Technical and Bibliographic Notes / Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

- [ ] Coloured covers/ Couverture de couleur
- [ ] Covers damaged/ Couverture endommagée
- [ ] Covers restored and/or laminated/ Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- [ ] Cover title missing/ Le titre de couverture manque
- [ ] Coloured maps/ Cartes géographiques en couleur
- [ ] Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/ Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- [ ] Coloured plates and/or illustrations/ Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- [x] Bound with other material/ Relié avec d'autres documents
- [x] Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion along interior margin/ La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la distorsion le long de la marge intérieure
- [ ] Blank leaves added during restoration may appear within the text. Whenever possible, these have been omitted from filming/ Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas été filmées.
- [ ] Coloured pages/ Pages de couleur
- [ ] Pages damaged/ Pages endommagées
- [ ] Pages restored and/or laminated/ Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- [x] Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/ Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- [ ] Pages detached/ Pages détachées
- [x] Showthrough/ Transparence
- [x] Quality of print varies/ Qualité inégale de l'impression
- [x] Continuous pagination/ Pagination continue
- [ ] Includes index(es)/ Comprend un (des) index

Title on header taken from:/
Le titre de l'en-tête provient:

- [ ] Title page of issue/ Page de titre de la livraison
- [ ] Caption of issue/ Titre de départ de la livraison
- [ ] Masthead/ Générique (périodiques) de la livraison
- [ ] Additional comments:/ Commentaires supplémentaires:

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below/
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

10X	12X	14X	16X	18X	20X	22X	24X	26X	28X	30X	32X
											✓

THE FAVORITE

AN ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL OF AMUSING AND USEFUL READING

No. 19 — 1874 — Vol. III.

MAY 9.

16 PAGES

5 CENTS

For Sale by all NEWSDEALERS.

FOR TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION

See Tenth Page of this number.

"ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE TO YOU LORD MUIRAVEN."

"NO INTENTIONS."

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT.

Author of "Love's Conflict," "Veronique," etc.

CHAPTER VII.—*Continued.*

The next morning is bright and beautiful; all nature appears jubilant, but between these two there is a slight reserve. All trace of discomfiture has passed—they are as loving and attentive to each other as before—but they are not quite so easy. With her first awakening, Irene's thoughts have flown to poor Myra. She wonders how she has passed the night, and vividly remembers that she promised to visit her in the morning; but Colonel Mordaunt says nothing on the subject, and Irene dares not broach it. She is so afraid of disturbing his restored serenity, or of appearing ungrateful for the extra love he has bestowed on her in order to efface the remembrance of their misunderstanding.

Every one knows what it is to feel like this after a quarrel with one whom we love. The storm was so terrible, and the succeeding peace is so precious to us, we are not brave enough to risk a repetition of our trouble by alluding to the subject that provoked it. So Irene dresses in silence, thinking much of her interview with Myra of the day before, and wondering how it will all end, and longing that her husband would be the first to revert to it. But they meet at breakfast; and nothing has been said.

Miss Cavendish is particularly lively this morning. She knows there was a slight disagreement between her host and hostess last evening, and she is anxious to dispel the notion that any one observed it but themselves.

"What a beautiful day!" she says, as she enters the room: "bright, but not too warm. Ah, Colonel Mordaunt, who was it promised to take us all over to picnic at Warmsley Castle on the first opportunity?"

"One who is quite ready to redeem his promise, madam," replies the Colonel gallantly, "if his commander-in-chief will give him leave. But I am only under orders, you know—only under orders."

"Not very strict ones, I imagine. What do you say, Irene? Is this not just the day for Walmsley? And Mary and I must leave you at the beginning of the week."

"Oh! do let us go, Irene," interposes her cousin.

"It will be awful fun," says Oliver Ralston. "Just what we were wishing for; is it not, Miss Cavendish?"

Irene thinks of Myra in a moment: it is on the tip of her tongue to remonstrate, and say she cannot go to-day of all days in the week, but she glances at her husband, and the expression of his face makes her hesitate.

"Philip, what would you wish me to do?" she says, timidly.

"I want you to please yourself, my dear; but I see no reason why you should not go. The weather is beautiful, the distance nothing—a matter of fourteen miles; just a pleasant drive. And I am sure it will do you good, besides giving pleasure to our guests. If you ask my opinion, I say, let's go."

"That's right, uncle," shouts Oliver; "she can have nothing to say after that. Now, Irene" (for it had been settled between these young people that, considering the equality of their ages, they should address each other by their Christian names), "let's make an inroad on the larder (what a blessing it is old Quekett's not here to prevent us!), pack up the hamper, order round the carriage, put on our hats, and the thing is done."

"Shall we be long away?" demands Irene, anxiously, of her husband.

He observes her indifference to the proposed plan, guesses its cause and frowns.

"That depends entirely on our own will. But if our friends" (with a slight stress on the word) "enjoy themselves at the Castle, I see no reason why we should not remain as long as it gives them pleasure."

"Dear Irene, pray don't go against your inclination," urges Mrs. Cavendish. Colonel Mordaunt answers for her—with a laugh.

"Don't indulge her, Mrs. Cavendish. She is only lazy. She will enjoy herself as much as any of us when she is once there. Come, my darling, see after the commissariat department at once, and I will order the carriage. The sooner we start the better. Oliver, will you ride, or take the box seat?" And so it is all settled without further intervention on her part.

She goes upstairs to prepare for the expedition, feeling very undecided and rather miserable. After all, does not her duty lie more towards the fulfilment of her husband's wishes than an en-

gagement with one who had no real claims upon her. Only, she is so sorry that she promised to visit Myra this morning. Perhaps she is expecting her even at this moment—straining her ears to catch the sound of her footstep—waiting in feverish anxiety to repose some further confidence in her. The thought is too painful. Could she not run down to the cottage before they go, if it was only for ten minutes? She hears her husband in his dressing-room.

"Philip," she says, hurriedly, "I promised to see poor Myra again this morning. Is there no time before we start?"

"Time!" he echoes; "why, the carriage is coming round now, and the ladies have their things on. You've gone mad on the subject of that woman, Irene; but if it's absolutely important you should see her again to-day, you must go down in the evening. Come, my darling," he continues, changing his manner to a caressing, coaxing tone, which it is much difficult to combat, "we had quite enough fuss over this subject yesterday: let us have a peaceful, happy day all to ourselves, for once in a way; there's a dear girl." And, after that, there is nothing more for Irene to do but to walk downstairs disconsolately, and drive off with her guests to Walmsley Castle.

They are a merry party; for it is just one of those glorious days when to live is to enjoy; and she tries to be merry, too, for gloom and ill-humor have no part in her composition: but she cannot help her thoughts reverting, every now and then, to Myra, with a tinge of self-reproach for not having been braver. Yet her husband sits opposite to her, his eye glowing with pride as it rests upon her countenance, and a quiet pressure of the hand or foot telling her at intervals that, with whomsoever he may appear to be occupied, his thoughts are always hers; and she cannot decide whether she has done right or wrong. It is useless, however, to ponder the question now, when she is already miles away from Priestley; and so she tries to dismiss it from her mind, with a resolution to pay her promised visit the minute she returns.

Walmsley Castle is a ruin, situated in a very picturesque part of the county: and, allowing for a long drive there and a fatiguing exploration, followed by a lengthy luncheon and a lazy discussion on the sward, it is not surprising that morning merged into noon, and noon into evening, before our party were aware of the fact, and that the first thing that calls Irene's attention to the hour is a cool breeze blowing across the hills, which makes her shiver.

"How cold it has turned," she says suddenly as she changes her position. "Why, Philip, what o'clock is it?"

"Just five, dear," he answers quietly.

"Five! Five o'clock! It never can be five."

"Within a few minutes. I suppose we had better be thinking of going home, or we shall be late for dinner."

"I hardly think we shall have much appetite for dinner after this," says Mr. Cavendish, laughing, as she regards the scanty remnants of their meal.

"Five! It cannot be so late as five," repeats Irene, in a voice of distress. "Oh! Philip, do order the horses to be put to at once. Poor Myra!"

Her expression is so pleading that he rises to do her bidding without delay; but he cannot resist a grumble as he does it. But she does not heed him: she heeds nothing now but her own thoughts, which have flown back to her broken promise, with a dreadful fear that she may be too late to redeem it. She remembers everything that happened with sickening fidelity: how Myra longed to detain her, and only let her go upon her given word that she would return. What right had she to break it—for any one, even for Philip? What must the dying woman think of her?

She is so absorbed in this idea that she cannot speak to any one: her conduct seems quite changed from what it did in the morning. She is a pitiful coward in her own eyes now. And as she drives back to Priestley, she sits alone, miserable and silent, longing to reach home, and fancying the road twice as long as when they last traversed it.

"Are you ill, my dear?" says Mrs. Cavendish. "Has the day fatigued you?"

"You had better not speak to Irene," replies Colonel Mordaunt, in her stead. "She is in one of her Lady Bountiful moods. You and I are not worth attending to in comparison."

She is too low-spirited even to be saucy in reply: and presently her husband's hand creeps into hers; and she knows that her reticence has pleased him, and gives it a good squeeze for reward.

But as the carriage drives up to the Court her quick eye catches sight of a dirty little figure crouched by the doorsteps, and all her vague forebodings return.

"Oh, there is Jenny!" she exclaims excitedly. "I felt sure there was something wrong. Jenny, what is it?"—as the carriage reaches the door—"is Myra worse?"

"Please, mum," says Jenny, with a bob, "she's as bad as ever she can be: and mother says, please, mum, could you come down and see her, for she's a-goin' fast, and she keeps on a-callin' for you. And mother says——"

"Oh! I will go at once," says Irene, leaping down from the carriage. "Philip, dearest, you won't be angry. And with that, begins to run down the drive.

"Stop, Irene, stop!" cries her husband; but she does not heed or hear him; and, having handed the other ladies out, he drives after her, and catches her before she has reached the outside of the grounds.

"Stop, dearest! Get in. I will drive down with you," he exclaims, as he overtakes her.

"You, Philip!"

"Yes, why not? Am I to have no share in the troubles of this kind little heart?"

"Oh, Philip! Thank you! You are too good to me! It is such a comfort to me!" And, with that, she seizes the great rough hand that has drawn her so tenderly to his side, and cries over it quietly. He smears her tears all over her face with his pocket-handkerchief in well-meant attempts to wipe them away, after the manner of men, but not another word is exchanged between them till they reach the cottage.

There all is silent. The lower part of the house seems deserted. And Irene, leaving her husband pacing the garden in front, finds her way quietly upstairs.

Myra's room seems full. Mrs. Cray is there with her soapy satellites, and all her children, except Joel and Jenny; and at first Irene's entrance is unnoticed. But as the women nearest the door perceive her, they fall back.

"Ah! you've come too late, mum," says Mrs. Cray reproachfully. "I doubt if she'll recognise you. She's a'most gone, poor creetur."

"I am so sorry," replies Irene, making her way up to the bed on which the sick girl lies motionless; "but I could not come before. Dear Myra, don't you know me?" And she lays her warm lips upon the clammy forehead. The dying eyes quiver—open—recognise her; and a faint smile hovers over the lead-colored lips.

"We were—we were—" she gasps, and then stops, still gasping, and unable to proceed.

"Is it anything you want to tell me?" says Irene gently; trying to help her.

"We were—" commences Myra again; but Death will not let her finish. "Tommy!" she ejaculates, with a world of meaning in her eyes, but with an effort so painful to behold that Irene involuntarily closes her own: and when she opens them again Myra's are glazed, her lips are parted, and two quick, sobbing breaths herald the exit of her soul.

"She's a-going," screams Mrs. Cray, rushing forward to assist in the Great Change.

"She is gone," says Irene quietly, as awe-struck, she sinks down by the bedside and covers her face with her hands.

"Poor dear!" quoths Mrs. Cray, in order to better the occasion, "how bad she's bin a wanting of you, mum, all to-day, to be sure; and how she's bin a-asking every minute when I thought you'd be here. It seemed to me as though the poor creetur couldn't die till she'd seen you again. I've seen 'em lie like this, bless 'em, for days a fighten for their breath, and not able to go, when there's bin a pigeon-feather in the ticking, but never from trying to see a face as that poor thing as longed to see yours. And I'm sure, if I've sent one message to the Court to-day, I've sent a dozen, and she a-watchin' each time as though——"

"Oh! don't tell me! please, don't tell me!" entreats Irene, as the whole mournful panorama passes before her mental vision, and overwhelms her with reproach, that ends in sobbing. Colonel Mordaunt hears the sound of her tears through the open casement, and comes to the bottom of the stairs.

"Irene—Irene!" he says, remonstratingly.

"Oh! please to walk up, sir; it's all over," says Mrs Cray, with her apron to her eyes, and, for the sake of his wife, the Colonel does walk up. When he reaches the little room, he is distressed beyond the measure at the sight before him; the poor dead, wasted body stretched upon the bed, and his beautiful Irene crying beside it as though her heart would break.

"Come! my dearest," he says soothingly, "you can do no more good here. Let me take you home."

But she turns from him: she will not answer him: she does not even seem to be aware that he is present.

