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# THE MONITOR

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ARABELLUS SILVER'S TEMPTATION.

For the *Monitor*.

## THE SILVER'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

BY ISABELLA VALANCEY CREWFOOD.

### CHAPTER I.

VIOLET SILVER.

It had its commencement like a comment of Fairy Land amongst the roses and in the moonlight.

A great emerald bank overhung a vast lake, fringed at its foot with a golden beach, and crowned with great pines, mingling their spicy incense with the breath of the roses swinging their crimson blossoms in the garden, midway up the steep, where, on a natural terrace, glistened the white columns of a pretty house.

Wide lawns sloped to the beach, bordered with selder-rose-trees, and acacias, flinging pearly globes and drooping saffery blooms in the air, heavy with dewy perfume, and two or three beeches echoed back the sleepy murmur of the lake, as their leaves rustled softly to the passing wind.

On the wide lawn a maze of winding paths led in and out through glowing alleys of every kind of rose that ever blushed beneath the sun, or yielded pearly favors to the riotous summer breeze; and hence it was that Arnold Silver's pretty villa by the lake was called "The Roses."

A hedge of dwarfish myrtle enclosed this radiant spot, and for artistic contrast with the masses of bloom within, a melancholy yew

loomed darkly by the wro gate, taking a paly silver from the moonlight, which poured a second tinge of radiance from the summer sky, purpling to amethyst where it kissed the lake; but above, a deep and slender blue, bridged with golden stars, and the silvery pathway of the milky-way.

Far out on the lake a schooner glided phantom-like across the diamond track of the moonlight, which seemed leading to the mysterious amethyst gates of the dim horizon; nearer land, the lights of the villa, poised midway up the hill, sent lanes of red light deep into the placid bosom of the inland sea; hardly palpating as the odorous wind stole across it.

A fountain opposite the drawing-room windows, sprang a shaft of diamond splendor against the moonlight, and by its marble margin stood a tall, slender girl, in a white dress, her arm over the neck of a white dog, at the feet of which crouched a fawn with great dark eyes and a collar tinkling with silver bells round its graceful neck.

Miss Violet Silver, Madames of Mesdemoiselle, only child and heiress of Arnold Silver, the great merchant, who, as the fairy tales say, "might have eaten gold every day," or, like the famous king, have occupied himself principally in "counting out his money," and found plenty of work at the same pleasant task.

Violet looked in the moonlight what the "garish day" would still behold her, a superb young creature, triumphant in the matter of a matchless face and form over a host of royal belles.

She was tall and lithe as a young gazelle in a tropical jungle, but no dove that parteth the blue of Heaven with snowy wing had a plume whiter than her face was fair, though, mark

you, there was but little of the dove in her laughing blue eyes, in the arch curving of her scarlet lip, or the faint dilation of a nostril as pink as the glow seen against the light through a white sea-shell.

Violot's nose was of the haughty Spanish type, and there was a Castilian air about this rosy bluntness, when the captain held her, to walk through the world with her head up, and scorn the earth, which only occurred when Silver drove through himself to such a pitch of despotism as to forbid her skating on the lake when the ice was rotten, or refused to let her ride "Thunderer," or declined to settle annuities on two or three dozen new projects, or otherwise misadvised himself after like atrocious ways.

Where occur the lines, so happy in their simplicity:

"Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,  
And honor charmed the air,  
And all astr looked kind on her,  
And called her good as fair!"

They describe my sweet Violot, my nineteen year old sylph, with the sinless brow and the radiant young eyes, better than if I fled with a diamond pen over an MS. of lily leaves from "morn till dowy eve." Rest you content, fair air, she was altogether lovely, and so worthy your regard as the heroine of this unpretending Canadian Tale, though I shall not linger to give, like Olivia, "divers schedules of her beauty."

She looked at the moon, where she walked in fullest beauty amongst her starry host, and as the virginal light bathed her and her dumb companions, they looked like some lovely group of enchanted creatures suddenly turned to forms of pearl by the potent wave of a gen's hand.

Heaven alone knows what sublime thoughts made the girl's countenance so angelic, as her shining eyes fell from star to star, her lips parted in breathless delight, and a lofty awe radiating from her perfect face as though she watched the flight of seraph hosts from one starry heaven to another, and through the perfumed air caught far-off strains of celestial choirs.

"Fairly," she said, coming out of her reverie, and patting the velvet skin of the snowy doe with her rosy palm, "we like the moonlight sometimes, don't we? when there are no ridiculous Charlies near to talk nonsense and disturb our meditations. Ah, mention an angel, and hear the flutter of her wings! Speak of Charlie and smell his cigar!"

She looked at the approaching form, emerging from the open French window of the dining-room, with a glance curiously compounded of archness and a subtle shade of something not tangible enough to be called melancholy in her great violet eyes.

He came up to the group by the fountain, and, with a droll air of chagrin, spat himself on the marble margin.

"There is something the matter, Charlie!" said Violet Silver, looking at him meditatively; "it's nothing about that, is it?"

"It just is!" said Charlie, ruefully; "the governors have been hammer and tongs at it ever since you left the table!" and Charlie groaned, and ran his taper fingers desperately through his crisp brown hair.

"Well," said Violet with spirit, "I suppose I am to be consulted in the affair. I wonder at papa," and a great flush swept over face and neck, and stained the pretty hand lying on Fairy's neck.

"You'd wonder twice as much if you had been there," remarked Charlie gloomily. "We're to be married on next Christmas Day, my young lady. I shall be twenty-one then, you know!"

"What?" cried Violet, then was silent, her bloom heaving, her eyes flaming, her cheeks like scarlet roses.

"Perfectly true!" said Charlie. "I'm sure I'm as sorry as ever I can be, Violot. It's awfully hard on us both, and—and on Daisy too, you know."

"What did papa say?" demanded Violet imperiously. "If you are my cousin, I think you are a coward, Charlie Silver!"

"Uncle Arnold held out as long as he could for letting us arrange matters ourselves, but you know my father, Violot! He put on one of those iron looks and uncle gave in at length," replied Charlie dismally; "and you needn't call a fellow names. I'd like very much to see you tell my father that you wouldn't do as he wished."

"Oh!" said Violet, stretching out her round white arm like a young sybil, her nostrils dilating as though there were the breath of coming war in the air, "I am not his daughter, and I am not afraid. If you promise faithfully that you will marry Daisy Leighton, you shall, and, yes, Uncle Aurelius shall consent to it, so surely as my name is Violet Silver!"

"Of course I'll promise," said Master Charlie patronizingly. "She's a good little thing, and I'm really very fond of her, or else, Violot, I wouldn't have made any objection to our engagement. But a fellow can't help these things, you know."

"Thank you!" said Violet with superb disdain, and elevating her Spanish nose towards the stars, "you needn't apologize! I can go into a convent or something as soon as you are married, and

With my hand on my bosom, my head on my knee,  
Bing, willow, willow, willow."

"Oh, come," said Charlie, much aggrieved, "what between you and my father, I wish I was dead or a sailor. I'm as fond of you as though you were my sister, and you turn me into ridicule without mercy. If I were a head

taller, and had a black moustache like a monkey-skin muff, like some people, it would be different! Though I'm sure I'm driven to such a state that I don't care if I never were to have one!" he added recklessly.

Violet turned very, very pale in the moonlight. She sank down on the edge of the fountain beside her cousin, and taking his hand between her soft palms, laid her proud cheek against it.

"Charlie, dear," she said softly, "you're very fond of me, aren't you?"

"Yes!" said Charlie, considerably mollified, "I'm fonder of you than any one, except Daisy, in the world."

"Then you must promise never, never, never to mention the person you know of until I give you leave."

"I promise!" said Charlie Silver; "but, Violot, do you think it's just the thing to meet him the way you do. Nobody knows the fellow."

Violet turned to cross Fairy, and so hid her bright blush from Charlie.

"Never mind, Charlie," she said, with a little quiver in her sweet, young voice; "you know I wouldn't do anything wrong?"

"Of course I know that."

"Very well. Go in and play chess with Daisy, and if they ask you where I am don't tell. Oh, Charlie, you don't know how much depends on papa, and especially Uncle Aurelius suspecting nothing!"

"I don't like to say yes," said Charlie majestically, "but as the great name of Violet is on the must waive a principle and keep it, I suppose!"

"Certainly," said Violet abstractedly, rising from her seat by the fountain, and laying her hand on Fairy's neck, while the fawn gambolled before them, shaking airy peals of silver from her tinkling bells, she tripped away through the moonlight, while Charlie returned to the villa.

He pushed back the foamy lace draperies of the drawing-room window, and stood at the shoulder of a tiny creature, with a zigzag-like face and great melancholy dark eyes, who was sitting on a low ottoman, gazing blankly at the opposite wall, her slender brown hands clasped idly on a heap of glowing roses with which she had been filling a Sevres vase on a marble stand at her side. She was in deep mourning, and looked a pathetic, dark little phantom in the glow and brightness of the pretty room. She heard Charlie's step, and a slight quiver ran through her slender frame, and a dusky rose crept into her lovely face, but she did not turn until he touched her arm very lightly. Then she slowly moved her eyes to his handsome young face. He was very like Violet, only that the brow was hardly so wide, or the outline of the chin at once so firm and delicate. It was a pleasant, lovable face, however, frank and bright as the face of the young should be, but a shadow darkened it as Daisy Leighton's eyes met his. He drew back a little from her, her face was so full of fire, such a tempest of jealous rage lightened in her dilated eyes. She rose, letting the roses fall in a mass to the carpet.

She flung out her little hand, as though appealing against him to the Universe.

"Coward," she said between her little white teeth, "and traitor! I saw you with her by the fountain."

Charlie's dark blue eyes assumed a look of mingled anger and distress.

"Upon my word, Daisy!" he said in a low tone, "I am quite tired of these fits of jealousy, and directed against Violet, too. What a silly puss you are!"

She looked at him with a singular smile, her dark face paling to the very lips, and at this stage of the scene a shadow fell across the carpet, and Aurelius Silver stood before them, a stern looking man, with a face such as one sees on an old Roman medal, and thick masses of sparkling silver hair clustering round his lofty brow. One could imagine him that Roman who gave his son, fresh from a glorious victory, to the sword of the executioner. His eagle eyes took in the agitation of Charlie and Daisy at a glance, but with a piercing look at them, he turned and walked silently away.

Afraid as he was of his terrible father, Charlie had considerable spirit and an affectionate nature. Daisy's emotion distressed him beyond expression, for he dearly loved the fairy little being, and going up to her he took her hand.

"Dearest Daisy," he said gently, "listen to me for one moment." But she tore the little brown fingers from his grasp, and with an inarticulate cry of the very excess of rage, sprang through the open window and fled out into the moonlight.

Charlie's first thought was of Violet and his promise to her.

"I hope she won't stumble upon them!" he thought, and darted out, to overtake and soothe her, but she had disappeared.

Charlie paused, at a loss how to act, and as he looked out across the moonlit lawn, it seemed as though a faint cry came to his ears from the direction of the lake, and at the same moment Violet came swiftly towards him, tall and white as a spirit, in her fluttering, misty dress.

CHAPTER III.

"AU REVOIR!"

Aurelius Silver stalked in his rage out into the moonlight, and turned his steps across the lawn, his whole soul filled with intensest wrath, born of the suggestive little scene he had just witnessed between his son and the paid companion of his niece. Just at the point when success had crowned his plans, it was madden-

ing to find his airy fabric of Hope dashed to the ground by the glancing wing of the bright little creature who had flitted so inopportunistly across his path. "Why," he said to himself, as his black shadow swiftly traversed the pearly light, bathing the emerald slope of the lawn, "I could crush her with a touch! And yet I foresee an exhausting conflict with her as with a scion in the desert, and perhaps as hopeless. Charlie, fool! Who would have dreamt it. How incredible the lad's eyes were as they met mine for that second. A touch of my own nature there!"

A grim smile darkened rather than brightened his majestic face, and he closed his iron lips until the fine curves of the resolute mouth were lost in one firm bar, as unyielding as death itself. "She must be got rid of," he counted silently. "I have never yielded a jot of my will yet to mortal, and it would be strange, indeed, if the folly of a boy and girl should turn me aside from the purpose of my life—that of joining the house and fortune of my brother with my own."

As he pondered, he turned aside from the narrow path, edged with low, aromatic cedars, which ran down to a little grove of willows overlooking the lake, in order that in this quiet spot he might think undisturbed. He was no longer angry, that is, he had taken his rage by the throat and planted his foot upon it after the fashion he had followed with Fate itself in his busy life. He was even a little amused with himself for his brief passion. "One would almost imagine it a thing of consequence," he said to himself; "the poor young fools!" and pushing aside the screen of drooping willow boughs, he was about stepping out on the little beach, glistening golden by the diamond tide, when, as though stung by an adder, he drew back into the impenetrable shade of the clustering leaves, amid which his face gleamed as though hewn from ivory. The glowing monster of his fierce anger was gathering for a spring, and for an instant he was paralyzed by the intensity of his rage. Had it been otherwise, he would immediately have revealed himself, for his haughty spirit would have spurned the idea of spying on the actions of others.

A light canoe trembled on the edge of the tide, partially shaded by the willows, and in it he saw a man, just engaged in pushing it out from the shore. As he looked it freed itself from the tiny beach, and tossed on the long, purple voiceless swell of the lake. The man turned a dark handsome face, with lustrous eyes to the shore.

"Good-bye, my love!" he said in a low and cautious voice, and Violet Silver kissed both her white hands to him, her deep eyes radiant, her rosy lips quivering yet asleep.

"Au revoir!" not good-bye, she whispered, "until Christmas Eve. Go! I thought I heard footsteps!"

She turned and fled past Aurelius, her golden hair, loosened and flowing, drifting against his broad chest as he stood aside in the shadow, her light dress touching his hand like a passing vapor.

The man, with a long powerful sweep of his paddle, darted his canoe along the shore, and, turning a sharp curve, bristling with gigantic pines, was instantly lost to sight.

Aurelius drew a heavy breath, which almost seemed to tear the steel muscles of his vast chest, and with the port of a Caesar defied by rebellious Helots, parted the screen of willows and stepped out on the fairy beach, baring his lofty brow as he did so to the freshening wind, which was stealing across the lake, leaving pearly footprints of faintest foam as it came. A complication had arisen which, in one glance, he saw could hardly fail of ruining his hopes unless, indeed, his action was prompt, vigorous and—unsparing. And of all men who ever tore the golden prize from the hand of Fortune, Aurelius Silver knew how to be unsparing to others and to himself. He had never done a generous deed, far less a dishonorable one. Some natures resemble masses of grim rock, threaded with veins of gold, but to the cold walls of which no tender parasite clings, no vine of beauty connecting them with the warmth and sunshine of human life. He neither gave nor expected sympathy. He had his virtues of the high Roman sort. He was honorable, he was temperate, he was courageous. The hidden fire which lurks in man, as in nature, was there, but it neither brightened his life; or that of others.

"So!" he said; "Violet also!" The expression of his face boded but little good towards the girl. She was the only creature he permitted himself to love, and for the very reason that in a certain cold way she was dear to him, he absolutely hated her in the moment in which he found her young spirit had freed itself from the shackles of his will.

He turned to the left, and walked about a hundred paces along the narrow beach, until the villa hung about him like a pearl set in moss. The strip of sand dwindled here to a mere golden thread, from which sprang the green settlements of the steep bank, or rather hill, on which stood the house of Arnold Silver, and the lake, suddenly deep, lay a depth of jet, dappled with silver at its foot.

Involuntarily Aurelius Silver glanced up at the villa. Against the lights in the drawing-room, beyond the rose-garden, the fountain sprang, a pillar of diamond spray, flecked with ruby, and against it again, a little black form rushing down the bank, phantom-like in the moonlight, a night of hair flowing out as she seemed to hurl herself down the steep bank towards the very spot where he stood.

It was Daisy Leighton. She paused for a brief second, as though poised in air almost above his head, her eyes seeming to roll tides of fire from the vellor of her lustrous hair. Her hands stretched out, as though she fled from some purring horror.

Then, with a wild cry, throwing for a second her ghastly little face and flaming eyes up towards the silvery glories of the paeol heavens, she sprang from the banks into the jolly depths at Aurelius Silver's feet, her long hair floated like a mass of ebon-hued drift for a second in the water, and then all was as before, save that widening rings of silver chased each other out across the lake, and drove its waters lapping in sudden life over the bait of sand.

A mighty shudder ran through the vast frame of Aurelius Silver. He was a strong swimmer; what ailed him that even now he made no effort to save the distraught child from the grave she had rushed to?

A voice spoke to his soul, "Oh, man, why trouble thyself? Fate has crushed one obstacle in thy path. Make her evil thy good."

Was there a voice abroad, sighing through the pines and across the purple, silver-crested swells of the lake, sighing over the sudden fall of him who had walked as a god amongst men from the high throne of his boasted honor? Were the stars changed to orbs of fire and blood as his burning eyes turned towards them? With his silver hair lifting itself stiffly from his head, with a hand of fire grasping his heart, with eyes that saw and ears that heard not, Aurelius Silver turned and fled by the path by which he came.

And silence fell upon the spot.

CHAPTER III.

"LORD, KEEP MY MEMORY GREEN!"

An old stone house standing just outside Montreal, back from the highway and flanked with great pines, old and weird looking, like those in Gustave Doré's picture of the "Hewing of the Cedars of the Temple." The house itself square, massive, low-browed, its hewn walls of granite, with that faint suggestion of rose and aqua-marine flowing through the stone which renders some of those old buildings so mellow and picturesque. The windows small and formal, the chimneys standing up against the sky, cowed and hooded like hermits on a mountain top, and from the great eaves giant lances of diamond, the handiwork of the fairy armorer King Frost, hanging like the spears of Titans in some enchanted land. A carriage drive sweeping its hospitable arms from great gates of sombre bronze to the stone steps, guarded on either side by a stone lion crouching, of an amiable, not to say benevolent aspect. A hall-door of polished oak, and over it a richly carved stone, bearing date of nearly a century before.

This was the home of Aurelius Silver, which, with Arnold, his brother, and his uncle Violet, he occupied during the winter months, spending his summers at their villa in the Upper Province. Thus the two families were together during the whole year.

Within, on the ground floor, a long, wide room, entered by great arched doors of deep hued oak, and lighted by a prim row of windows set so deeply in the walls that the sills, cushioned and draped with ruby-hued velvet, formed the coziest lounging places possible. The walls were panelled with oak, richly brown and lustrous, tossing to and fro in their shining depths the scarlet leopards and writhings of the great fire burning on the hearth, lonely logs like prostrate pillars of carbuncle, glowing ruddily and filling the room with a rosy illumination.

The ceiling was painted with a quaint, gorgeously-hued picture of Jove banqueting, surrounded by a golden-haired Ganymede, while his eagles plumed their great pinions at his feet.

A mighty bust of Spanish oak, a mass of rare carving, and antique enough in appearance to have been taken from the "rich, dim city" which Merlin waded into existence with his wand, bore an array of silver plate, rich, rare and old, catching the firelight on frosted wreath and grinning griffin head, the crest of the family, with a fine effect. For the rest, a great dining-table and vast chairs of oak and ruby velvet, a grim portrait or two with the Silver coat of features on the wall, and by one of the windows a fragrant heap of icy cedar, bright, and Violet, in a blue cashmere dress, twining wreaths of the same, a pencil of sunlight striking across her bright head and leaving its mark behind it in that golden tulle, straying off and losing itself in the dark oak panel from which that exquisite head was thrown out like a portrait wrought in rose and pearl and gold upon a shield of bronze.

The girl's face was changed in some subtle way since that night she found her by the fountain. A shade more pensive, a thought less radiant, the eyes deeper in expression, the lips parting less readily in laughter and in speech; and the same change, intensified a hundredfold, repeated in Charlie Silver's face, who, sitting on the cushioned sill by which her chair was placed, watched her in silence as her long, rosy fingers twined the emerald sprays into a long, foamy wreath, flecked here and there with the fire of scarlet berries, dug from beneath the white drifts in the woods.

His face was changed indescribably. The features were sharper, the glance of the eye loftier, if shadowed, the lines of the mouth and chin resolute and decided. The face which had been like Violet's had developed into a more gracious resemblance to Aurelius Silver, a likeness which had retained what was finest and noblest in the



older face, yet left lacking the cold and tyrannous expression which gleamed lolly in the large and stern eyes of his father.

Four months previously he had hardly looked his twenty years; now, on the eve of the day which would see him one-and-twenty, he looked ten years older than his age.

"Charlie, how did you do?" said Violet, breaking a long pause. "Hand me some more sprays, please. There, how do you like my wreath?"

"Very well," said Charlie, obeying the mandate. "What a pretty idyll of Christmas Eve you make, Violet. You have a gracious duty about you such as the spirit of the day would have."

"Thanks! I like compliments," said Violet, very sincerely. "You are far better than I am, Charlie, and this wreath is destined to frame our great-grandmother over the chimney-piece. How droll she looks in that powdered wig and brocaded dress, slumbering at her woolly flock. What flourishing ideas of Arcadia the dear, innocent souls had!"

She watched him as he drew a dainty set of steps to the hearth, and proceeded to festoon the wreath round the massive old frame of the portrait, with eyes gradually saddening from their arch brightness, and, not wishing him to read their changed expression, she went back to her seat by the window and resumed her task.

"I shall always detect the perfume of cedar!" she exclaimed impatiently, as Charlie seated himself again on the cushioned sill. "Do you know, if Uncle Aurelius hadn't developed such an extraordinary enthusiasm for Christmas decorations, I shouldn't have had the heart to undertake them this year."

"I can imagine that," said Charlie quietly. "It is very pleasant to know that I shall have some one to think kindly and lovingly of me when I am away. I can quite understand that quaint old prayer, 'Lord, keep my memory green!'"

"Charlie!" said Violet, with startled eyes, "you speak as though you never meant to return from the West! Surely you are not going from us with that idea in your mind? Think of your father!"

"My father cannot alter my determination," replied Charlie, "nor does he wish to do so. I shall probably never return to Canada. Dear Violet, I am sorry I told you if it distresses you thus!"

The hot tears fell on the wreath, her hands had dropped on her lap, but she dashed them away and looked at him hopefully.

"Time," she said, "will bring its cure; you are so very young, Charlie!"

"Not too young to keep a memory green," he said, repeating his former words softly, "and sad but dear remembrance." Then his eyes brightened and he went on, "I want work, and this plan of opening a branch of our house in San Francisco will give it to me. After all, Violet, it is a slavish spirit which resigns the work of life because of the griefs of it!"

"Yes," said Violet, dreamily, "were I a man, so would I think, but it seems to me so cruel for you, Charlie."

Charlie smiled gravely, and lifted his head proudly.

"I am no coward!" he said; "but come, Violet we will speak no more of this. We have other anxieties on our minds at present, dear!"

"Yes," said Violet, very soberly, "I almost tremble."

"Give me the note," said Charlie Silver, rising, "if you have it about you. I had better take it at once."

Violet took from her pocket a little letter, perfumed, dainty, looked at it lovingly and put her sweet lips to it.

"With my love," she said, blushing shyly, and Charlie proceeded to place it in his pocket-book.

"Good-bye for the present," he said, as he left, "I shall see you before dinner?"

"Yes," said Violet, anxiously, "don't disappoint me, dear Charlie."

Charlie smiled and an answering smile rippled over Violet's face, and into her eyes.

"I must go up stairs and tell Maggie to lay out my white tulle and trim it with holly," she said to herself, after she had been a few moments in the solitude of the stately room.

She got up and, a lovely picture in her tender young loveliness, tripped through the dark arch of the door, out into the great, square hall, with its Christmas draperies of green wreaths, and like the room she had left flooded with crimson light in every nook and cranny from a great fire on a wide hearth in the wall.

Aurelius and Arnold Silver, sitting in the library, one reading the other smoking, heard a cry which rang through the house, and a heavy fall.

They rushed into the hall and at the foot of the wide staircase lay Violet, like an image of snow, perfectly unconscious, a look of intensest horror frozen on her lovely face.

"I never knew her to faint before," said Arnold Silver, quaking in every limb, as Aurelius lifted her from the ground, and carried her into the dining-room. "My darling! What can have happened?"

"Nothing," said Aurelius, quietly, "because she never has fainted, that is no reason that she should not do so. She has not seemed herself of late."

He laid her very tenderly and gently on a couch, touching her cheek caressingly with his fingers as he did so.

"She is reviving," he said, quietly.

CHAPTER IV.

VIOLET'S STORY.

"And so, it being Christmas Eve," said Violet, "and just our own four selves here I will tell you a story."

It was after dinner. The dessert was on the table, wine flashing redly, a glow of rare exotics in a great silver basket, peaches blushing in dainty Sevres dishes. A saucy page in a same priceless ware, holding aloft a basket of grapes like amethysts and emeralds, and the firelight and lamplight flowing over all.

The Silvers had drawn from the table and were gathered round the fire, which burned royally as a Christmas fire should, and in its full glow sat Violet, at her father's foot, as Charlie had called her, a lovely idyll of the season. She was herself again, and the holly berries gleaming in the glossy coronal on her golden head were not more vividly crimson than her cheeks and lips. Her eyes were starry, shining, dilated, wonderful in their rapid changes of expression as she looked from one to the other of the group. She looked at Aurelius Silver, as he sat on the opposite side of the hearth, his noble face and head thrown finely out by the ruby velvet back of the deep chair in which he sat and she smiled, as she spoke. She held in her hand a fan of white feathers, the handle of rubies and dead gold, and when she drooped her head, its shade fell across her face.

"A time honored custom at Christmas-tide," said her father. Do you remember, Aurelius how our poor father and mother used to tell us youngsters Christmas tales, in this very room?"

"I remember," said Aurelius Silver, quietly. "And more Margaret's tales of the Loup-Garou and Fen-folet, in the nursery?"

continued Arnold, "and now frightened I used to be. You never feared anything during the whole course of your existence I do believe, Aurelius."

