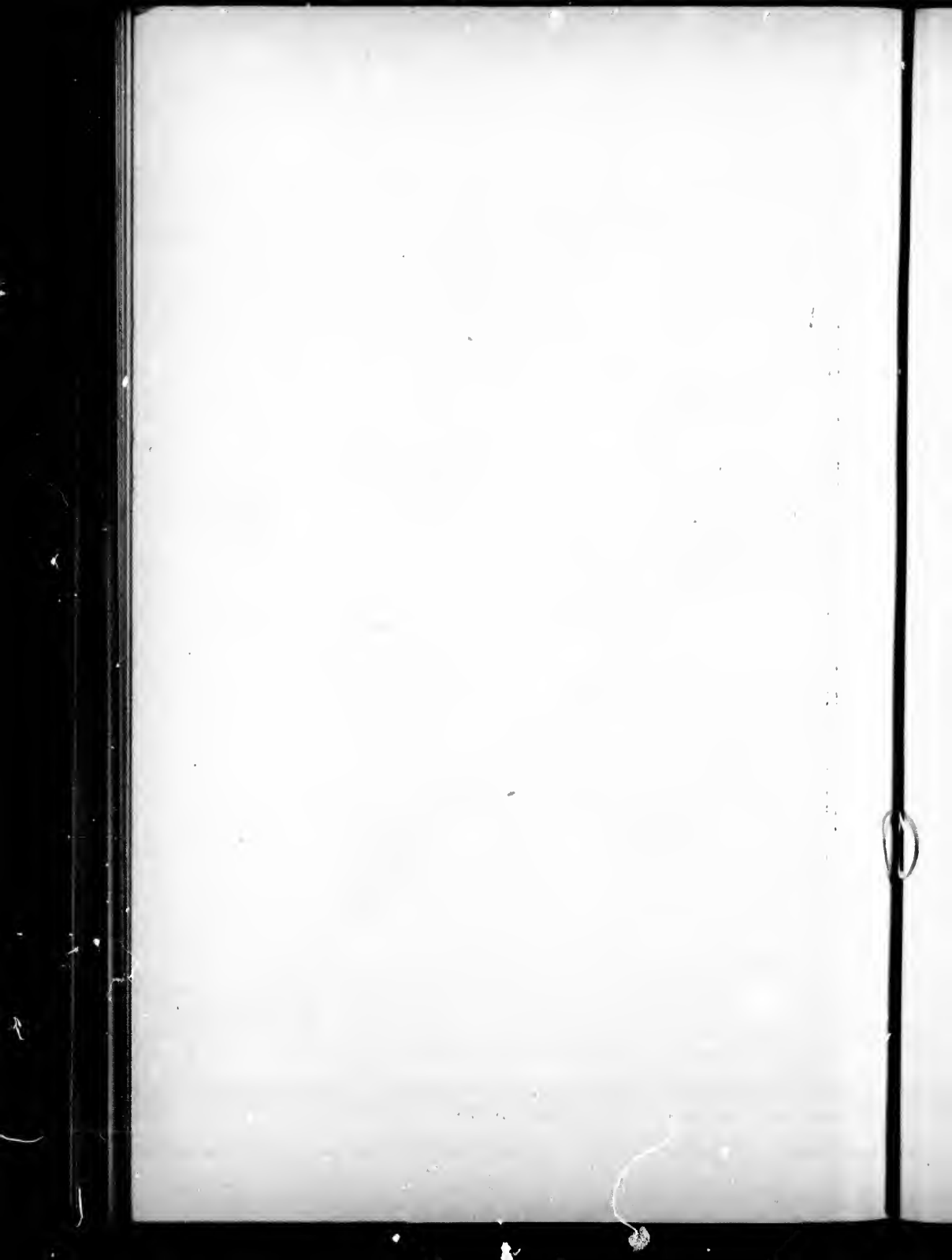
“ Good heavens ! ” the conscience-stricken clergyman exclaimed. “ She looks like a blessed Madonna, and I called her a painted Jezebel ! ”

He was an impulsive man, and he saw his error. As soon as the carol was over he pushed his way to Miss Maloney's side, and turning towards the astonished crowd, said : “ Friends, I want you all to hear me tell Miss Maloney that I am bitterly ashamed for what I said to her yesterday. I was wholly in the wrong. She is doing you all far more real good than I ever did. She is the best friend you have ever had.”