"I hate myself, I hate myself," she says vehemently; "why did I ever consent to go to that detestable picnic, when my place was here? I promised her, poor dear girl, that I would come again this morning, and she has been waiting and watching for me, and thinking that I had forgotten. And her last word was to remind me of the oath I took to protect her child — and even that I must break. And she is about me now; I feel it: despising me for my weakness and my falsehood. But she cannot think me more degraded than I think myself."

Colonel Mordaunt is shocked at the expression: he cannot bear that it should be connected, even wrongfully, with any action of Irene's.

"Degraded! my darling! what can make you use such a term with reference to yourself—you who are everything that is true and noble."

"True, to break my promise to the dying — noble, to swear an oath and not fulfil it! Oh, very true and very noble! I wish you could see my conduct as it looks to me."

"If that is really the light in which you view the matter, Irene, I will oppose no further obstacle to the satisfaction of your conscience. You shall keep your promise, and adopt the child."

At that she lifts her tear-stained face and regards him curiously.

"Are you in earnest, Philip?"

"Quite in earnest! I could hardly jest on such a subject."

"Oh, thank you! thank you—you have made me feel so happy;" and, regardless of spectators (for though the room is nearly cleared by this time, the laundress and some of her children still remain in attendance), up comes her sweet mouth to meet his. Colonel Mordaunt is already repaid for his generosity. And then Irene turns to the bed.

"Myra!" she says, as naturally as though the poor mother were still alive, "I will be true to my word. I will take your little one and bring him up for you; and when we meet again you will forgive me for this last breach of faith."

At this appeal, Mrs. Cray pricks up her ears; she understands it at once, and the idea of getting rid of Tommy is too welcome to be passed over in silence; but, being a cunning woman, she foresees that it will strengthen his claim if she professes to have been made aware of it beforehand.

"Your good lady is talking of taking the poor child, Colonel," she says, whining, "which I'm sure it will be a blessing to him, and may be he'll bea blessing to her. Ah, you see I knows all about it: I've bin a mother to that poor girl as lies there, and who should she tell her troubles and 'opes to, if it wearn't to me? But I kep' her misfortune close, didn't I, mum?—not a word passed my lips but that all the village might have heard, which it's proved by not a soul knowing of it, except ourselves and Joel — and one or two neighbors, maybe, and my brother as lives over at Fenton. But now she's gone—poor dear—and you've promised to do kindly by the child, I don't cares who knows it, for it can't harm no one."

"Then your niece told you of my wife's offer to look after her little boy?" says Colonel Mordaunt, falling into the trap.

"Oh, lor! yes, sir; a many times: which I've looked forward to her doing so, knowing that no lady could break her promise; and she's always been so fond of Tommy, too; I'm sure he'll take to her jist as though she was his mother. And it's a fine thing for the child; though it'll near break my heart to part with him."

This last assertion is a little too much, even for Colonel Mordaunt's softened mood, and he rises to his feet hastily.

"Come, dearest!" he says to his wife, "it is time we were going."

"And Tommy?" she replies inquiringly.

"You don't want to take him with you now, surely?" is the dubious rejoinder.

"No! I suppose not! but — how will he come?"

"Lor, mum! I'll bring him up this evening—he shan't be kep' from you, not half an hour more than's heedful; but I must reddle him up a bit first, and give him a clean face."

"Oh! never mind his face," begins Irene; but her husband cuts her short.

"There there, my love! you hear, the child will be up this evening. Surely that is all that can be required. Good evening, Mrs. Cray. Come, Irene;" and with one farewell look at Myra's corpse, she follows him from the room.

All the way home the husband and wife sit very close to each other, but they do not speak. The scene they have just witnessed has sobered them. Colonel Mordaunt is the first to break the silence, and he does so as the carriage stops before the hall-door of the Court.

"I am thinking what the d—l you'll do with it," he ejaculates suddenly.

"With the child?—oh! a thousand things," she says joyously. Her voice startles him; he turns and looks into her face; it is beaming with happiness and a wonderful new light that he has never seen there before.

"Why, Irene," he exclaims, as he hands her out, "what is this? you look as if you had come into a fortune."

"Because I have such a dear, good old husband," she whispers fondly, as she passes him and runs upstairs te dress for dinner.

Of course the whole conversation at the dinner-table is furnished by the discussion of Mrs. Mordaunt's strange freak. By the time Irene descends to the dining-room, she finds the story is known all over the house; and the opinions on it are free and various. Mrs. Cavendish holds up her hands at the very idea.

"My dear Colonel! you spoil this child. Fancy, letting her adopt the brat of no one knows who!—the trouble it will give you—the money it will cost."

"Oh, Irene has promised faithfully I shall have no trouble in the matter," laughs the Colonel, who, having once given his consent to the arrangement, will never betray that it was against his will; "and as for the expense — well, I don't think one poor little mortal will add much to the expenditure of the household."

"Particularly as I intend to pay for him out of my pin money," says Irene.

"But the nuisance, my dear: no money will pay for that. Ah! you won't believe me now—but by-and-by—wait a bit—you'll see!" with mysterious nods and winks, of which her niece takes no notice.

"She'll have to end by turning him into a buttons-boy," remarks her husbands, who is secretly delighted with the pantomime.

"I'm sure I shall do nothing of the sort," says Irene quickly, and then calms down again. "I mean that I shall grow too fond of the child to make him into a servant."

"You fond of a baby, Irene," says Mary Cavendish; "that is just what puzzles me—why I'm sure you always said you hated children."

"Oh, very well, then! keep your own opinion—you know so much more about it than I do," with a little rising temper.

"Irene, my darling!" says the Colonel soothingly.

"Why do they all set upon me, then, Philip? What is there so extraordinary in my wishing to befriend a wretched little outcast? I'm sure I almost begin to wish I had never seen the child at all."

"Let us change the subject," is her husband's only answer.

* * * * *

But when the dinner is over and the evening draws to a close, Irene begins to move restlessly up and down the house. She has already taken her maid Phœbe into her confidence, and the girl, being country bred and with no absurd notions above her station, is almost delighted at the prospect of having the little child to take care of as her mistress. And they have arranged that he is to sleep in Phœbe's bed, which is large and airy. And before the housemaid comes up with a broad grin on her countenance to announce that Mrs. Cray, the laundress, has brought "a little boy for missus," these extravagant young women have sliced up half-a-dozen or more good articles of wear, in order that the young rascal may have a wardrobe.

In the midst of their arrangements, Master Tommy, clean as to the outside platter, but smelling very strong, after the manner of the Great Unwashed, even though they dwell in villages, is introduced by his guardian. Irene cannot talk to Mrs. Cray to-night, she dismisses the subject of poor Myra and her death struggles summarily; and thrusting a five-pound note into the laundress's hand, gets rid of her as soon as she decently can. She is longing to have the little child all to herself, and she does not feel as though he were really her own until the woman who beats him is once more outside the door. And then she turns to Phœbe triumphantly.

"And now, Phœbe, what shall we do with him?"

"I should wash him, ma'am," replies Phœbe, following the advice of the great Mr. Dick, with respect to David Copperfield.

"Of course! we'll give him a warm bath. Run downstairs and get the water, Phœbe. And is this his night gown?" examining the bundle of rags that Mrs. Cray has left behind her. "Oh! what a wretched thing; but, luckily, it is clean. He must have new night-gowns, Phœbe, at once, and———"

"He must have everything new, ma'am, bless his heart!" exclaims Phœbe enthusiastically, as she disappears in quest of the water. When she is gone Irene lifts the child upon her knee, and gazes in his face.

"Tommy," she says gently, "Tommy, will you love me?"

"Iss," replies Tommy, who has seen her often enough to feel familiar with her.

"You are going to be my little boy now, Tommy."

"Iss," repeats Tommy, as he surveys the wonderful fairy-land in which he finds himself. It must be recorded of Tommy, that, with all his faults, he is not shy.

In another minute Phœbe is back with the water, and the bath is filled, and the two women undress the child together and plunge him in, and sponge and lather him, kneeling on each side the bath the while, and laughing at their own awkwardness at the unaccustomed task. And then Tommy gets the soap into his eyes, and roars, which cheerful sound attracting Colonel Mordaunt's attention as he mounts the stairs, causes him to peep into the open bed-room-door unseen. And there he watches his young wife and her maid first kiss the naked cupid to console him, and then return to the soaping and splashing until they have made him smile again. And when the washing is completed, and Phœbe stretches out her arms to take the child and dry him, Colonel Mordaunt sees with astonishment that her mistress will not allow it.

"No, no, Phœbe! give him to me," she says authoritatively, as she prepares her lap to receive the dripping infant; and then, as the servant laughingly obeys her orders, and carries the bath into the next room, he watches Irene's lips pressed on the boy's undried face.

"My little Tommy!" she says, as she does so.

He sees and hears it, turns away with a sigh, and a heart heavy, he knows not wherefore, and goes downstairs as he ascended them, unnoticed.

A week has passed. Poor Myra's form has just been left to rest beneath a rough hillock of clay in the churchyard, and Joel Cray is seated in the sanded kitchen of his mother's cottage, his arms cast over the deal table, and his head bent down despairingly upon them.

Mrs. Cray, returning abruptly from having just "dropped in" to a neighbor's to display her "black" and furnish all funeral details, finds him in this position.

"Come, lad," she says roughly, but not unkindly, "it's no use frettin'; it won't bring her back agin."

"There's no call for you to tell me that, mother," he answers wearily, as he raises two hollow eyes from the shelter of his hands; "it's writ too plainly here" — striking his breast — "but you might have warned me she was goin'."

"Warned you! when all the world could see it! Why, the poor creetur has had death marked in her face for the last six months; and Mrs. Jones has jest bin a sayin' it's a wonder as she lasted so long," replies Mrs. Cray, as he hangs her new bonnet on a nail in the kitchen wall, and carefully folds up her shawl.

"All the world but me, you mean. 'Twould have come a bit easier if I had seen it, perhaps. Why, 'twas only the other day I was begging of her for to be my wife, and now, to think I've just come from burying her! Oh, good Lord!" and down sinks the poor fellow's head again, whilst the tears trickle through his earth-stained fingers.

Mrs. Cray loves her son after her own fashion. It is in a great measure, her love for him and sympathy with his disappointment that have made her hard upon Myra and Myra's child; and she desires to give him comfort in his present trouble. So she draws a chair close beside him, and sits down liberately to tear open all his worst wounds. But it is not entirely her want of education that begets this peculiarity, for the example has been set her, ever since the world began, by people as well-meaning, and far less ignorant than herself.

"Now, where's the good of thinkin' of that, lad?" she says, as soothingly as her harsh voice will permit. "She'd never have bin yours had she lived ever so long; and all the better, too, for no woman can make a good wife when her fancy's fixed upon another man."

"And if hers were, you needn't remind a feller of it," he replies uneasily.

"Oh! but I says it for your good. Not that I wants to speak a word against the poor thing as is gone; for when a fellow-creetur's under the ground, let his faults be buried atop to him, say I; that's my maxim, and I keeps to it. Still, there's no denying poor Myra were very flighty, and a deal of trouble to us all. I'm sure I thought this afternoon, when I see the handsome grave Simmons had dug for her, and all the village looking on at the burial, and Tommy brought down from the Court by the Colonel's lady herself, in a brand-new suit of black, and with a crape bow and a feather in his hat, that no one would have thought as seed it that we was only burying a——"

"Mother, what are you going to say?" demands Joel, as, with clenched hand and glowing eyes, he springs to his feet.

"Lor! you needn't fly out so. I wasn't going to say nothing but the truth."

"The truth! But it is the truth? Who knows that's the truth?"

"Why, you wouldn't be after saying as she was an honest woman, Joel?"

"I don't know. I'd rather be saying nothin' of her at all. My poor girl, trodden down and spit on! And she, who was the bonniest lass for miles round Priestley. Mother, I must leave this place."

"Leave! when you've just got such a fine situation under Farmer Green! Have you lost your senses, lad?"

"I don't know, and I don't care. I don't seem to have nothin' now; but I can't bide here any longer; there's somethin' in the air that chokes me."

"But where would you be going?"

"I can't tell that either. Jest where chance may take me. Only, be sure of one thing, mother — I don't come back to Priestley till I've cleared her name or killed the man who ruined her."

"You're going in search of him, Joel?"

"It's bin growing on me ever since that evening I came home and found her dead. I won't believe that Myra was the girl to give herself over to destruction; but if she were — well, then the man who destroyed her must answer for it to me."

"But what'll I do without you?" commences Mrs. Cray, as her apron goes up to receive the maternal droppings of despair.

"You'll do well enough, mother. If I didn't feel that, I wouldn't go. And the child (if it wasn't for her, I could say, 'Curse him!' But I won't. No, Myra, never you fear; he'll always have a friend in me), he's off your hands, and well provided for. So you've nothin' but your own little ones to look after. And you'll have friends at the Court too. You won't miss me."

"But how are you ever to find the gentleman, Joel?"