Aurelius Silver started very slightly, and looked at his brother, but in his usual composed tones he said:

"Let us hear Violet's story, by all means. It is not likely to be very fearful, is it, Pussie?"

"No," said Violet, eagerly, "it is warty just about people like ourselves. There could be nothing very fearful about us for instance, could there, uncle Aurelius?"

"No," said Aurelius, smiling strangely, as he looked into the fire. "We are anciently respectable, commonplace people. Far above cause for remorse. Infinitely beyond temptation."

"Gee on, Violet," said Charlie, looking curiously at his father, the vibration of whose voice sounded unfamiliar. Indeed of late a certain strangeness had crept into the life of Aurelius Silver, noticeably during the few weeks ushering in the holy Christmas, and which had not escaped the keen young eyes of Violet and Charlie.

Arnold Silver had hitherto been alone in the almost princely generosity, which, at this season especially, had made the name of Silver a word honored and blest amongst the poor of the city, but this year Aurelius had borne his part generously, not appearing in the deeds of mercy himself, but deputing Violet in many cases, his brother in others, as the almoner of his bounty. If possible he was quieter, more reticent than ever, though at times a strange disturbance seemed to reign in his soul, and he would retire from the society of the family remaining secluded for many hours at a stretch in his library. Who shall say what phantom of remorse sat by his board, visible but to himself? Who shall tell the anguish of such a soul as his reflecting on the second of temptation which had been sufficient to hurl from its high place of arrogant security that cold and jealous integrity, that stern god honor which he had erected into a deity and bowed thy knees to idolatrously? Its crest had towered to the skies, its feet of clay were on the shifting sands. There he no such doughty Iconoclast for your idol of self-security, as temptation, a truth Aurelius Silver had waded through a sea of fire to learn and understand.

How often the hideous memory of that starlit and peaceful night, on which he had fled, as much morally a murderer as Cain, from the lake, returned upon his soul no one but himself could tell, for the secret was buried, and would for ever remain buried in his own breast. This up-as-tree memory had borne some good fruit. When he found Charlie firm as a rock in his determination to remain faithful to the memory of Daisy Leighton he had not urged him or threatened, or disowned him, as most assuredly he would have once done.

"Wait!" he had said quietly, "if you retain the same mind at Christmas, I will speak no more to you on the subject. But let the matter rest until then. You are very, very young, and youth is the changeful April time of a man's life. Wait."

And Charlie had waited, but as we have seen, changed not at all.

Through his soul there ever rang an appealing and plaintive voice, "Keep my memory green!"

"Papa!" said Violet, putting her hand on her father's, and turning her wistful eyes to his, "in my story there is a girl, like me, and perhaps you will think her wicked and ungrateful to her father who was just like you, but you will hear all about her quite to the end before you say so. Won't you dear?"

"If she is like my little girl, she can't be very bad," said Arnold Silver, laughing broadly, and patting her pretty hand as it rested on his; "but go on, my dear, we are all anxiously."

Violet clasped her hands on her lap and fixed her eyes musingly on the seeping amethyst and molten gold of the flames licking the great sides

of the marble logs on the huge hearthstone. "About fifteen years ago there were two brothers, partners in a great business. Just, papa, as you and uncle Aurelius are, and one of them had two sons and the other one only little child, a little girl, and the two mothers were dead. Now the elder brother, the father of the two boys, was a strange man, cold and haughty and like iron in everything he said and did, and when his wife died, he was very fond of her, uncle Aurelius, he grew colder and harder, until it seemed as though he had but two aims in life, to heap up wealth and to be known amongst men as of spotless integrity. He did not seem to care for his children, though of course that was impossible, because the elder, who was about fifteen, was like the dear mother who had died, and a generous high spirited lad, and I am quite sure all the time the father hardly seemed to know he had a son, he was proud and fond of this boy, only it was not his way to show his heart to the world. And the youngest, a little child of six, was it likely he did not love the little motherless thing dearly? Of course every one here knows how impossible that is," said Violet confidently, "don't, we papa?" "I suppose so, Pussie," said Arnold Silver very soberly, and looking straight at the fire. Aurelius was silent, his face a little in the shadow of the jutting marble pillar supporting the chimney-piece. His niece glanced at him and stole her hand into her father's. Her eyes were very bright, her sweet young voice steady and clear as silver as she went on,—

"How much that poor man was to be pitied! He was so absorbed in his own business that he had no time to see the evil which was gathering round his elder son, and had he seen it, I don't think he would have moved a finger to save him. Not that he meant to be cruel, you mustn't think that for a moment, but he said and thought that for a truly honorable and upright man there was no such thing as temptation. Those who fell, fell from inclination, and as they fell, so for him, should they lie. So it came about that one day, the proof was brought home to him that his son, the elder one, had forged his name for a trifling sum— Did you speak uncle?"

"No," said Aurelius Silver, but he had made a sudden movement which had attracted her attention.

"Well, the boy's father, quietly turned him adrift to her, as he said, 'with the dregs of the earth his crime had levelled him with.' I don't believe he seemed angry even, but none of us can fancy what he felt in his secret soul. He must have thought that perhaps if he had acted differently himself, watched and guarded the boy from corrupt influences, this would not have happened, and how! how dreadful that thought must have been. But the boy disappeared."

"And your story ends," said Aurelius Silver, but not looking at her.

"No!" cried Violet, "it has a sequel, uncle Aurelius, let me go on!"

Aurelius Silver was silent and Arnold turned his cordial face towards him, with a mingled aspect of entreaty and command.

"Let her go on, Aurelius, the sequel is new to us both."

"He went," said Violet, rising and leaning towards her uncle, her voice broken, her cheeks paling and flaming, her eyes fixed on his, "he went to another country, and alone battled for fifteen long and lonely years with the world. He had a great heart, this boy, and it carried him on eagle wings, far above the associations such as they were, of his former life. He acquired wealth, and in the faint hope that his father had forgotten all but that he was his eldest son, he turned his steps homewards. He met his cousin, now a woman grown, how it does not matter, and oh! papa, she was very, very like me, but don't begin to hate her just yet, and be begged that she would try to soften his father towards him, and from one thing to another, the girl and he got to love each other better than all the world. They met very often in secret, though it was the wish of both families that she should marry her young cousin, now a man, and she promised, against her returned from California, where he had to go to look to his affairs, to beg his father to forgive him; but she was such a coward," cried Violet bursting into tears, "as well as such a wicked, deceitful thing to her own father who was the best and dearest in the whole wide world, that she put off speaking until Christmas Eve, and oh! uncle, you must finish the story," and Violet flashed into her father's arms, which folded tightly about her, and hid her face amid the ruffles decorating his expansive chest.

"Aurelius Silver," said Arnold, solemnly as Violet trembled in his arms, "I charge you to finish it as your heart and conscience urge you to do. Reflect where the chiefest fault lay."

A peculiar smile, gracious yet shadowed, crossed the lofty face of Aurelius Silver. He rose and came towards them.

"Do you, my daughter!" he said, taking Violet into his arms, and kissing her pure, young brow, "the good Angel of this Christmas Eve. You shall finish your Christmas tale as you will."

"Papa dear," cried Violet, "tell me that you don't hate me dreadfully, but I couldn't help it, indeed I couldn't!"

"I'll get over it in time, Pussie," said Arnold with twinkling eyes. "I've known it all along. But come, let us see Aurelius the younger."

"Did you know of this?" queried Aurelius Silver turning to Charlie as Violet fled, rosy as a wreath, with smiles and blushes into the hall.

"Yes," said Charlie, simply, "but it is only of late I knew that Violet's lover is my brother,"

She came back clinging to his arm, a man with dark, lustrous eyes and the kingly port of the Silvers, but with a face all his own and his dead mother's. She left him, however, and stood by her father, and Aurelius looking steadfastly at him, clasped his outstretched hand in his and held it in a firm grasp. "You are welcome!" he said, and still holding it turned to his brother.

"Arnold," he said, "where is your welcome?" "Here!" said Arnold Silver, taking Violet's rosy hand and placing it in his nephew's, "one more expressive than words. But no California, remember. I cannot part from her."

"A good gift!" said Aurelius Silver musingly. "Charlie, she might have been yours. Your brother is leaving us," he said turning to his elder son, "on account, as perhaps you are aware, of a certain sad event dating some four months back?"

"I have heard of it," said the young man in a tone of quiet, yet heartfelt sympathy, and Violet's pretty head drooped sadly. She had no spell to dissolve the trouble which was to darken the whole of that young life.

"Violet," said her uncle, after a moment's pause, "as Charlie's promised bride, I bought you a set of jewels, as the betrothed of my son Aurelius I should like to clasp them on you."

"Thank you, uncle," said Violet, and as he left the room, she went up to Charlie, and looked at him with sad eyes.

"This Christmas has held nothing for you," she said, "it is very sad."

"Except a darling sister and brother," said Charlie, clasping her hands in his.

"And wife!" said the voice of Aurelius Silver behind them.

They turned their faces to him, in a silence born of awe. A pallid silence through which Violet's voice rang out in wild exultation.

"Daisy! Oh Charlie, this was the ghost I saw to-day!"

Aurelius Silver stood towering like some lofty column, crested with sparkling snow and by his side a dark and beautiful little creature, whose wide and speaking eyes were fixed on Charlie's face.

"Take her," said Aurelius Silver smiling, "she is yours. That night when she fell into the lake, it was my fortune to save her young life. I had her brought here in order to test the real strength of your affection for her, determined that she should be yours if I found you true to her memory on this day. Charlie!" he said abruptly with a sudden change of voice, "no more of this idea of leaving me. I am old and I wish my children about me. Will my Christmas gift bind you to your home?"

Charlie's answer need not be recorded, suffice it to say that in the happy silence which succeeded it, the silver clock on the chimney-piece rang out twelve!

"See!" said Violet Silver, as the last stroke died away, "it is Christmas morning!"

And in the dawning of that gracious day we will leave them.

No one ever knew the fearful temptation, which for a second had mastered Aurelius Silver, and no one ever knew, except him, that Daisy had not fallen into the lake by mere accident, no, not even her husband.

No one knew how potent the bitter experience of that night had been in stirring the soul of Aurelius Silver to its depths, or how the latent fire of human sympathy and affection burned so late but so warmly in his soul.

THE MYSTERY OF VISCOUNT BOWLDOUT.

A WEST-END ROMANCE.

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

His lordship was furious, and all the attempts to pacify him were the dimest of failures. "Never," he said solemnly to her ladyship, "never," and as he spoke he added weight to his injunction by bringing down his finely-formed but somewhat gouty hand on a buhl table covered with gimcracks from Dresden, and causing those tiny magnets to shiver in their porcelain shoes,— "never! let me near the name of that abandoned, that hardened prodigal again! I absolutely forbid its being pronounced in this house. He is a disgrace to his family, to his order, and to the profession to which he belonged." And having deluged himself of this terrible denunciation, his lordship buttoned his coat across his noble breast, leant one hand on his hip, and extended the other in a monitory manner towards his lady, looking in an attitude remarkably like Scipio Africanus, or the late Lord Grey in the act of moving the second reading of the Reform Bill. I think, by the way, it was Lord John who moved it; but that matters little.

Her ladyship wept. How could she refrain from tears, seeing that the hardened prodigal whom she had just heard denounced, repudiated, and banished from the paternal roof—represented for the nonce by a back drawing-room in a private hotel in Jermyn-street—was her own son? Du rest, her ladyship was continually weeping. In her interesting youth her nursemaids were wont to address her reproachfully as "Cry-baby," and to speak of her contumeliously, when she was out of hearing, as that "whining little miss." In the Brigade of Guards (to which her husband, alas! belonged) they used to call her Lady Waterworks.

Her ladyship's spouse was the Right Honourable the Earl of Impyene. His lordship owned estates of immense extent in several counties, several coal-mines in the North, and a slate-quarry in Wales; and Impyene-terrace and Bowldout-street, in the cathedral city of Fustyford, belonged to him; but all his broad acres were mortgaged several times over, and he had no money. His wife had no money; that is to say, her lord and her trustees between them had muddled it away, somehow. Carlos de Ven Dunnyop, by courtesy Viscount Bowldout, his lordship's only son, and heir to the earldom, had no money. In the entire family there was not any cash.

Bowldout, the abandoned and hardened prodigal, had expectations, but they all came to nothing. His uncle, Major-general Dunnyop, formerly of the H.K.L.C.'s army, ought to have left him several laes, or crores, of rupees—at all events, a prodigious quantity of money. He did not do anything of the kind, bequeathing his large fortune, his indigo plantations, and his opium farms to a lady of dark complexion and of the Mahometan persuasion, with a numerous young family, all as fat as butter, and of the color of Epp's cocoa. Then old Sir Thomas Roper, one of the judges of the Court of Common Pleas, and his mother's brother, had been contentedly expected to make young Viscount Bowldout his heir. He was a bachelor, and had saved many thousands at the bar before he was made a judge. Sir Thomas died from the effects of indigestion after dining with the Worshipful Company of Bar-tratchers at their Hall in Oatcaton-street, and he left all his money to the Asylum for Idiots. The Hon. Miss Dunnyop indeed, that wealthy spinster of Grosvenor-square, his aunt, left him a thumping legacy—enough to have rehabilitated the fortunes of the entire family—but the old lady having been, unfortunately, in her latter years somewhat eccentric—keeping squirrels in her bedroom; always dining in a cocked-hat, with nine wax saddles on the table; frequently calling in Italian landlady grinders, Ethiopian serenaders, and the like to discourse sweet music to her, and regaling them with potted meats and sherry wine—distant relatives, to whom she did not leave anything in her will, started the hypothesis that the Hon. Miss Dunnyop was mad. So the estate was thrown into Chancery, and must have hurt itself in the fall, since it lay in Lincoln's-inn for many years without moving, and apparently unconscious. At all events, nobody got any money, the lawyers excepted. The costs always being costs in the cause.

So there was "no luck at a" about the noble house of Dunnyop. Chronic poverty did not, however, prevent the Earl of Impyene from living on the fat of the land, from sitting at quarter sessions and sending postchans to gaol for having pheasants' eggs in the crowns of their hats, and imprisoning little children for plucking turnips or sprigs of lavender. Poverty did not hinder him from giving balls and dinners; it did not prevent her ladyship from appearing at court, covered with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, and with a satin train several feet in length behind her. There are some people who must have a carriage and two horses to it. Lady Impyene always had. If you ask me who paid for it, or for the clothes she wore, or the food she ate, I must reply that I really don't know. In *Yandy Fay* we got occasional glimpses of how the Rawdon Crawleys contrived to get on.—not precisely so as to make both ends meet, but at all events to lace the corset of genteel existence with sufficient closeness to hide the beggar's smock beneath, but their "nothing a year" was, after all, more a *façon de parler* than an absolute reality. Rawdon won money at cards somehow, and Becky borrowed freely from the Marquis of Steyne. Now, the Earl of Impyene had never been accused of a tendency to play: it was his grandfather, the first earl, who had originally "dipped" the estate by gambling; and it was very certain that nobody would lend the Countess of Impyene any money. Yet they robbed along somehow, and the best of everything, and a box at the Opera, and always dined at night. I think they must have lived on air—or on the wind of their nobility, so to speak.

Carlos de Ven Dunnyop, Lord Viscount Bowldout, was deeply in debt when he went to Eton, at the mature age of ten years; at least, the cake-woman, and the lady who sold sweetstuff, and the hunchbacked old man who dealt in marble, balls, and hooky-sticks, in the neighborhood of the residence of the Reverend Lancelot Graves, Montpelier-road, Twickenham, who had the honor to prepare his lordship for the great public seminary just named, all declared that the heir to the earldom of Impyene owed them "no end of money." It may be said, likewise, that he was remotely in debt to the Rev. Lancelot himself; for that respectable private tutor's bill for board and education remained in an unsettled condition when the youthful viscount was transferred to the "distant spires and antique towers" which are visible at the Eton Playing-fields. Who paid the two hundred guineas per annum more or less requisite for keeping a boy at Eton must be accounted one of the mysteries of the noble family I am celebrating, since very little credit, I understand, is given by the tutors and dames at the college where "grateful service still adores her Henry's holy shade." Stay, the Hon. Miss Dunnyop was still alive, and had not yet become so eccentric as to partake of her meals in a cocked-hat, when young Carlos went to Eton. Perhaps she paid her nephew's school-bills. His little bills she assuredly did not pay for

him; and from the barnard at the "Christopher," who had trusted his lordship for beer, cold gin-and-water, Abernethy biscuits, pork pies, and cigars—probably consumed on Sundays, and in church-time—to his purveyor of cricket-bats and rackets, his supplier of tarts and ginger-beer, and the ingenious mechanic who mended the watch—who paid for it—whose works he was always breaking, the memory of Carlos de Ven Dunnyop, Viscount Bowldout, lingered for many sad years in the food hearts of the tradespeople of Eton, Slough, and Windsor. They would never forget him, they said, pathetically. Some of these simple folk went even farther in their affectionate familiarity. They spoke of their absent debtor as a "little scamp."

It is needless to follow the brilliant career of my noble hero at the University of Oxford. He left without taking a degree; but though he

ached friend Viscount Bowldout of the Grenadier Guards.

I think it was for fourteen thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven pounds fifteen shillings and fourpence threefarthings that the young gentleman was bankrupt, in the spring of 18—. Half the Commercial Directory, in the shape of tallows, shirtmakers, bootmakers, hosiery, jewellers, livery-stable and hotel keepers, wine-merchants, and fancy stationers, seemed to be present in Esminghall-street to present their part of debts. Strangely enough, there were no bill-discounters in the list of creditors, and on this circumstance the learned Commissioner warmly complimented the noble bankrupt when he allowed him to pass his examination; the truth being that no discounter in London would have "done" any of his lordship's "paper," even at six times sixty per cent interest. "He never had a rap, and he never

and Wylie, Lombard-street, the famous heronet and banker, when he might have been in marriage and for the asking Clementina Angelina Argentinna Gramshovel, the heronet-banker's only child and heiress. It is true that she was much marked with the small-pox and had only one eye, but then how very rich she was to be. Now do you understand why my lord was furious, why my lady wept? and now can you comprehend how Fanny Clearthorn was expelled from Sir John's big house in Eaton-square; how Lady Gramshovel denounced the banished governess as a designing minx; while Clementina Argentinna Gramshovel said meekly that she forgave the crawling serpent from the bottom of her heart—when a woman says that she forgives you from the bottom of her heart, you had better make your will; it is all over with you—and how Lord Viscount Bowldout arrived at the conclusion that he had rather made a mess of matters generally, and that he was in a "doctid fix." It was the opinion of his lordship's former comrades in the Guards, and from which gallant corps he had long since sold out, that Bowley had "gone a mucker," and "come a cropper." They were "horeay" young men, and spoke habitually in the stable argot, so dear to the British youth.

One afternoon, at the height of the London season, Viscount Bowldout was walking somewhat gloomily through Curran-street, Mayfair, into which thoroughfare he had entered by the narrow passage which leads from Hay-hill by the garden wall of Lansdowne House, on his way to Hyde-park. It accorded with his lordship's purpose to avoid the more populous thoroughfares of Piccadilly, in which numbers of his lordship's tradesmen—those he had patronised since his bankruptcy, and who were wont upon occasion to be inconsiderately impertinent (this is a sadly democratic age)—had their places of business. Being utterly ruined, Lord Bowldout had naturally residential chambers in Pall-mall and a stall at the Opera, and carefully kept his name on the books of all his clubs. The Committee of the Junior Lavender and Glove behaved most handsomely during the trying period of his lordship's bankruptcy. His lordship's want of gaiety on the afternoon in question was not due, I should say, to the general embarrassment of his affairs. He had been born in a muddle, and he very probably thought himself predestined to die in one. He was melancholy because he wanted a flower for his button-hole, and he happened to have overrun his credit—or rather, the credit of his credit; the ghost of his tick, as he pathetically called it—with every one of his florists, and to be without half-a-crown in his pocket wherewith to purchase the wanted floral decoration.

"Halfpenny, my lord," said your lordship's well-to-do florist, "the Viscount heard a voice very familiar to him exclaim close by him. He raised his eyes—he had been razing at the pavement, as though in hopes of seeing slices-of-the-valley sprout from the interstices of the flags—and saw standing at the door of a greengrocer's florist's, and fruiterer's shop a face and form very familiar to him. They belonged to John Rooty, formerly butler to his noble father. "There's tick for a flower, then, at all events," thought Viscount Bowldout, as he condescendingly returned the ex-butler's salute, and at his respectful invitation entered his small but davenly-stocked establishment.

"That little matter of the flower for the button-hole was soon settled. "I don't think I need book it, my lord," quoth Mr. Rooty with jocular deference. "It ain't the first bokay your lordship's family had from me. Lord! how her ladyship used to stick it up for sowerin'-plants at her 'omes."

"I've nothing to do with my family's debts," interposed his lordship testily. "They've all cut me—cut me dead, Rooty, because 've gone to smash." He was a simple-minded young nobleman, and was not averse to using the naive *patois* popular at music-halls and on the knife-boards of omnibuses.

"Know hall about it, my lord. No offence," went on the retired cellarer. "Your lordship must be getting hawful 'ard hup."

"Hard up isn't the word," said Viscount Bowldout wearily. "I'm cornered. I can't go to my clubs, because I owe the waiters money. It's a real smash. I shall have to sweep a crossing, or go on the stage and play the hind 'ogs of the hippy-pippy-what-d'ye-call-'em in the pantomime."

"Ope not, my lord. When things come to the worst they must mend, so my old woman says. Maybe, my lord, I could give you a lift that would be of some service to you."

"You, Rooty?"

"Well, look here, my lord. I'm a holdover out of the family. It's true that your pa never paid me my wages, and borrowed money besides, and that your ma went tick with me for sowerin'-plants till flesh and blood couldn't stand it no longer; but the 'ouse of Dunnyop's brought me into susstety, and susstety is what I want. My lord, I ham a hambitious man."

"Indeed, Rooty?"

"Hi always were, from a knifeboy upward. This shop is hall very well, and my old woman turns in a good bit o' money. Hi've done pretty comfortable too by attendin' dinner-parties; and the pastrycook's shop opposite, which we send hoad dinners, is mine."

"By Jove, you're a regular financier, Rooty. You'll be a Rooty-shill' some of these days," broke in Lord Bowldout, quite interested.

"Hi wouldn't be mean myself to be hanyardin' so low," resumed the vinodical pastrycook,



MR. ROOTY MAKES A PROPOSAL.

made no figure in the schools, he was always immersed in books. There was scarcely a ledger in a tradesman's shop in the High-street without whole pages being devoted to records of the arithmetical indebtedness of Viscount Bowldout.

After this he went into the Guards. I have heard that he had nine tailors; that he "subbed" every morning with three bottles of eau-de-cologne to his bath; that he had fourteen horses in his stable—or somebody else's stable, which amounted to the same thing; and that he thought nothing of giving—or rather giving, the terms are convertible—half-a-guinea for a lily-of-the-valley to wear in the button-hole of his coat. He betted heavily, and stood to win thirty thousand, they say, on Dicky Sam, the Derby favorite, that went dead lame on the morning of the race; and he was associated in some mysterious manner with the Royal Depravity Theatre at the period when that favorite place of entertainment was under the management of Miss Maggie Beaumanois (*vis Scroff*), formerly of the corps de ballet. Maggie lived at the Paltons, S.W., in very grand style. You remember her pishald poles, her Dutch pug, and her diminutive tiger in buckskins and top-boots,—those articles were all gifts from her at-

will have a rap, unless he gets that Chancery suit, and he won't get it," quoth Mr. Leo Vigh Sharp, of Knaves'-inn, to Mr. Solomon Flat-catcher, of Little Sabretasche-street, when the prospects of the youthful bankrupt were discussed.

This, then, was the "hardened and abandoned prodigal" whom his noble papa felt compelled to repudiate and renounce—I will not say to disinherit, since his lordship had nothing to leave his heir save his title and his debts. But why, it may be asked, was the Earl of Impyene in such a terrible rage with his son? Was running into debt unknown in the family? Was not, indeed, the young man rather to be congratulated than censured, on having positively got into debt to the tune of nearly fifteen thousand pounds without a shilling wherewith to discharge his liabilities? I am somewhat of opinion, that Viscount Bowldout's bankruptcy had very little to do with the Earl of Impyene's indignation against him, and that the real reason for the paternal wrath was this: that the imprudent and ungrateful young man had had the inconceivable folly to fall over head and ears in love with Fanny Clearthorn, a pretty but penniless governess in the family of Sir John Gramshovel (Gramshovel, Scalsby,



"The wine-merchant's cellarage hunder 'Ogdes the tailor, in Jermyn-street, is mine. But my views is 'gher; 'gher, my lud. They haspires to hupholstery."

"To what?" "To hupholstery," solemnly went on the ambitious Rooty. "Likewise, with a view to hupholstery, which, boin' neglected in my hown heddication, I am 'avin' my son James givan classical tootition in one of the best commercial hacademies at 'Oxton. Han hupholsterer, a fash'nable hupholsterer and hupholsterer in St. James's-street, I 'ave made up my mind to be."

"And why not an undertaker too, oh, Rooty?" "Why not, indeed! You may chaff, my lud; but let me tell you that hundertaking comes matterl hafter hupholstery and hupholstery; and let me tell you, that when you get into the line of berryin' dooks and herls, there's a deal of meat on the transaction."

"I don't think you'll get much out of my governor's funeral," the candid Viscount remarked. "Besides, we've had tick at Banting's for the last three-quarters of a century."

"Hit hain't o' berryin' you h'im thinkin', my lud," replied the greengrocer amiably. "Hi want to put you in the way of makin' a livin'. Do you want to make one?"

"Yes; if I'm not obliged to work for it," he answered with perfect simplicity.

"I'll go ball that you shan't 'ave to work 'arder than ever you did in your life. You don't call goin' hout to dinner 'ard work?"

"No, not very."

"Good! Now, will your ludship go out to dinner at eight o'clock to-morrow evening at the 'ouse of—here he consulted a large account-book—"Singleton Fytch Fytch, Esquire, Boanerges-gate, 'ide park?"