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"BUT IF SUCH AN AUDIENCE WOULD NOT COME TO CHURCH, WHAT THEN?"





Then he offered his hand to Mary with a bow of penitent reverence, and when she had meekly submitted to his warm clasp, he hurried away without another word.

"Well! that were a rum start," said the leading politician of the company; "but it ain't the first time as the Church and the vested interests 'as shook 'ands, and it won't be the last."

* * * * *

Many Christmas Eves have come and gone; the Vicar and Miss Maloney are firm friends now, and have many ways of helping one another. Neither of them, perhaps, sees much result of endless labour. The parish of St. Matthias-in-the-Fields is not yet composed solely of devout, decent Churchmen and Churchwomen. Drunkenness still brings its attendant train of vice and want, disease and sorrow, to darken the lives of the men and women who herd in the still low neighbourhood of Maloney's public-house. But the Vicar has got a new hobby. He buys up all the public-houses he can, and finds among his devotees ladies (as much like Miss Maloney as possible) to manage them. There is no saying what results may be produced—in time.

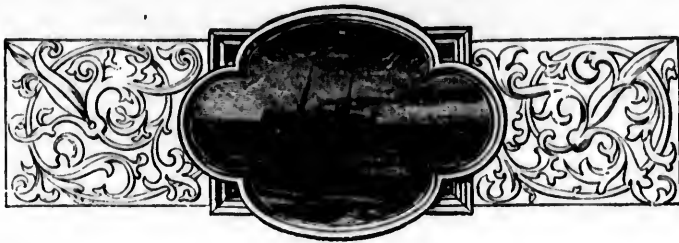
And Mary is content. She knows that here and there a man who was once a drunkard is sober now; and that no one gets any harm now, even when not capable of getting good, from her public-house. She knows that here and there she has saved an outcast

and brought hope to the desolate; and after all what are great results but a multitude of little changes?

The Vicar of St. Matthias is still unmarried, and will never marry. But if ever his principles are put to the test, it is when he catches a glimpse of Mary's bright hair and sweet face through the windows of Maloney's public-house.



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THE WHITE WAND AND THE GOLDEN STAR.

Told to a Child.

BY A. S. BOYD.



ONCE upon a time there was a great tree that grew by the river just outside the village, and the children used to come and play under it. It was so very tall that they thought the branches at the top must touch the sky, and it was said that if any one climbed to the very highest branch of that tree and cut off one of the white wands that grew there he could reach up to the sky and bring down with it a golden star. And whoever did this might get whatever he wished for, even the dearest wish of his heart.

Well, of all the children who now played under the tree not one had ever tried to climb it. There was, indeed, an old, old story of somebody who had, long ago, made the attempt; he went up a little way

—just high enough for the leaves to hide nearly all the ground underneath, but he got frightened, so he came down and said that it was impossible to go to the top.

But there was a boy called Martin Hazel who often looked up into the green branches of the tree, and sometimes he would stop playing for such a long time, and would keep looking up so earnestly, that the other boys and the girls would begin to tease him and ask if he thought *he* could climb so high.

“Yes,” he said, “I think I can.”