"I know his name was ''Amilton,' and I'll track that name through the world until I light on him. And I saw him once, mother. 'Twas only for a few minutes, but I marked him well — a tall, upstanding feller, with dark hair and blue eyes. The child's the very moral of him, curse him! And I'll search till I come acrost that face again; and when I comes acrost it, we'll have our reckoning, or I'm much mistaken."

"And how shall you live meanwhile?"

"As I always have lived, by my hands. And now, mother, put up my bundle, and let me be going."

"To-night, lad? Oh! you can't be in earnest."

"Yes, to-night. I tell you there's something in the air of this place that stops my breathing. I could no more lie down and sleep in my bed here, while she lies out yonder with the lumps of clay upon her tender breast, than I could eat while she was servant. Let me go, mother. If you don't want to see me mad, let me go where I can still fancy she's a-living here with you, and that coffin and that shroud is all a horrid dream."

And so, regardless of his mother's entreaties or his own well-doing, Joel Cray goes forth from Priestley. Whilst the neighbors are preparing to retire to their couches, and the dead woman's child, alike unconscious of his motherless condition and the stigma resting on his birth, is lying, flushed and rosy, in his first sleep in Phœbe's bed, the uncouth figure shambles slowly from the laundress's cottage, and takes the high road to Fenton, which is on the way to the nearest town. But before he quits the village he passes, a little shame-facedly, even though the dusk of the summer's eve has fallen and he is quite alone, through the wooden wicket that guards God's acre, and finds his way up to the new-made grave.

But it looks so desolate and mournful, covered in with its hillock of damp red earth, that he cannot stand the sight, and as he gazes at it, his honest breast begins to heave.

"I can't abear it," he whispers hoarsely, "to leave her here—the thought of it will haunt me night and day."

And then he stoops and gathers up a morsel of the uninviting marl studded with rough stones.

"And to think you should be lying under this — you whose head should be resting on my bosom — oh, darlin', my — my darlin'! my heart'll break!"

And for a few moments the poor wretch finds relief in a gush of tears.

"I'm glad no one saw 'em," he ponders quaintly, as the last of the low sobs breaks from his laboring bosom; "but I feels all the better. And I swear by 'em—by these here tears which the thought of you has drawed from me, Myra, that I don't look upon your grave again until I've had satisfaction for the wrong he's done you. Oh! my lost darlin', I shall never love another woman! Good-bye, till we meets in a happier world than this has been for both of us!"

And when the morning breaks, he is miles away from Priestley.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mrs. Cavendish and her daughter are gone; the sportsmen are gone; and, with the exception of Oliver Ralston, whom Irene has come to look upon almost as one of the family, Fen Court is cleared of guests, and she is left once more to the society of her husband and her sister-in-law, and the care of her little *protégé*, Tommy Brown. The transformation wrought in this child by a few weeks' attention and a suit of new clothes is something marvellous. No one who had only seen him grubbing in the front yard of Mrs. Cray's domicile, or driving the truant pigs in from the lane, would recognise him now. His hair, cleansed from its normal state of dirt, is several shades lighter than it was before, and lies in loose waving curls about his head and neck. The tan is gradually wearing off his broad white brow, and his plump neck and arms and shoulders, now fully exposed by his low frocks, make him appear what he really is—a very handsome child. Above all, he possesses the violet eyes that first attracted Irene's notice; and beneath the dark lashes of which he has a quaint, half-shy, half-sly manner of looking up at her which makes her heart throb each time she encounters it, though she can hardly tell the reason why. But the name by which the boy is generally known grates upon her ear; and her annoyance on this subject is a source of never failing amusement to Colonel Mordaunt. He considers it so thoroughly feminine.

"Such a dreadful name!" she says plaintively, as they are sitting out-of-doors one evening, and watching the child play upon the lawn. "Tommy Brown! It has not even got the virtue of singularity to recommend it. Could anything be more commonplace?"

"Why don't you re-christen him, my dear?" demands the Colonel, laughing. "Call him Aubrey de Vere, or Lancelot Vane, or Percival Lisle, or by any other simple and unpretending title. He is sure to end by being a footman, or a drummer, or a shop-boy — nothing could be more appropriate."

"He shall never be anything of the sort," cries Irene indignantly; "and it is not kind of you to laugh at me, Philip, when you know I am fond of the child. I don't mind Tommy so much, Thomas isn't a pretty name, but it was my dear father's, and there are plenty of Thomases in the peerage; but I can't stand Brown."

"Sligo family," interpolates her husband, with mock seriousness.

"Oh! Philip, do be quiet. Of course, if it were his rightful name there would be no help for it; but as he has no name at all poor little fellow, I don't see why it should not be changed."

"Nor I. What do you propose to change it to?"

"I suppose, Philip —— Now, I know I'm going to say a very stupid thing, so I give you fair warning; but I suppose it wouldn't do to call him by my maiden name?"

"What, St. John?"

"Yes," confusedly, "Thomas St. John. After papa, you know."

"My dear Irene, you have gone clean out of your senses about that child. Pick a beggar's brat from the gutter, and dub him with your father's name!—with the name of my cousin. I couldn't hear of it. What on earth would people say?"

"Let him say what they like. They must have something to talk about ——"

"They shall not talk about my wife. No, Irene. I have permitted you to follow your own inclinations in adopting this boy—whether wisely or not remains to be determined—but I will not hear of his being endowed with the name of any one belonging to my family. Call him Montmorency, or Plantagenet, or any tomfoolery you may fancy, but let us have no trifling with what is sacred, and saying, Colonel Mordaunt rises from his seat, and walks back into the house. He is beginning to feel a little jealous of the interest evinced in Tommy Brown.

Irene remains where he left her, red and silent. She does not attempt to detain him, or to call him back, for his words have left a sore impression on her mind, and she is afraid to trust herself to speak. It seems so hard to her that every one should resent her desire to be a mother to this poor motherless baby, or to forget that so wide a gap exists between herself and him. And she watches the little black frock and white pinafore, as their owner toddles about the grass, now making ineffectual attempts to grab a moth that the evening breezes have awakened, then stooping to pick off the heads of the daisies that the mowing machine has passed over, until her thoughts wander to his poor dead mother, and her eyes fill with tears.

"I hope—that is, I suppose, that my brother ——but what do you think, Mrs. Mordaunt?" remarks the sapient Isabella, who, book in hand, has been sitting at a respectful distance from the master and mistress of Fen Court, as though she had no right to approach them or join in their conversation.

"I beg your pardon—I wasn't listening," rejoins Irene, as she quickly blinks away the drops that hang upon her lashes.

"I mean——he is not angry, I trust or vexed, with what you said, as he has gone indoors, you see."

"What, Philip? why should he be? We were only talking about Tommy. Ah, you mustn't do that, dear," as the child plunges over a flower-bed in the ardor of the chase. "Come here, Tommy—come to me."

But prompt obedience not being one of Tommy's many virtues, Irene has to go in pursuit of him; and, having captured, she brings him back to the garden bench, and seats him on her knee. Miss Mordaunt immediately retreats to the farthest extremity. It is the funniest thing in the world to see these two women with the child between them—the delight of the one, and the distaste and almost fear of the other, being so plainly depicted on their countenances.

"Now, Tommy, do sit still," says Irene. "What a weight the fellow grows! I am sure he must be pounds heavier than when he came here. See! here's my watch. Put it to your ear, and hear the tick-tick. Hasn't he got lovely hair, Isabella?"

"It appears to be very fine," replies Miss Mordaunt.

"It's as soft as silk, and curls quite naturally. No, darling—not my ear-rings. You hurt me! —oh! how he does pull. And now he wants that rose out of your dress. What a child it is! No, Tommy musn't take poor auntie's rose. (He may call you "auntie," mayn't he, Isabella?")

"Well, if Philip has no objection; but of course——"

"What possible objection could Philip make? The child must call us something. He's going to call me "mamma," I know that! Who am I, Tommy?—now, tell me."

"Mamma!—yo's my mamma," replies Tommy, as he makes another grab at the ear-rings.

"You darling! But you will pull your poor mamma's ears out by the roots. And you positively make my knees ache with your weight. Just take him for a minute, Isabella. You can have no idea how heavy he is." And, without ceremony, Irene places the boy in the arms of her sister-in-law. Miss Mordaunt receives him upon a hard and bony lap, with a deep well in the centre, as though he were a wild animal, warranted to bite upon the first occasion; and Tommy doesn't like the situation. He is of a rebellious and democratic turn of mind, and has no courtly hesitation in calling a spade by its right name. And some of Tommy's right names, acquired outside the Priestley public-house, are very wrong names indeed.

"Let me go!" he says wildly, as Miss Mordaunt's arms, in deference to Irene's wishes, make a feeble barrier to retain him. "I don't like oo."

"Oh! Tommy, Tommy, that's naughty. You must love poor auntie," remonstrates Irene. But the child struggles on.

"I don't like oo—I don't like oo—oo's ugly—oo's a devil!" he winds up with triumphantly, as he escapes from her grasp, and rushes back upon the flower-beds.

"Really, Mrs. Mordaunt, I trust you will not ask me to feel his weight again," says poor Isabella, who is quite excited by the compliments she has so unexpectedly received.

"It is very naughty of him," replies Irene soothingly. "I must scold him well; in fact, I would slap his hands if I did not know that his language is entirely attributed to the horrible way in which he has been brought up. Poor little child! Fancy how shocking it is that a baby of his age should even know such a word!"

"I trust—that is, it would be very unpleasant for all parties, if he were to call my brother by such a name," remarks Miss Mordaunt in her primmest manner.

"Oh! don't tell him, please," says Irene, as she catches up the truant to carry off to bed. As she makes the request she sighs. She sees so plainly that she will have to bear the brunt of all Master Tommy's peccadilloes.

Phœbe meets her at the bedroom door with a message.

"If you please, ma'am, Mrs. Cray's waiting in the kitchen to know if she can speak to you."

"Oh, of course! Tell them to show her into my morning room, and then come back and take the child;" and in another minute Irene is confronted with the laundress.

"Well, Mrs. Cray, is there anything I can do for you this evening?"

"Thank you, no, ma'am. The washing as you're been so good as to find me is a real help. And what with Tommy off my hands, and poor Myra gone, we're getting on finely. And how is Tommy, ma'am? They tell me below stairs as he've grown marvellous, bless 'im."

"Oh! he's very well, Mrs. Cray, and very happy. Did you wish to speak to me?"

"Well, ma'am, I was wishing to take the liberty to do so. I suppose you've heard of my loss, ma'am?"

"Your loss!—no!"

"My poor son, ma'am—my Joel! He gone away."

"What! left Priestley?"

"Yes, ma'am. He couldn't abide the place now his cousin's buried, and his whole mind seems bent on finding out the man that's wronged her. He wanted to marry her himself, you see, ma'am, and I do believe it's gone to turn his head." (Here Mrs. Cray's canvas apron goes up, as usual, to her eyes.) "The last words he says to me was, 'Mother, I'll find him,' he says, 'and I'll kill him,' he says, 'if I travels the whole world over for it,' he says.'"

"Oh! but you mustn't believe all that people say when they are in such grief as that, Mrs. Cray. When your son is able to reason a little more calmly, he will never think of doing anything so wicked. You may rest assured that whoever wronged poor Myra will not be permitted to go unpunished; but the unpunishment must be left in God's hands."

"That's just what I says to Joel, ma'am. I says, 'Joel,' says I, 'whoever done it, it's no business of yourn; and men will be men,' I says, 'and the girl was quite able to take care of herself.' But you don't know what Joel is, ma'am. He's as strong in his will as a helephant, and you might turn a posty sooner. So that I feel whenever they two meet there'll be bloodshed and murder, and perhaps worse. And I shan't never be easy till he comes back again!"

"Where is he now, Mrs. Cray?"

"The Lord knows, ma'am, for I'm sure I don't. He went away last Thursday week, and I've seen nothin' of him since. And it's hard for his mother to be left in this way, and she a widder, with five little'uns to work for, and her poor niece in the churchyard. It's very hard; very hard, indeed."

"But I thought you said you were getting on so well, Mrs. Cray?"

"So I am, ma'am—thanks to you and the washing. And it's a real relief to have poor Myra laid comfortable underground, and to feel she'll never want for nothin' again. And that's what brings me up this evenin', ma'am. I've been redding up the house a bit, and turning out her boxes to see what would make up for the poor children, and I came across a few letters and bits of things of hers as I'm sure I never knew she had—she kep' 'em so close."

"Are they of any importance to the child?"

"That I can't say, ma'am, being no scholard myself; but, as you've provided so handsome for Tommy, I thought as you'd the best right to see them, and come to your own decision whether they should be burned or not."

"Thank you. I think you are right. Have you got them with you?"

Here Mrs. Cray produces a red cotton handkerchief from under her shawl, which, unfolded, discloses a small packet tied up in part of a dirty old newspaper.