"But I'm not asked, and I don't know the man from Adam."

"Never mind that. You'll be asked by the first post to-morrow mornin'. Will you go? You know a bold servant wouldn't deceive you. Hand look 'ere, my lud. Hif you want a cool 'undered, jest to set you straight a little, jest put your 'and to a Hi Howe Howe, and the money's yours as soon as I can get it out of the cash-box in the back parlour."

Mr. Rooty, of Ourzon-street, Mayfair, greengrocer, fruiterer, and florist, interested in the pastrycook's shop over the way, and in the wine-merchant's premises under Mr. Hodge's, the tailor, in Jermyn-street, was not exactly the mocking demagogue; nor had Viscount Bowldout much of the stuff of Dr. Heliophilus Faust in his composition. Still there was a compact entered into between the Viscount and the ambitious greengrocer, that summer afternoon. The next morning Lord Bowldout received at his chambers a card of large dimensions and highly glazed, in which Mr. and Mrs. Singleton Fytch Fytch of Boanerges-gate, Hyde-park, solicited the honour of Viscount Bowldout's company at dinner that evening at eight o'clock, R.S.V.P. And Viscount Bowldout went to the dinner, and enjoyed himself tolerably well at a sumptuous banquet with a host and hostess and a number of guests, none of whom he had ever met before in his life.

The Viscount almost entirely absented himself from his accustomed haunts during the remainder of the season. The gallant dandies, his ex-chams, opined that "Bowley" was "up a tree" and "keeping dark." Some said that he had gone to Australia; others that he was at Hombourg, becking 'ere. Sir Benjamin Backbite declared that Bowldout had married a wealthy old female at Cheltenham, and was doomed to constant attention on her cats; and Joseph Surface, Esq., was truly sorry to think so, but feared—no strongly and sadly feared—that the misguided young man had cut his throat, and that the awful tragedy had been hushed up. It was at Calais, Joseph Surface, Esq., had been told. But though Lord Bowldout was seen no more in the club smoking-room, or at the bow-windows thereof, he had by no means bid adieu to London life. He dined out most assiduously. Lepoul, his valet (from whom, indeed, I obtained the materials for this veracious history), showed me a whole pile of dinner invitations, all of which had been duly accepted and honoured between the months of May and August 18—. For example, there were Mr. and Mrs. Jarvey Caddington, Peckhambury-square; Mr. and Mrs. Treblepippin, Spontolla Lodge, Lombard-gardens West; the Misses Hyde, Leatherumcrescent, Tanner's-park; Mr. and Mrs. Figg, Sandilands Cottage, Cheshunt; Mr. and Mrs. Warmgoose, the Snippery, Acton; and many more. Besides the dinners, the Viscount found time to attend during the season no less than a hundred and seventeen "at homes," "assemblies," and "thea dansantes." I have heard, too, that he was on more than one occasion seen at the Pavilion Hotel, Folkestone, and at the Grand Hotel, Scarborough, in the company of ladies and gentlemen gorgeously attired, but personally unknown to the aristocratic acquaintance who, by chance, came across him. Towards the close of the season Lord Tom Tupper (the Marquis of Parnassus's fourth son) being by chance in the City, happened to meet Bowldout alighting from a hansom in Lombard-street. The Viscount seemed anxious to avoid Tom, and hurried up one of the courts of the auriferous thoroughfare. "Now what the dooce was Bowley doing in Lombard-street?" Lord Tom Tupper continually asked during the next fortnight of all the friends who would listen to him. "It ain't possible, we know, that he's got a banking account there; except on the wrong side of the plate."

Tom Tupper, there are more things in heaven and earth than we dreamt of in your philosophy.

About this time, if you scanned the evening papers, and especially the Observer, carefully, you might light on Viscount Bowldout's name very frequently as a director of the Jemima-Jane Opal Mining Company (Limited), the Universal Discount Association of the New Atlantic, the Credit Foncier of Utopia, the Hand-on-your-Throat Insurance Corporation, and kindred joint-stock enterprises. Lord Viscount Bowldout was President of the Cosmopolitan Washing, Ironing, Clear-starching, and Shirt-button Guarantee Society, and Deputy-chairman of the Interolar Grand Trunk Railway. Meanwhile his lordship, although he began to look somewhat pale and careworn, was, in a worldly sense, flourishing exceedingly. He drove a mail phaeton with two splendidly-matched bays, and he could have driven four-in-hand had he liked, and have paid for his team too. He had an account at a banking-house in Lombard street (O shallow Tom Tupper!), and that account was on the right side of the slate, and a very round one.

Fortune favours the fortunate; and there is nothing that succeeds like success. These may be platitudes; but they are true. Just as Lord Bowldout was beginning to think that he had

flaxen hair, whom you may see sometimes trotting on his Shetland pony in Rotten-row, his bridle held by the stout coachman, mounted on a cob as stout as his side. The Earl of Impycou has gone to the land where debtors are at rest, and Carlos his son—not a "hardened profligate"—reigns in his stead. I think I can best explain the "Mystery" as related to me in his lordship's own words, overheard one morning at breakfast by Lepoul, his man, who, besides, had shown all about his master's occult proceedings for a very long time.

"You see, my pet," said his lordship, trifling with a partridge's wing on his plate, "when I left the Guards, and the poor old governor turned me up, and that bankrupted business—I've paid all the fellows since then, with five per cent interest—was bothering me, I was awfully hard up, and didn't know literally which way to turn. I was thinking of enlisting in the Carabineers, or something desperate of that sort. Well, you know Rooty, the rich auctioneer, upholsterer, and undertaker, in St. James street? He furnished this house, you remember. He's disgustingly rich. They say he's going into Parliament. Well, when I was at the lowest flow-water, he kept a little greengrocer's shop in Mayfair. He had been butler in our family, you know. Well, he was a good-natured fellow,



"THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CAME DOWN, AND GLORY SHONE AROUND."

money enough to marry little Fanny Clearthorn (to whom he had never, to his honour, been false), the Lord High Chancellor woke up one morning in a perfectly wasal-like state of wakefulness, and delivered a decree which somehow had the effect of moving the Court of Probate, and the Court of Common Pleas, and all manner of subsidiary tribunals, and of arousing the very wildest excitement in Lincoln's-inn and in the Inner and Middle Temple. No less than three leading articles were written in popular daily papers on the Chancellor's judgment; the effect of which was that the embargo so long laid upon the estate of the Honourable Lucrulla Honoria Dunnop, spinster, deceased, was all at once removed, and that a large property—valued, however, in a trifle like ten thousand pounds for coasts—came into the sole and undivided possession of the Hon. Carlos de Ven Dunnop, commonly called Viscount Bowldout. He was reconciled to his noble parents that very evening (how her ladyship wept!); and three weeks afterwards Fanny Clearthorn—the rector of St. George's, Hanover square, aiding and abetting—became Lady Bowldout. Miss Clementina Angelina Argentina Cramshobel remains unmarried. She is the Lady Superior of the Sisterhood of St. Verges, Old Brompton. The good Sisters devoted themselves to educational work; and the Lady Superior, it is said, does not disapprove of corporal chastisement in the training of the young.

and lent me some money, and then— Well, when a fellow's hard up he's obliged to do very shabby things. I used to go out to dinner for him." "Go out to dinner for him! What on earth do you mean, Charles?" asked Lady Impycou, kissing her husband's forehead. "Just what I say," returned his lordship, swiftly avenging by the *lex talionis* the aggravated assault just recorded. "You see, Rooty was a pushing fellow, and had gone into the pastry-cook line, and used to send out dinners. He had no end of customers who had made heaps of money, but had been tradespeople, or something of that sort, and didn't know anybody in what is called 'Society' that they could ask to dine with them, or to come to their parties afterwards. They had lots of girls, but no men. Well, by Jove, if that Rooty didn't serve his customers with guests as well as with dinners, I know he served them with me, and I suppose he put me in the bill. You see I hadn't a penny, but then I was a Lord, and that was something. By degrees, by going to and fro among them, I met a lot of rich City fellows, and then I got made director of a lot of companies; and they used to give me two guineas every time I went down to lunch in the board-room; and besides, I got a lot of paid-up shares, and they used to tell me how to sell them at the right time; and altogether I did very well, till the Chanocery suit turned up trumps; and that's all about it, my darling." Miss Jen in the aggravated assault department, as before. Such was the Mystery of Viscount Bowldout. Tom Tupper, you have not much money. Adm. of the similar.

SONG OF THE ANGELS.

LUKE, II. 8-15.

While shepherds watch'd their flocks by night, All seated on the ground, The angel of the Lord came down, And glory shone around. Fear not, said he, (for mighty dread Had seiz'd their troubled mind,) Glad tidings of great joy I bring To you and all mankind.

To you, in David's town, this day Is born of David's line The Saviour who is Christ the Lord;— And this shall be the sign: The heavenly Babe you there shall find To human view display'd, All meanly wrap in swathing-bands, And in a manger laid.

Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith Apppear'd a shining throng Of angels, praising God, and thum Address'd their joyful song. All glory be to God on high, And to the earth be peace; Good-will henceforth from heav'n to men Begin, and never cease.

CLEVEDON CHIMES:

Their Christmas Peal for 1872.

CHAPTER I.

The bells of the village church of Clevedon were ringing out for morning service one brilliant August day, and mingling with their pleasant tones in the hot, lazy air, the voices and songs of the villagers, as they gathered in the golden court, sounded like fragments of a grateful song.

Clevedon was a small village about twenty miles south of London, so primitive that one could quite imagine it to be at least fifteen times that distance from the great metropolis, and so exquisitely beautiful was its wooded scenery, its lightly swelling downs, and magnificent trees, that a painter might well have chosen it for the model of a perfect English landscape.

There were very few houses in Clevedon, and those few were far apart and solitary, yet all to keep up with the country round. They were old-fashioned homesteads, with gabled roofs and rustic porches, and large commodious rooms, and beamed roundly the well-doing of the various owners.

Far back from the broad, high Portsmouth road, in its park of vast extent, and surrounded by its ancient trees, stood the Manor of Clevedon, where lived the Squire—the largest landowner in the county—and his little daughter, Sybil.

Close to the square-towered church of Norman architecture which faced the village green, the white stone Vicarage, with its battlemented front, looked out from a wealth of foliage and luxuriant garden on to the silent homes of all the holy dead. Here lived the clergyman—a widower for many years—and his only child.

Squire Clevedon—as the country people usually designated the owner of the Manor—looked oftener at Miss Rachel Grey in church than at any one or anything else, so rumour said. Be this as it may, Miss Rachel was totally unconscious of it at this period of her story; and if it ever occurred to her father that the sweet face he loved so well was an object of attraction to his rich neighbour, the Squire, it was only as an unpleasant thought to be dismissed, as soon as entertained, into the vague uncertainty from whence it had sprung.

The present owner of Clevedon, it must be explained, was a very recent importation from nobody knew where. To judge from his sunburnt countenance, one might naturally conclude that the greater part of his life—which had, perhaps, extended over some fifty years—had been passed under southern suns; otherwise, all knowledge of his antecedents was merely chimerical. He had succeeded to the Clevedon estates—which were entailed—as the nearest relation of the late owner, although the relationship was somewhat remote, being only a cousin in the fourth or fifth degree. He was not a popular man with his tenantry: this is not to say that he was hard upon them, or ground them down to his own estimates of what rents in such a flourishing place should be; but he exacted his "pound of flesh" with scrupulous precision, neither more nor less. Strict, unwavering justice was the rigid rule by which he measured out his duty to his fellow-man. There was no blending in his inflexible heart of the mercy "that blesseth him that gives, and him that takes"—no reflection in his stern, proud countenance of the gentle virtue that "is an attribute of God Himself." It may be asked, could his own life bear the test of the harsh, uncompromising rule he laid down for others? There are few lives that could, we think. But, to have justice on one side, we must first read to the end of the story before we proceed to pass judgment on the Squire.

The Vicar of Clevedon next arrests our attention; and, in the study of his character, we may come to understand the aversion such a nature as his would have to the harsh cynicism of his neighbor. If it be a falling with some mortals to be unexceptionably charitable and forgiving towards their fellow-creatures, Mr. Grey possessed that falling in all its fullness. If it be an encouragement of vice to hold out the

ready, helping hand of brotherly love to wretched roadside outcasts, Mr. Grey encouraged vice in no limited degree. Simple obedience was the law of his simple life. What the Master taught with loving earnestness, the servant learned with unquestioning faith. Where the Leader had gone before, the soldier surely followed. The Great Light had shone in the midst of a great darkness. Should not the reflection of that light endeavor—though, at best, it could be but faintly—to shine in the yet undissipated gloom? And yet, Mr. Grey was fallible. How he was most so, we shall better learn as our tale goes on.

Softly and sweetly the chimes of Clevedon were floating on the August air, the day on which I propose this story should begin.

The Vicar and Miss Rachel, the Squire and little Sybil, the two old ladies from Brierly Grange, accompanied by three neat maid servants, a poor blind man who had once been a gardener at the Vicarage, and the clerk, formed the somewhat limited party of worshippers that entered that August morning the House, which loving care and reverence had made so fair and beautiful to look upon. The blind man took his accustomed seat just under the pulpit; the two old ladies, with their maids, filled a bench not far from him; Miss Rachel knelt where the colors from the great East window fell in their mellowed brilliancy on the white folds of her dress, and softened the sunlight of her waving hair; the clerk betook himself to a peculiar structure of carved oak, close behind the south-west door—which eccentric-looking domicile he had, with some difficulty, reserved to himself when the church had been deserted some years before; the Squire sat where he could obtain the best view of Miss Rachel Grey; Sybil knelt by his side; the Vicar rose from his kneeling posture in the reading-desk, and the Holy Service began.

Let us look on the faces of some of these assembled few, while, for a brief hour or so, they are withdrawn from the outer world. There are but few traces of coming age as yet apparent in the blackness of the Squire's thick hair; but there are lines on his brow, and a gloom in his proud black eyes that tell of wounds received in life's sharp conflict—wounds that, for all the Spartan cloak thrown over them, are unhealed and smarting still. He was tall—perhaps a little over than under six feet in height—broad-shouldered, strong, and straight. His forehead was square and wide, and his eyes large, black, and luminous, with a smothered fire away down in their depths, that inspired fear as much as admiration for their undeniable beauty. His nose was of the perfect Roman type; his face oval; the chin massive and finely turned, denoting strong will and determination; his teeth white and even; his mouth well cut and resolute, yet almost entirely concealed by a heavy black moustache. He was a singular stamp of beauty—a face we see but once in a lifetime—a never-to-be-forgotten face, yet ever floating and vanishing away as we strive to see some faint resemblance of its rare beauty in the mass of humanity around us, like the spirit in Dante's Paradise.

And the Vicar, as he knelt in the quiet church, and prayed with his clear, low voice so earnestly—what a contrast was the holy calm of his countenance to the world-marked one of his neighbour! His hair—now partially gray—had once been bright and brown, like the daughter's; his eyes, undimmed as yet by coming age, were dark and gray, like her's, too; the forehead was broad, the nose straight; the mouth delicate, yet firm in its expression; the whole character of the countenance beautiful in its benignity and gentleness, though united with resolution. He was not a very tall man, yet strongly built and well made, and stately and erect in his bearing.

We need but to glance at Rachel Grey, after this description of her father, and we see how like she is to him—the same features, the same expression, the same colouring; though in her, being a woman, all more refined and delicate.

We turn now to little Sybil, with eyes so dark and lustrous, and the rich, deep color under the olive-tinted skin. She is like the proud, tall man beside her—not in the sternness of his beauty, only in the beauty itself. There is a softer, better look in the child's face than in his—a look that seems to reflect something of the spirit of Miss Rachel. Her hair is brown, and dark, and long; and the child is slight, though tall for her age, which perhaps is about twelve years.

The soft August air came floating in through the open church door, laden with the pleasant, far-off murmur of the reapers. No one in that little band of worshippers—not even the watchful, never-to-be-taken-in-clerk—seemed to notice that over that open doorway there flitted every now and then a dark shadow. Sometimes it swayed forwards far into the church, then suddenly vanished, only to reappear and disappear again as suddenly. Once, when the wary clerk had turned round to the East, at the Creed, the substance from which the shadow emanated came bodily into the aisle, seemed to listen to the wonderful words, seemed to be trying to utter them—vaguely, indistinctly, imperfectly; faltered utterly towards the close, cast a dreary look around, stole forth again into the golden sunlight.

Presently the prayers ceased; there was a stillness for a few minutes, broken only by the footsteps of Mr. Grey as he slowly ascended to the pulpit. Then came the simple words of his sermon: they told the story of the Great Love; they urged what our lesser love might do for one another; and, as he spoke, the shadow crept

back to the doorway, and streamed far into the church. After a little time, all heads were bent for the blessing: earnestly and lovingly it was given. Then came the last hush; but when all rose to go, the shadow had gone from the doorway, and the sunlit strayed down the aisle without check or hindrance.

The Squire whispered to Sybil that he was going to walk home with Miss Rachel Grey, and that she was to return to the Manor by herself; then hastily walked out of the church, leaving the little girl alone in the porch. The child stood still for a moment or two, watching her father down the churchyard path, walking rapidly, to overtake Miss Grey. A sad smile flitted over the bright little face as she saw him, with haughty look and gesture, repulse a poor wayside wanderer who had approached him, as if to solicit charity. Sybil's was a tender heart; and, just at this moment, it was dwelling on the words of Mr. Grey's sermon. "I wish father were not so hard," she said mentally, as she walked out of the churchyard over the village green, and entered the park. Strolling leisurely under the trees, listening to the drone of the insects in the scented air, with that pleasant song from the harvest fields falling ever and anon on the ear, the child was unaware that she had been followed; and was much startled when, on hearing herself addressed, she hastily turned, and beheld the vagrant who had been repulsed by her father. He was a man perhaps a little over thirty, tall, and powerful-looking, with brown, waving hair, and dark, brilliant eyes. He spoke quickly and eagerly—

"Pardon me, lady!" Then, seeing the child shrink from his approach, as if with fear, he retreated a few steps, and endeavoring to calm down his excited manner, continued—"Will you tell me the name of this village?"

"Clevedon," replied Sybil, timidly. "Clevedale?" repeated the man, who had heard but imperfectly, the child's voice was so low; and he bent his head forward, to listen more carefully.

"Clevedon," iterated Sybil, in a louder tone. The vagrant made a rapid step forward and put his hand to his brow—a well-shaped hand it was, betraying but few traces of manual labor. A second or two he looked thoughtfully down the long park glade, then asked, without raising his eyes—"Does the clergyman live at the great house up there?" and he inclined his head towards the Manor.

"No," said Sybil. "He lives at the white house, near the church. Do you want to see him?"

"Who was it that waved me off like a dog just now, over there by the graves?" continued the wanderer, not noticing the child's question. "The dark, proud-looking man who came out of the church, and was walking quickly after a lady dressed in white. Did he go to church to learn to treat a fellow-creature like that? I wasn't going to beg of him."

The man was excited now. He knitted his brow fiercely, and leant it heavily on his clenched right hand.

Sybil did not reply at once; but on his repeating his question with greater emphasis, she said—

"It was the gentleman who lives at the house in this park. It was Mr. Clevedon."

The vagrant walked quickly, rapidly down the glade, then stopped, and slowly retraced his steps to the child, who by this time had taken from her pocket all the money she had with her, a bright half-crown.

"Little girl—little lady," said the man, looking far away through the long vista of trees; but before he had said any more, the child dropped her little offering lightly into his hand.

The man started, looked down at the shining coin in his half-closed hand, changed colour, was about to murmur something like thanks; when, suddenly fixing his keen dark eyes on Sybil's face, he asked quickly "if she knew Mr. Clevedon?"

"I am his daughter," replied the child, quietly.

The vagrant drew his tall form to its full height. Sybil wondered how any one so wretchedly clothed, so utterly destitute as this poor creature was, could look so stately and grand.

"Take back your gift," he said, loftily, giving back the half-crown to the dismayed child. "I am very wretched, and hungry, and miserable; but I'll never touch that!"

He was turning away; but the great tears in Sybil's eyes stopped him for a moment.

"Don't be hurt, child, because I won't have your money," he said, in quite a gentle tone. "You meant it for kindness, and God will bless you for it. It's all the same to Him, you know; only, you see, I can't take it."

Then, with his proud mouth trembling with some ill-concealed feeling, and his haughty head erect, he strode quickly away from Sybil down the glade, and soon was lost among the trees.

## CHAPTER II.

The night had come—the glorious August night, with its unspeakable purity and calm. Slowly the spirit moon rose in the pale blue far-off sky, like a sainted abbot, followed by a scattered train of meek and holy stars, the nuns and novices of Heaven's cloisters.

Under the elm trees, in the Vicarage garden, stood the Squire and Miss Rachel Grey. They were talking of Sybil, and of the unbelieveable life she led at the Manor; of how many years had passed since her mother died, that she did not even remember her; and Rachel was wondering where that dead mother's grave could be; where she had lived, and where Sybil was born:

for on all these points the Squire was singularly uncommunicative.

Once or twice, in the course of that evening, there had seemed to be some words hovering on Mr. Clevedon's lips to which he gave no audible expression: they came suddenly, as if prompted by some impulse of the heart; but no voice could be found in which to give them utterance. He knew that he should either gain much or lose much by speaking those words aloud, and some indefinable foreboding inclined him to the losing side. It was pleasant to have the friend ship of any one so pure and true as Rachel Grey—pleasant for him, and everything for his child. It would be more pleasant still to have her love as his wife; but, in asking for that, he ran the risk of losing all. He was not sure what her feeling towards him might be; but he felt inwardly persuaded of the Vicar's, and might not the child be influenced by the parent? So the Squire reasoned with himself, and so the time passed by.

They were still talking under the elm trees on the lawn, when the Vicar came quickly out of his study, and joined them.

"I am called suddenly to a very sad case," he said, hurriedly. "Are you inclined to walk with me?"

This was to the Squire, who was not at all inclined to leave Miss Rachel alone; but he bowed his assent, and, excusing himself to the lady, walked quickly off with the Vicar, down the lane that skirted the gardens and meadows belonging to the Vicarage.

"There has been a poor man found in the ruined barn, near the Grange," said Mr. Grey to his companion, as they hastened along. "I have only just heard of it. They tell me he is very ill—perhaps dying. He is quite a stranger. One of the unfortunate class of tramps, I fear."

"Scamps would be the better term, don't you think?" remarked the Squire, dryly.

"I cannot say," returned the Vicar, in a curt, cold tone. And then, more gently, he added, "It is not for me to judge."

"You will send him on to—Union, I suppose," continued Mr. Clevedon, mentioning the name of the nearest town.

"No, decidedly not," replied the Vicar, with great energy. "I object far too much to our workhouse system to avail myself, in the least degree, of its cold charity. No, the poor fellow must be cared for *à se*. It will not be much tax upon us to support him till he has quite recovered—should he not be so near death as we now fear; and if he dies, it is but little to give him a grave in our churchyard."

The Squire had no opportunity of making further remark just then, as they had arrived at the ruined barn; and, entering together, the brilliant moonlight, shining through the broken rafters, discovered to them the tall form of a man lying on some straw that a kind farm labourer had hastily gathered together—on first finding him in his wretched condition—before going to inform the Vicar. Mr. Grey bent gently over the prostrate man, and earnestly regarded him a few moments without speaking. Brown, waving hair shaded a brow that betrayed no mean intellect; dark, brilliant eyes stared vacantly from their sunken sockets, betraying that that intellect was now behind a cloud. Fever-flashed, sinking, starving, almost at the lowest ebb, the haughty vagrant that had refused Sybil's gift not many hours before—the wavering shadow that had hovered and flitted about the doorway of the church in the bright morning—was now lying low enough indeed.

"What is he muttering about—what does he say?" asked the Squire—for the parted lips of the outcast were moaning some unintelligible words.

Broken, vague sentences they were; haughty refusals of proffered help; vain attempts to utter a childish prayer that, perhaps, long ago he had learnt to pray at his mother's knee; futile endeavours to rehearse coherently the solemn words of the Creed; low, faint murmurings; hopeless efforts to rise and pursue his wandering way.

"I must go home at once and send down for this poor fellow," said the Vicar to his companion. "Will you stay here till my return?"

The Squire gave his assent, and Mr. Grey walked quickly from the scene of suffering on his errand of mercy.

Ralph Clevedon leant against the broken doorway, and the moonlight fell full on his dark, handsome face. A strange position for the wealthy landowner, he was thinking, to be watching by the side of a wretched outcast—one of a class with whom he had no sympathy, and to whom his rule of justice never seemed to have any reference.

A low yet sharp cry from the interior of the shed startled him from the reverie into which he was falling; and, quickly re-entering the broken doorway, he saw that the sick man had half raised himself from the ground, and was regarding him with a look of defiant pride. One hand was raised with haughty gesture to wave him off; the hot lips were parted to utter these words—

"I will not have your help." Then defiance, pride, intelligence, faded from the brilliant eyes; the upraised hand fell helplessly down; the words became confused, then indistinct; he fell back on the ground with low moans of pain, and the cloud that had shrouded his intellect became more dense than ever.

But the Squire, standing by the side of this poor creature, looked down upon him with all the haughtiness and scorn gone from his proud countenance, and remorse and suffering having taken their place!

Ralph Clevedon strode out of the ruined shed

into the still August night, and from the depths of his hidden nature there burst a groan of pain—pain, not caused by the sufferings of the beggar he had left alone, only by the look on the beggar's face as he sank helplessly back on the ground. For he had seen a likeness in this vagrant—this castaway of society—a strange, wonderful likeness he had seen to one who had long since ceased to walk with him along the beaten track of his life, who might still have been walking there, if—if only—Ah! that little word "only;" containing, oftener than we think, the history of a lifetime!

Ralph Clevedon was not singular in having his deepest feelings stirred by this chance expression in a stranger's face. We all see these likenesses as we go through life—the striking likeness, in some stray wail of humanity, to a being who has been the embodiment of beauty to our souls.