At last one day he said to himself, “I must try.” Then some of the boys helped him on to the lowest branch, and he began to climb, and climb, and climb. He had not thought it was quite so difficult a task, but he did not allow himself to rest very often on the way, and at last he reached the top. How strange it was to be there! So lonely and so quiet; there was not a sound from the village far down below, not even the shouts of the children could reach so high. And the branches of the tree spread out so widely that he could see nothing beneath him but endless green leaves, while over his head the stars were shining in the blue sky, and around him as he stood on the highest branch were the wands of pure white. His hand grasped one of them, and he took the strong knife which his father had given him on his birthday and he cut that one off. Then he reached up to the sky with the white wand, and he could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw that on the

end of it he had brought down one of the golden stars which he had chosen. With this wonderful thing really his he felt very happy, for he thought how the girls and boys would admire him, how proud his



mother would be, and how his father would praise him for being such a brave fellow.

Then down the tree he came. Going downwards was not difficult, and Martin did not take long to reach the lower branches. Beneath him he could see the children still playing. Then the crackling of a branch made them look up, and with something like a scream of fright, they all ran away. Martin smiled, and as his feet once more touched the grass, he looked round to see what had made the children run away. He could see nothing to be afraid of, and he heard no sound except the singing of the birds and the noise of the sheep as they cropped the grass. And as he listened the clock began to chime in the old church steeple.

It was disappointing that the boys had not waited to see him come down with the white wand in his hand and the golden star glittering at the end of it, but that made him all the more eager to hurry home and tell his mother.

Near his mother's door which was at the entrance to the village, Martin saw some children whom he did not know. While he was wondering who they could be—for strangers were not often seen in this place—they turned away with a laugh that was nearly a cry and ran down the street. Then he opened the door of his mother's house, and a woman he had never seen before, who was sitting by the fire inside, with a baby on her knee, looked up and said sharply, "Nothing to-day."

"Where's my mother," said Martin.

"*Your* mother!" and the woman laughed.

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"Yes, my own mother, and my father ; this is our house."

"This is *my* house," said the woman, "and was



my mother's house ever since old Betsy died, years ago."

"Betsy is my mother's name ; father calls her Betsy."

"That may be, that may be, but there's nobody of that name here," said this cross woman. Then she turned Martin rather roughly from the door, and shut it behind him with a bang.

There was a shout of laughter in the street. It was the time when the young men were coming home after having finished their day's work in the fields. They had seen some one pushed out of a house, and had heard a door slam, and they thought it was a good joke, so they laughed again.

"Hallo, old man, who has been ill-using you?" they asked, as they gathered round the boy who had been turned from the door of his mother's house.

Martin looked round, but he saw no old man. Then one of the young fellows tapped him on the shoulder, and said,

"They'll give you nothing in that house."

"I don't want anything," said Martin: "that is our house, and I have something to tell my mother."

How the young men laughed!

"Yes, you are strangers and you don't know her, and you don't know me; but she'll be glad I'm down safely from the top of the tree; and with *this* I'm going to make her happy." He held out his white wand with the golden star glittering on the end of it, but to the young men it seemed only a plain stick. So they looked at one another seriously as if they were sorry for him, and they said—"Poor old man!"

Then they left him, and he walked along the street, for the sun was setting and it was near the time when he should go to meet his father coming from his work.

The people stood at their doors and stared at him curiously as he passed. He knew none of them and

none of them spoke to him; so he felt troubled. Then he met a very old woman. It was at last some one he knew—old Margaret, the grandmother of one



of the little girls who played every day at the foot of the tree. He stopped her.

“Did Mary tell you I had gone up the tree to-day?”

“What Mary?” asked the old woman.

“Mary Wood, your own grandchild, who lives with you,” said Martin.

"I am Mary Wood, and I've no grandchild left," said the old woman.

"But do you not know me?"

"I never saw you before," said Mary Wood.

"But I went up the great tree this morning, and I've got the white wand and the golden star!"

"What tree?"

"The great tree by the river, where we always play," said Martin.

"Ah, now I do remember," said the old woman: "there was a boy I knew who climbed up the great tree—as we used to call it. That was a long time ago—when we were little children. He never came back again."

"What did they call the boy?"

"What did they call him? Dear, dear! what *did* they call him? Ah, yes, Hazel was his name, Martin Hazel, and he lived in that very house, with his father and mother: but they are dead these many, many years, and Martin never came back. No, he never came back."