"There they are, ma'am, just as I found them in Myra's box. There's a bit of hair among the papers, and a glove—which it looks to me like a gentleman's glove, but there is no saying, and gloves ain't a proof if there were. So, not being able to read the writing, I didn't disturb them more than necessary, for I guessed you'd like to have 'em as they was—and taking such a hinterest as you do in Tommy, and they being of value perhaps to the child—which of course I shall be very willing to leave them with you, ma'am—for being no scholard, as I say before ——"

As Mrs. Cray stands there, repeating the same sentences again and again, and fumbling the dirty packet about in her hands, a light breaks in upon Irene. The letters are to be paid for. And she is quite ready to pay for them, for her interest and curiosity are alike aroused by what the laundress has told her, and she hopes the papers may prove of use in tracing the parentage of oer adopted child.

"Oh! certainly, I quite understand," she exclaims eagerly, as her hand dives into her pocket for her purse; "and I'm sure I'm much obliged to you, Mrs. Cray, for the trouble you have taken in bringing them up to me." And thereupon she seizes on the letters, and transfers instead a sovereign to the woman's palm—an exchange which so entirely meets Mrs. Cray's views of justice, that it is several minutes before Irene can stop her torrent of thanks, and get her well out of the room again.

It is dusk now, for the autumn evenings close in fast, and she rings for candles, and, full of expectation, sits down to inspect the contents of the packet she has bought. She is so deeply interested in this case—so sentimentally regretful still over the memory of poor Myra—so anxious that her child should not be left entirely dependent on herself for a friend. So she draws her chair close into the table, and leans both her arms upon it, and bends her head down to the light, as people do who are about to enter on a task that engrosses all their minds. When she has cast away the dirty string, and still dirtier outside paper, she comes upon a small bundle of letters, or rather notes, in number about six and which, to judge from two or three specimens selected at random, do not appear at first sight to be likely to prove worth a sovereign vested in the interests of Tommy.

"Dear Myra,—

"Don't expect me to-morrow. It is impossible I can come. The bill shall be paid next week. —Yours ever, E. H."

"Dear M.,—

"I shall be over on Friday at six. Never mind dinner. Shall dine before starting. I or

dered in six dozen of claret yesterday. Carriage was paid.

"Yours affectionately, E. H."

"DEAREST M.,—

"You are a thorough woman. How could I be at F——— when I was twenty miles the other way? You will see me some time next week. Get the dress by all means. I inclose cheque.—Yours truly, E. H."

When Irene has deciphered these and a few others, very similar in character, she pauses for a moment's thought.

What do they tell her? Positively nothing but what she knew before. It is evident that the writer was not a passing acquaintance of the dead girl's, but some one who considered her home as his, and held himself responsible for her expenditure; without doubt, the father of her child—the Hamilton of whom Myra had spoken to her.

Irene thrusts the letters to one side indignantly, almost with disgust. She fancies she can trace the selfish nature of the writer in every line; she thinks she would not care to stand in that man's place at the present moment, and only wishes she could find some clue by which to trace him, and make him aware of the mischief and misery he has wrought.

Having disposed of the letters, she next takes up the glove—a gentleman's glove, as the laundress had observed, but of no value in tracing the identity of its owner—and the envelope that contains the lock of hair.

It is a soft, wavy piece of dark brown hair, the counterpart of that which grows on Tommy's head, and Irene experiences a strange sensation of mingled admiration and dislike as she takes it in her hand. Besides these, the packet contains nothing but a gold locket, broken and empty; a heap of withered flowers, chiefly violets, and one of those highly ornamental and strictly useless ivory-backed prayer-books which are manufactured for young gentlemen to present to young ladies, and which Myra was very unlikely to have received from any friend in her own class of life. Irene opens the prayer-book to see if there is any inscription in it, but the title-page is guiltless of the indiscretion of revealing its donor's name. It is blank and silent and inscrutable as the past appears likely to be upon the subject of her adopted child. She turns over the leaves mechanically and with an air of disappointment. At the service for the solemnization of marriage the page is folded down. Poor Myra! how often may she not have glanced at the holy words, which bore no sweet memories for her, with longing tears! As Irene's hand shakes, the little volume shakes, and something—an oval piece of cardboard apparently—falls loosely from it on the table. She seizes and turns it uppermost. It is a photographed face, cut from an ordinary *carte de visite*, which, from its size and appearance, has evidently once been encased in the broken locket—the face of a man, which she holds forward eagerly to the light.

"God in heaven! it is that of Eric Keir!"

* * * * * * *

In her anxiety to examine the portrait, Irene has risen to her feet, and now stands, quivering in every limb, and gazing at it as though she were spell-bound. There can be no mistake—he appears younger here than when she knew him, there is less hair about the face—less thought upon the brow—a look of more *insouciance* about the mouth—but the eyes, the nose, the contour of the countenance, are the same; there can be no doubt but that it was taken from himself.

"But how—how can his photograph have found its way amongst Myra's poor possessions? Why should it be mixed up with these relics of the base and selfish lover who betrayed her innocence?"

The deadly sickness that rises to her heart makes answer to the question.

The initials E. H. stand for Eric Hamilton; he is the man, at whose door all the suffering she has witnessed must be laid; his child, whom she has adopted as her own, lies sleeping at this moment under her protection.

As the reality of the thought strikes home to her, Irene lets the photograph fall from her hands, and sinks back upon the chair which she had quitted.

Eric Hamilton Keir and Myra Cray. For a few moments, all that she does, or thinks of doing, is to repeat those two names conjunctively over and over again, until the syllables lose all significance for her.

The effect is to harden her heart and cause it to feel quite dead and cold. Presently she hears a sound outside in the hall, and, springing up, pushes all the sad mementoes of poor Myra's disgrace together in one heap, and thrusting them into the writing-table drawer, turns the key upon them. And then she leaves the room, almost as though she were in a dream, and still dreaming, encounters her sister-in-law upon the stairs.

"Are you not coming down into the drawing-room?" says Isabella. "I think—that is, I am not sure, of course—but I believe that my brother is expecting you. Coffee has been in for half an hour."

"Don't wait for me," Irene replies in a low voice, as she toils in a languid, purposeless manner up the staircase.

As she gains her bedroom door, Phœbe appears upon the landing from her own apartment.

"Oh! please, ma'am, would you just step in and look at Master Tommy. He do look so beautiful in his sleep."

"No, no! I can't. I don't wish to see him. I don't care about seeing him," replies her mistress, in tones so unusually sharp and decisive, that Phœbe, bewildered, retreats to her nursery again, feeling that somehow she has made a mistake.

Irene enters her own room and paces up and down in the dark, not fast, but restlessly.

"Myra Cray!" so run her thoughts, "a low-born, uneducated girl, whom he was base enough to betray and desert, and then he came to me—to ME—and dared to trifle with my affections too!"

The knowledge of the similarity between their cases should make her soften towards Myra's memory, but it does not: the shock of the discovery has occurred too lately. As yet she only think of her as of one who (however briefly) held the heart she was unable to secure. And she is impotently weak to cope with a feeling which she knows to be unworthy of her; and the whole world loses favor in her eyes in consequence of her own defalcation.

As she is still walking up and down the room, trying hard to stamp down the demons of envy and jealousy and revenge that are struggling for supremacy in her bosom, Colonel Mordaunt's deferential tap for admittance is heard against the door. It is an unfortunate moment for him in which to appear before her; we are best left to conduct these mental warfares by ourselves; and there are moments in life in which the attentions of our best and dearest friends irritate instead of soothing us. And all Colonel Mordaunt's attentions, however kindly meant, are conducted on that soothing stroke-you-down-gently principle which is so trying to accept patiently when every nerve is quivering with excitement.

"Why, my darling," he commences, "all in the dark! What can you find to amuse you up here?"

"Oh, I'm all right, thank you. I don't feel inclined for the light just now—I'm thinking."

"And what can the little woman be thinking about that requires both gloom and solitude? Nothing unpleasant, I hope, Irene."

"How should it be?"

"Then come down to the drawing-room, my darling. Isabella is waiting till you appear to pour out the coffee."

"I would much rather not go; why can't she take it alone?"

"What reason can you have for not joining her?"

"Only that I feel a little—a little hipped to-night, and would rather remain by myself."

"Hipped! Why, what on earth can you have to make you feel hipped? Has anything gone wrong?"

"I have already said no to that question. But is it absolutely necessary in order to feel low, that we should be suffering in the present? Have we no past to return at times upon us?"

Irene forgets, as she says this sentence, how much confidence she reposed in her husband before marriage; and as it escapes her, and the remembrance returns, she grows still more impatient with herself and him.

"I had hoped," he observes (and the observation alone, in her present condition, carries offence with it), "that your past was done away with for ever, Irene."

"I never gave you cause to hope so," she retorts sharply, and he turns away in silence to leave the room. In a moment she has seen her error and sprung after him.

"Forgive me, Philip, I am in a horrid temper! But when you talk of my past as gone for ever, you forget that I have lost my father and mother, and—and——"

"There, there, darling! It is I who should ask your forgiveness; I was a brute to say what I did. But I have been hoping I had made you happy, Irene."

"And so you have—very happy!" she returns with a sort of hysterical gasp. "Let us say no more about it, but go down to Isabella." And for the remainder of the evening she is, to all outward appearance, much like her usual self. She goes to bed, however, sleeps brokenly, and rises in the morning unrefreshed. The revelation of the night before has made no difference in her future prospects, nor can it influence in any way her present actions; but it has revived all her bitterest feeling with regard to Eric Keir's behavior to herself—feelings which she had hoped were long since laid to rest, because the tame existence which she is leading affords no opportunity of arousing them. But the dull leaden weight which, alternated with fierce moods of scorn and irony, once rendered life a torture to her has settled down upon her heart again, and disposes her to feel hard and cold to all mankind, until, whilst she is dressing, a certain chubby hand knocks uncertainly upon her bedroom door. She knows well the faint broken sound his dimpled knuckles make, and generally flies to the door to open it herself. But, to-day her brows contract, and she shrinks backward as though the mere knowledge of his presence there could give her pain.

"If you please, ma'am, it's Master Tommy," says Phœbe's voice from the outside.

"I can't see him this morning, Phœbe. Let him run in the garden until we come down."

"I want oo—I want oo," says Tommy, as he kicks at the bedroom door.

"Are you going to let that child kick all the paint off the panelling?" shouts her husband from his dressing-room.

"If you please, ma'am, he's been in the garden already, and he's got a most beautiful rose for you—haven't you, Master Tommy?"

"Let me in! I want oo," repeats the *protégé*.

Then she advances slowly and unlocks the door, and admits the child before Phœbe can follow him, and finds herself standing in the centre of the room, gazing with her large, hungry eyes at the atom of humanity whose existence vexes her so sorely.

"What do you want, Tommy?" she commences coldly.

"A rose for Tommy mamma—a booful rose," he lisps as he presents the flower.

She does not offer to accept it, on the contrary, she turns away.

"Don't call me mamma," she says quickly.

The urchin looks astonished, and then pouts his lips. Children are ready judges; he recognises the injustice and waywardness of her new mood at once.

"I go, Phœbe," he utters plaintively, in remonstrance to the change. Irene looks round —sees the dewy mouth drooping at both corners —catches the deprecating glance of the violet eyes—becomes aware of her barbarity in a moment, and flies to fold the friendless, fatherless little creature in her arms.

"As if 'twas your fault," she murmurs, pressing her lips upon his curly head. "Poor lamb—poor unhappy, deserted little child! Oh, Tommy! he has left us both—he has left us both—we will be all the world to one another."

* * * * * * * * * * *

The mistress of Fen Court is very thoughtful for some days after this little episode, and only like herself by fits and starts, though, strange to say, no one notices the change, except it be Oliver Ralston. But our most intimate friends are often the last to read what is passing in our inmost minds. We are suffering perhaps so keenly that we scarcely dare to raise our eyes lest they should blurt out our secret, and imagine every one we meet must read it written on our brow in characters of fire; and yet those with whom we live go on consulting us day after day with reference to the weekly expenditure, or the servants' peccadilloes, or the children's spring dresses, as if, for the time being, such matters had not lost their significance for us almost as much as though we had passed beyond them. Yet it is not so with strangers, unless, indeed, we happen to be actors and actresses of the first rank. They meet us, and observe to one another afterwards, "What is that man's perplexity? What cause can that woman have for weeping?" And so Oliver Ralston discovers that Irene is not so cheerful as before, and taxes her with it in his rough, hearty way.

"Dreaming again, Irene! What is up?"

"When you can explain to me, Oliver, how much is comprehended in that mystical term, perhaps I may be able to inform you."

"You know what I mean! Why are you so down in the mouth?"

"The natural reaction after so much dissipation."

"Fiddle-de-dee! Excuse my rudeness, but you know fiddle-de-dee is the only word to suit your explanation. Seriously, though, is it anything in which I can help you?"

"Not at all Oliver! thanks all the same—except, indeed, by not commenting upon what you are pleased to call my being 'down in the mouth.'"

"But may I tell you to what I think it's due?"

"Certainly! if you can—which I know you can't."

"You are sorry you ever adopted that little brat, Tommy?"

She grows scarlet.

"Indeed I'm not. What should make you think so? Has your uncle been saying anything against him?"

"He never mentions the subject to me. But I have seen you looking at the child scores of times lately, and I can read it in your face."