Once or twice he stole back to the ruined barn, and looked down into the face of the prostrate man—as if to seek that look again; and each time he shuddered, and hastened out into the moonlight.

When the Vicar returned with the assistance he had procured to convey the sick man to the Vicarage, he was too much occupied to observe the hastiness with which the Squire took his departure, and that he was not the self-possessed man of the world he had always known him to be.

But little Sybil, who was waiting to wish him good night, thought he was strangely absent, and almost cold in his manner; yet afterwards, when she was lying more than half-awake in her little white bed, she had a dim perception of him bending over her in the moonlight, with a tender look on his face she had never before seen; and then, as her thoughts and sight became confused by the sleep that was so fast binding her in his fetters, the form of her father, as he paced up and down the room, seemed to bear a strange resemblance to that of the poor wanderer she had spoken to in the park that morning. The haughty head, the defiant aspect, the courtly bearing, were all the same—all the same! The gaunt look of suffering, the poverty, the rags, were only wanting in the child's uncertain vision to complete the picture.

Undoubtedly, the Squire's usual self-possessedness had utterly forsaken him this August night; but it is only fair for us to measure him by his own rule of justice, and totally acquit him from any sympathy with the tramp. Indeed, the poor, wretched man, his utter destitution, and his sickness perhaps unto death, formed no part of the Squire's perturbed thoughts.

More than three months had passed away since the August moon looked down through the broken rafters of the ruined barn, and beheld the good Vicar in his work of love.

The summer was dead and buried; and from their distant home the heavy snow clouds were slowly coming to make shrouds for the autumn flowers. Clouds of change, too, had come from their shadow-world, and settled on the faces of some of the few who gathered in Clevedon Church that bright, gone-by morning.

The Squire had become morose and sulky; the Vicar pre-occupied by some secret anxiety; Rachel pale and sad-looking; Sybil's life more lonely than ever. Time had only dealt gently with the roadside wanderer.

It would be difficult to recognize in the handsome man that was sitting, one afternoon late in November, in the Vicarage library, bearing in his stately carriage the unmistakable stamp of high birth—it would be very difficult to recognize in him the poor, wretched vagrant that had cast himself down to die that August night. Yet it was he, restored to health of mind and body—clothed, grateful, happy. From the first moment that the Vicar had looked down on him in the ruined barn, he was aware that no common beggar called for the exercise of his charity. There is an indescribable something about people of gentle or noble birth that separates them as completely from the commonality—the *cas* naité of society—as a range of mountains may separate one nation from another. It may be that necessity has placed them on an uncertain footing between two classes; it may be that the slights of Fortune's favourites fall thick and fast, where they are so sure to be keenly felt; but, although they may pierce the superior atmosphere that surrounds these most distinct beings, they can never dissipate it. Rooks, they may be, that the waves of little-mindedness and ignorance fruitlessly endeavor to wear away—yet rocks they nevertheless remain.

The Vicar was also sitting, that same November afternoon, in his library. His right hand closed over a letter he had been reading, his left shading his eyes from the bright firelight.

"I am troubled," he said softly, as if to himself. "I do not see my way."

The young man, who had been reading near one of the windows, quietly closed his book, and came round to the fire.

"Is it about me you are troubled?" he asked, quickly.

"No," replied Mr. Grey, raising his earnest eyes to the brilliant dark ones of his guest. "No; I am not troubled about you. I believed implicitly all you told me of yourself, before I sought the proofs, which were all-convincing. You will return to the world to-morrow—all the better, I trust—nay, indeed, I am sure—or the sharper discipline you have undergone. I have every faith in you. Be honourable, earnest, patient, and forgiving—the Vicar dwelt long on this last word—"and the rugged path may be made straight for you yet. No; I am not troubled about you."



The young stranger would fain have inquired into the disquietude of his kind, good friend, but that he felt it would be intrusive.

The silence that fell on them in the darkening room was broken by a tapping at one of the low French windows. The Vicar started nervously, and half looked round.

"Who is it?" he asked, quickly. "The child from the Manor," replied the young man; "come, I suppose, to say good-bye to me. She knows I am going to-morrow."

"You had better tell her all," said Mr. Grey. "Sybil is a sensible child—loving, earnest, true; her influence may work what ours never might."

There was a slight hesitation about the stranger as he listened to these words, but, by and by, when the Vicar looked into the drawing-room, on his way back from seeking his daughter, he saw the child and the wanderer sitting side by side in the bright firelight, the one listening wonder-struck to the long life-history the other was recounting.

But now Mr. Grey was again in his library, and again his right hand was folded over the same letter. Opposite to him sat Rachel—changed since the August morning, pale and sad-looking. The date on the letter was not recent—perhaps some two months back. The Vicar glanced at it nervously; then looked long into the fire; finally, fixed his gaze full on his daughter's face.

"We have been strangers, Rachel, for two months or more." "Yes, father."

Then they relapsed into silence. Avhile after, Mr. Grey spoke again; but his voice was low and trembling—

"You remember that I received this letter from Mr. Clvedon in September. You know its contents. The time that we took to consider on the matter expires to-day. Have you decided?"

All these sentences were uttered with extreme difficulty; and never once did the Vicar raise his eyes to his daughter's face, until her calm-toned reply fell on his ear—

"Yes, father, I have decided that your reply to that letter shall be a refusal."

A cloud seemed to pass off Mr. Grey's face; but, a moment after, it gathered more gloomily than ever; for, in the silence that followed Rachel's speech, he perceived that the shadow of a great sorrow had fallen upon his daughter.

"You love him, my child?"

These were the words that came from the Vicar's saddened heart; but they pierced the barrier of estrangement that had grown up of late between father and child, and made them one again. He rose, and walked over to where his daughter was sitting, with the great, unbidden tears falling over her clasped hands.

"Rachel, dear one! This has cost you much. Only tell me why you refuse?"

"For many reasons, one, that my acceptance would make you unhappy. But that is not the greatest. In following out the natural dictates of my heart, I must live for this world alone, I have chosen not to do so."

The Vicar gently passed his hand many times over the soft brown hair of his child, grateful that she had decided, of her own free will, as he had prayed she would—mournful, as he thought on the dreary life-struggle that lay before her.

"We are no longer strangers, Rachel; oh?" he asked softly.

"Oh, no, father; never again! I only felt I had better strive alone. Now it is all past. You will write to-night?"

"Yes. Some day, Rachel, when you are better able to hear it, I will tell you why we may both be thankful for the decision you have made to-night."

"You have learnt something about him lately, father—I am sure you have, and you like him none the better for your knowledge?"

"Have patience, child. Wait till you can listen calmly. I will tell you all then. You can wait, Rachel?"

"Yes, father."

Then she quietly passed from the room to her own chamber; and the Vicar took up his pen to reply to the Squire's letter.

Later on in the evening, when the child had returned to the Manor, not quite the same child as when she left it—for Sybil bore a woman's mission with her—the wanderer was once more standing by the library fire, talking to his benefactor.

"I am to come back at Christmas, you tell me," he was saying.

"Yes," returned the Vicar. "Yes; I have a golden dream for that blessed time, and you are one of the creatures that people it. You must not be wanting then; and—"

But the Vicar stopped, and a shade came over his brow—for there was a stern, dark figure in the picture he was portraying to himself that cast a great shadow over all that golden dream.

"You have told the child?" he asked presently, when the shadow on his face had passed away.

"Yes," was the reply. "Now, all we have to do is to hope and wait."

"And trust, and do our best," added the Vicar, gently.

Then they cordially shook hands, and separated for the night.

Sybil went home from the Vicarage with her heart full of a great work. Child as she was in years, she was yet old enough to comprehend, to their full extent, the difficulties that lay before her. Soberly was her little head puzzled how the mighty undertaking was to be effected; but,

long before she reached the Manor, her woman's nature told her that love must work it all—strong, patient, enduring love, that overcomes all obstacles, that coaches on, and never ceases sight of the end from the very beginning. And it never occurred to her that her mission was to begin from the very moment she entered the drawing-room of her home.

Leaning against the mantelpiece, scowling darkly down into the glowing fire that was burning on the bright steel hearth, was the Squire, apparently not the most amiable of men just at that moment. Sybil went softly up to him to say good night, as was her wont, the unpleasant expression on his face seeming to warn her that that would be her wisest course at present, but she was startled when he said, suddenly, almost sharply—

"Can't you stay one minute with me? Am I an object of aversion even to you?"

"Oh, father! father!" cried the child, twining her arms round one of his, and speaking with all her heart in her eyes and words.

There was a magic in her thrilling voice. The Squire passed off from the Squire's face. He took his little daughter in his arms, and kissed her.

"Sybil, you shall be a woman to-night. You shall sit by the fireside with me, and we will talk. We want no one else to make our home happy, do we, Sybil?"

"Yes, we do," replied the child, earnestly, looking into the glowing fire, and thinking of her mission.

"Yes, we do," echoed the Squire, in a low, sad tone, also looking into the fire, and thinking of the Vicar's letter that had come to him that evening.

"Father," said Sybil, after a little while, "did you ever see the—the gentle—the poor man that Mr. Grey has been so kind to, that has been ill at the Vicarage such a long time?"

"Yes, I saw him once—the night he was found, I think it was. What about him?" And the Squire knitted his brow at the recollection of that night.

"Were you ever kind to him, father? Did you ever send anything to help him?"

"No; I never encourage vagabonds," was the cold, decided reply.

Sybil's heart fell; but she determined to try again.

"He is going away to-morrow," she said, "for he is strong and well now. And—father—he is not a vagabond!"

She looked so pleadingly at her father as she spoke; but again his hard words fell like cold water on her warm feelings.

"Going to beg about the country again, and impose on soft-hearted people, is he? or to the workhouse—which?"

"Oh, father!" and there was indignation in Sybil's large dark eyes; but she suppressed it in a moment, for her father had a right to say what he liked. "He is going to be honest and true," she said, simply; "and going to look for something he lost a long time ago. Don't you hope he will find it, father?"

The Squire gave a short laugh. "I dare say he will find himself at Millbank or Portland before very long," he said.

"Father," said Sybil, after an interval of silence—branching quite off from her previous subject of conversation, and speaking with a sort of awe in her voice—"was mother very sorry to die?"

"No—no; not at all—not at all!" The Squire spoke shortly, but in subdued tones.

"Was I the only little child she ever had?" asked Sybil, with the same earnest manner.

"Oh, no; there were two or three others, but they all died long ago—long ago."

"Perhaps, then," said the child, tenderly, "she was very glad to go and live with them; but how could she like to leave you? I never should."

The Squire smiled sadly.

"Perhaps you will think differently some day, Sybil. I shall tell you more about her when you are older; you may think then that she was glad to leave me."

They both looked into the fire, lost in thought: Sybil puzzling herself how she was to carry out her undertaking; her father living in the by-gone years, with that haunting face his only companion, excluding all others—even Rachel Grey's.

Sybil felt she must go on now with her work; and, finding that talking of her mother seemed to soften her father's nature, she determined that she would speak often on the subject than she had hitherto done. She would not be only the petted child, she would be his friend, his companion; she would speak of the dear lost one to him, and so, in a manner, bring her presence back; and then, by degrees, he would become less hard and stern, and by and by he would listen to her mission. Thus the child reasoned with herself in her simple heart. She had no experience of human nature, no knowledge of the crooked hyphen that so often takes to obtain its ends; she could only see, with the eyes of her deep love for her only parent, that keeping his sorrow to himself had made him cold and stern. Now she would share it with him, and then, perhaps, that grave would not seem so far away; and the mother she had never known might come nearer to them in spirit, and so would help her in her work.

With this resolve in her mind, Sybil rose to say good night. She would not say too much at once, she thought; and, besides, her father was beginning to frown again, for his thoughts had reverted to the Vicar's letter.

"Good night, my little one," he said, tenderly, holding her before him by her two hands.

"Sybil, child, you are all in the world I have to love."

"All, father?" said the child, inquiringly, the greatness of her mission overflowing her heart, and her soul in her eyes.

"All!" repeated the Squire, turning sadly away, and thinking of Rachel, and the still, dead face.

The snow clouds had come at last. They had been a long time on their journey—so long, that the last flower of autumn had faded and died away before they brought their shroud for the poor, weary earth. The first white flakes fell in the third week of December, just seven days before Christmas.

The time was drawing very near now for the Vicar's golden dream to become a bright reality or a painful delusion; for the child's mission to be fulfilled or dispelled; for the wanderer to find what he had so long lost, or to lose sight of it for ever; for the cloud of separation that had gathered between the Squire and Rachel Grey to be dispersed, or deepen into the darkness of a night that has no stars. Sybil had been busy, since she had taken up her work, in breaking up the hard ground of her father's heart; and any one that knew the Squire well—well, alas! they were few—might have seen that her sowing had not been in vain. Outwardly, he was unchanged; but the sorrows of his past life had lost some of their bitterness since his child had brought them from their hiding-place, and scattered away the roughness of their sharp edges. The Squire's distant grave had a sort of visible presence in the old Manor. She looked out of Sybil's eyes, she spoke in Sybil's voice. It was not his child sometimes, the Squire thought, that changed the harshness of his speech into more gentle language, or the scorn of his withering smile into a more genial expression of countenance; it was the spirit of his dead wife that spoke to him through Sybil, and stirred the faded leaves of better feelings that had long lain withered in his heart, until they almost seemed green again.

How such a nature as Ralph Clvedon's could love twice may seem incomprehensible, if we give the subject but a passing thought. We will, however, pause a few moments; and, looking down into the secret depths of the human heart, we find that two strong affections in a lifetime are not incompatible with intensity of feeling. One may be formed when the spring-tide of life is over, in all its freshness, when the bloom and coloring on the fruits and flowers we gather delight our eyes; when we look on the world around us through a reflected light, and all its rays, golden—all bright, beautiful, and short as an Apollo summer. There has been a great reality in this earth-vision, it has left its stamp upon us, whether for sorrow or joy; it comes back for a few swift-passing moments, when we toil through the noontide heat of life's steep high road; and is as beautiful, and as fleeting, as the last rays of sunset on a mountain top.

We descend into the valley. The shadows become gray and long; there is light still in our hearts, but it is not sunlight—that glided the pinnacles and minarets of the Palace of the Past our poor humanity raised fondly to ourselves; it set long ago, perhaps, over a cold, ungrateful, or worse still, over neglect, scorn, pride, misunderstanding!

We travel on; our hearts are weary—they are human hearts still; they pine for human love: it is not enduring, it is not satisfying, it is not perfect—but it cheers us, helps us on. We look not so much to the outward beauty as to the inward spirit; we find it pure, calm, true. We are not dazzled; we see so plainly now, with that sober light that has surrounded us since the sun went down. We perceive the husks with the pure grain, the weeds and tares with the golden corn: we treasure the one; we are lenient towards the other. There is so much waste land in our own natures, that we do not seek for the highest cultivation in those of others. We are forbearing, yet we love strongly and deeply; for now, with our sight made clear, we can see the foundation of our affections; and so we build up a structure that lasts to the end: and thus the night of our second love becomes holier far in its calm starlight than that bright, warm sun-vision that went down while it was yet day. And thus with the Squire!

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE DOCTOR'S STORY.

BY BELLE BREWER.

"Did I ever tell you, Haines, about that scrape I got into with the Hibernian population of this place when I first came here?" "Oh yes!" And the doctor, after assuming the American position of absolute rest, feet elevated a few inches above his head, and giving a few preliminary puffs at his pipe continued—

"I was but a sprig of a doctor when I came here, armed with authority from a neighboring college to practice the 'cheating art.' I had my shingle, announcing that 'C. S. Brewster, M. D., Physician and Surgeon,' was ready to wait upon the people, from the issuing of medicine and Dover's powder to the amputation of legs, and from that down to pulling teeth. I then sat down and waited for business. It did

not come very readily, occasionally an old fellow would come in and regale me with a long story of 'rheumatism,' and generally succeed in boring me till I gave him a prescription free to get rid of him. Now then someone would come in to have a tooth extracted—there was no dentist here then. That was about the extent of my practice. The people were not going to have young 'sawbones' trying experiments on them. Dr. Jones was here, and Dr. Jones was good enough for them.

"In consequence of all this, time began to hang heavily on my hands; but fortunately, just as patience was about to leave her monument, a bright idea struck me: I would procure a subject, and brighten up my anatomy. Happy thought! and I immediately proceeded to act upon it. I dropped a line to Ainsley, who was just across the river from me, engaged in the same laudable business as myself. Ainsley and I had been chums and 'uncle thicket' in our college days, so I invited him to come over and take a part in the 'first resection.' That was on Monday, and on Tuesday night he came. An Irishman, of doubtful reputation in the neighborhood, had died a day or two before, and we decided that, inasmuch as said Irishman had been of no benefit to mankind living, he should now contribute something to the cause of science. Well, suffice to say, that about the witching hour of night, we 'raised' that Irishman, (of course we had a trusty friend to assist us), conveyed him to my office, put him on a dissecting-table improvised out of a large box, and were soon deep in the investigation of human anatomy. So far all had gone swimmingly, but a few days afterward it entered into the heads of Patrick's friends to raise a tombstone to his memory. Very well, thought I, raise a stone to the place where he recently was, my brave sons of Erin, but he's not there now, he's risen.

"However, it was not so funny when, on the evening of the same day that the tombstone was to have been put up, the friend who had assisted us came in and informed me that the Irish were rising, and that a guard had been placed around my office to prevent my leaving or conveying away the body. It seems that a few splinters of walnut had been found near the grave; this causing suspicion, they had dug down and found the body gone, and forthwith charged me with the crime. Things looked pretty bilious, for an infuriated mob is not pleasant to contend with, I can tell you. I had seen them before my friend left, he not being able to render me any assistance, and I set down to consider what to do. Clearly, to fight with the mob, in some way, and that quickly, and how I could not take it away, for they were watching, and there was no place in the building to conceal it. At last, after racking my brain in vain for a long time, a way, and the only way, suggested itself. The thought was repugnant, but my liberty, if not my life, was at stake, and who will hesitate at such a time. My friend had told me that the rabble did not intend attacking the office until daylight; in order, therefore, to make sure that I did not escape. So I had time to carry out my resolve. Spitting up my improvised dissecting-table, I soon had a blazing fire in the stove, which fortunately for me was a large one, and then—I made a sacrifice of poor Patrick. I sat grimly by that fire till the gray dawn streaked the East, and just as the last vestige of anything that could criminate me disappeared, there was a loud knocking at the front door. Getting up, and opening it, there before me I saw the mob in full force. Assuming a look of astonishment, I demanded the reason of their early visit, and why they came in such numbers.

"By the blessed Saint Patrick we'll show you," said an ugly, red-mouthed son of the Emerald Isle; "we've come to search your office for the remains of the gentleman, as ye took from the graveyard the other night, and we'll do it, too, won't we, boys?" A howl of assent was given. Pretending to get angry, I ordered them to leave, every one of them, before I had them all arrested for molesting a peaceable, law-abiding citizen; and ended by telling them that they could not search my office with my permission. "Then we'll search it without your permission, and may the devil fly away with you, you murdering villain! It's not, Tim O'Bralligan as'll be after lavin' yo blackguard, till ye trot out Pat Murphy's corpse. Come, boys, with that they poured into the room, brandishing their 'shillelaghs,' and searched every nook and corner, but of course they found nothing.

"By the howly Moses, the doctor has told the truth," said the red-mouthed leader of the mob, looking somewhat abashed. "The corpse of the gentleman as ye seek is not here, and I, for one, at the doctor's pardon, and now, boys, would better be after lavin'." "Yes," said I, "and the sooner the better, before I have you all arrested for forcibly entering my office." And they went, without not on the order of their going. "My own adventure, my star seemed in the ascendant. Practice began to come in, and since that, I have had plenty to do, and have had no desire to leave. That became of Ainsley? Oh, yes, poor fellow, he died about 10 years ago. Better fellow never breathed than Ainsley; a man among men, would have made his mark in the world. He was ahead of us all morally, socially and 'tellectually,' and called away in the vigor of his manhood and in the midst of his usefulness. And the doctor, gazing absently at the wall, went off in a fit of rhapsody on the mysterious ways of Providence.



## THE FAVORITE.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, DEC. 28, 1872.

## OUR FIRST BOW.

A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all, and, in the general joy and enjoyment of this festive season, may you find room in some warm little corner of your hearts to welcome the new candidate for your favor. We make no excuse, nor offer any elaborate arguments as to the necessity for launching THE FAVORITE on the sea of literature; we only have two reasons; first, a desire to furnish a thoroughly good paper, perfectly moral in its tone and tendencies, to take the place of the trashy publications with which the country is deluged; and, secondly, we have what we conceive to be a very reasonable desire to make a little money by the transaction. In order to accomplish our purpose we shall spare neither pains nor expense to make the FAVORITE the best, as it is the largest and cheapest, weekly story paper printed on this continent. We shall constantly have three or four serials by the best authors, a number of short stories, interesting sketches, spicy editorials, and entertaining selections from the contemporaneous press. We shall run the FAVORITE emphatically as a *low* paper; there will be nothing in it to induce drowsiness; every article will be well written and entertaining, and our stories will be of the most absorbing interest. THE FAVORITE will be conducted essentially as a *family* paper; it will be pure and elevated in tone, and not a word or line will appear in it which could call a blush to the cheek of virtue, or sully the purity of thought of the most innocent. It will be designed especially for entrance to the family circle, and may safely be placed in the hands of childhood; the stories we publish, while interesting and full of adventure and incident, will be free from any of the vulgar sensationalism of the day, and will tend to elevate, improve, and instruct as well as amuse. As a fair sample of the class of paper we intend having, we refer to the present number; future numbers will be constructed on the same model, only they will contain parts of several serial stories. Politics and religion—that is religious discussions—will be excluded from our columns, as we do not think them suited for a purely literary paper; current topics will be discussed in an independent and liberal spirit, and no partisanship or sectarianism allowed to creep into our reviews of the most interesting questions of the day. We intend to publish a thoroughly good paper, as good as money and talent can make it, and we trust to the public to give us that earnest and cordial support which alone can insure our enterprise being a success. We desire to supplant the indecent and immoral publications which now circulate so freely, and to supply in their place pure, healthy, invigorating literature, and we call on every one who wishes to see the literature of his country elevated and improved to assist us.

## CHRISTMAS.

Eighteen hundred and seventy-two years ago the first Christmas was celebrated beside the manger of the stable in Bethlehem by a few shepherds who came and bowed themselves before the infant Saviour, and offering their humble gifts worshipped in silent wonder, and now from every clime and every land, from the frozen poles and the burning desert, goes up the sound of rejoicing and thanksgiving on the anniversary of the birth of the Saviour of the world. Everywhere, throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, hymns of prayer and praise ascend, and everywhere the sound of rejoicing and merriment is heard. In the language of the great human interpreter of the Divine law, the time is "hallowed and gra-

clous." Hallowed, because dedicated to a sincere thanksgiving, and gracious, because then the best sympathies of our nature break from out the crust that has gathered over them during the past year's rough experiences, and show an activity as if they had been refreshed by partial or complete slumber. Under the genial influence of Christmas men thaw out who were to all appearance frozen for ever; closely buttoned breeches pockets are unloosed, and the hand of charity inserted; flinty hearts are softened and affection suffered to enter where the gates seemed barred to it for ever. Somehow Christmas atmosphere seems to be different from any other; no matter in what part of the world, whether in frozen Canada or the burning tropics, the Christmas air seems to waft brooms of love, and peace, and unselfishness. A. no time does self fall to so low an ebb as under the influence of Christmas; people think not so much of themselves as of others; the old folks are planning what presents they can best delight the hearts of the youngsters with, and the little folks are busily engaged counting their hoarded wealth and puzzling their little heads to know how two dollars and ten cents is to be made to buy a card-rack for mother which will cost one dollar and a half, and a smelling-bottle for auntie which will cost a dollar and a quarter. Nearly every body is planning some little present for some relative or friend; poor indeed is he who has nothing to give, or no one to give to. This custom of making presents at Christmas time doubtless has its origin in the presents of the wise men of the East, and will probably last as long as the world does. But there are some who cannot make presents; some to whom Christmas is not Christmas at all, some whose dull routine of heavy toil is not broken by the joyous day; some whose abject poverty makes the day a time of rejoicing or mirth for them. Is it not our duty, if we are blessed with a great or small portion of this world's goods, to seek out those who are in want and misery, and according to our means, enable those who are too poor to help themselves to enjoy in some small degree this festive season, remembering the injunction of Him whose birth we celebrate, "Ye have the poor with you always." Deprived upon it, our own Christmas dinner will taste sweeter for the consciousness that we have enabled at least one fellow creature to enjoy a meal he would otherwise have gone without; and our own pleasure will be enhanced by the knowledge that we have let in a little light on some dark spot, and caused joy to reign where despair and sorrow held control. While we enjoy Christmas thoroughly ourselves, let us be mindful of those whose sufferings we can alleviate, and remember that He whose natal day it is come to bring

"Peace on earth, good-will to ward men."

## WHO WILL WRITE FOR THE FAVORITE.

Our number of 4th January, to be issued in a few days, will commence the first volume of *The Favorite*. It will be rich in story and verse, and will contain an immense amount of interesting reading matter. Three new serials, two of them written expressly for *The Favorite*, will commence in this number which will contain the following, and other articles:

- HARD ON BEAT;** a tale of Canadian life. By J. A. Phillips, of Montreal, author of the popular stories "From Bad to Worse," "My Reporter," &c., &c.
- WIDOW;** or the Foster Sisters. By Miss Isabella Valancy Crawford, of Peterboro', Ont., author of "The Silvers' Christmas Eve," "Wrecked," or, "The Rosicrucas of Micree," &c.
- TALES OF MY BOARDERS.** By A. I. S., of Huntington, Q.
- DRAG ON THE OCEAN.** By E. A. Sutton, of Quebec.
- The conclusion of "The Clevedon Chimes" and "Christmas in Sunshine and Shadow," and other interesting articles.