Then Martin felt all at once that the old woman spoke of him, and that he himself was older even than she was. For in climbing the tree he had forgotten about everything and everybody; in his eagerness quite forgetting that Time was passing, and that it was a long, long distance from the foot to the top of the tree. But Time was passing all the same, and had in passing left its marks as strongly on Martin as on everybody else. He looked at his hands—they were thin and yellow; he saw that his clothes were worn;

his back and his knees were bent. The years that had gone by had seemed to him only one day; and that day was now nearly over. He was all that remained of the strong boy who climbed the tree for the wonderful treasure at the top, and, now that the treasure was his, there was nobody who knew



him to say "Well done!"—nobody left who could take pleasure in his prize.

Then sadly, and with a heavy heart, he walked slowly back through the village in which he was born, where nobody knew him and where he knew nobody. Wandering on, his steps led him back to

the foot of the great tree. Here he sat down, and because the world was empty of all the faces he had cared to look at, he bowed his head and wept. As he thought of his old friends he wished with all his heart that he might see them and be happy with them again. And while he was crying and longing, with the white wand in his hand and the golden star glittering on the top of it, he was gently lifted up, and up, and up, till the golden star found its own place in the sky. And there the white wand grew into a lovely flower that would never wither. And there he saw his father and his mother; and everybody he loved was there; and nothing was there but perfect happiness.

And so he got what he wished for, even the dearest wish of his heart.



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A SPRIG OF LAVENDER.

Founded on Fact.

By A. M. CAMERON.

“On the earth the broken arcs,
In the heavens a perfect round.”

R. BROWNING.



SOMETHING was amiss with Lady Bess to-night ; that was clear.

The men who, with pipe in mouth and beer jug in hand, sat about the room, glanced from time to time with a rough but not unkindly curiosity, at the drooping shoulders of the girl who, with bowed head resting on her crossed arms, had so remained, almost motionless, for the last half-hour and more. Only a quick, impatient movement of the handsome shoulders, as from time to time some one of her companions sought to rouse her, testified to the fact that Lady Bess was sober, not drunk ; thinking, not asleep.

The nickname, given to her many years ago, suited her strangely well, and had clung to her ever since. Even the women, her companions, poor, fallen, down-trodden creatures as they were, accepted the title as her due, and remembered, with what was left to them of pride, that she, Lady Bess, belonged to this their own particular haunt. It was not only that the veriest rag she chose to don became at once a more dignified mantle than all the finery they could muster, but that there was about her personal bearing a nameless something, a barrier of reserve, a reticence about all matters not touching on her poor mundane present, which none of them dared seek to probe. In a word, she was "Lady" Bess.

She rose from her crouching position at last, this grandly built, sin-stained woman. The room was so stiflingly hot, the men's voices so shrill and loud.

One of them just now, in passing, had laid his hand, with rough familiarity, on the bowed head. "Come and have a drink, lass," he had suggested, offering for her comfort his own one infallible remedy. But at the touch she had sprung up, and with black eyes dilated, pale cheeks flushed, and fists clenched, would have struck him then and there, had he not, with a laugh and an oath, made good his escape.

Then she, too, left the room and stood for a moment at the door. The air was still and heavy this hot August evening, but at this hour the street was comparatively quiet, and sitting down on the

door-step, the girl once more leant her forehead on her hands, and thought.

Only twenty, and so sin-defiled !

Only twenty, and this her birthday !

Only twenty, and such a weary vista of years flowing on in maddening monotony before her—dull, heavy, merciless as the tide of that dark river which rolled on and ever onwards only some few hundred yards behind her, and over whose black mysteries she had lately dreamed so much.

How many years ago was it—four ? five ? or an eternity, since the day on which she had left father, mother, purity, home, heaven ?

How many since she had tasted to the full of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and found its fruit bitter, so unutterably bitter ?