"Acute observer! but wrong for once in his life. I wouldn't part with Tommy for anything in the world."

"Not if I found his relations for you?"

"He has no relations," hurriedly—"he belongs to me entirely—he will never be taken away. But please let us talk of something else, Oliver. Have you seen Dr. Robertson again."

"How artfully you change the subject.—Yes; I saw Robertson this morning; and it's all but settled."

"With Philip's consent?"

"Certainly. He has come round to think it will be the best thing in the world for me. And so it will. I have still sense enough to see that. There will not be much temptation for me to dissipate in Fenton. The only drawback is that I am afraid I shall not get so much practice as I ought to have."

"Oh, never mind the practice. To lead a quiet life is the most important thing. And I promise you shall operate on me whenever occasion calls for it."

"What an opening! I'll have both your legs off before the year's out. But, really, Irene, it will be a great thing for me to live so near you."

"It will be perfectly delightful; for, *entre nous*, though poor Isabella is extremely good, she is a very stupid companion. And you must come over and dine with us every day. Now, won't you?"

"And leave Robertson to look after his five parishes alone? I'm afraid he won't consent to that. But I must keep a horse, and dare say I shall often be able to take Fen Court in my rounds."

"Are you going to live with Dr. Robertson?"

"No; he has a wife and large family; so I should prefer not to do so. But I can have two rooms in a farmhouse close by—very nice ones."

"And we will furnish them for you; that will be charming. You have no idea how pretty I shall make them. I shall send you over table-linen and crockery and every thing from the Court. We have much more than we can use. It will be the greatest fun in the world getting your rooms ready."

"You are much too good to me."

"And when you have taken possession you shall give a house-warming. Isabella and I will go over in the pony-chaise; and Tommy shall ride his donkey. (By-the-way, do you know that I've bought a donkey for Tommy, and he sticks on like a little brick?")—here Irene interrupts her rapid delivery with a deep-drawn sigh.

"Why that sigh, Irene?"

"What sigh?"

"At Tommy's name again. Ah! you can't deceive me. All the low spirits of the last week are attributable to the existence of that wretched child."

"How you do tease me, Oliver. And it's very rude to break off the conversation in that way. Where was I? Oh! yes; the upshot is that we'll all go and have afternoon tea at your Fenton apartments—that is, if you'll have us."

"How can you doubt it? Only your proposals are so delightful, I'm afraid they are too good to come true. What will Uncle Philip say to them?"

"Just what I do. But I will go and sound him at once." And off runs Irene in search of her husband. She finds Colonel Mordaunt in a beaming humor, and everything goes right. He considers the offered appointment as good an opening as a young man in Oliver's position could expect to obtain; acknowledges he should like to have him near Fen Court; agrees heartily to every suggestion with respect to furnishing the apartments; and even mentions a certain strong hunting cob now standing in his stables as very likely to be his own particular contribution to his nephew's new establishment.

"And so you see, Oliver, that's all right," is Irene's comfortable conclusion as the last clause has been discussed and provided for; and then follows a merrier evening than they have spent for some days past: for Irene catches the infection of her husband's good-humor and Oliver's content, and miraculously recovering her voice, which has been *hors de combat* for at least a week, sits up to a much later hour than usual, singing snatches of old ballads that were famous before she was born, and interrupting herself every second minute to twist round on the music-stool and make some little harmless joke at the expense of Oliver's future *ménage*.

So they all go to bed pretty well tired out, and my heroine does not wake until her accustomed hour on the following morning. The first thing of which she is conscious is that Colonel Mordaunt is already up and dressed.

"Why, Philip"—sitting up in bed, and rubbing her sleepy eyes—"is that really you? Have I overslept myself?"

"I think not. It is only just eight. I rose rather earlier than usual."

"Why? Were you disturbed? or is there a meet to-day? By-the-way, Philip, were there carts in the night?"

"Carts, my darling?"

"Yes; scraping over the gravel. I fancied I heard them; or perhaps I dreamt it. I was very sleepy. Are you going away?"

"I shall be back in a minute," says her husband hastily; but several minutes elapse, and he does not return, so Irene rises, and proceeds to dress herself. She is just about to ring for Phœbe to assist in the completion of her toilet when she is attracted by a loud roar from somewhere below stairs. Tommy has evidently come to grief.

"Oh! they have let him fall and hurt himself," she exclaims aloud, all the maternal solicitude with which her breast is laden springing into action directly a call is made upon it; "they have let the baby fall!" and rushes to the door.

"Phœbe!" There is no answer; but she fancies a slight bustle is going on in the hall, and hears, above the crying of the child, a confused and angry murmur, as of voices engaged in argument.

"Phœbe! Phœbe! where are you? Bring Master Tommy here!" she exclaims again, as she leans over the banisters; and then a diversion is created and a movement made in her direction, and Phœbe, with the boy still whimpering in her arms, and Colonel Mordaunt bringing up the rear, appears upon the staircase.

"Oh! is he really hurt?" begins Irene, anxiously, as she perceives the guard of honor.

"My darling, there is nothing the matter. Pray don't distress yourself," replies the Colonel.

"Then, why do you come up too? And how did it happen? Did he fall down the kitchen stairs, Phœbe? You know I have strictly forbidden you to take him there."

"He didn't fall down the kitchen stairs, ma'am," replies Phœbe, with a very pursed-up mouth.

"How did you do it, darling?" demands Irene of the child, now safely in her arms.

"Naughty ooman," lisps Tommy, half disposed to cry afresh at the mere recollection.

"My dear Irene, how absurd of you to question an infant of that age. As if he could possibly tell anything that is to be depended on."

"Why don't you tell me, then? How did it happen, Phœbe?"

"Well, ma'am, I wasn't exactly present at the time, because I had gone to——"

"I consider I am a far better person to explain matters than your maid, Irene," interrupts the Colonel rather testily. "The fact is, the child was playing about where he has no business to be at all (but, really, you do indulge him to that extent that it becomes dangerous even to suggest matters might be amended)—"

"Please go on, and let me hear how the accident occurred."

"Well, he went into the dining-room when it was—was occupied—and —and—when he was told to go, and would not obey (he is one of the most disobedient little animals I ever met), he was sent out. That's all."

"Sent out! Did you strike him, Philip?"

"Oh! no, ma'am, 'twasn't master," interposes Phœbe quickly.

"Who, then?"

"Naughty ooman," explains Tommy.

"Who dared to do it?" repeats Irene.

"Well, my love, it's really nothing to make such a fuss about: it's not everybody that would think so much of giving a tiresome child a tap on the head as you do. And I dare say she never thought twice of what she was doing."

"She!—she! Not Isabella, surely."

"Oh! Lor, no, ma'am. Miss Mordaunt ain't out of her room yet," cries Phœbe.

A thought strikes Irene. The mystery becomes clear.

"Has Quekett returned?" And the change in her voice as she puts the question is so patent to her hearers that Colonel Mordaunt becomes quite alarmed for what may follow.

"Yes, yes, dear; she has. Now you know all. But I am sure she didn't mean to offend you. Phœbe, you had better go, and take the child with you."

But Irene folds the boy closer in her arms.

"I can do without you, Phœbe; but I shall keep Master Tommy." And the bedroom door recloses on the servant only.

"And so that woman has come back, and dared to strike my child," says Irene, as soon as they find themselves alone.

"Pooh! nonsense! my love. Your child. Do just think what you are saying. And, as for daring, I consider that a very strange term for you to use when speaking of any action from so old and valued a friend as Mrs. Quekett is to me, towards so very recent an acquisition as that nameless *protégé* of yours." The Colonel tries to speak with his usual ease and composure, but the attempt is a melancholy failure.

"She has dared to strike my child," repeats his wife, with a heaving breast.

"The boy refused to obey her, and she boxed his ears. It was a very natural thing to do."

"It may be very natural, but it shall not be repeated."

"Then you must teach the child to be more obedient."

"I shall teach him nothing for that woman's sake. When did she return?"

"This morning, at about six. She prefers travelling by the night train."

"It appears to me that she prefers any mode of action by which she can best show off her insolence and the unusual position she has permitted to attain here. She leaves us without a moment's warning in order to humor her own caprice; and she returns in the same manner, without the slightest consideration for our convenience. A pretty way for a servant to go on in, truly."

"Irene, I thought this subject had been discussed and done with."

"I shall never have done with it whilst she remains here, and is permitted to behave as she does. It is past all bearing."

"Well, there is no chance of her leaving," replies the poor Colonel, with a sigh; "so the prospect is cheerful."

"If her presence here is a necessary evil, I must bear it; but she shall not interfere in my private affairs. Philip, I have borne more from that woman than you know of; and I tell you candidly, were it not for your sake, I would not remain another moment under the same roof with her. But, as she has really returned, for which I am infinitely sorry——"

"Why, you did not imagine she was gone for good, surely?" interrupts the Colonel. "This is her home, and always has been."

"But she might have died, or something, in the interim."

"Irene, I am surprised to hear you speak in that strain."

"Don't be surprised at anything I say of that woman. Nothing could be too bad for her. But of one thing I am determined. She shall not strike this child. And of that I shall make her aware on our first meeting."

"I advise you not to quarrel with her."

"I shall not condescend to quarrel. I shall simply give my orders; and if she doesn't choose to obey them——"

"What then?"

"I shall appeal to you."

"And if I am powerless?"

"Why, then—but it will be time enough to decide what I shall do when the occasion for decision arrives. Meanwhile I shall speak my mind very plainly to Mrs. Quekett."

"I advise you to keep good friends with her," repeats the Colonel, who appears to his wife to have assumed quite a depressed and craven air since the night before. "She is an estimable woman in many respects: faithful, honest, and to be depended on; but she makes a bitter enemy. It will be far wiser to have her on your side."

Irene's lip curls in proud contempt.

"Thank you, Philip; but I have been used to choose my allies from a class superior to that of Mrs. Quekett. I have borne with her patiently hitherto, but she has put me on my mettle now; and, if I die for it, she shall not strike this child again!"

"Oh, hush!" exclaims Colonel Mordaunt, fearfully, as they issue on the landing together (the little boy still clinging round Irene's neck), and commence to descend the staircase, at the foot of which appears the housekeeper, proceeding in state to her own apartment, and followed by a couple of menservants bearing her boxes.

"I hope I see you well, Mrs. Mordaunt," she says, with a smirk, as she encounters the couple about halfway down.

Colonel Mordaunt, who is as nervous as a woman, nudges Irene upon the elbow.

"Mrs. Quekett speaks to you, my love."

"I heard her.—I should think you might have given us some notice of your return, Quekett. It is rather unusual to take people by surprise in this way."

The tone in which she is spoken to makes Quekett flush up at once, and her voice changes with her mood.

"I couldn't have let you know beforehand," she replies rudely, "as Lady Baldwin didn't say till yesterday that she could dispense with me. And it's quite a new thing, into the bargain, for me to hear that I'm to account for all my comings and goings to a family where I've lived for——"

"Of course—of course," interrupts the Colonel hurriedly. "You mistake Mrs. Mordaunt's meaning, Quekett, altogether.—Irene, my dear, breakfast is waiting. Had we not better go down?"

He is terribly afraid of what may be coming, and has but one wish: to separate the combatants. But Irene's cup of wrath is filled to the brim, and she stands her ground. With Tommy clinging tightly to her from pure fear, she feels brave enough to say or do anything.

"One moment, Philip.—As you have returned, Mrs. Quekett, you and I had better understand each other. You struck this child this morning. Don't do it again!"

"Irene! Irene!" implores the hapless Colonel.

"Don't do it again!" pants Mrs. Quekett.

"Don't do it again," repeats her mistress calmly. "I have adopted him: he is under my protection; and I will allow no one to correct him but myself."

"A pretty pass things is come to!" exclaims the housekeeper, whose rage at being rebuked before the footmen is beyond all description. "I wonder you're not ashamed of yourself, Colonel, to allow it. A dirty brat, belonging to the Lord knows who, and coming from the lowest lot in Priestley, to the brought up here and prinked out like a young gentlefolk, and not a finger to be laid on him. Why, what'll the neighbors says? What do you expect the village is saying at this very moment? Do you want a repetition of old times?"

"Hush, Quekett! Pray be silent!"

"Oh, yes! it's very easy to bid me hold my tongue, when I come home to find the Court run over with bye-blows——"

"How dare you speak of this child in my presence by such a name?" exclaims Irene. "Philip, will you permit such an insult to be offered to your wife—and before your servants, too?"

"No, no, my dear, of course not.—Quekett, I must entreat you to pass on to your room. Neither you nor Mrs. Mordaunt are in a fit state to discuss this matter now."

"But remember, Mrs. Quekett," adds Irene, "that whatever you may think, you shall not speak of Master Tommy in that way again."

"Master Tommy, indeed!" sneers the housekeeper.

"Yes, Master Tommy. Whoever he may be, wherever he has come from, I have adopted him as my own child, and I will have him treated as my own child."

"Oh! very well, ma'am, just as you please."

"I am glad you see it in its proper light at last. Let me pass." And with the boy still in her arms, Irene marches statelily to the breakfast-room, whilst the Colonel, glad at any cost to see the interview come to an end, follows, though with his spirits down at zero.