In this number will also be commenced a novel of great power and absorbing interest now appearing in England, entitled:

**LASTELLA.** By the author of "The Rose and the Shamrock," which we publish from advance sheets.

We have a large number of interesting tales on hand which will be produced in rapid succession; and we are always ready to encourage native talent by purchasing at the highest rates anything in the way of stories, sketches, poems, provided they are good.

*The Favorite* is the largest and cheapest literary weekly paper published on this continent, containing as it does sixteen pages of four columns each, or sixty-four columns of reading matter, being one fourth larger than the *New York Ledger* or *Weekly* or any of that class of papers.

Amongst the many authors whose works will appear in *The Favorite* we may mention the following:

## CANADIAN.

- Miss Isabella V. Crawford, of Peterboro', Ont.  
 Mrs. Alex. Ross, Montreal, Q.  
 Mrs. M. E. Muchall, Peterboro', Ont.  
 Mrs. Susanna Moody, Lakefield, Ont.  
 "Effic," Clarendonville, Q.  
 Kate Seymour, Montreal, Q.  
 "Antoinette," Halifax, N. S.  
 Miss Emma N. Crawford, Peterboro', Ont.  
 A. I. S., Huntington, Q.  
 Mrs. J. V. Noel, Kingston, Ont.  
 J. A. Phillips, Montreal, Q.  
 Robert Brydon, Hespeler, Ont.  
 John Lesporance, Montreal, Q.  
 Rev. W. Lumden, Oakville, Ont.  
 E. H. Griffith, Montreal, Q.  
 E. A. Sutton, Quebec.  
 Geo. S. Barnum, Ottawa.

&c., &c., &c.

## ENGLISH.

- Wilkie Collins, Edmund Yates, Ernest Brent, Miss M. E. Braddon, James Greenwood, Jean Ingelow, &c., &c., &c.

## AMERICAN.

- Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, William Ross Wallace, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Dr. J. G. Holland, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Louise M. Alcott, &c., &c., &c.

## LITERARY ITEMS.

**THE DOLL WORLD SERIES.** By Mrs. Robert O'Reilly. 3 vols in a neat little case. Boston. Roberts Bros. Montreal: Dawson Bros. Price \$2.

These three little volumes, *DOLL WORLD*, *DEBORAH'S DRAWER*, and *Daisy's COMPANION*, are excellent stories for children and are particularly well adapted for a Christmas present as they are handsomely bound in cloth and embellished with six or eight engravings each. The style of the stories is good and they cannot fail to be interesting and instructive to the young.

**KING ALFRED AND OTHERS** the discoverer of the North Cape.

**THE MARQUIS BY CANADA,** or *Pass in Boots*. These are two of Marcus Ward & Co.'s Illustrated Legends, published by W. P. Nimmo, Edinburgh. Montreal: Dawson Bros. Price 25 cents each.

A brace of capital Christmas books finely illuminated. The new version of *Pass in Boots* is well and pleasantly told, and the bright showy pictures are just the thing to delight the juvenile heart.

**CASELL'S MAGAZINE** for December is as full of good things as usual. Mr. F. W. Robinson's serial "Little Kate Kirby" is continued, and grows in interest as it progresses. There is a curious paper on "How Oil was Struck in Canada," by J. C. Dent; and two excellent short stories, "Two Events in a Quiet Life," by E. Claxton, and "Very Odd," by the author of "Mrs. Jerminham's Journal." The poetry in the number is very good, and the illustrations are fully up to their usual standard of excellence. **THE ALDINE.**—This is without doubt the very best art magazine published in America, and very nearly resembles the *Art Journal* of London. It contains twenty-four pages and has about thirty-six illustrations, printed in the most perfect manner on tinted paper. The reading matter is most carefully selected, and the utmost pains are taken in getting up the whole magazine. **THE ALDINE** is published monthly by James Sutter & Co., 58 Maiden Lane, New York. Price \$5 per ann.

John E. Potter & Co., Philadelphia, have in press and will shortly publish **POTTER'S COMPANION BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA**; a Universal Dictionary of Biblical, Ecclesiastical and Historical Information, from the earliest times to the present day. By Rev. William Blackwood, D.D., LL.D., author of "Blackwood's Comprehensive Aids to the Study of the Holy Bible," etc., etc., with valuable contributions by other eminent divines. Comprised in about 2000 Brevier pages, quarto, with nearly 8000 illustrative engravings.

**THE CANADIAN EVANGELIST** is the title of a new religious paper published in German at Preston, Ont., and is designed to fill in the German literature of our country somewhat the same position that the *Witness* does in English. The first number is well got up, and the paper promises to be well worth the subscription price, \$1 per annum.

(For the Favorite.)

## HOW I SMASHED A GHOST.

About a dozen years ago when I was just getting out of my teens, and trying hard to persuade a sly little monstache to grow so that I might be taken for a man, I had an adventure with a ghost. It was in the island of Barbadoes in the West Indies, where I spent nearly all my boyish days. My parents were Barbadians, and indeed our family had been settled on the island over one hundred and fifty years, and I had cousins and other relations without number. It was always the custom of the family that as many members of it as possible should dine together on Christmas day, sometimes at one house, sometimes at another. It happened one Christmas that the dinner was to be held at the house of a cousin of ours who lived about twelve miles out of town, and it was arranged that most of us were to remain over night, and some half dozen or so were to stay until New Year's. My mother, sister, and myself did not arrive until late, and I had not time to go to my bedroom. The dinner passed off like all Christmas dinners, the thirty-five or forty persons present were all well acquainted, the dinner was excellent, the wines perfect; what more was wanted to make a jolly party. After dinner, of course, we had games "forfeits," and "blindman's buff," and "Copenhagen," and all sorts of games; but we got tired of them, and at last we all gathered on the great wide piazza—for it was a warm, clear, moonlight night—and some of the older ones of the party began to tell ghost stories, while the port-wine negus, claret cup, and coconut julp circulated pretty freely, and those who liked to enjoy a pipe or cigar did so—I have vivid recollections of making myself horribly sick with a pipe.

Of all the terrible ghost stories I ever heard I can not remember anything equal to some Uncle Bill told that night; they actually made my hair stand on end and the girls shrieked in terror. He seemed to enjoy our fright and each tale was more terrible than the previous one. At last the clock struck twelve, and it was decided to be time to go to bed. The house was a large rambling structure, two stories high—the usual height in the West Indies on account of the hurricanes—and I found that one of my cousins and myself were to occupy an upper room in the East wing which had been used as a sort of store room, but had been pressed into service on account of the house being so full. I was very tired, and undressing nastily I jumped into bed, and in spite of Uncle Bill's horrible stories I was asleep in five minutes.

Do you know what the sensation is to wake suddenly out of a deep, sound, dreamless sleep? That was the way I awoke, with a sudden start, and a consciousness that something was wrong.

I looked to my right and there I saw a gigantic figure arrayed in white, with immense outstretched wings, bounding over me; the face was mild and beautiful as an angel's, but I thought I could discern a devilish twinkle in the eye, and a cruel, half-satirical smile about the mouth. I was wide awake, never more wide awake in my life, and I could see the terrible figure bounding clear and closer over me. My resolution was taken; up to this time I had not moved, I now raised my hands cautiously to my head, grasped my pillow with both hands—it was a large, heavy hair one, for I always liked a hard pillow—closed my eyes for a second, and then rising suddenly to a sitting posture I let drive at the ghost with all my might.

"Good Heavens, Arthur!" exclaimed my mother, entering the room with a light, "what is the matter; is it thieves?"

My mother had a chronic idea about thieves, and was always fancying they were in the house.

"What was the matter? Ah! that was the question. I sat up in bed, half-stuffed, and thoroughly puzzled. On my right stood a tall press painted white, the doors of which were battered in; and on the floor lay some dozen or more pots of jama, preserves and pickles in various stages of dilapidation, and on the third shelf of the press was my pillow, calmly reposing in a large tureen of boiled paw-paws.

It was all very well for my mother to say I never saw any figure at all, that it was the moonlight streaming in at the open window, and falling on the white press; but I know better; it was a ghost, and I smashed him with the pillow.

J. A. P.

OLD TIME AND I.

BY MARK LEMON.

Old Time and I the other night Had a carouse together; The wine was golden, warm, and bright—

"Why measure all your good in gold? No rope of sand is weaker; 'Tis hard to get, 'tis hard to hold—

"Hast thou not seen the propitious knave Come down a precious thimble? His chest disclosed? "I have—I have!"

"'Tis not because to-day is dark, No brighter day's before 'em; There's rest for every storm-tossed bark."

For the Favorite.

THE CHRISTMAS ANTHEM.

BY J. A. PHILLIPS.

It was Christmas Eve, and there was a bustle of preparation for the morrow pervading the little village of Groschen, in the Eastern Town-

In the Main Street the shops were all aglow with light and gay parties were hurrying about from shop to shop, some providing for to-morrow's dinner, others engaged in searching for some suitable gift for some friend or relation,

Almost at the head of the Main Street, standing back some twenty or thirty yards from the road, in the middle of a grass plot, which was now covered deep with snow, stood the village church.

The only spot which appeared to have partially escaped the pervading plainness was the place set apart for the choir, and which boasted nearly all the decoration there was.

There was a small harmonium in the choir, and the railings were neatly turned and the broad seat in front comfortably cushioned, which gave the "music gallery" as it was ostentatiously called, a greater air of finish and completeness than any other portion of the church.

The little church was busy and gay this Christmas Eve, like all the rest of Groschen, for the members of the choir had met to practice the Christmas music for the last time, and also to decorate the edifice as far as possible with evergreens.

The practicing was over and the minister's wife, who acted as—what shall I say, organist?—sat at the harmonium trying over softly a new ambitious "voluntary" with which she intended to "play the congregation out" on the next day.

Groups of girls were busying themselves in various parts of the church, twining wreaths around the iron brackets which supported the oil lamps, sticking sprigs of green into the backs of the seats, trying to coo "some garlands to hang gracefully about the plain, angular reading-desk, and otherwise endeavouring to beautify the place and give it an appearance of more life and cheerfulness than it usually possessed.

Of course there were various young men helping the young ladies—there would be no fun in decorating a church if it were not for the assistance the young men afford the young ladies—and the greater number of them were gathered in the body of the church chatting gaily and ornamenting the backs of the seats.

"Peace on earth, good-will toward men."

girl of about twenty engaged in twisting some wreaths of evergreens around the seats; she worked in a dull uninterested way as if she took but little pleasure in her task, and at length rested her head on the top of the rail and the tears started to her eyes and silently trickled down her cheeks.



"PEACE ON EARTH AND MERRY MELODY, GOD AND SINNERS RECONCILED."

ing away from the altar rail, "leave Groschen, perhaps never to return."

She said no more, but walked slowly along the chancel to the choir and seated herself on the broad seat in front of it. Her companion followed and silently seated himself by her side.

"What do you mean by leaving Groschen, Jessie; is it a joke?"

"If it was it would be a very sad one, Bill, but it is only too true. I leave the day after to-morrow."

"But what does it mean?"

"It means, Bill, that sad trouble has come on us, and all Groschen will know it before the year is out. Father is ruined, and the farm will have to be sold, and God only knows whether there will be enough left to keep father and mother in their old days.

"Sell Brookside—Squire Barton ruined—you going away? I can't understand it," said Bill, in a puzzled sort of way.

"It is only too true. You see, it happened this way: Two years ago father went security for an old schoolmate in Quebec who was entering on some speculation. Mother opposed it, but father had great confidence in his friend and went security for him. Well, the speculation failed, and father had to pay a large sum of

money, so large that he didn't have enough, and so the farm had to be mortgaged for \$2,000. It was done very quietly in Montreal, and no one here knew anything about it. The mortgage was to run for several years, but you know how everything has gone against father this year, the crops being poor, the stock dying, and then that dreadful fire which destroyed the barn and all it contained.

"Mr. William Hayes, who has hitherto been styled only 'Bill,' sat in deep thought for several minutes; then he said:

"Is there no one, Jessie, that your father could apply to for help, no friend, no relative?"

"No," she said, shaking her head sadly, "no

time when he ought to tell her of his love and offer to guard and protect her; but how was he to do it? What was he? Nothing! Simply a hanger-on upon his father; to be sure, he was book-keeper in his father's store in the village, and got the liberal pay of \$6 a week and his board and lodging.

And so Mr. Hayes sat and drummed away, thinking what a fool he was not to have gone to California four years ago, when his cousin Tom Reeves went. Tom had made a little fortune in that time, and wrote home glowing accounts of his successes.

"Jessie, darling, I know I am a great fool; I know I am not worthy of you; but I love you."

"There, there, let us go!" exclaimed Jessie, rising suddenly with glowing cheeks; "they are putting out the lights, and we shall be locked in."

So saying she walked down the aisle followed by Mr. Hayes, who felt more convinced than ever that he was a fool.

"It is just what Christmas ought to be." That was what farmer Bullrush said next morning, and farmer Bullrush was an authority on the weather for ten miles around Groschen, and certainly ought to know what he was talking about.

The bell of the little church had not ceased ringing for the very good and sufficient reason that it had never begun; in fact, there was no bell at all, but the congregation had assembled in full force and the building was crowded to its utmost capacity.

Jessie sat in her accustomed place as leader of the choir, and the paleness of her countenance and the half mournful manner in which she looked about the church from time to time, as if taking leave of some familiar object, showed how much she felt and grieved at the fact that she sat in her accustomed place far perhaps the last time.

The service was pretty well advanced when a stranger entered the church. He did not seem at first as if he intended to enter; for after he put his head in he withdrew it again, and then muttering, "I can rest here as well as anywhere else," he advanced a little way up the aisle.

He was a curious looking man, this stranger, old, with scanty white locks and the crow's feet deep around his eyes. Yet it did not seem to be age alone which had blanched his hair and lined his face, for his form was erect and strong, and the bright flash of his eye told of health and vigor yet.

He looked about him from time to time, and a half smile curled his lips as the solemn words of the Litany fell upon his ear, and he muttered to himself, "All nonsense; all nonsense."

Suddenly there was a pause, the congregation rose from their knees, and the clergyman gave out the anthem. It was not exactly an anthem, it was one of the hymns for Christmas day, but it had been carefully practised for weeks and arranged so that the soprano should sing one verse and the tenor the next and "everybody" join in the chorus, and great things were expected of it, in fact it was to be the feature of the service.

The wheezy little harmonium sighed out the overture, there was a slight pause, the rustling of dresses as the congregation rose, and then a clear sweet, full young voice, pure and musical as the song of a bird, burst forth in the full tide of melody with the glorious old Christmas hymn,

"Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the new-born King, Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."

Grandly the full, round voice rose to the majestic melody of the hymn, and the whole building seemed to echo again and again with the glad tidings that Christ was born to save sinners.

When the full tide of song first fell upon his ear the old man turned and looked long and earnestly at the fair singer. Jessie Barton was not what would be called a pretty girl, her features were not regular, but her complexion was fair, and her face pure and good, and as she stood now, her bright blue eyes sparkling with animation, her fair hair streaming unbound over her shoulders, her cheeks slightly flushed, and her whole soul seemingly absorbed in singing her Creator's praise, she looked almost beautiful.

The old man put his hand to his ear and sat quietly listening, and long after that he kept repeating to himself,

"Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconcile'd,"

and then he would look over the altar and read the words,

"Peace on earth, good-will toward men,"

and he would shake his head and mutter "I can't understand it; it used to be all hell-fire and damnation, but it's all changed now, I should like to ask her about it," and he turned and looked again at the calm, pure face beside him.

The old man's attention never wandered from the service again, and he listened meekly and reverently to the sermon, as if he was trying to reconcile it in his mind with something he had heard before.

It wasn't a brilliant sermon, it was simply a recount of the plan of salvation and a brief history of the nativity of the Saviour; but the preacher was earnest and impressive and carried a conviction of the Creator's love and tenderness home to the hearts of his hearers. And the old man listened with his hand to his ear, and still he murmured "I should like to ask her if it is true."

The service was over and the congregation had all dispersed, Jessie was almost the last person to leave the church, for she had lingered to say good-bye to her friends, and after that was busied in packing up her music to take home with her for the last time.

As she passed out of the door, after shaking hands with the sexton and bidding him good-bye, a man who had evidently been waiting for her came up and quietly walked by her side. She looked up and saw it was the old man who had sat by her in church. He did not look like a beggar, he was well dressed and seemed warm and comfortable; his clothes, altho' not exactly new, were of good quality and in excellent preservation, and he walked erect, with his head up and an elastic, independent stride like a man who owed the world nothing and asked no favours of it. He walked on for a few yards in silence and then said, abruptly, "Do you believe it?"

"Believe what?" asked Jessie; she was surprised, but not the least frightened at the old man's conduct, for it was broad daylight and she was within a hundred yards of her father's house, and some of the congregation were not a dozen yards ahead of her.

"What you were singing just now,

"Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconcile'd,"

and what he was preaching about Christ dying to save sinners, do you believe it?"

"Do I believe the story of the Saviour offering himself a sacrifice for our sins? Of course I do! Don't you?"

"I don't know! It seems so strange; I haven't been in a church nigh on thirty years and then they used to preach about hell-fire and damnation; it all seems so strange." He walked on quietly by her side for sometime without saying any more, until Jessie stopped before a comfortable looking farm-house, then he asked:

"Would you mind talking it over with an old man?" he asked. Jessie hesitated and then said, "you had better talk to the minister, sir, he is so much wiser, and knows so much better than me."

"No, it was your voice roused me, not his; I'd rather talk to you."

"Jessie," said her mother coming to the door, "why don't you come in, dinner's waiting on the table?"

Jessie looked from the old man to her mother and seemed in doubt what to do, at last she asked the old man to "wait a minute," and going to her mother said:

"Mother, here is an old gentleman who was at church, and he walked home with me and asked me some strange questions, and he says he wants to talk with me, what shall I do?"

"Well, child," she said, "you know your father's notions about Christmas, he wouldn't let a dog go from the gate on Christmas day, ask the gentleman in to dinner, the roast beef is small, but it will be enough."

Jessie did as she was bid, and after a little remonstrance on the part of the old gentleman, who at first insisted on going to the inn, allowed himself to be persuaded and followed Jessie into the house.

"Father, this gentleman is a stranger in the village, and I've asked him to take dinner with us."

"And you did right, Jessie," said Mr. Barton rising and advancing toward the stranger and cordially extending his hand. "You're heartily welcome, Sir; our fare is plain, but what there is we are pleased to have you with us to share. I never allow any stranger to pass my door on Christmas day; if there is little else to offer there's a hearty welcome, and that's something. Come right in, dinner is just ready." Mr. Barton was a hale, hearty specimen of a farmer, tall, broad-shouldered, bronzed with exposure, his

hand hard with honest labor, and the frost of fifty winters just showing itself in his iron grey hair, he stood the very impersonation of that noblest work of God, an honest man.

The dinner passed off merrily, the old gentleman developed a fund of wit which no one expected from him. He had travelled in almost every part of the world, had been whaling in the Arctic Seas and had hunted tigers in the heart of India. He had seen many strange sights and was full of humorous anecdotes with which he kept his audience fully amused.

After dinner they went into the parlor, and while Mr. Barton took his usual nap, Jessie opened the piano and sung some of her favourite hymns for the old man.

"Thank you, my dear," he said, when she had finished, "and now I want to ask you a question; you have treated an old man and a stranger very kindly and he does not even know who to thank; what is your name?"

"Jessie Barton."

"Barton, Barton?" he exclaimed in some surprise, "any relation to the Bartons who used to live in Sherbrooke?"

"The same family, father moved here about fifteen years ago."

The old man bowed his head in his hands for a minute and said softly to himself, "I believe it now."

"Peace on earth, good-will toward men."

Just then the farmer stirred in his sleep and waking with a sudden snort looked about him and tried very hard to pretend he had never been asleep at all.

The old man rose and crossing to him said very solemnly:

"Alfred Barton, do you remember thirty years ago quarrelling with your brother in the old homestead in Sherbrooke?"

"Aye, aye, Bob was always a hasty lad, but he had a good heart."

"Do you remember how he cursed you, and swore he would never break bread with you, or recognise you as his brother again?"

"Aye, aye, but I know he was sorry for it afterwards, and if he had lived I believe he would have come back years ago and told me so."

"He does live, he has come back, he is sorry for it," exclaimed the old gentleman in excited tones. "Good God, Alfred, is it possible we have both changed so much in thirty years we cannot recognise each other?"

The two men looked into each other's faces for nearly a minute, then their hands met with a hearty grip and two words escaped them:

"Robert!"

"Alfred!"

And so the quarrel of thirty years ago was made up.

After a while the farmer spoke, still holding his brother's hand:

"Robert, lad, you've come back at a bad time, the farm is about to be sold, and there will not be much left; but much or little we'll share it together, lad, for so I know the father would have wished, altho' he said nothing about it in the will, thinking you were dead."

"And so you'll share with me," said the old man, a tear beginning to creep into the corner of his eye.

"Aye, lad, it's not much, but there's a hearty welcome."

"And I'll share with you," said the old man, bringing his hand down with a jolly smack into the farmer's right hand which he had seized with his own left hand and turned palm upwards all ready to be smacked; "I'll share with you, and you won't get the worst of the bargain, for," and he drew himself up proudly, "the firm of Robert Barton & Co., Bankers, San Francisco, is good for a million any time and plenty of small change left to pay little bills. Yes," he continued after a pause, "I'm a rich man, Alfred, but I stand alone in the world; of a wife, five sons and two daughters, not one is left to me, and I stand like a blasted pine-tree withering up all alone. One by one death has stolen my darlings away and now, when I am getting old, and want to spend the rest of my days in peace and quiet, I have no home to spend them in. Let me end my days with you, Alfred, I have done enough for fortune, let me do something for happiness."

My story is as good as finished; the farm wasn't sold, and Jessie did not go as a governess to Montreal. Mr. Hayes somehow found courage to finish that little speech he commenced in church and Jessie did not interrupt him, and when his father found that he was going to marry a great heiress instead of a penniless girl, he gave him a handsome house and made over the business to him.

There is a little "Bill," and a little "Jessie," and a little "Bob" now, and Jessie looks quite matronly altho' she still leads the choir; and the old man sits in the strangers' seat—he will take no other—and listens to her pure voice, and says that he never began to feel what true happiness might mean until he heard that Christmas Anthem:

"Peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconcile'd."

Scene—A Galloway farmer's kitchen. *Dramatis Personae*—Jean, the lass, liding the parritch; Jock, the farm servant. Jock coming in from his day's work and throwing himself wearily into a chair—"Jean!" "Weel, Jock?" "I think I'll marry ye, Jean!" "Man, I wud be muckle obleeged ta ye if ye wud." Honest, at least.

A huckster in Stamford, Ky., has the following warning displayed over his stall—"Any Man or Boy that takes One Apple Without Leave is a liti Roge in his hart."

For the Favorite.

## OUR CHRISTMAS DINNER.

BY JAMES BUMPUS.

It was the first Christmas after I married Seraphina Angelina; we had only been united in the bonds of wedlock about a month, and I had not got over the pride and pleasure of having a young and pretty wife, when Seraphina proposed that we should have a dinner party on Christmas day. If I had not been still blindly in love I should never have consented, for Seraphina was just fresh from boarding-school, and knew nothing of housekeeping; but our servant, Mary, was an excellent cook, and I placed my faith in her. Invitations were issued to about thirty of our friends and relations, I ordered the wine liberally, gave Seraphina *carte blanche* for the dinner, and everything went on charmingly, and I congratulated myself that we should have a most delightful Christmas party.

Poor deluded mortal, how soon I was awakened from my dream of bliss. My first rude shock was on the morning before Christmas, when Mary got angry at something Seraphina said to her, and demanded her wages, saying she would not "cook for a regiment;" she actually called my friends "a regiment." It was in vain I tried to persuade her, and I even went so far as to offer her five dollars if she would stay the one important day.

"Not if yer was to make it foive goulden guineas, I wudn't stay with the likes of her."

As this was a direct attack on Seraphina, of course I had nothing to do but to let Mary go.

"Never mind, James dear," said Seraphina, "don't worry about it; I'll cook the dinner, and you shan't have cause to be ashamed of it."

She put her arm round my neck and kissed me, and I felt a little of my courage return; but still I knew we must have a cook—I had engaged waiters for the table—and so I went to the Intelligence Office, and, after much trouble, secured the services of a very unprepossessing Irish female named Bridget, who declared she could cook anything from a sprat to an elephant.

Seraphina was very busy all that day, and the sum she spent for cab hire was enormous; as to the number of packages, boxes, bags and miscellaneous articles which kept continually arriving, they were past all calculation, and I began speculating as to whether we were preparing for a six months' siege, or only for a simple dinner to a few friends on the morrow. After dinner—which was cold, with no pastry—Seraphina pulled an easy chair to the table, put on the drop-light, and was soon immersed in a large red covered book which I had never seen before. I peeped over her shoulder to see what it was. It was a Cookery Book!

Then I knew I was lost.

When a woman gets up a dinner out of a cookery book, dine at your club, for all hopes of a decent meal are vain and delusive.

The hour of trial approached; the guests began to arrive; I had to do the honors, for Seraphina, with her hands all scalded and burnt, and her face the color of a boiled lobster, was upstairs making a hasty toilet, after having "finished" the dinner, as she whispered to me while running up to her room.

At last we were seated at table. Mine was a very comfortable chair, but I felt as if I was seated on thorns, and in my nervousness and confusion forgot that my cousin, the Rev. Obediah Spooks, was present, and mumbled out a short grace myself, which mortally offended the Rev. Obediah—who had prepared a special grace half an hour long—and he has not forgiven me to this day.

At last soup was served. I had Julienne at my end of the table and there was oyster at the other end. I could smell the oyster before I saw it; it was terribly burnt and utterly unfit for use. I looked on the Julienne, on which my hopes now rested; it looked thin: it was thin; the vegetables seemed raw: they were raw. There was quite a run on Julienne, but no one asked to be helped a second time, indeed no one got through the first helping, and the waiters carried it almost untasted away.