Were they thinking of her now ? Not speaking, oh, no, never speaking ; yet as this was her birthday-evening, thinking, perhaps, for a moment even of her. Were they alive to think ? Would they know her if they saw her now ? Would they *wish* to know her ? Were the roses thick and sweet over the little porch ? Was the lavender springing fresh and rare along the garden paths ? Were the tiny waves lapping to-night against the quiet churchyard where the one sister, the one daughter now lay sleeping ? Did they wish, sometimes there were two graves there, not one ?

Raising her dry and burning eyes presently, an angry light shone in them ; for standing opposite to her on the dusty pavement, contemplating the bowed

figure with a sort of patient wonder, was a boy, rough, dirt-begrimed, travel-stained, but who, nevertheless, had something of a country savour about him ; cheeks that, with fair play, would be rosy still ; hair bleached almost white by a sun that had shone down on fields, not streets.

As I said, the girl on the doorstep glanced at him, angrily enough at first. Was there no place on God's earth where a poor, hunted creature could sit down for a space to think her own sad thoughts, unmolested ? Yet gradually the angry light in the dark eyes died away, and a softened, almost wistful, expression took its place. For, as those eyes wandered over the dusty figure before her, from the frank, sun-burnt face to the clumsy, country-made coat, they suddenly lighted on a something, a little shrivelled-up something, in the boy's button-hole, such a poor worthless thing — nothing more than a sprig of withered lavender.

Then Lady Bess rose suddenly, her tall figure almost filling the narrow doorway, and demanded fiercely what he wanted there ?

"Only a wash and a bed, miss," the lad answered, pointing to a written announcement in the window, and looking at her with a somewhat astonished expression in his honest blue eyes.

Bess thought a minute, her glance still dwelling, not on the boy's face, but on that dead sprig in his coat ; then, after peeping furtively behind her into the noisy, beer-reeking room, she turned to him once

more touched him quickly on the arm, and whispering hurriedly, "Follow me," darted like a shadow down the street.

The boy, wondering, paused a moment, uncertain whether to follow. Aware of this, she turned, and, looking back, beckoned him half-angrily, half-beseechingly, onward.

In and out she led him, through narrow lanes and alleys, foul and loathsome, where God's fair sunshine fell shadowed, and His sweet breezes tainted and heavy; where even His little children had ceased to be child-like.

At last, when they had reached comparatively wider, lighter streets, whose atmosphere was somewhat less suffocating, she paused in the shade of a high wall, and, bending down, whispered breathlessly in his ear.

"I can't go further than this; turn that corner, and knock at the door of the first house on your right—there's a brass plate on it—tell them what you want, they'll take you in, and may be," she added, with a short laugh, "may be you'll find the lodgings there a bit cheaper than down at our place; any way, you can but try." She paused an instant, then, laying her thin hand on his arm, said, quick and low, "You'll let your mother know where you are, first thing, won't you? You've tramped far to-day, I can see, and she'll be wondering about you."

The boy opened his blue eyes wider.

Mother! why you don't think I'd have come

away if there had been mother to leave, do you? I'm alone, miss; leastways, unless you count Aunt Sal, and she's mostly drunk. She thought it a good plan, too, that I should tramp up and see what London could do for me; so I came. I hardly fancied it would be so big, though," he added.

"Ay, it's big," she answered, "big and lonesome. God in heaven knows that."

The other shuffled about for a minute, awkwardly enough, his hands thrust deep down in his coat pockets. Presently he blurted out,

"I'd like to thank you, miss, and to know your name, if you please. Mine's Ned. I haven't much money, so to speak, but if——"

"I don't want your money," she retorted, the sharp ring returning to her voice once more.

"And can't I do anything for you, miss?"

"Yes," she answered eagerly, greedily. "Let me have that sprig of lavender, will you? You don't want it, do you?"

"Want it? 'tain't worth much to anybody now, I reckon, but take it, and welcome; it was pretty enough when I gathered it yesterday morning," and he held it out to her.