As they leave her, Rebecca Quekett turns round upon the landing to gaze at the retreating form of the mistress of Fen Court, with a look of unmistakable hatred.

"Humph! To be treated as her own child, is he?" she says maliciously aloud, so that the servants in attendance can overhear her; "and he a nurse-child of that creature Cray's, left unclaimed for any lady to adopt. That's a queer story, ain't it?" she continues, appealing to one of the men beside her; "and perhaps she ain't so far wrong when she stands out for his being treated as her own. There's lots more things happen in this world than we've any notion of. Well, you'd better get up with the boxes now, James. They've kept us on the landing long enough, Lord knows!"

And so the worthy disappears into her own room, and is lost to the view, at all events, of Irene for the remainder of the day.

Colonel and Mrs. Mordaunt have a sharp little discussion on this subject during breakfast time—quite the sharpest they have engaged in since their marriage; and though Irene will not yield one inch with regard to stooping to conciliate the housekeeper, she feels, at the termination of the meal, that she has been worsted in the fight. For the subject of her adoption of Tommy Brown has necessarily formed part of the argument, and her husband has gone so far as to observe that if a child who is no relation to either of them is to bring discord into the house, he had better go. And he Irene recognises, for the first time, her impotence to keep him in opposition to her husband's wishes, and the knowledge silences her, even to making her reflect sadly whether she may not ultimately (unless her *protégé* is to be cast on the world again) be compelled, for his sake, to submit to Mrs. Quekett's terms of peace; and the fear lowers Colonel Mordaunt in her eyes—with him lowers herself, and renders her morbidly depressed. She spends all the morning in the shrubbery, running about with Tommy, for she cannot stand Isabella's deprecating air and deep-drawn sighs; and here, after a while, Oliver Ralston comes to find her, with bad news written on his countenance.

"It's all knocked on the head, Irene. I can't close with Robertson."

"Why not? Has he changed his mind?"

"On the contrary, I had a letter from him this morning, begging for my final decision, as he is in need of immediate help; but my uncle has just had me into his study, and he says it's no go."

"Oliver! surely not on account of Quekett?"

"Most surely yes, Irene. I'm as certain that old fiend is at the bottom of it as I am that I'm alive. Not that Uncle Philip told me so. He hummed and hawed—you know his way when that woman's got him into a scrape—and said he had been thinking the matter over, and looking at it from all points of view, and it seemed to him now that it would be more prudent of me not to accept a trust I might not care to retain."

"But didn't you tell him you do care for it?"

"Of course I did. I said everything I could think of, but without effect. The fact is, he doesn't wish me to stay here. I could take the appointment without consulting him further; but I owe everything to him, Irene, and——"

"Oh, yes! Don't go against his wishes. But perhaps he may change his mind again. Shall I speak to him?"

"I wish you would."

"Well, look after Tommy, and I'll go at once."

She finds her husband still in his study, apparently wrapt in thought, and dashes at the matter in hand in her own frank, straight-forward way.

"Philip, why have you altered your mind about Oliver going to Fenton?"

"I have altered it, my dear, and that should be sufficient."

"Not at all, unless you have a good reason. It isn't fair."

"I would rather not discuss the matter with you, Irene. We have had bickering enough for to-day."

"Need we bicker because we talk? This subject does not touch my interests so nearly as the other; but I think you owe Oliver some explanation of the change."

"The explanation is very simple. Upon consideration, I don't think the plan a good one, or likely to prove for his happiness or mine."

"And the consideration came through that woman Quekett."

"Why should you think so?"

"Because I know it. Oh, Ph'lip, Philip!" And Irene, kneeling down by his arm-chair, puts her head upon her husband's knee, and begins to cry.

His tender affection is aroused at once.

"My darling, why is this? Have I really made you unhappy?"

"Yes, you have. To see you so completely under subjection to your own servant; to know that she can sway you when I fail; that her wishes can make you act contrary to your own good judgment, as you are acting now—you, who I looked up to as so strong and brave, and worthy to command all who came within your range. It lowers you in my eyes; it makes you contemptible in the eyes of others, and I cannot bear it!"

"Irene, Irene! for God's sake, spare me!"

He has grown very pale during the progression of this speech, and now it is ended, he takes out his handkerchief and passes it across his brow.

"Spare you! Why don't you spare me from insult in the house where you have made me mistress?"

"My darling, you don't understand. How I wish I could explain it to you, but I can't. But several members of my family (my father, for instance) have been laid, at different periods of their lives, under great obligations to Mrs. Quekett. I acknowledge she is not always pleasant in her manners, and I regret to see she has not taken so kindly to you as I should have wished; but, notwithstanding, I could not feel myself justified in not doing all in my power to repay the debt I owe her."

"And which I should imagine she had cancelled a thousand times over by her insolence. But why should poor Oliver suffer for your father's liabilities?"

Colonel Mordaunt is silent.

"Fenton is more than three miles from Fen Court. Surely his presence at that distance can have no influence on Mrs. Quekett's peace of mind."

"He would always be over here, my dear."

"And so, because she objects to it, your own nephew is to be banished from your house. Oh, Philip! I could hardly have believed it of you."

"Pray, don't make me more unhappy about it, Irene, than I am. Do you think I don't feel it also?"

"Is that possible?"

"I am suffering, at this moment, far more than you, my child, or than Oliver either, for that matter."

"Poor Philip, I am so sorry for you! But is it quite, quite necessary that Oliver should go?"

"It is 'quite, quite necessary.' If he did not go now, he would be compelled to do so in a few months, and perhaps under circumstances most unpleasant for us all. And yet sometimes I think, if I could trust you, Irene——"

"You may trust me, Philip, and to any extent."

"I believe it, my darling—but no, no, it cannot be. Don't ask me again. Only go to poor Oliver, and tell him that I will hold myself responsible for any expenses he may incur, in the way of premium or outfit, in procuring another appointment, on the condition that it is not in this county—anywhere, in fact, but near here."

"And you won't trust me, then?" she says, with a reproachful air, as she prepares to leave him.

"I cannot—I dare not. Yes, dearest, I will." And with that he rises suddenly, and stands before her, and takes her two hands in his own. "Irene, when you gave your dear self to me at the altar, did you not promise to honor me?"

"And I have honored you, Philip."

"I believe it; and I trust you to honor me still, notwithstanding that I am unable to explain all that you wish to know."

"But secrets are so horrid between husbands and wives," she says, pouting, with true feminine curiosity; "and it is so hard to forgive what one understands nothing about."

"Have you never kept a secret from me, then, Irene?"

He is alluding to the possible name of her former lover, and the circumstances of their intimacy, which have never been confided to him. But her thoughts fly immediately to her adopted child and the knowledge she possesses of his parentage; and under her husband's steady gaze she becomes crimson to the very parting of her hair.

"Oh, very well," she answers, with a light laugh; "don't let us say any more about it, since talking won't mend matters. Only I trust my confidence in your integrity, Philip, is not supposed to extend to holding out the right hand of fellowship to Mrs. Quekett."

But Colonel Mordaunt appears to have forgotten the root of the subject in question. He is still holding her hands, and looking fixedly at her downcast eyes and working features.

"My query seems to have affected you, Irene?"

"It would affect any one, I should think, to be stared at as you are staring at me. But this is child's play, Philip. What is it you want me to do?"

"Only to believe in me as I believe in you."

"That would be easy if believing in you did not involve believing in Mrs. Quekett also. However, I will leave the woman to go her way, if she will leave me to go mine. Is that a bargain?"

"I suppose you are alluding to the child; she has not interfered in anything else."

"I am. You gave me permission to adopt and bring him up. Will you make this fact clear to your housekeeper, and tell her, at the same time, that my forbearance depends entirely up on her own."

"Then you sign a treaty of peace with her?"

"Under those conditions, and for your sake, yes. I feel myself degraded to enter upon any terms with a dependent; but, since it is for your comfort, I concede. Only it must be kept as religiously on her side as mine. And now I trust we have heard the last of so contemptible a business."

Colonel Mordaunt sighs, and turns away.

"You are not yet satisfied, Philip. What, in Heaven's name, would you have me do more?"

"Nothing, my dear, nothing. Indeed I do not see what else there is to be done. Only, pray remember what I said to you this morning and do not irritate her more than you can help."

"I shall never speak to—or notice her!" replies Irene; and here, feeling that all that can be said has been said upon the subject, she leaves the study to communicate the upshot of the interview to Oliver.

Colonel Mordaunt, left to himself, looks more thoughtful than before. He has courted the information that his wife has not laid her whole heart bare to him, and yet now he feels miserable because she has put the sign-manual of silence on a fact which he knew to be such. Mrs. Quekett, Oliver Ralston, the child, everything which has worried him hitherto, passes from his mind to give place to the curiosity with which he longs to discover how much of her former life Irene has kept back from him. He remembers vividly all she said to him at Brussels, and in the little sitting-room at Norwood, on the subject of her disappointment; but he was so eager in the chase at that time—so anxious to secure her for himself at any cost—that he did not choose to believe what she asserted to be true—that the best part of her life was over. Yet had not the sequel proved him to be in the right? For the six months she has been his her spirits have gone on gradually improving day by day. Indeed a few weeks ago she was buoyant—radiant — running over with fun; and, if they have commenced to flag again, it has only been since——

Since when?

Since the arrival of Tommy Brown amongst them! As Colonel Mordaunt's thoughts, travelling backward and taking notes by the way, light on this fact, he rises from his seat, and walks aimlessly about the room.

"D—n that child!" he says without the least reserve, "I wished to God we had never seen or heard of him."

And then he goes out to his stables and kennel, and tries to forget all about it; but the idea haunts him nevertheless, and often after that day Irene, glancing up suddenly, finds him studying her face, with an earnestness, not altogether born of affection, which puzzles whilst it wounds her.

Mrs. Mordaunt, in desiring her husband to inform Mrs. Quekett that peace between them can only be maintained at the cost of a 1 e ommunication, has entered into the worst pact

with the housekeeper she could possibly have made. For Rebecca Quekett is a woman to be conciliated, not to be dared. She has her good points (no human creature is without) and her weak points; and were Irene politic enough to draw out the one or trade upon the other, she might turn what promises to be a formidable enemy into a harmless, if not a desirable, friend. But she is too spirited and too frank to profess to be what she is not; and so, from the hour that Colonel Mordaunt timidly announces his wife's determination to his housekeeper, the future of the former is undermined. Mrs. Quekett does not lay any plans for attack. She gives vent to no feelings of animosity, nor does she, at least openly, break the truce; but she remembers and she waits, and Mrs. Quekett does not remember and wait for — nothing.

The months go by. Oliver Ralston has procured employment with another country practitioner, somewhere down in Devon, and is working steadily. Tommy has passed his third birthday, and under the tuition of his adopted mother, is becoming quite a civilized little being, who has learned the use of a pocket-handkerchief, and speaks English almost as well as she does. Colonel Mordaunt, as kind as ever to his wife, though perhaps a little more sober in displaying his affection for her—a fact which Irene never discovers—finds that the hunting season is over, and wonders how he shall amuse himself for the next six months: Isabella is as quiet and timid and reserved and melancholy as ever; and Mrs. Quekett still keeps the peace.

Not that she never meets her mistress face to face—that would be impossible in a place like Fen Court—but a quiet "good morning" or "good night" in passing — a curtsey on her side, and an inclination of Irene's head upon the other—is all the communication between them; and, as far as my heroine can discover, Mrs. Quekett has never again dared to correct Tommy, although the child's aversion for her, and terror of going near any room which she occupies, seem as though she had taken some means of letting him understand what he has to expect if he ventures to presume on her forbearance. Yet though outwardly there is peace, Irene has many an inward heartache. The subsidence of her husband's first adoration (which would have been quickly noticed by a woman in love with him) gives her no uneasiness. On the contrary, had she observed and questioned her own heart on the subject, she would have confessed the change was a relief to her. But there is something between them, beyond that—an undefinable something, which can be felt, if not explained. It is the cold cloud of Reserve. There is that between the husband and wife which they dare not speak of, because they know they cannot agree upon the subject; and Reserve feeds upon itself, and grows by what it feeds on.

The heart has many little chambers, and it is difficult to keep one door closed and throw open all the others. And so, imperceptibly, they drift a little farther and a little farther apart from one another every day. Irene has no object in life apparently but the education of the child—Colonel Mordaunt none but the care of his kennel and his stables. Irene is kinder to the horses and dogs than he is to Tommy. She often accompanies him on his rounds to stroke and fondle and admire the noble animals, but he seldom or ever throws a kind word to the boy.

Indeed Tommy is almost as afraid of him as he is of Mrs. Quekett. Colonel Mordaunt at all events, comes second in his list of "bogies;" and sometimes Irene feels so disheartened, she almost wishes she had never seen the child. But the remembrance of her promise to his mother (whom she has grown to pity far more than herself) will soon recall her to a sense of pleasure in her duty. But she is no longer so happy as she was at first. The gloss has worn off the new life—change has ceased to be change —and sometimes an awful sense of regret smites her, and makes her hate herself for her ingratitude. But we cannot force ourselves to be happy; and the extreme dullness of Priestley does not contribute to make her shake off a feeling of which she is ashamed.