This was a dampener, but I bore up bravely; I ordered the wine about briskly, and the sherry revived me. Whatever the dinner might be, the wine was good, that was some comfort. After a little pause the fish was brought in; it was fresh salmon with green peas, and I could see an involuntary smack on the lips of the gourmards, who were surprised to see this delicacy at that season of the year. What fabulous price Seraphina had paid for the salmon, and how much pieces the peas cost, I never knew; I never had the courage to ascertain what was the actual expense of that wretched dinner. I knew at a glance the salmon was spoiled, it was almost raw, and as for the green peas, it was actually painful to hear them rattling on the plates like buckshot. No one ate salmon.

Next came the roasts. Seraphina had gone in heavy on roasts; there was an immense sirloin before her, a roast turkey before me, and a splendid haunch of venison before Major Jones, who was quite an epicure. My spirits began to revive; surely this course must be all right, I thought; but, alas! I thought a mistake.

It was evident there was something wrong about the beef; I saw Bowles, who sat on my wife's right and carved for her—this was in the

good old days when everything was put on the table whole, and not cut up at a side table and handed around as at present—after two or three frantic plunges, he managed to get the fork into it, but cut it he couldn't. Seraphina, with tears in her eyes, suggested that the knife was not sharp; it was sharpened, but Bowles' success was not much improved thereby, for it was only after a long and severe struggle that he succeeded in sawing off one slice, and the perspiration stood thick on his forehead with the exertion. Nothing but an axe would make any impression on that beef. The fact is Seraphina had baked it according to the instructions in the cookery book, which said, "bake twenty minutes extra for the meat to heat through." Seraphina had added the two twenties together, multiplied it by twenty—the weight of the sirloin—and had baked it thirteen hours; in fact I believe it was baking all the previous night and all Christmas day. There was not much beef eaten.

The turkey looked like a success; it felt tender; I cut off a leg, it was a little red about the joints, but would do; I tried the breast, it was excellent; I cut open the bosom to get at the stuffing; Heavens! what a horrible mess fell out; in the hurry and confusion of cooking Seraphina had not cleaned out the crass. No one took turkey.

If the beef was too well done, the venison was raw, but Major Jones came gallantly to the rescue.

"Bumpus," said he, "your cook don't know how to roast venison, but tell her to get the frying pan hot, with a good lump of butter and a dust of pepper and salt in it, and I'll out you some steaks. It would be a pity to let this splendid haunch spoil."

He did cut steaks, and Bridget managed to fry them pretty well, so that at last my guests got something they could eat. The next course, game, was all right; I had persuaded Seraphina to allow me to order that from the pastry-cooks, so it was well cooked; the pigeon pie was perfect; the canvas-back ducks, quail and partridge done to a turn, and with the champagne circulating briskly, I actually began to breathe freely; there was only the salad and pastry now, and I felt safe.

Nearly every one took salad, it looked so nice; no one took more than one mouthful; I tried it myself; it had a most peculiarly nasty flavor, and could not be eaten. I found out afterwards that, when making the sauce, Seraphina had discovered that she had no olive oil, and had sent Bridget to the druggist's to get a bottle; Bridget, thinking one oil as good as another, brought castor oil, hence the peculiar flavor. Salad made with castor oil is not nice.

That was the last serious mishap; the cakes, jellies, blanc-manges, ices, &c., had been ordered from the confectioner and were very good. To be sure there was to have been a plum-pudding; but as Seraphina had forgotten the suet, and had not stoned the raisins or washed the currants, the plum-pudding was not a success and was not introduced.

So ended our dinner. That was several years ago, and Seraphina is quite a cook now, but never since that Christmas day have I had any confidence in a dinner cooked after the instructions in a cookery book.

### THE MYSTERIOUS LAMP.

At a distance from the earth which it is utterly impossible to convey any idea of, there is another globe; and if the optical and astronomical calculations be correct, the sun which lights and warms that globe (for it has a particular sun of its own) gives days of different colors. There are green days, red days, blue days, yellow days, corresponding to Sir Isaac Newton's seven prismatic colors. Now, all objects visible on these several days will of course vary according to the particular color of the day, yellow day, from our experience of this color, must be the most dreary and miserable; for though yellow is all very well in its way, mixed up with other colors, helping, like a thunder-cloud, to enhance the beauty of the distant sky, yet, when everything is yellow, then we discover its peculiar effect on our visual organs. A simple and inexpensive experiment, and one which is often shown at the Colosseum and Polytechnic Institutions, illustrates the effect of a yellow day. Spirits of wine poured on a tea-spoonful of common salt in a vial, well shaken, and then put either on a lamp-cotton or tow, and ignited, will burn with a peculiar colored flame, giving out purely yellow rays. This mysterious effect changes the appearance of all earthly objects. Coral lips become of a livid hue; rosy cheeks turn ghastly pale; red cap ribbons become black; in fact, everything appears different to what it does by the light that we are familiar with; and of all things the human face undergoes the greatest change. Very young children should not be shown this experiment; for though there are of such an unearthly color, that old friends appear with new faces, and a child would scarcely know its own mamma.—S. P.

The *Nouvelle Presse Libre* has an advertisement which runs as follows:—"A young man of twenty-five, well brought up, and of good family, wishes to be adopted as a prince by a foreign or native prince. Address, Pils adoptif, & M. Rodolphe Mossu, Vienne Sallerstrasse, No. 3."



THE DYING YEAR.

BY M. J. Z.

The year now departing, how fleet it has worn, With finger of light its delicate roof...

Beautiful helms have bound in their frames Sprays of the orange-bough mingled with pearl; Sweet, loving hearts, that were warm with caresses...

Wealth with deep poverty places exchanging, Hath built with cedars its beautiful halls; Commerce, beyond the wide ocean ramping...

Leads that were distant now firmly united, Linked by the lightning, one continent stand; Sorrows are soothed, and wrongs have been righted...

CHRISTMAS EVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LORD LYNN'S WIFE," ETC.

"Off to-night! Mail train, oh? Why Talbot, old fellow, you will lose the very cream of the hunting. Nice open weather, with the scent...

I, Talbot Carew, whose name figured in the London Gentry as second son of Francis Carew, Esq., of Harbledown Court, and in the Army List as lieutenant in a light cavalry regiment...

My parents were, however, so anxious that I should not refuse my uncle's well-meant invitation, that I reluctantly made up my mind to accept it...

With all that, I could not help looking upon my visit to Bramshaw as an unmitigated annoyance. I had seen, as I have already remarked, very little of the rclaves under whose roof I was to be domiciled...

Bramshaw Hall turned out to be a fine old place, built of stone which age had covered with mosses and lichens of tainty green and golden

russet tints, and very much superior in an artistic point of view to the red brick and white copings of our own ancestral mansion in central England.

I was very kindly received by the baronet and by my aunt—it was Lady Treherne, by the bye, to whom I was related—and found myself welcomed by a number of guests of different ages, ranging, so far as I could guess, from seven to seventy years...

"A wfully jolly old place, you know, and all that," said Colonel Tollemache to me aside, and with an air of mysterious importance. "And as regards your uncle and aunt, I only wish that there were more of the same sort, for kinder people I never saw."

"Of course not," said I, wondering. "Nor do I. A wful stuff!" said my friend, and went off to flirt with a Miss Porter, who came from Stochester too.

A lady whose acquaintance I presently made and who liked, apparently, to hear the sound of her own voice, was more explicit than the enigmatical subaltern had been. It was thus that Mrs. Methven explained matters: "Why, you see, Mr. Carew, we are rather celebrated for haunted houses in this part of the country, and the wonder was rather that Bramshaw, old as it is, and with all the dreadful things done here that must have been done of course—you men are all wicked creatures, Mr. Carew, though of course you won't agree with me about that—should not have had a ghost of its own before."

And indeed, on further inquiry, so I found it, a vague feeling of discomfort, almost of alarm, was abroad among the guests. Dinner, however, so far as I could see, dispelled all these dismal day-dreams as to haunted houses and creaking stairs; and indeed I have not often known people who enjoyed themselves so heartily as these Blankshire gentry around my uncle's hospitable board.

Then in the drawing-room there were games of all sorts—one of forfeits among them—and, to my own amusement, I found myself voted by the children into the high dignity and office of Lord of Misrule, or Grand Jester, or something of the sort; which post I accepted because they clapped their little hands and seemed so eager and bright-eyed, and because even then, at one-and-twenty, I could not bear to say to children, Nay. And we had a great deal of romping, laughter, and intense nonsense, to the disgust of young Tollemache, who wondered how an officer of my standing could thus demean himself...

by no means so pretty as several of the little ruddy-complexioned West-of-England pixies who frolicked around her. Blanche's health, as I conjectured when first she put her thin hand into that of "Cousin Talbot Carew," was none of the best; and I could see by Lady Treherne's half-anxious, half-gratified look, that she was surprised by the unusual animation which her daughter, usually languid and reserved, displayed on the occasion of these Christmas sports.

"Well, we went to bed. My room was at the east end of the house, and was known as the Tapestry Room. Its walls were, indeed, covered with tapestry of great antiquity and ugliness, and the bed was an imposing structure, calculated to impart to the intelligent foreigner, should he ever gain admittance, a proper appreciation of the majesty of sleep.

At last, the sullen sound of the great clock on the turret above the stables reminded me that it was very late, conventionally as well as actually, and that I had better get some sleep while I could; and then it was that, feeling for my watch and missing that accustomed pocket-companion, I recollected that when we were at play downstairs, my watch had been one of the forfeited pledges, late redeemed, and that it had been left lying on the marble mantelpiece in the great drawing-room, since I had forgotten to take it up when my little playmates left us.

"It serves me right," said I cynically, with the remembrance of Tollemache's face floating before my mental vision, "for making such a fool of myself. Never mind! I'll fetch it." So I took up my candle and called forth. The passage which gave access to my room was called the Gothic Gallery, probably because it was narrow and dark, with hideous medieval carvings in niches, and stained-glass casements, through the tinted panes of which the pure white snow outside looked crimson, ochre-yellow, or of a dusky green.

Without difficulty, the centre of a heap of torn gloves, crushed flowers, and the pink or blue papers that had been wrapped around French bonbons, relics of the Juvénile revelry, I had nearly reached my room again when a gust of wind, caused by the sudden opening of a door, extinguished my candle. Immediately afterwards, I saw the faint glimmer of a light slowly and steadily approaching. Nearer and nearer it came, and presently I could distinguish a figure clothed in white, or some light colour that looked white in the uncertain light, gliding with a noiseless tread and a smooth evenness of motion which was of itself remarkable.

Blanche! Yes, it was my young cousin, Blanche Treherne. I recognized her as she passed close by me, carrying her candle in a hand that was as steady as if it had been that of a statue; and, in truth, marble itself could scarcely have been paler than her fair innocent face, as she went by, to all appearance, without perceiving me. She still wore the dress that she had worn during the evening's merry-making downstairs, her pretty white frock relieved by some admixture of light blue. Her long hair, of a pale golden colour, hung loose over her shoulders; and I noticed with wonder that her small feet were bare, so that her step caused no more sound than if she had indeed been a phantom. On she went walking slowly but with no sign of hesitation, her eye fixed on something—what, I knew not—as if a spirit's shadowy hand had beckoned her onwards. By some instinct, I had refrained from addressing her, even in my surprise at the recognition, but now, moved by an impulse for which I could not account, I left my place of espectral abode and followed her at some distance, being careful to tread softly as I could. She passed on, along the Oakon Gallery, and I wondered more and more at the strangeness of her conduct. Her own chamber was, I conjectured, on the floor above, as were those of sev-

eral of the visitors, while others, as well as the master and mistress of the house, slept in that part of the mansion from which every step removed her further and farther. Why, in the name of common sense, had she chosen to range the house, thus, on this bitter winter's night? and what could be the steady purpose that drew her forward, as steel is drawn to a magnet?

Ah! now she can go no further, unless her intention be, as doubtless it is, to descend to the reception-rooms below by the grand staircase, for she has reached the end of the Oakon Gallery. Such was my soliloquy, as I indulged my brains in the effort to devise a reason for these extraordinary proceedings on the part of a girl of my cousin's age. It was just possible that she, like myself, might have left downstairs some object of which she was now in search; but if so, why this ghostlike gliding with bare foot about the mansion of which she was the heiress, indulged and loved by all? These thoughts came into my head as for the instant she stood still, near the angle of the broad landing-place, while in front of her was the great French window, sitting up nearly two-thirds of the width of the wide passage, by which the Oakon Gallery was lighted. This window was an innovation, no doubt, but an improvement on the small-paned casement of stained glass, through which the sun had scarcely had power to illumine the old pictures that lined the walls, which it had enper-seced.

"By heaven, she is lost!" was my hasty exclamation, as, to my infinite horror, I saw Blanche turn from the staircase, and deliberately yet quickly throw open the tall French window. That very day, just after sunset, Sir Charles had insisted on my admiring the view from that west window, which commanded a bold sweep of country, swelling moorland and black pine-woods, rocky fort and the distant sea. The window was at a great height above the ground since from it one could look down, sheer over the edge of the stone terrace on which the mansion stood, to a rocky dell, where far below a brawling stream made music among the boulders that fretted its waters into foam. All this I remembered, at the same instant that the "dead" truth flashed upon me. Blanche was a sleepwalker—her actions were prompted by the strange mechanical semi-consciousness of the somnambulist—and from this terrible slumber that was on her, her awakening would be in another world. Nearer, and nearer yet, she drew to the giddy verge, her eyes steadily fixed on vacancy. She stood poised on the sill of the open window, through which the bleak night-air rushed in, causing the candle in her unobscured hand to flare and flicker. I dared not call, dared not raise my voice, lest I should startle her, and precipitate the catastrophe that seemed imminent. There was a chance, though a poor one, that if I would close the window and return to her room as I had heard that sleepwalkers sometimes do, ignorant of the mortal peril so nearly encountered.

Now she seems to bend slightly forward, her slender figure actually overhanging the abyss. A fall from such a height must be fatal. Effortfully blaming myself for my own lack of prudence, in allowing things to proceed to this pitch before I interfered, I mustered all my strength for one desperate bound, sprang to her side, and caught the girl's falling weight in my arms, at the very moment when she stepped from the window-ledge. A second or two would have made my hasty movement too late; and as it was, it was well that Blanche was a light burden, and that I was active and strong, or both might have fallen from that dizzy perch. Blanche, abruptly awakened, broke the silence of the house by an agonized scream, as of mingled pain and terror, and for an instant she struggled, while the candlestick dropped from her hand. The candle was extinguished in its fall; but I looked down and saw the wick luminous spark of the burning wick falling through the midnight darkness, and then heard the dull clang as the silver candlestick reach the rocks below.

Blanche's shrieks had effectually aroused the household, and before I could scold her natural alarm, she was clasped in her mother's arms, while a babel of voices rose clamorously around us, and conjectures, exclamations of horror or of thankfulness, were uttered on all hands, as visitors and servants came successively hurrying to the spot whence the crisis had been heard. That the young heiress of the Trehernes was a somnambulist was what no one, not even her own parents, knew, not had the poor frightened child herself the least suspicion that this was the case; but at any rate the incident ghost-stories with reference to Bramshaw Hall were now nipped in the bud, and the most superstitiously disposed could not doubt the connection between the mysterious occurrences of which they had whispered, and Blanche's unlucky peculiarity. The candlestick, dented and battered, was found next morning among the rocks below the terrace.

I prefer to pass lightly over the deep and fervent expressions of gratitude and strong feeling with which Sir Charles and Lady Treherne acknowledged the preservation of their only child; but I remember to have reddened and winced excessively under the weight of praise undeserved, since any one else in my place would surely have done as much, and it rather annoyed me than otherwise, that the company persisted in treating me as a sort of hero during the rest of my stay, and in commencing and deferring to me as if I had been some public benefactor. The only exception to this general complacency to make much of an unworthy individual

was Blanche herself. My young cousin seemed to avoid me since that eventful night; and of all the farewells that were said when I returned home, the coldest "good-bys" was Blanche's own.

We sailed for India; and for four years I went through the usual round of Indian duties and amusements, with no opportunities of active service, but a fair average of sport with gun, rifle, and boar-spear, with plenty of drill as well as dancing, and an occasional change of station as the chief military event of the year. During this time I sometimes received, though rarely, a letter from my aunt; but from home I often heard tidings of the Trehernes, who no longer resided constantly at Bramshaw, but were often in London, on the Continent, or at English seaside watering-places. At the end of four years, my elder brother poor Tom, died, and my parents pressed me to leave the army and come home, the necessity for a profession in my case no longer existing. With some regret I bade adieu to my former life and its associations; but, after all, there is no great hardship in being the future proprietor of an entailed estate like ours, and with tolerable resignation I sent in my papers and renounced the career of arms.

I had not been long in England before an invitation to repeat my former Christmas visit to Bramshaw Hall reached me, couched in such affectionate terms, and so urgent, that I could not find it in my heart to decline. "Mind," said my father jestingly, "that you don't leave your heart behind you there, unless indeed you have left it in India. Miss Blanche, I am told by those who are judges of such matters, has turned out amazingly good-looking."

I laughed, and answered with a tone of perfect conviction that there was little prospect of any love-passages between my cousin, now sixteen years of age, and myself. I found that my father's account of Blanche's appearance hardly did justice to the reality. She had developed into a very pretty girl, who at moments, as when she sang, which she did in a sweet sad voice, and with much musical taste and skill, looked absolutely lovely. I took an opportunity to ask Lady Treherne, half-jocularly, whether "the ghost" was effectually exorcised, and sleep-walking a thing of the past. With perfect confidence my aunt replied in the affirmative. Care, and change of air and of scenes, amusement and study, had, she said, done wonders for Blanche's health, and whereas the extreme delicacy of her constitution had formerly caused much anxiety to her parents, they now considered her to be quite well and quite strong. "It was on her account, dear girl," said Lady Treherne, "that we quiet old folks have run about the world as we have done, travelling and pleasure-hunting; for you must know, Talbot, this is the first Christmas we have spent at the Hall since—since you were with us."

A curious coincidence. It was with snowy weather again, and with few exceptions the same company that I had formerly met had reassembled under Sir Charles's hospitable roof. As before, I had arrived on Christmas Eve; and as the dinner in its old style, and the dance, and the songs and music, and the games for the children, succeeded in precisely the same fashion, I could have imagined that the four last years were the baseless vision of a dream, and that this was my first and only Christmas at Bramshaw Hall. One change there certainly was. Blanche, no longer a child, was taken in to dinner by me, and she did not avoid me in the pointed, almost petulant, manner in which she had turned from me when she was but twelve years old, but I could make no way with her in conversation, nor did she meet my eyes frankly, but allowed hers to rest anywhere but on my face when I addressed her, answered my best things with monosyllables, blushed when I spoke carelessly of our former meeting, and altogether disconcerted me, who was perhaps a little vain of my powers of pleasing. I soon gave her up as hopeless, and directed my attentions elsewhere.

Never in my life had I felt myself less disposed for sleep than when, late on the night of Christmas Eve, I sat before the crackling wood fire in my bedroom—they had given me the Tapestry Room, as before—and meditated on all that had occurred, for good or ill, since last I was the tenant of that ancient chamber. Four years ago poor Tom, my elder brother, was hale and strong, and I a younger son, with no prospects but such as my profession might, in those, from a military point of view, hard times, open out before me. Four years ago I was sailing out for India, with scanty chances of revisiting familiar scenes and associating with old friends, until absence should have weakened the memories of the first, and thinned the numbers of the latter. Yes, four years ago; how strange was the adventure of that other Christmas-Eve, to which my thoughts flew back, no matter on what subject I might be pondering!

Blanche Treherne was a pretty girl—very pretty. Yes, my father had been accurately informed on that point. Accomplished too, but not, perhaps, a person of very deep feelings; or surely she might have been a little more cordial with a kinsman just returned from a four years' exile, and who had been once lucky enough to render her a service which—Well, well! that was an old story now, and young ladies have plenty to occupy their heads without treasuring up romantic gratitude for something that happened in their childhood.

I drew aside the heavy window-curtains and looked out. Snow, snow everywhere, as on that memorable night long ago. It was but a thin sprinkling as yet, however, for it had but begun to fall on the previous day. The sky was streak-

ed with clouds, through the rifts of which a wan new moon peeped coldly. There had been no moon to light the inky blackness of the night four years since, and so far there was a difference.

I could not go to bed. Somehow, do what I would, I remained wakeful and watchful, with an undefinable impression upon me that I was wanted, that I had a duty to perform, and that I must not sleep. I listened intently for the slightest sound, and even the moan of the wind without seemed to me like a human voice complaining. Again and again did I throw wood upon the fire, until my supply of fuel waned to such an extent that it was plain that I must soon retire to rest, or sit up fireless. "This will never do," said I; "I fancy I am making a fool of me; and because something queer happened when I was last here, I cannot accept the prosaic view of life which is of course the true one. I'll just slip out and take a glance at the scene of

no dream—no creation of a disordered brain. No. It was Blanche herself; her bright hair floating like pale gold over her shoulders, and wearing a loose pignora of white cashmere. While I stood speechless, she advanced, and with a slow but certain movement of the hand which was free, she began to unclasp the fastenings of the great French window.

For a moment I stood, as if rooted to the ground by horror. I tried to rush forward, but my feet seemed nailed to the floor, and my voice, when I essayed to call aloud, refused to obey my will. The low creaking sound, as the window slowly opened, and the inward rush of the shrieking night-wind, dissolved the spell of my helplessness, and I darted along the gallery, shouting, or attempting to shout, though my voice reached my own ear but as a harsh and hollow murmur. The white figure, bending forward, seemed about to vanish in the blackness beyond. Suddenly the candle was



DAVID.

my former adventure, and then come back and go to sleep for the rest of the dark hours."

"Ed dying, Blanche's candle, and smothered into the Gothic Gallery. Instinctively I turned to the point where, four years since, I had espyed the gleam of the light in Blanche's hand. All was darkness now. Here, too, was the doorway into which I had retired to allow the separation, as I had deemed it, to pass. Smiling at the recollection of my own irrational alarm, I went on, walking softly, to the corner of the Oaken Gallery. "So vivid is the imagination," said I, "that I almost expect to see the glimmer of the light, and the childish figure gliding on before me, as when—"

The words died away on my lips, for what I beheld was a sight that curdled my very life blood with horror.

At the other end of the Oaken Gallery, receding from me, and within a few feet of the great west window, was a female figure draped in white, distinctly visible, and carrying a lighted candle with the same impassive mechanical steadiness that I had noticed four years since; advancing slowly too, and noticeably, with the same air of being beckoned forwards by a viewless hand that had beckoned me in a like so narrowly rescued from a cruel death. It was

extinguished by a stronger gust of wind, and I uttered a cry of horror, for I thought that Blanche had actually fallen; but by Heaven's mercy I was in time, but just in time. My arm was round her waist, and was on her arm, as she was tottering on the very verge of the dread precipice; and by a quick and powerful exertion I drew her back. She awoke, with a low moaning cry, such as may often be heard on the lips of a child suddenly aroused from sleep. "What is this?" she said wildly—"where am I?—Cousin—what—where?" Then, as she looked around, and saw the reality of the position, she shuddered, and sank fainting and unconscious into my arms. Bearing her as swiftly and tenderly as I could along the Oaken Gallery, I laid her on a sofa that stood in the adjacent corridor; and hurrying to Lady Treherne's door, aroused my aunt from her sleep, and related in few words what had befallen her daughter; and how, a second time, she had been providentially snatched from the jaws of death.

"It was the association of ideas that did the mischief—not a doubt of it," said the old family physician, who had known Blanche from her infancy; "the cure seemed complete, and in effect was so; but no doubt the Christmas spent for the first time at the old house and in the old

way; the similarity of the weather and of the evening's amusements; and, above all, Mr. Carew's presence, with the memory of the former adventure, influenced our young friend's fancy in a manner that might have been—But we won't talk of that now."

The Trehernes left Bramshaw at once; and at their earnest wish I accompanied them, and paid the remainder of my visit at their house in London. Here it was that I learned to find Blanche very, very dear to me; and that after some weeks I ventured to ask her to be my wife. "I thought," said I, as I took her little hand, unresisting, in mine, "that you rather disliked me than otherwise formerly; but perhaps now—"

"Do you remember four years ago?" she asked, interrupting me, and with a burning cheek and a glance, half arch, half shy, that puzzled me greatly.

"Yes, of course I do," answered I, perplexed. "Because I have loved you ever since—ever since: oh—first—" and she shuddered, and hid her beautiful blushing face on my shoulder.

Sir Charles and Lady Treherne gave their willing sanction to the engagement between Blanche and myself, which was equally welcome to my own parents; but on account of the youth of the bride-elect, it was thought better to postpone the wedding for another year, till Miss Treherne should have passed her seventeenth birthday.

When I asked her, as in duty bound, to name the day for that all-important ceremony, the dear girl hesitated for a moment, and then, with tears, but not of sorrow, sparkling in her loving eyes, she softly made answer, "Christmas Eve."

For the Favorite. CHRISTMAS IN SHADOW AND SUNSHINE.

CHAPTER I. THE CONVENT.

"The time draws near the birth of Christ!"—I wonder why it is that those words always have for me a more sad and solemn sound than a joyful one? Perhaps it is that the Christ born in Bethlehem came to live such a sad and lonely life and to die such a bitter death when all forsook him and fled, or perhaps it is that from my fifteenth to my twentieth year Christmas Eve was to me a season of solemn worship, and then I had two Christmas Eves, one of which was spent in anger with myself, indignation against others, a weary longing for a far off home; and then another Christmas Eve came when my heart, torn with misery such as falls but to the lot of one in thousands and my poor brain racked and wrung—alone—steeped in misery and wretchedness in the city of Montreal, I must have gone crazy for very misery, had not the dear Christ himself sent his angel to help me.

We lived a quiet life in the old French chateau on my father's Seigneurie in Lower Canada, so that when in my fifteenth year I accompanied my father and mother to Europe and was placed in one of the educational convents in the environs of Paris the change was to me rather an accession to gaiety than otherwise.