"Thank you; it's worth more to me than you could understand, lad. Bess is my name. Lady Bess they call me."

She hesitated, and then adding hurriedly, "If you ever pray, you might remember that name in your prayers now and again," turned from him and sped

away, a dim shadow in the quickly darkening London streets.

An hour later, and the men in that lodging-house laughed to see how the drink could make Lady Bess dance and sing.

* * * * *

Only a few years afterwards. Again an August evening, hot and airless.

But in the quiet wards of the hospital its heat was tempered to the sufferers; flowers made their sweetness felt; loving hands fanned and moistened throbbing brows.

There were many souls collected in those wards to-night, many young faces lying on the white pillows, waiting patiently, or impatiently, as the case might be, for the call to higher altitudes and fairer climes. For the disease to which this hospital sought to minister was one whose victims are gathered most from among the ranks of young and ardent spirits, setting out often so eagerly and hopefully on life's race.

The chaplain, good man, had been moving gently from bed to bed, saying his usual quiet word of strength and comfort to each, ere night closed in, and the rooms were still till morning.

He had passed through the women's ward, and had well-nigh finished his service of love among the men, but he lingered last and longest beside one bed, a young man's bed. He knew his story—that of a friendless lad found wandering in the dreary loneli-

ness of a great town's streets, befriended, sent abroad, made a man of, and a prosperous man, too. Then, God's hand laid on him and his work, the short span of probation well-nigh ended; a voyage home over the seas he had crossed so hopefully, so gladly, only a few years before; now a brave patience and a quiet waiting for the restful landing on another and more distant shore.

It was a very bright face that lay on that particular pillow, beside which the chaplain now stood, — a fair face, almost child-like, in spite of its one-and-twenty years.

"Happy, Ned? Quite happy? Ready to go when the call comes?"

"Quite happy, sir," answers Ned, as the smile grows brighter. "Hardly a wish left if you could but find and thank that girl, and tell her what she did for me that night. Poor Lady Bess," he added wistfully, "perhaps I may thank you myself some day, after all."

The chaplain started; an idea had struck him.

"Ned, just wait a bit, my man. I won't be long; pray God it's not too late; may be you shall send that message yet," and smiling joyfully, he hurried away.

.Speeding quickly across the intervening passages, he re-entered the women's ward. All was quiet there, but at the far end a screen was drawn round a little bed. He passed behind it. Yes, God was merciful, the candle of life flickered still.

Propped up on pillows, but leaning softest on her mother's breast—the dark curls, once that mother's pride, lying tossed in pathetic confusion over the pillow not whiter than the worn cheek on which the long, dark lashes rested now—lay a woman, young indeed and handsome still, but wasted, sin-stained, sorely bruised; by her side a cup of lavender, over her head the name "Elizabethh."

"Bess," whispered the chaplain softly; "*Lady Bess*," he repeated once again, and waited eagerly for the answer.

The dark eyes opened, the parched lips moved. "Yes," she murmured.

"Once," he continued, his lips close to the ear almost deaf now to sounds on earth, "once, the Master whom you would now so fain have served, promised that the least kind deed done to the poorest or lowest of His children should be as done to Him. Bess, I have heard to-night of a boy called Ned; do you remember?"

A smile, a strange, half-incredulous smile, broke over the girl's pale face, and seeing it, the chaplain continued quickly.

"Bess, Ned is going home too, and when, very soon, you and he meet before that Master's feet, I think you will be glad, for through your means Ned knows to-night that he is going to a much-loved Friend besides."

As he spoke the smile waxed brighter and brighter yet, and at last the weak voice whispered wonderingly,

“*That*, sir, will the Master remember such a little thing as that?”

“‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me,’” came the answer, soft and low.

* * * * *

When morning dawned, Lady Bess had gone home, but a smile, peaceful as that of a little child, rested on the dead face still.

Later on, in turning over her poor things, they came upon something wrapped carefully away in an old piece of paper—it was a sprig of withered lavender.

THE END.

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