Meanwhile the bleak, cold spring creeps on, and loses itself in April.

One morning, as they are all seated at the breakfast table, Colonel Mordaunt has a large and important-looking envelope put into his hand; and his correspondence in general being by no means important, its appearance attracts attention.

"An invitation, I should imagine," remarks Irene, as she looks up from buttering Tommy's fourth round of bread.

"Wait a moment, my dear, and we shall see. Yes, exactly so; and a very proper attention for them to pay him. I shall have the greatest pleasure in complying with their wishes."

"What wishes, Philip?" ("No, Tommy! no jam this morning.")

"That I shall be one of the stewards. It seems that our new member, Mr. Holmes, is about to visit Glottonbury, and the people are desirous to welcome him with a dinner and a ball in the town hall. And a very happy thought, too. The festivities will please all classes;—give employment to the poor, and amusement to the rich; — and the ladies of Glottonbury that cannot appear at the dinner will grace the ball. An extremely happy thought. I wonder who originated it.

"A public dinner and ball, I suppose?"

"Generally so—but they will send us tickets. You will go, my dear, of course?"

"To the ball? Oh, indeed, I would rather not. I have not danced for ages."

"There is no need to dance, if you will only put in an appearance. As the wife of a man holding so important a position in the county as myself, and one of the stewards of the dinner, I think it becomes your duty to be present if you can."

"Very well, I have no objection. I suppose one of last year's dresses will do for Glottonbury. But really I feel as though I should be quite out of my element. Who will be there?"

"Most of the count[y pe]ople, I conclude—the Grimstones and Bat[c]eys, and Sir John Cootes' party, and Lord D[e]nham and the Mowbrays. Sir John and Mr. Batcherley are down upon the list of stewards, I see. I am gratified at their including my name. Then there will be a large party of Mr. Holmes's friends from town, and amongst them Lord Muiraven. Isn't that a member of the family your aunt, Mrs. Cavendish, was so fond of talking about?"

But to this question Colonel Mordaunt receives no answer. Presently he looks across the table to where his wife is tracing fancy patterns with a fork upon the cloth, and thinks that she looks very pale.

"Do the Cavendishes know Lord Muiraven?"

"I believe Mary met him once at a ball."

"Do you know him?"

"No!"

"Then what the deuce was your aunt always making such a row about him for?"

"I don't know."

"Aren't you well?"

"Perfectly, thank you. When is this ball to take place?"

"Next Tuesday week. It is short notice; but Mr. Holmes's visit is unexpected. He seems to have made his way in the county wonderfully."

"Is he a young man?"

"Thirty or thereabouts. I saw him at the election. He has a pleasant voice and manner, but is no beauty. He and Lord Muiraven and a Mr. Norton are to be the guests of Sir John Cootes."

"Are any other strangers coming with them."

"I don't know. My letter is from Huddleston. He doesn't mention it."

"I wish you would find out."

"Why?"

"Because it will make a great difference in the evening's enjoyment. One doesn't care to be dependent on the tradesmen of Glottonbury for partners."

"I thought you didn't mean to dance."

"No more I do—at present. But there is no knowing what one might not be tempted to. Any way, find out for me, Philip."

"What friends Mr. Holmes brings with him."

"Exactly so. Will you?"

"I cannot understand what interest the matter can possibly have for you, my dear."

"Oh, never mind it then — Have you quite finished, Tommy? Then come along and order the dinner with mamma." And with the child in her hand, Irene leaves the room. Colonel Mordaunt looks after her suspiciously. "Who on earth can she be expecting to come down from London to this ball?" He is beginning to be suspicious about very little thing nowadays, and he alludes to the subject in an irritable sort of manner two or three times during the forenoon, until he puts Irene out.

"Look here, Philip. I would rather not go to this ball at all. I have no inclination for it, and the preparations will probably involve a great deal of trouble. Please let me stay at home."

"Indeed I cannot hear of it. You must go, and look your best. As my wife, it will be expected of you, Irene."

"To be jostled by a crowd of tradespeople!" she murmurs. "I hate a public ball at any time, but an election ball must be the worst of all."

"I don't see that. The rooms are large, and the arrangements will be conducted on the most liberal scale. All you will have to do will be to look pretty, and enjoy yourself; and the first is never difficult to you, my darling."

"Well, I suppose I shall have to go, after that, Philip. Only I don't consent till I have seen a list of the expected guests from town."

"Why this anxiety about a pack of strangers," exclaims Colonel Mordaunt pettishly. But he procures the list nevertheless. It contains but one name with which she is in the least familiar —that of Lord Muiraven.

"And these are really all?" she says, as she peruses it.

"Really all! There are at least twenty. Are they sufficient to satisfy your ladyship?"

"Quite!" with a deep-drawn sigh. "I will not worry you any more about it, Philip. I will go to the ball."

* * * *

On the evening in question, however, she is not looking her best; and, as Phœbe arrays her in one of her dresses of the past season, she is amazed to find how much her mistress has fallen away about the neck and shoulders, and how broad a tucker she is obliged to insert in order to remedy the evil. But Irene appears blissfully indifferent as to what effect she may produce, and is only anxious to go to the ball and to come back again, and to have it all over. She is terribly nervous of encountering Lord Muiraven (although from the descriptions of Mary Cavendish, she knows he cannot in any way resemble his younger brother), and yet she dares not forbid her husband to introduce him, for fear of provoking an inquiry on the reason of her request. She arrives at the Glottonbury town-hall, in company with Isabella, at about ten o'clock; and Colonel Mordaunt, as one of the masters of the ceremonies, meets her at the entrance.

"Are you still determined not to dance?" he says, as he leads her to a seat.

"Quite so. Pray don't introduce any one. I feel tired already."

He glances at her.

"You do look both pale and tired. Well, here is a comfortable sofa for you. Perhaps you will feel better by-and-by. I must go now and receive the rest of the company."

"Yes! pray don't mind me. I shall amuse myself sitting here and watching the dancers. "Oh! Philip," her eyes glistening with appreciative delight, "do look at that green head-dress with the bird of paradise seated on a nest of roses."

"You wicked child! you are always making fun of some one. How I wish I could stay with you! but I must go. I shall look you up again very soon."

He disappears amongst the crowd as he speaks and Irene is left by herself, Isabella (to whom anything like a passing jest on the costume of a fellow Christian appears quite in the light of a sin) having walked off to the other side of the room. For a while she is sufficiently amused by watching the company, and inwardly smiling at their little eccentricities of dress or manner, their flirtations, and evident curiosity respecting herself. But this sort of entertainment soon palls, and then she begins to question why she cannot feel as happy as they appear to be; and her thoughts wander over her past life, and she sinks into a reverie, during which the lights and flowers, the dancers and the music, are lost or disappear; and virtually she is alone. How long she sits there motionless and silent, she cannot afterwards account for; but the sound that rouses her from her dream and brings her back to earth again is the voice of Colonel Mordaunt.

"My dear!" he is saying, "I have found a companion for you who is as lazy as yourself. Allow me to introduce to you Lord Muiraven!"

At that name she starts, flushes, and looks up.

But, as her eyes are raised, all the color dies out of her face, and leaves it of a ghastly white. For the man whom her husband has introduced to her as Lord Muiraven is—Eric Keir!

(To be continued.)

WHY NOT FORGIVE HIM?

Why not forgive your brother
If he comes to you in sorrow?
Why not your anger smother
Ere the dawning of to-morrow?
You say he has reviled you
Your dearest friends among;
But has error ne'er beguiled you?
Have you never committed wrong?
Why not forgive him?

He is penitent and humble—
He is weak and in your power—
Who is not apt to stumble
When passion rules the hour?
He wrong'd you in his blindness—
Now act the Christian's part,
And pour the balm of kindness
On his sad, repentant heart.
Why not forgive him?

Can you look for sweet contentment,
Or can love your bosom fill,
While you cherish fierce resentment
For the one who treats you ill?
No! Spite of proud position—
Of place, or power, or pelf—
Unblest is your condition
Till you triumph o'er yourself
Why not forgive him?

With grief his heart is riven—
And can you with reason pray
That your sins may be forgiven,
When from him you turn away?
Vaunt not your pure condition,
Nor back forgiveness keep—
Think of God's admonition
"As ye sow so shall ye reap!"
Why not forgive him?

LURLINE.

It had been snowing steadily for three days, and now, on Christmas Eve, the wind gradually shifted to the east, and changed the large, soft flakes to a dreary, penetrating mist, that wrapped the wide fields like a grey curtain, and lent an additional brightness to the holiday cheer that reigned within.

Lurline Veray watched the storm with very anxious eyes.

Not that she had any Christmas shopping to do, for the bank wherein the livelihood of herself and her crippled brother was deposited had failed disastrously, and it was as much as Lurline could do to keep the fire alive and the table furnished ever so scantily, to say nothing of the necessary but costly, wine and medicines for the invalid, who to-night lay tossing on his low couch more restlessly than usual, suffering both in body and in mind for the want of the usual sedative.

Storm or no storm, she must go to the doctor's, who lived quite at the other end of the village, over a mile and a half of almost unbroken road.

So, after waiting in the rain until twilight for a cessation of weather hostilities, she donned her scanty black alpaca, which, poor as it was, was her best dress, drew a pair of patched boots on her feet, and wrapping herself in a soft white fur cloak and hood, the sole relics of former splendor, she sallied out into the face of the blinding mist.

Had her errand been less imperative, energetic as she was, she would have turned back before she reached her destination.

The water-soaked snow penetrated her thin shoes as though they had been of paper, and clogged her feet like a leaden weight, the mist drenched her skirts, till they clung about her like a wet blanket, and beaded heavily her fur cape, and the raw, cutting wind, blowing directly in her face, made her stop every now and then to recover her breath.

But, drenched and weary as she was, it is doubtful if she had ever looked prettier in all her life.

The cold air and the exercise together had brought a vivid carnation to the cheek, whose pure outline poverty and anxiety had been unable to pinch or fade.

The wide hazel eyes were full of light and sparkle, and the wet had curled the shining chestnut hair into a bewitching framework of tendril-like rings around the low white forehead and full temples.

Fatigue could not alter the undulating grace of that slim, round figure, and the small head was carried with the proud yet gracious air of a young princess.

As she tramped slowly homeward, with her small packages of medicines under her cloak, through the open shutters she caught fairy glimpses of garlanded rooms, of gay Christmas trees bending beneath their glittering loads, and groups of bright-eyed, rosy children in holiday attire, wild with mirth and laughter; while ever and anon bursts of music and the glad pealing of young voices rang out in rivalry of the bells, now chiming with soft cadences through the mist.

Her mind travelled back to a Christmas Eve two years ago, when her home, too, had been vocal with joy, and when Ray Nelson had put on her forefinger a golden circlet set with one great pearl and looked the love he had not put in words.

Her father was alive then, and tenderly as he loved his only daughter, he had yet positively refused to consent to her marriage with a man, who, though well connected and rich, had no settled business or profession in life.

At first Ray had tried his utmost to persuade her to a secret marriage, but Lurline had a certain unflinching pride of her own, inherited from her blue-blooded Norman ancestors, which forbade her stooping to wrest from life any gift which it seemed to deny her.

"Besides," she urged, when she and Ray talked the matter over, "I know papa is right, dear, though it does seem very hard on us. You are doing yourself great injustice by the way you live now. You have talent, you have energy; go out and win a place in the world, and I shall glory to share it with you."

"Then you do not care for me, but only for the position I can give you in the world?"

"Oh, Ray," she cried, passionately, "do not be so cruel. I care for you too much, I fear. I care for you so much that I will never be a chain to bind you to luxury and effeminacy—so much, that I long to see you in your rightful place in life—'a man, and a leader of men.'"

So, with impassioned sobs and tears, they parted—he to go abroad for a year, she to stay at home, without even the consolation of corresponding with him, for her father had forbidden all communication between them for that length of time.

"If the young fellow's all right," said the old gentleman, "they will only love each other more for the complete separation; if not, so much the better for both."

"True to you!" cried Ray. "Great Heaven! how could I be anything else, Lurline, guiding star of my life? In one short year, darling, I shall be back, and put a wedding ring on your finger to keep company with this."

And he tenderly kissed the pearl.

"Remember next Christmas Eve, if I am alive, Lurline."

But Christmas Eve came and went without bringing Ray to claim his bride, though she had heard of him frequently through mutual friends, who reported him as happy and prosperous in his new career.

So, after waiting wearily through the slow hours that dragged themselves through that holiday time, poor Lurline slipped off the pearl ring, and laying it in a little box on a curl of sunny hair and one or two scented notes, she locked the casket, and from that day to this had striven with all the pride of her nature to put him away from her heart—how successfully, we shall see.

Toiling along in the cold and wet, with the night fast closing over her like a pall, with the memory of past joy only deepening her present sorrow and loneliness, what wonder that the choking sobs rose in her throat, that the ripe lips should fall into curves of hopeless sorrow, while two great tears welled up into the wistful hazel eyes, and dropped slowly down, and mingled with the rain drops on her cloak?