I was an only girl at home taught by a resident governess with no companion of my own age except in winter when we went for a couple of months either to Quebec or Montreal. In the convent, I was one among eighty girls from seven years old to twenty, there were large pleasure grounds surrounding the convent where we had swings, croquet grounds, balls and hoops, in short every thing that would tend to make us take exercise and be merry. Christmas Eve was to me the dulcetest night in the year. At my father's Seigneurie we went to midnight mass it is true, but we had a large party of relatives who always came to the old chateau that they might with us keep a merry Christmas.

My father, although a Frenchman every inch of him, was the son of an English lady who had told him tales of the Christmases kept in her own land, and imbued him with a desire for making Christmas Eve as much a holiday time as one for religious observance.

I missed the jollity and Christmas gifts of my old home, when during the Christmas evens spent in the convent we wore all, big girls as well as the least, sent trooping to bed after our early six o'clock supper that we might be able to rise at eleven, and feeling fresh and wide-awake from our long rest, be ready to take part in the midnight services.

My twentieth year came at last, and with it came General Rosenham, a relative of my father's from England, who brought me to spend the next two months of November and December in his own beautiful English home in Kent. My father's aunt, Mrs. Rosenham, welcomed me kindly to her home, where I was at once introduced to what seemed to me, then, the gay world, visitors as many as twenty at a time constantly coming in succession to the large handsome house and its hospitable owners.

The evening of my arrival I was introduced to an officer in the Guards, Colonel Deyveraux, a handsome man with most fascinating manners whom my aunt and indeed her guests called young, but whom I, with my French Canadian notions, looked on as a veteran paragon of the day. In the early days of my acquaintance with him when I heard those around me talking of him as being a handsome young man, always prob-



ing young to whatever qualification he was praised for possessing. I used to ask myself with a smile what the French Canadian girls at home would think of a cavalier upwards of thirty years old?

I was then twenty years, my father forty-one, and he with his beautiful expressive brown eyes, finely cut mouth, and suave easy French manners, was to me infinitely more a beau parson than Colonel Devereux with his studied manners and poor French, which he insisted on speaking to me although my English was as pure as his own.

These were my first impressions of Colonel Devereux, and in a measure they continued with unabated force, although from his assiduous endeavors to please and amuse me, his unremitting attention in all our walks and rides, and even from his weekly journeys up to London bringing my little commissions of colored silk beads and ribbons for my work, all chosen with the most punctilious good taste, I came in a short time to look upon him as one I could hardly do without; he had a fund of anecdote which he poured into my ear as he took the place which he had established for himself beside me at breakfast, lunch or dinner, making me enjoy myself as I could not otherwise have done; he paid me such marked attention, that at last he considered himself entitled to be looked upon as my lover, a thing I had never dreamed of, while not only he entertained this fancy himself, but my aunt and uncle and indeed their visitors were talking of my good fortune in having captivated the rich and handsome Colonel.

My father was expected in the middle of January, I was to visit London with him for a few weeks, and then to return to my own Canadian home, an event which I looked forward to as the consummation of my happiness, my father and my mother, my brothers and a baby sister whom I had never seen, were each in their place the dearest in all the world to me, and if truth must be told, next to them, came two of the nuns with whom I had passed the last five years. The twenty-fourth of December came with green grass and (for England) with clear skies; the day was mild-grey and soft, myself and several of my aunt's visitors were employed searching for gum clusters and other winter flowers amid the cultivated plots on the lawn; while thus employed Colonel Devereux came up in his riding costume, a short whip in one hand and a parcel which looked very much like a bouquet of flowers covered with white tissue paper in the other.

"What a handsome man Colonel Devereux is," said one of the young ladies.

"Yes," replied another, "he is to me the handsomest officer in the guards."

He was flushed from exercise, evidently in high good humor, a mood which he did not always indulge in, and I joined heartily in their opinion, keeping to myself, as my aunt had taught me to do, the ideas I had respecting his age.

He came and stood among us chatting gaily, there were other gentlemen present and by and by I found myself standing *à-d-elle* with the Colonel, the others having wheeled off in different directions.

"You told me the other day, Miss D'Arvergne that you had never seen a capercaille (a Scotch cock of the mountains) there is a magnificent specimen of the cock and his quiet looking brown mate, which has just arrived this morning, as a present to General Rosenham from a friend of his in the Highlands of Scotland, they have been placed in one of the summer houses as a temporary abode. Shall I conduct you to the place? They are well worth seeing."

"Oh! by all means," replied I, "I should so much like to see those birds, we know one or two Scotch families in my native Canada and it will be something to tell them when I go home."

He led the way through a narrow path bordered on each side by a thick holly hedge whose dark green polished leaves and scarlet berries shone bright around us.

We had seen and admired the capercaille and his mate, given them a bunch of red berries which the Colonel had pulled from a mountain ash close by, and which the poor imprisoned birds ate with avidity, although they would not touch some wheat or other grain that the forester had placed for them.

We were now on our return home and nearly at the end of the holly-sheltered path, when Colonel Devereux uncovering the parcel he held in his hand, disclosed to my delighted gaze an immense bunch of the most exquisite red and white roses! I was quite taken by surprise, and involuntarily exclaimed:

"The roses of Cashmere."

They were not the delicate, fragile-looking things we see brought from a hot-house, but great thick-leaved, strong, glorious flowers, each petal looking as if made of wax.

I caught myself in the act of holding out my hand to grasp them. He saw and understood the half motion I made and smiled, a little smile, but a pleased and happy one, saying, as he placed them in my hand:

"Are they not beautiful? I rode twenty miles this morning to get them for you. That is the reason I was not by your side at breakfast."

I had missed him from my morning meal, and felt that it was a dull one because he was not there. I took the flowers from his hand. They were an immense bouquet, at least fifteen or eighteen flowers, the deepest pink of those red roses surpassing in beauty anything I had ever seen. I thanked him warmly, adding, "It is the most beautiful present I ever received."

"I have a far finer present to give you in the evening," said he, "and one that will last when these flowers have faded, and I shall expect you to give me something in return. You know it is our English fashion to exchange presents on Christmas Eve."

"I know," replied I, "my aunt has told me so; but I am sorry to say" (I felt the warm blood of shame mounting to my face as I spoke) "that I have neglected to provide myself with such."

This was mere thoughtless negligence on my part. My father kept me amply supplied with money, and there were many opportunities by which I might have got anything I was pleased to order from London.

"You have something in your possession I have coveted very much," said he, "almost since the first day we became acquainted. When I present you with my Christmas gift I shall ask you for it. It is far more beautiful in my eyes than those roses, full of beauty and sweetness as they seem to you."

I fancied at once I knew his meaning. In a half idle, half busy sort of way, I had been engaged since my childhood in England on a pair of white silk slippers embroidered in gold. They were intended for my dear father, and had been begun before I left the convent. I was sure Colonel Devereux desired those slippers for his Christmas gift. The work was very elaborate, and I had often heard him express his admiration of it, saying more than once he admired it because it was so different from the floss and beads with which other young ladies adorned their fancy work.

"Oh!" said I, "I think I know what you mean, I shall be most happy to grant your request. You have been so kind to me since I came to live with my aunt and uncle that it will afford me great pleasure to give you anything I have which you deem worth your acceptance."

He smiled, a quiet, pleased, yet strangely expressive smile, as if he would try to hide the meaning which his face expressed. I remembered this afterwards; at the time I had a little idea of what his meaning was as if my years had been ten instead of twenty. In our convent life we never hear a word of *beaux* or love, and we go into the world strangely unprepared for such. A girl fresh from convent life should never mix with the world save under the eye of a mother.

We had wandered on towards the house and were now at the hall door and I sought the drawing room that I might show my beautiful roses to Miss Rosenham, determined that during the rest of my residence in England I would rise two hours earlier every morning in order to embroider another pair of slippers for papa, to replace those which I fancied I had just given away. Immediately on my entering the drawing-room my aunt exclaimed:

"Oh! such roses—what beauties—where did you get them? Are they from the greenhouse?"

"No," replied I, "there are only China roses to the greenhouse; and these are great large healthy garden beauties. Colonel Devereux gave them to me; he rode twenty miles this morning to get them."

I placed them in my aunt's hands, saying as I did so, "Take which you like best, and as many as you like."

She smiled significantly as she said "No; I will not take one of them, although I admire them very much. Colonel Devereux has taken a great deal of trouble to give you the pleasure which it is evident these roses afford you, it would be but a poor return were you to distribute them among your friends. Carry them to your own room and place them in water. To-day I will be very busy, every moment of my time occupied; but to-morrow I shall speak to you about Colonel Devereux and your roses."

I stared with unfeigned surprise, wondering what she meant, but made no reply. I was about to leave the room when my aunt called me back, saying:

"Euralie, do you think you would have confidence to sing to-night before our assembled guests that beautiful anthem, 'Christ is born in Bethlehem' with which you so overpowered your uncle and me one evening we were alone, shortly after you came to us?"

"Oh, yes!" replied I; "I have often sung it as a solo at the convent, where we had many visitors from Paris;" and I smiled as I added, "The French are better judges of music than you English are."

"You must not make such remarks as that, Euralie," replied my aunt; "they are almost *gauche*. A girl of twenty years should know better. I fear you are sadly deficient in many things you ought to know; however, we shall talk about all that to-morrow. Meantime, go up to the schoolroom; the children and their governess are out walking, so you will have opportunity to practise your anthem undisturbed. I mean that you should astonish my guests with it to-night."

I went to my own room, and carefully placing my roses in water, proceeded to the music-room in search of my music portfolio that I might practise the anthem, as my aunt requested.

The music room was an ante-chamber adjoining the drawing-room; and as I entered, before I had time to find the music I heard my own name pronounced (as Euralie) in an impetuous, angry tone by Colonel Devereux. Astonishment more than curiosity made me stop that I might hear what he said, and to whom he spoke, an indignant flush mantling to my cheek at the liberty he took in using my Christian name while speaking of me. I had only caught the sound of my own name uttered by Colonel Devereux,

but not the sense of the words which he spoke. It was my aunt who replied, and her words were clear enough, standing as I was only a few yards from the speaker, with an open door between us. I could not see my aunt, but I heard every word she said as clearly as if I stood by her side.

"It is possible you may be mistaken, Colonel Devereux; Euralie is as much a child as to any knowledge she has of the ways of the world as if she had only numbered ten years instead of twenty. She is sincerely attached to her father and mother, and I am very sure they will never consent to her marrying any one who will not make Canada his home. 'God soith the earth in families' may be truly said of those French Canadians. They cannot endure to be separated from each other, and you see there what you never can in an English home, grandparents, parents and their children, all inhabiting one house and living in the utmost harmony and love. No, Colonel Devereux, I cannot give my countenance to your paying your addresses to my niece until you have first the sanction of her parents. Her father will be here in January. It is proper you should speak to him before saying more than you have already said to Miss D'Arvergne on the subject, and I, as your friend, advise you to give up all thoughts of her, unless you can make up your mind for her sake to live and die a French Canadian."

"As to that," replied Colonel Devereux, "it is simply nonsense. What English gentleman would bury himself in a colony, and in Lower Canada, with its eternal snows, of all other places in the world? Monsieur and Madame D'Arvergne must learn to part from their daughter as other civilized people do. I am quite secure as to the place I hold in Euralie's heart. I have made up my mind to be her husband, and you know enough of me to be sure that whatever I make up my mind to I shall do."

As he said these words his voice became hard and stoney, the words uttered in low, distinct, hissing accents, which, indignant as I was, made me shiver with a dread of I knew not what.

"I will certainly promise no such thing," he continued. "Monsieur D'Arvergne may fancy what he pleases. When I am married, my wife and I shall live in the old English home where my fathers have lived for centuries."

"Laying aside all questions as to what you might, or might not promise to Monsieur D'Arvergne," replied my aunt, in accents which told me she was irritated by his pertinacity, "Euralie is deeply attached to her parents, and I am much mistaken in her if she will consent to leave those she has known and loved from infancy, the land of her home and kindred, and come to England to live among a people who do not even speak her language."

He spoke again, in the same hard, unfeeling tone:

"When I am married, it is not at all likely that I should consult even my wife on the subject of where my future home shall be. Euralie's husband is her master, and she will soon be taught that it is her interest as well as her duty to obey him."

I heard no more. I ran with light steps up to my own room, seized the roses I had so treasured a few minutes before, dried their stems carefully, and, bringing them down, threw them on the centre table in the music-room, a place where I was very sure they would be seen by Colonel Devereux.

My aunt and he were still talking, but I did not linger a second. I despised myself for having listened to the hateful words I had heard. If it were possible, I would have left the house and England that very hour. I could have lashed myself because I had permitted him day after day to sit beside me as if he had a right to that place. A thousand little circumstances, that seemed things of naught an hour ago, appeared to me now in their true light; I had unwittingly encouraged the man, virtually fed his vanity until he imagined I loved him. What would I not have given to undo the work of the past two months? He would be my master and husband indeed! All my French blood boiled at the thought. I gathered up my music and sought my own room, where, locking the door, I paced to and fro, more like a chafed and angry animal than aught else.

I felt as if the only thing on earth that could appease my wrath would be to put his head on the floor and stamp on it.

My mother is De Salaberry, my father a D'Arvergne. They boast themselves of their pure unmixed French blood of the old Régime, the only admixture being that of my grandmother, a Rosenham, and they are of a quiet, unobtrusive race; but I began to think then, and I had more reason to think so since, that there must have been an admixture of Indian blood in my race, and that it all flowed down in one little channel into my own veins.

I was all a savage for hours that day. However, it died down as such paroxysms must die. I became quiet at last; I could sit down and think, and I began to cast in my mind what my dame's room was to be during the evening when, of necessity, I must once more meet Colonel Devereux.

If my heart and passions resembled a volcano in the morning, I had, by my strong will, kept them quiescent in a coating of hard cold lava for the evening. I had no doubt the opportunity would be given me, and I had determined to show Colonel Devereux in as few words as possible, and with an exterior as cold as the ice of my native land, that he was nothing to me, never could be anything except an acquaintance

of the passing moment, that he had sadly overrated himself and his attractions, his vanity and self-love had miserably deceived him. He my master, indeed! How those words grated and rung in my ears. And yet, alas! it was but too true; he did, indeed, become my master,—the master of my destiny,—in misery and disgrace more bitter than death.

I did not go to dinner that evening, but I joined the party in the drawing-room in time to sing the anthem my aunt wished her guests to hear.

I suppose it was the temper I was in gave strength to my voice, enabled me to throw all my passion, every feeling of my soul into it. I never sang so well—never before, never after. My voice filled that great lofty room as if it had been that of a strong man. No one spoke nor moved during the pause of my voice; a pin could not have dropped to the ground unheard, and when the last words of the joyful psalm, "Christ is born in Bethlehem," died away upon my lips, I sat for some seconds with my hands lying on the keys of the piano, entranced with the music I myself had made.

There was a dense crowd behind and around me, but, thanks to my aunt, General Rosenham took his place by my side, turning over the leaves of the music, thus preventing Colonel Devereux from approaching me.

Giving me his arm as I rose, he kindly said: "You must be tired. Come and rest with me on the balcony."

I gladly accepted his offer and we sought the balcony, a beautifully enclosed place full of flowers and climbing roses, where the soft heated air made me always fancy I was back in sunny France.

The time had come for cutting the Christmas cake. It was the fashion of their house that the master and mistress should do so, and one of my little cousins came to tell her father his services were needed for the important occasion.

"Come with me, Euralie," said the old gentleman; "you shall help to cut the cake, and perhaps you may be lucky enough to get the ring."

Without thinking for a moment what would most likely be the effect of my remaining there alone, I begged of him to leave me, saying:

"I shall rest for a few minutes longer, and then join you in the drawing-room."

As he left me I leaned back on the rustic sofa where I sat, closing my eyes from a weariness. The fatigue occasioned by my passionate emotions overpowered me more than all the physical suffering I had gone through in my past life, were it all put together and heaped in one.

I was thinking of the quiet convent home I had left, and of the different way the day would have been spent had I awaited there my father's arrival in Europe, and not come, as my own earnest desire was, to taste the pleasures of the world at Eldon Hall.

I must have been entirely absorbed by my own thoughts, or the din of laughing and talking in the drawing-room must have drowned all nearer sounds, as I fancied myself the sole occupant of the balcony until a light touch on my arm made me open my eyes to see Colonel Devereux quietly seated beside me.

"I fancied you asleep," said he, "and touched your arm that I might ascertain the truth of my surmise."

I did not answer, in truth I knew not what to say, if I had had my choice at that moment the wide Atlantic would have been flowing between us, I would never have seen his face nor heard his voice again.

The loathing and dread I had for the man must have been sent me as a forewarning of the evil days he was to bring on me and mine. The words which I had overheard him say were no sufficient cause for my entertaining the feelings I did towards him. In another I am sure they would have been treated by me with more of contempt than aught else.

"Where are your roses?" he asked in the soft tones he knew so well how to assume.

"The roses you brought here in the morning?" replied I, scarcely knowing what I said. All the many preconceived words at sentences I had put together in the afternoon, while pacing up and down in my own room, had vanished into thin air. "I offered the half of them to my aunt, and as she would not divide your present with me, I left them on the large table in the music-room. I fancied you would have found them there."

There was a dim, softened light from the drawing-room, which fell with a gentle radiance into the balcony where we sat. I looked at him as I spoke. He returned no answer except by knitting his brows with a scowl which told as plainly as his words of the morning had done—he was able to be my master.

He recovered himself quickly, however, and said in a soft voice, as if touched with pity:

"Poor dead roses! Had I known their fate I should have gone and gathered them together and given them cool water to drink of and bathe in. I sometimes think those beautiful flowers are more sensitive than we imagine, and feel neglect in some hidden way that is not revealed to our coarser natures."

He spoke for a few minutes of the gorgeous flowers of India, the roses of Persia, the lilies of the Holy Land, the rose of Sharon, and then he added, "How much I should like to show you all those beautiful things—the flowers and gems of those Eastern lands." He said something more about having to be tied down by the conventionalities of society. I know not what he said; my heart was beating in great wild throbs; I did not try to listen; I was longing to



be far away in my old Canadian home—up in the room allotted to me in my aunt's house—out among the gay throng there in the drawing-room—anywhere away from the man of whom I had conceived such an unaccountable dread and hatred; but it seemed impossible for me to move; I appeared to be in a charmed circle from which escape was impossible.

He probably mistook my silence for a dreamy quiet joy inspired by his words, deemed my neglect of his roses a girlish freak; at all events he took from his pocket a diamond ring, and holding it between his thumb and finger, let the light so shine upon the gem that it blazed in many colors. It was a costly bauble, a large diamond, and evidently one of the first water.

"I have brought you the present I promised you in the morning, as one that would be more enduring than the poor roses. Will you accept it, and promise me that you will not throw it away as you did them?"

"I will certainly promise you that I will not throw it away," replied I in a quick voice, "because I cannot accept such a present at your hands, neither that nor anything else. It was the consciousness of having done wrong that made me leave your roses on the music-room table. I had no right to accept even a handful of roses from so cunning a stranger, the acquaintance of a few weeks, one whom I had only known as the guest of my aunt."

"It is because you know so little of the world that you are so fastidious," replied he; "other girls accept flowers and gems from those they have known only a few days. I have seen so much of you, sat beside you at the board, attended you in your rides and walks, the past eight weeks have embodied more to me, unfolded more of your character, shown you more of mine, than we could in ordinary cases have known in as many years."

I could not bear the way in which he spoke, asserting an intimacy and familiarity which he had no right to. I was getting hot and feverish. I felt as if my passion was again rising, and if I sat there I must strike him on the face. With a mighty effort I burst the charm which seemed to give me to my seat, and, starting up, I made a step forward to leave the balcony.

"Euralie, dearest," said he, holding me by the arm and detaining me forcibly as he spoke, "hear me say one word. I come to this balcony in order to ask you to be my wife. My happiness or misery for life hangs on your answer."

I endeavored to disengage my arm from his grasp. It was impossible; but a strength was given me such as a few minutes before I could not have looked for.

"Colonel Devereux," said I, looking him steadily in the face, "you surely have not thought for a second of your words, nor of how utterly at variance your age and my own are."

"My age," said he with a look of unutterable surprise which he most assuredly did not feign; "why, what age do you take me to be?"

"The age my aunt gave you on my arrival here, and which made me, a girl of twenty years, fancy I ran no risk of my motives being misunderstood in receiving commonplace politeness from a man ten years my senior."

He was looking in my face as I spoke, his lips firmly compressed, his face drawn down in white lines. He essayed to speak twice ere the words passed his lips, and then he said in a cold stilled voice:

"Am I to understand that no effort of mine can change your decision, that you have been trifling with me all this time only to fool me and send me adrift when you brought me to your feet?"

"You are to understand, Colonel Devereux," replied I, in a voice as firm and distinct as his own, "that I never for one instant thought of you as a lover. As I before told you, your age prevented my doing so. Had it been otherwise, I could never have encouraged an Englishman as my lover. If I ever marry, it will be one of my own race and my own tongue, one who will live and die in the beloved land to which I owe my birth."

"Be it so," replied he, loosening his grasp from my hand; "you have made your choice, time will tell whether for weal or woe. I gave you love strong as death, and you trampled it under your feet. In tears to come, if I live, I shall give you hatred cruel as the grave, and therefore it shall fold you in its arms until you lie down and die in misery and disgrace."

In an instant he was gone from the balcony, and I sat down that I might recover from the shock his terrible words gave me.

(To be continued.)

THIS is the way they do up an Enoch Arden romance in Oshkosh, Wis.: The Western did not come back and gaze through the window at the felicity of the reconstructed household and then go into the green and yellow melancholy business not any. He kicked the poor husband out, sorted over the children and sent his brats after him, and then after trashing his wife, settled down into a peaceful and happy lead of the family.

CHRISTMAS CHARITY.—Of all times in the year the Christmas tide is that at which hearts and parentheses should open widest in thoughts and deeds of charity. Those should give who never gave before, and those who are charitable always should at this season give the more. Some of our overflow of happiness should not fail to reach the poor and miserable, whom Father Christmas, an aristocratic fellow, is otherwise apt to slight. To give is more blessed than to receive, especially when such so little so much happiness may be brought about. The most of these best able to give, who are apt to be verily unacquainted with the misery of our great city and the proper ways for its relief, will do well to contribute to the many organized charities, which reach all classes.

For the Favorite.

"THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE," ETC., ETC.

BY EMMA NAOMI CRAWFORD.

"What mortal his own doom may guess," —BROOK.

"Now, George, don't be so ridiculous!" and Patty Rivers glanced half-laughingly, half-angrily down into the blue eyes raised imploringly to hers, and shook her head in a very determined manner.

You must not imagine from her looking down into those eyes that George was of lowly stature and Patty a fine woman, as that expression is generally understood. No; she was only enabled to do so by reason of the beautiful humblity which kept her lover on his knees at her feet, in utter defiance of dow and pobbles.

"But, Patty," urged the discomfited George, as he slowly rose to a very dignified height, "you take all the poetry out of a fellow! Byron doesn't impress you any more than——"

Language apparently failed to interpret his feelings, and he maintained a dignified silence for some minutes, pulling his cherished monstache sulkily, and thinking, rather resentfully, what a very pretty picture she, his unpoetical betrothed, made, standing there in the full tide of moonlight, which shone and glistened over her wavy brown hair and soft brown eyes. Then he thought that white muslin and pink ribbons were becoming to that style, but that, of course, was mere millinery, and then he thought himself very badly treated, and "he knew why!"

"I hope," he remarked, with a polite air of enquiry, "that your friend, Mr. Hollis, will soon arrive. I hear that he is going to remain all summer," and he looked keenly at the pretty face turned half away.

Patty started, and glanced up into his composed but gloomy countenance.

"Yes," she replied, after a moment's hesitation, "we expect him to-morrow. He is very nice, and rich too."

"Very nice, and rich too," echoed George; a desirable friend—very."

"Papa thinks him nearly perfect," said Patty, gaily. "But, George, don't be so cross!"

"I cross!" ejaculated that gentleman. "No, Patty. Whatever my feelings might be at finding myself treated as I have been, I have the soul, I imagine, of the Spartan Boy, and they remain hidden from careless observation! They are of no consequence to you!"

"I think your feelings might have been of consequence to me, when I denied myself the pleasure of seeing a gentleman of your attractions at my feet on the damp gravel. It must have been uncomfortable!"

George did not deign to answer, but stood digging his cane into the gravel; and, seeing that he was in what she called his "heroic," Patty turned away, and with great wisdom kept a profound silence.

Moonlight is beautiful, silence often soothing, but one is apt to turn from the contemplation of nature as seen under the beautifying rays of the moon and the impressive solemnity of the ether with a certain ill-defined resentment against them, when the object of one's young and tender affections can be seen by the former to turn her face from you, and helps to preserve the latter herself.

Patty's brown eyes gazed solemnly at the moon, until, at length, George spoke:

"It's very hard on a fellow to be obliged to come sneaking round a girl's house after dark to see her, and then see other men walking with her, and trying to cut a fellow out! It made me mad to hear you singing with Bob Sowers, at Mrs. Brown's last week, and the fellow put on such an air of devotion that I could have choked him. And I must say, Patty, you looked awfully sentimental."

"I was thinking, George dear, of you," said Patty, slipping her little soft hand into his, "and how hard it was that papa would not consent to our marriage, and wondering if he ever would, for I will never, never marry without it."

"He never would tell me what objection he had to the idea, and I'm sure I don't know," said George, with a deep sigh. "And there's Fairy-Hill all ready for you, Patty. I even made Mrs. Turner get a kitten—though she hates them—to make it look more homelike, you know."

"And papa is so good-humored, too, and kind," said Patty. "I'm sure I never saw any one so fond of jokes and such things. He very nearly killed himself laughing this morning when Nipper ran into the parlor with his head firmly fastened in one of the butter dishes, and we had to break the dish to get it out!"

"Nipper's rather too fierce for me," remarked George; "he doesn't like me very much, I fancy."

"Hush, George! I hear papa calling me!" exclaimed Patty in a low voice of extreme terror. "I must go now, or he'll come to look for me!" and she ran quickly towards the house, while George, having watched the last flutter of her white dress through the trees, turned and walked slowly through the tall clover until he reached the highway, moaning over her father's hard-heartedness, and turning over various means for his overthrow and defeat.

We cannot tell of what his dreams were that

night, but in her's Patty saw herself the mistress of that charming abode mentioned by her lover, and, seated on the chintz-covered sofa in the drawing-room, declined with regal scorn the hand of the Shah of Persia.

"You are looking very mysterious, papa," said Patty, about a week afterwards, as they sat at breakfast. "What is the matter? Has anything happened?"

Mr. Rivers did look very mysterious, and as he handed his cup to his wife for some more cream, a triumphant smile spread slowly over his broad face.

"No, I, Patty?" he exclaimed. "Well, I should too, for I have a secret."

"Not a gully one, I hope, Mr. Rivers," said a dark-eyed young woman who sat beside his potted daughter, and she laughed.

"Well, there's gullit connected with it, Mrs. Hollis," said Mr. Rivers, "and I suppose, like all ladies, you would like to hear it?"

They made a very cheerful party, in that large, cool dining-room. Indeed few people could persistently gloom in Mr. Rivers' society, and a gay assent from Mrs. Hollis showed him that his profound remark was as clear-sighted as original. Her husband, a delicate-looking man, with a large fortune, and a most expensive taste for literary ventures of the wildest sort, smiled at Patty, who smiled back at him, and Mrs. Rivers looked anxiously at her husband:

"Well," he commenced, with a bow to Mrs. Hollis, "last night I felt very restless, couldn't sleep in fact, and so I got up and went down to the verandah to smoke a pipe. It was all very quiet, and after a time I turned to come in, when I heard Nipper, who had some way broken his chain, come dashing up to me. I thought I might as well chain him again, and so I walked down with him towards the orchard. I saw a shadow moving along by the orchard fence as I came near, and thinking of those Cochins—"lines that were stolen last week, Patty, I crawled quietly round to the corner of the fowl-yard. Sure enough, in a few minutes I saw him coming, and the rascal had a bag under his arm, which seemed pretty full. He didn't see me, and up he came to the corner just as I let Nipper go! You should have seen him struggle, but he never gave so much as a groan! I called the dog off, and before he had time to get up, I dragged him by the collar into the yard, and not caring to rouse any one, I bundled him into the coop he took the Cochins from, and threw his bag in after him."

"The wretch!" cried Patty. "He might have murdered you! Is he there now, papa?"

"I don't think Nipper would be likely to trust him on parole," said her father, laughing.

"I left him sitting with teeth watering with delicious anticipations before the coop."

"I propose that we go and interview the monster," said Mr. Hollis; "it will be nearly as exciting as a circus."

"Oh, yes," assented Patty, and, headed by Mr. Rivers, they all rose and left the room.

As they neared the fowl-yard, a very curious sound reached their ears, and Mrs. Hollis and Patty, who were in advance, gazed towards the novel prison with some astonishment. What could it mean? It was not the voice of Nipper, nor was it the clucking of the hens? No! In fact the marvellous sound bore a strong resemblance to the dulcet strains of "O come, gentle."

As heard from a violin, and filled with a pardonable curiosity, they opened the gate and entered. They say that true nobility of appearance will reveal itself under the most unfavorable circumstances, but I will admit that, despite his six feet one, his broad shoulders and blue eyes, George Grey was not seen to advantage as he peered through the bars of that hen-coop at his betrothed wife!

And Nipper, a huge bull-dog with a black patch over his left eye, rose, in no way fatigued by his long vigil, the hours of which, doubtless, had been cheered with hope, and thrusting his massive head into Patty's hand, looked for the approving pat which usually rewarded his faithful efforts, but which, for once, was wanting.

Mr. Rivers could not resist a joke, and the consequence was that a few mornings afterwards George said to Patty:

"I meant to play that serenade under your window, Patty, but since my cooping was the cause of your father's consenting to our marriage, and I'll have plenty of time to play to you in the future, I'm rather glad that I had the opportunity of improving the musical tactics of your Shanghai, though there is still room for improvement!"

A CHRISTMAS LEAGUE.—In the year 1812, an old English chronicler relates that several young persons were dancing and singing together on Christmas Eve in a churchyard, and in their noisy merriment they disturbed one Robert, a priest, as he was performing midnight mass. He in vain entreated them to desist—the more he begged, the more they out their capers; whereon priest Robert prayed that they might dance without ceasing. The historian says that they continued to do so for a whole year, feeling neither heat nor cold, hunger nor thirst, neither decay of apparel, but the ground, not having the same miraculous support, gradually wore away, and, before the expiration of the year, they were dancing away sunk in a hole up to their waists. It is further said by the ancient chronicler of this unique pastime, that one Bishop Hiler came to the rescue, and the dancing ceased. Some of the young people died immediately afterwards, others slept profoundly three days and nights, and then went about the country publishing the strange event.

WIT AND HUMOR.

BURNING MARRIAGES.—Rabbits. A STRIKING FACT.—The church clock. STRANGE DEED.—Three sheets in the wind. A LATE COOK.—One that "critters" away her time. AN HEALY ON MAY.—A woman's attempt to marry him.

THE BAYING CLAW.—Hands clutching the drowning man. What does a man see in the wild, wild waves?—Sea foam.

A MAN recently knocked down an elephant. He was an anticleric.

THE FRAY OF IMAGINATION.—Having no dinner, but reading a cookery-book.

IF twenty grains make a scruple, how many will be required to make a doubt?

WHY is a philanthropist like an old horse?—Because he always stops at the sound of woe.

LOVE is said to be blind, but know lots of phobias in love who can see twice as much in their gals as I can.

WHAT was he expected to claim tears from a Yarmouth bloater?—An "erring brother's disgrace."

WHY is the captain of a Thames Penny Boat likely to have a good supply of eggs?—Because his boat lays too at every pier.

WHICH railway would be in a better position, one on the broad, or one on the narrow gauge?—The narrow; because the other would be more gauged (mortgaged).

A GENTLEMAN in Kansas had a reception at his house the other evening, and when the guests went away, it took him all night to wash the tar and pick the feathers off his person.

AN instance of throwing oneself about was witnessed a few evenings ago at a party, in the case of a young lady, who, when asked to sing, first tossed her head and then pitched her voice.

"YOU say," said a judge to a witness, "that the plaintiff resorted to an ingenious use of circumstantial evidence; state just exactly what you mean by that."—"Well," said the witness, "my exact meaning is that he lied."

A YOUNG man in Titusville, who has two or three very countable girls, placed a notice on his front door one night, which read: "Shut down for thirty days. No store in the parlour, and but one lamp."

A WRITER says: "Fathers remembering their own boyhood, should make some little allowance for their children." But the worse of it is that many of our children, after spending their "allowance," go in debt for double the amount.

AN artist was so remarkably clever, that having exercised his skill on a very deaf lady, indeed who had hitherto been insensible to the nearest and loudest noises, she had the happiness next day of hearing from her husband in South Australia.

THEY've got Froude down to a pretty fine point in New York. A statistical student says that in the first twenty-five minutes of a recent lecture he put his hand in his pocket twenty-one times, and lifted his coat-tail thirty-five times, by actual count.

AN individual whose patronymic was Silence, when about to give evidence in a civil case was told to state his name. "Silence!" he roared out with rather stentorian lungs, and was nearly being committed for contempt of court, before the mystery of the seeming impertinence was cleared up.

AN old lady called at a country post-office the other day, and asked, "Is there a letter for John Jones, if ye please, sur?" There being several persons of that name in the town, and a letter for one of them, the clerk asked if this John Jones was in business? The innocent answered, "No sur, he's in gaol."

I FIXE Tim Larry \$5 for assault and battery on Pat Malone. Pat—But your Honor I want more damages. He blacked me eye, and if I had been invited to a tea-party, I couldn't have gone. Judge—The court knows nothing about consequential damages. You must carry your case to Geneva.

THE Courier-Journal says: "Louisville should take warning by the fate of Boston and Chicago. Every good citizen will now put a barrel of gunpowder under his building, and be prepared for emergencies. The fact that a building amply provided with powder goes up quicker the second time than it did the first is well known among architects."

A GRAND Jury ignored a bill against a huge bear for stealing chickens, and before discharging him from custody, the judge made him read and reprimanded and concluded thus: "You may go now, John, (shaking his finger at him, and let me warn you never to appear there again." John, with delight beaming in his eyes, and a broad grin displaying a beautiful row of ivory, replied: "I wouldn't bin here dis time, judge, only de constable fotch me."

THE English mania for betting is illustrated by the story of a young Briton. He wagered that a spider which he would produce, would cross a plate quicker than a spider to be produced by a friend.—Each spider was to have its own plate. His spider, however, on being started, would not stir, whilst its rival ran with immense speed. The bet was consequently lost, and the loser soon found out the reason why—his friend had a hot plate.

We call the following Positive Philosophy. Will our "Medical Men" take notice. One of the Ft. Ute medicine men," says a Dakota paper. "I lately told his fellow Indians that when he died if they would cut him to pieces, his body would unite and he ascend to Heaven in a cloud of smoke. An experimental savage killed him at once, and the crowd out him up, departing in disgust at the fallibility of his knowledge when the parts lay as they were left."

NEW PERFORMERS.—Some Journal of undoubted authority states that several new performers are about to be added to the orchestra. Among these new performers are mentioned.—The man who fiddles with his watch-chain; the man who harps on one string; the man who blows his own trumpet; the man who is up to the horns of a dilemma; the man who knows the symbols of algebra and the triangles of Euclid; the man who rings the changes; and the man who drums on the table.

A GENTLEMAN doctor—celebrated almost as much for his love of good living as for his professional skill, called upon a certain eccentric nobleman whom he found sitting alone at a very nice dinner. After some time, the doctor received no invitation to partake of it, said, "My dear lord, if I were in your lordship's place, I should say: 'Pray, doctor, do as I am doing!'"—"A thousand pardons for the occasion," replied his lordship. "Pray, then, my dear doctor, do as I am doing, and eat your dinner."





CHRISTMAS PASTIMES.

GAMES.

BUFF WITH THE WAND.—Having blindfolded one of the party, the rest take hold of each other's hands in a circle around him, he holding a long stick. The players then skip round him once and stop. Buffy then stretches forth his wand and directs it by chance; and the person whom it touches must grasp the end presented, and call out three times in a feigned voice. If Buffy recognises him, they change places; but if not, he must continue blind, till he makes a right guess.

THE COUNTRY CLUB.—A pack of cards being produced, the dealer gives them forth one at a time to the person next him, calling out its name at the same time in a drawing, monotonous voice, thus—"The four of hearts;" the next repeats it in the same way, pushing it to his next neighbour, who does the same, until it has gone the round of the circle: but there is no cessation of either the dealing forth the cards, or the repetition of their names, and thus a continuous murmur of voices is going on! but added to this, whenever the drawer comes to a picture card, he not only calls out its name as "the king of hearts," but he adds "Whoop!" as he passes it on to his neighbour, who does the same in performing his part of pushing it forward. Sometimes it will happen that this "whoop!" is being repeated at two or three different parts of the table at once, together with the monotonous hum of "The three of spades," "The nine of diamonds," &c., &c., makes such a babel of the drawing-room that one round of the pack, or sometimes less, is sufficient for an evening.

THE TRAVELLER'S ALPHABET.—This is a game to set juvenile wits to work. The players sit in a circle, or round a table. The first one starts by saying to his left-hand neighbour, "I am going to America," (or any place commencing with A). The one so addressed will turn to his or her left-hand neighbour, and ask, "What will you do there?" The reply must come prompt from the third one, "Ask for apples," or anything commencing with A. In every instance the verbs and nouns must commence with the letter the traveller is journeying to; for instance: "I am going to Bath." "What will you do there?" "Bathe baby." "I am going to China." "What will you do there?" "Chop chins." "I am going to Dover." "What will you do there?" "Dive deep." "I am going to Ealing." "What will you do there?" "Eat eggs." And so on throughout the alphabet. Should a player hesitate while five can be counted, a forfeit is the result; also if any mistake is made in following with the right letter.

THE ELEMENTS.—In this game the party sit in a circle. One throws a handkerchief at another, and calls out AIR! The person whom the handkerchief hits must call out the name of some bird, or some creature that belongs to the air, before the caller can count ten; which he does in a loud voice. If a creature that does not live in the air is named, or if a person fails to speak quick enough, a forfeit must be paid. The person who catches the handkerchief throws it to another in turn, and cries out EARTH! The person who is hit must call out some animal, or any creature which lives upon the earth, in the same space of time allowed the other. Then throw the handkerchief to another, and call out WATER! The one who catches the handkerchief observes the same rules as the preceding, and is liable to the same forfeit unless he calls out immediately some creature that lives in the water. Any one who mentions a bird, beast, or fish twice, is likewise liable to a forfeit. If any player calls FIRE! every one must keep silence, because no creature lives in that element.

MIND YOUR P'S AND Q'S.—The leader of this game addresses the party with the remark, "My mistress is dainty, she does not like peas—what shall we get her for dinner to-day? One may suggest, "Roast beef, potatoes, and plum-pudding." The leader gives a shake of the head, demands a forfeit, and turning to the next, repeats, "My mistress is dainty and she does not like peas—what shall we give her for dinner?" "Roast pork and parsnips!" cries another. "She does not like them, pay a forfeit;" and the same question is repeated. The third, perhaps, suggests "Boiled mutton and cauliflower, and dry bread." "These will please her," replies the leader, and he pays a forfeit. If only two or three are in the secret, the game may proceed for some time, to the intense mystification of the remainder, who have no idea what they have said to incur or escape the penalty. It depends merely on a play of words. The mistress not liking "P's," the players must avoid giving an answer in which that letter occurs. As the same proposition must not be repeated twice, those even in the plot are sometimes caught; as the reply they had prepared for themselves is occasionally forestalled by another player, and they have no time for consideration.

THE CROCHERY CONCERT; OR, DUMB BAND.—Each of the party selects an instrument, on which they are expected to pretend they are performing—one chooses the violin, and proceeds to play it. Another sets herself in a graceful attitude; draws a chair before her, and sweeps the strings of an invisible harp. Another runs her fingers up and down a supposed pianoforte, for which a table forms a substitute. A fourth places his hands on an angle with his mouth, turns the head a little on one side, and moves the fingers quickly, in imitation of a flute-player's position, features, and action, &c., &c. The "leader," having been selected, takes his place in front of the band, and having determined what piece of music shall be performed (which ought to be some well-known air, chorus, march, &c.), holds up his baton, or roll of music, and spreads out the other hand as a signal for "the whole band" to commence playing on their instruments, and making music which imitates their respective sounds. The leader then claps his baton on his left hand, which is a signal for the band to stop; then he instantly imitates the violin, and the violinist must pretend to play; from which he passes to the drum, and so on to various other instruments, and all at once holds up both hands as a signal for a grand crash; and he thus alternates as quickly as possible the different orders for silence, *colos* and *concoros*; the failure of any player to imitate his leader, or obey his orders, of course entails a forfeit. The sound of the various voices, the sudden pauses, the timid *colos*, the incessant changes, are all productive of great amusement. For quietness, this game may be played dumb.

PARLOR TRICKS.

TO CHANGE WATER INTO BLOOD!—This announcement may, at first, appear rather startling, but after a brief explanation, it may be accomplished without the slightest difficulty. Privately prepare a concentrated solution of the sulpho-cyanide of potassium, and also wash a plate with a strong solution of per-chloride of iron. The solution of the potassium, being perfectly colorless, cannot be distinguished from water; and to heighten the effect the plate

ought to be a white one. Fill a wine-glass with the solution of potassium, and when the plate is quite dry, throw the contents of the glass quickly on it, when the apparent water will be instantaneously changed into a deep crimson liquid, resembling, as near as may be, "the blood of a wizard."

TO PRODUCE A CARD WITHOUT SEEING THE PACK.—Take a pack of cards with the corners cut off. Place them all one way, and ask a person to draw a card; when he has done so, while he is looking at it, reverse the pack, so that when he returns the card to the pack, the corner of it will project from the rest! let him shuffle them; he will never observe the projecting card. Hold them behind your back. You can feel the projecting card—draw it out, and show it. Simple as this trick is, it will excite great astonishment.

HOW TO LIFT UP A FLINT GLASS BOTTLE WITH A STRAW.—Take a straw which is not broken or bruised, and having bent one end of it into a sharp angle, put this curved end into the bottle, so that the bent part may rest against its side; you may then take the other end, and lift up the bottle by it without breaking the straw, and this will be the more readily accomplished as the angular part of the straw approaches nearer to that which comes out of the bottle.

push the bottom in a little way; then get some gum and stick a small portion of canary or other seed on the bottom, so as to make it appear a full box; then obtain a small bag with a little seed in it, and feign to fill the box; but instead of doing so, only bring out a little seed on the bottom; afterwards rub the loose seed off, and the party seeing the seed that is fast on will think the box is full. Then take the box in the right hand, a cap or hat in the left hand, and cover the box, and show the empty side; cover the box, and say, "Presto; come back," turn the box, and show the full side.

TO TELL A PERSON WHERE HE HAS DEPOSITED THE LAST OF THREE GIVEN KNIVES.—In order to make this trick appear plausible, wager any sum with a person that you will give him three knives to hide (one at a time), and you will tell him where he will deposit the last. It generally happens with the person who accepts this wager to stipulate that he will hide them out of the room, which you readily agree to, and on your presenting to him, in a careless manner, the first and second knife, he runs out, and carelessly deposits them in some secret hole or corner, though not the least consequence is attached to them in wording the wager. During your opponent's absence backward and forward, whip the third knife

leaps up, kisses hand of girl. Old man going to hit him as he jumps over lamp again, hits baron on the nose, knocking off nose. Chair brought in. Pantomime ceremony of sticking nose on again. Lover jumps back over lamp, as though he had come from the clouds; steals nose, and jumps back over lamp, spreading out his hands as though flying up in the air. Consternation of all; baron runs away. Lover appears again. Father and mother give consent to their union. A dance, and each in turn jumps over lamp and disappears. A host of comic situations could soon be resolved upon for such a shadow pantomime as the above. Many old popular songs could also readily be depicted in shadow while one of the company sang the words.

TO MAKE THE POKER STAND ALONE.—A good deal of incredulity will be apparent at the announcement that you will make the poker stand upright on the floor without anything touching it; and great astonishment will result on its accomplishment. The trick is very easy, and is done in this manner. Some time before you intend exhibiting the trick get a piece of black thread about a yard long and blacken a small black pin (you should wear dark or black trousers) to each end, fasten these pins to the knee, or seam of your trousers about level with the knee; so that when you sit down the thread will be stretched across your knees, and by spreading your legs a little you can keep the thread taut. Now take the poker, and after examining it to see if it is straight, rest it against the thread, and after balancing it will, of course, stand upright to everyone's astonishment, as no one can see the thread. Sit apart, either in the centre of the room or somewhere where no one is too near you. A great deal of amusement may be afforded by getting a pasteboard figure jointed at the knees, hips, and arms, and hanging it over the thread by the arms; whilst a tune, or a piece of music, is played on the piano, ask one of the ladies to play on the piano, and make your figure dance, which is easily done by taking thread across your knee between finger and thumb and shaking it.

Place about three or four grains of sulphate of potash, and two grains of sulphur in a mortar, rub them together and briskly detonating reports will occur, as the particles go round the mortar. Pour a little boiling water on to a few slices of beet-root, or of red cabbage, divide the red fluid into several glasses. To one add a few drops of ammonia, to another a few drops of muriatic acid, and a third a little alum, to a fourth potash—note the great variety of colours produced.

CRYING THE FORFEITS.

This is generally the merry time, and all are anxious to know their sentence. To assist our young friends, we append a few.

We will suppose the question has been asked, "Here is a thing, and a very pretty thing; now what shall be done to the owner of this very pretty thing?" They may be then sentenced as follows:—

Hop round the room three times without stopping. Repeat the alphabet backwards, and at the same time strike the other on the chest without changing the motion of either for an instant.

Bow to the prettiest, kneel to the wittiest, and kiss the one you love best.

Kiss yourself. This is done by kissing yourself in the looking-glass.

To be blindfolded, and fed with cold water till you guess who is feeding you.

Say five flattering things to the lady you love.

Become the Hobby Horse. The penitent, on his hands and knees, is obliged to carry round the room a lady who is seated on his back, and whom all the gentlemen (himself excepted) are privileged to kiss in turn.

Put two chairs back to back, take off your shoes, and jump over them. (The fun consists in a mistaken idea, that the chairs are to be jumped over, whereas it is only the shoes.)

Enact the Knight of the Rueful Countenance. The player whose forfeit is to be hand, and select some other player to be his squire, who takes hold of the ladies in their both go round to all the ladies in his company. It is the squire's office to kiss the hand of each lady, and after each kiss to wipe the knight's mouth with a handkerchief. The knight must carry the candle through the penance, and preserve a grave countenance.

Kiss the Candlestick. When ordered to do so, you politely request a lady to hold the candle for you. As soon as she has it in her hand, she is supposed to be the candlestick, and you, of course, kiss her.

To be blindfolded and stand in the centre of the room, one is to kiss you, a second to pinch you, and a third box your ears; you must then guess who has inflicted all three.

Take a Journey to Rome. The person must go round to all the company, and tell them that he is going on a journey to Rome, and that he will feel great pleasure in taking anything for His Holiness the Pope. Every one must give something to the traveller. (The more cumbersome or awkward to carry, the more fun it occasions. When he has gathered all, he is to deposit the things to one corner of the room, and depart them, and thus end his penance.)

Become a Pilgrim. A gentleman conducts a lady round the circle, saying to each member of it, if a gentleman, "A kiss for my sister, and a morsel of bread for me." If a lady, "A morsel of bread for my brother, and a kiss for me." The bread is of no importance, but the kiss is indispensable.

Propose your own health in a complimentary speech, and sing the musical honors.

Hold one ankle in one hand, and walk round the room.

Take Hobson's Choice. Burn a cork one end, and keep it clean the other. You are then to be blindfolded, and the cork to be held horizontally to you. You are then to be asked three times which end you will have? If you say "Right," then that end of the cork must be passed along your forehead; and which-cork must then be turned several times, and which-cork must then be passed down your ever end you say must next be passed down your nose; and the third time, across your cheeks or chin.

You are then to be allowed to see the success of your choice in a looking-glass.



CHRISTMAS GAMES.

TO SUSPEND A RING BY A BURNED THREAD.—The thread having been previously soaked two or three times in common salt and water, tie it to a ring not larger than a wedding ring. When you apply the flame of a candle to it, though the thread burns to ashes, it will yet sustain the ring.

TO MAKE AN EGG STAND ON ONE END.—To accomplish this trick, let the performer take an egg in his hand, and while he keeps talking and staring in the faces of his audience, give it two or three hearty shakes, this will break the yoke, which will sink to one end, and consequently make it more heavy, by which, when it is settled, you may make it, with a steady hand, stand upon the glass. This would be impossible while it continued in its proper state.

THE POKER CARD.—Having previously arranged a pack of cards with their heads all the same way, but rejecting all diamonds except the king, queen, knave and seven, you request a person to draw a card from the pack. Keep your eye upon him, and reverse the pack in your hand, and request him to replace his card. Having done this give him the pack to shuffle and return to you. On looking them over the card chosen will be discovered by its being reversed. If care is observed in the shuffling, the rejected diamonds may be allowed to remain at the bottom of the pack.

FIZZING UP.—Put a lump of chalk the size of a nut into a wineglassful of vinegar—there will be such a commotion, such a swimming and diving of the chalk, such a hissing and fixing between the acid and the stone, that it is probable you will write to some benighted editor of chemical and mechanical news, saying you have discovered "perpetual motion."

TO MAKE AN EGG TUMBLE.—Put a pennyworth of quicksilver into a quill, and seal it at both ends with wax; then boil an egg hard, and as soon as you take it out of the water, put your quill through a small hole in the narrow end; put the egg on the table, and it will tumble about as long as the heat remains.

A MAGIC SEED BOX.—Procure a large pill-box and

into the fire, and by the time he is prepared to accept of it, have it moderately heated; he will then naturally enough deposit it on the ground, with a few ejaculations incident to a person in his situation, while you exclaim, "There, there it is on the ground—I knew where you would deposit it."

TO MAKE WATER FREEZE BY THE FRESIDE.—This curious feat can only be performed in winter. Set a quart pot upon a stool before the fire, throwing a little water upon the stool first. Then put a handful of snow into the pot, having privately conveyed into it a handful of salt. Stir it about for eight or nine minutes with a short stick, and the congelation will be effected.

THE MYSTERIOUS BOTTLE.—Pierce a few holes, with a glazier's diamond, in a common black bottle; place it in a vase or jug of water, so that the neck is only above the surface, then with a funnel fill the bottle, and cork it well while it is in the jug or vase. Take it out, and notwithstanding the holes in the bottom, it will not leak; wipe it dry, and give it to some person to uncork. The moment the cork is drawn, to the party's astonishment, the water will begin to run out of the bottom of the bottle.

A PANTOMIME IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.—Stretch a sheet across folding-doors. Place a strong light behind this on the ground, about six or eight feet from the sheet, and lower the lights in the room where the spectators are sitting. Now, my dears, exercise your wit. A pair of lovers should come on; the lover should throw kisses with his hands, and then attempt to kiss the lady; she will not let him; he throws himself upon his knees. Now the old father enters, shaking stick at them, which being ineffectual and seize girl. The lover jumps over lamp and disappears in the air. Rich baron comes on with long nose, made with paper or wafers; he kneels at the girl's feet; she politely slaps his face. Mother and father jump back over lamp, lie down behind baron. Girl gives baron a push; he falls over lover. Lover