She was so absorbed that she did not hear the sound of horses' hoofs behind her, and started when Mr. Thornton drew up his spirited horses at her side.

"Good evening, Miss Lurline," came in his mellow tones. "It must be a case of dire necessity that takes you abroad such a night as

this. Let me have the honor of taking you home?"

He had jumped from the chaise as he spoke, and, with lifted hat, assisted her in with the courteous grace of a thorough "gentleman of the old school," tucking the luxurious white fur robes around her feet and settling her cloak with a deferential "allow me."

And as Lurline settled herself back in her soft nest behind the prancing horses, and yielded herself to the delight of being so cared for and protected, the thought came over her—

"What if it might always be so?"

Before this the village gossips had linked her name with Mr. Thornton's, and she had a shy consciousness that there was something more than mere friendly feeling in the glances which he so often fixed upon her.

Often as she sat in church she would feel rather than see his earnest gaze, and turn to see him drop his eye, like a bashful, boy lover, instead of a grave widower, owning to fifty years.

But whenever any of these little tidbits of tattle reached her ears, side by side with the vision of the stately man, with his silver hair, would rise a young face with deep eyes that looked such passion, curling, crispy locks of gold, and cheeks flushed with the tints of early dawn.

"How is Harold?" asked the judge, after they had started.

"His lameness is no worse," she replied; "but this stormy weather keeps him so closely at the fireside, that the confinement tells upon his spirits. He has been unusually despondent and melancholy to-day."

And she sighed as she thought of the added weight of care which this same low state of Harold's spiritual barometer entailed upon herself.

"Ah, yes, I see! His mind preys upon itself for want of some other employment. His highly imaginative temperament makes him more sensitive to the disturbing influences than an ordinary person would be. Does he still stick to his painting?"

"He hasn't done much at it lately," said Lurline briefly.

She didn't say that they were without the means to buy the necessary materials for the young artist to work with.

"No?" said the judge. "That's a pity. If he would only go to work at it now, it would be the best thing in the world for him.

"If he could only be sent to Italy, now, for a few years, you might have yet cause to be proud of your artist-brother, Miss Lurline."

Lurline caught her breath impatiently.

Did she not know all this?

Was it not the bitterest drop in her cup of poverty to see her only brother, her darling, gifted brother, whom her mother had bequeathed to her love and care on her dying bed, pining and wasting day after day, his sensitive nature suffering in sympathy with the physical ills which might be cured, had she but the means to provide the costly medical attendance necessary; his bright talents rusting, his noble aspirations stifled in this dread atmosphere of poverty and privation?

It was hard, very hard, when all around them the vulgar rich were wasting their substance in riotous living.

It was the overmastering sense of this injustice of fortune that broke down her usual proud reserve, and make her turn half angrily to the judge.

"Mr. Thornton," she said, with a tinge of bitterness in her clear tones, "I wonder if you have any conception of the meaning of poverty? I can assure you, speaking from my own experience, that its bitterest sting is not in material things, but in seeing the noblest growths in our souls withering slowly, day by day, under its blighting breath.

"Oh," she went on passionately, "if I could only, by any exertion of these two hands of mine, place my brother in a position where his soul could blossom out as Heaven meant it should, I would work the flesh off to the very bone to accomplish that end."

She drew a long, sobbing sigh, and leaned back again, the passion dying out of her face, and leaving it marble white, and with such a pitiful look of pain for one so young and so very very beautiful.

Some strange emotion was at work in his face.

He leaned forward eagerly to scan more closely the half-averted countenance at his side.

"Lurline," he said, then paused.

His blue eyes were tender; his face had the eagerness of youth.

Then he caught his breath, and went on in a strange, stifled tone.

"Lurline, there is a way by which you can do all this for your brother, and more, even more, for another soul.

"Lurline, have you ever thought of me as a lover—as a husband? Could you love me, dear? Will you take me as a Christmas gift? Speak. Though I am an old man, my heart is warm and true, and no boy could give you such tender, such adoring love as I should lavish at your feet every day of your sweet life."

The color all came back in a rosy flood as she shyly raised her dark eyes to his face.

They went fluttering down again as they met the fire in his.

"You are too good—too noble," she murmured; "but, Mr. Thornton, I do not love you. That is—"

"Never mind," he interrupted, impatiently, "about the love, just now. You do not dislike me. Love will come bye-and-bye. Only give me some hope, and I will wait for an answer three—yes, six months, if you say so."

They had reached her door by this time, and lifting her in his arms, he carried her across the sloppy side walk, never letting her down till he had set her feet within her own little dark passage.

"That is the way I'll take care of you when you are my wife," he whispered. "These dear feet shall never tread any troublesome or dangerous paths while I live."

He opened the door into the little sitting-room, where Harold's low lounge was drawn up beside the scanty fire.

"Harold," he cried, "I have been trying to persuade this sister of yours to accept me as a Christmas gift, with an Italian education for you thrown into the bargain. Will you not add your entreaties to mine?"

Lurline glanced from the pale worn face of the invalid, made still more ghastly by the great luminous, dark eyes, wherein the restless fire of genius glowed to the man, standing tall, erect, and stately in the centre of the room, his presence shedding dignity and splendor over that poor abode, and thought that the sacrifice was not such a greater one, after all.

And then, what life, what gladness would it purchase for this poor prisoned soul!

She went over to her brother, and laid her hand on his hot forehead.

"Oh," she moaned, low to herself, "if I had never loved Ray Nelson!"

But her brother threw his arms up like an eager child, and, clasping her round the neck, drew her face close down to his.

"Oh, Lurline," he whispered, "if you only could!"

She released herself, and turned to Thornton with downcast eyes.

"No, do not answer me now," he said. "In six months I'll ask you again. Try to love me a little—ever so little, Lurline."

And raising her soft, slender hand to his lips, he bowed low, and was gone.

How different, ah, how different from those impassioned partings of old, when she and Ray had clung to one another's arms, and kissed over and over again!

That night, she dreamed that she was about to be married to Thornton.

Priest and people had assembled in the little village church, and she stood before the altar, in snowy white, her hands clasped in her future husband's.

But just as the last "I will!" fell from his lips, the hand that held hers grew suddenly icy cold, and, with a sickening cry, she turned and saw that the man at her side was a ghastly, terrible corpse, and that it was not Thornton, but Ray Nelson.

And she awoke with the old ache in her heart a thousand fold deepened, and new that Ray Nelson, and not Thornton, must be the man she should marry, if marriage was to be to her anything more than a horror and a sin.

So, though she said nothing to Harold about it, she set herself to work again, with redoubled diligence, her sole desire now being to save money enough to take the two to Italy, where they could live in some humble way, she gladly toiling that he might study, and by redoubled love and tenderness atoning to him for the hope deferred.

But the times were hard, work was scarce, and the applicants for it numerous.

She well-nigh ruined her eyes over embroidery, at starvation prices, and many a time the cold, grey light of morning found her still at work.

The worn shoes were repatched, and the alpaca, rusty now, turned and turned again, in order that she might buy brushes and colors for Harold.

Meanwhile, Thornton was most kind.

He was too wise to help her materially, even supposing she would have accepted such aid, willing that she should endure the sharpest pangs of poverty for a season, in order that the comfort and luxury which only waited her acceptance, might appear the more alluring by contrast.

But he sent her bouquets of rare exotics from his conservatory, and early grapes from his hothouse; and, often, in the soft spring twilights, he called for her to drive with him in the pony carriage which, by-and-bye, should be hers, he thought.

It would be wrong to say that Lurline was never tempted.

Often, as she bent with aching temples over her work, before her mind's eye would rise a vision of what her life might be did she choose to accept the lot which fortune had thrown at her feet.

And often, when she passed Thornton's mansion, that stubborn, loftly resolution of hers was shaken to its very foundation, and, perhaps, had he been at her side there and then, her destiny would have been irrevocably sealed.

But he was content to bide his time, and never by word or look attempted to win a premature answer.

So, at last, the twenty-fifth of June came round — the day Thornton was to receive his answer.

Harold had been in unusually good spirits all that day, and as the warm summer twilight crept over the earth, he had his easy chair wheeled to the low window, where the faint evening breeze could lift the damp, dark curls from his pale forehead.

"Lurline, darling, come here," he called.

He laid his hand on her shining hair and patted and caressed her soft cheek fondly.

"What a stately lady you will make, sister," he said. "Wait till we see diamond stars shining in these braids, and these dear fingers encircled with gold and gems.

"And oh, Lurline, if you only knew how I pant for those soft Italian skies! We'll all go together, and I shall be a new creature in that atmosphere of beauty and art.

"Oh, you'll be proud of your troublesome brother yet, mademoiselle. And Thornton is so noble and generous. How much better it is that you should have been kept for him, instead of marrying that flighty Ray Nelson, you used to think so much of. Papa was right, after all, was he not, Lurline?"

Lurline hid her face, while a quick spasm contracted her heart.

Perhaps her father was right.

Was it better, after all, that she should marry Thornton?

Had she any right to sacrifice Harold's happiness on the altar of her own selfishness?

And even if Ray should come back, a proper womanly pride ought to forbid her to reinstate him.

While she yet quivered with these questions, Thornton's well-known knock was heard.

Harold gently raised her, and dropped a soft kiss on her forehead.

"I am indebted to you for all that makes life worth having—yes, for life itself," he said, solemnly, "for I could not live much longer this way, Lurline."

Lurline was white to the lips when she met her lover in the hall.

"You have come for your answer," she gasped, rather than spoke. "You have waited long and patiently—will you wait one day more? I will send you your answer to-morrow, on my honor."

He looked down on her kindly, as a father might.

"Very well, so be it," he said; "although it is a hard thing for an old man like me to wait."

And drawing her arm within his own, he led her into the little parlor across the hall from Harold's room.

His call was a brief one, however, for neither felt at ease.

While he yet lingered over his farewells on the doorstep, Maud Ingalls came along with Mr. Kingsley, the artist, to whom she had lately become engaged, and whose devotion she was fond of parading on every possible occasion.

"Oh, is that you, Miss Veray?" she said, in her soft, lisping tones, "We—that is Mr. Kingsley and myself—allow me to introduce Mr. Kingsley, Miss Veray—have come around to see a little sketch of your brother's, that Mr. Kingsley admires very much—something wonderful in the way of color, I believe."

Mr. Thornton took his leave with a bow, and Lurline ushered the visitors into the sitting room.

Miss Ingalls believed in being popular, and while Mr. Kingsley examined the sketch, graciously kept up a conversation with Lurline, who, she remembered hearing her mamma remark, belonged to a family quite as thoroughbred as their own, and who, if one could credit the village gossip that she was about to be married to Thornton, was really worth cultivating, despite her present shabby mode of living.

"Let me see," she rattled on; "it runs in my head that you used to be exceedingly good friends with that young Ray Nelson, did you not? Well, we saw him at Paris; and papa thinks him one of the most promising young men he has ever met—quite wealthy already, they say, and made it all himself too. And he's going to be married. Did you know it?"

The dim light concealed the deadly pallor that fell over Lurline's face like a blight, and she managed to keep her voice steadily as she answered, with apparent unconcern—

"I had not heard of it. Do you know to whom?"

"Oh, no; that is a secret. I only know that it is so, for I heard him tell papa, myself, that he was somewhat hurried in his business on account of his approaching marriage."

That night it seemed to Lurline that her heart died within her.

Since Ray Nelson was false, what did it matter to her what her future life should be?

If that was the much talked-of love which men felt, she wanted none of it; and if she could give life and happiness to another, why not do it, since nothing could now further affect her for good or for ill.

So, when Thornton came next day, he received the answer he had hoped and prayed for.

Still she could not bring herself to consent to an immediate marriage; and, as it was considered that a winter in Italy was imperative for Harold, he was placed with a valet in the care of friends who were going abroad, and, after his departure, early in November, Lurline set about the preparation of her simple *trousseau*, refusing with firm pride the rich gifts Thornton would have lavished upon her.

The wedding was set for Christmas, and the day dawned far differently from the preceding year

No snow had fallen, and there had been scarcely a frost as yet.

Lurline stood in a broad belt of sunshine before her little black-rimmed mirror, fastening the bridal roses in her shining brown hair.

Her dress of snowy India muslin, fine and sheer, fell about her in filmy, cloud-like folds, and the long bridal veil shaded a face strangely beautiful, though all its rare, rosy bloom had deserted it, save in the soft lips, which showed like a thread of scarlet.

She lifted her gloves and bouquet, and turned with a little sigh as she heard a carriage stop at the door.

In the passage she met the little maid.

"Mr. Thornton, I suppose," she said.

"No, miss, it ain't. It's a young man, and he says as how he must see you, and won't take no for an answer."

Lurline floated slowly down the stairs in her shimmering robes, but when she reached the parlor door, she stopped with a shudder, and caught at the door-post for support, for there, leaning against the mantel in the old familiar attitude she had seen a thousand times, stood Ray Nelson.

She gazed at him with wide, terror-stricken eyes.

"Why have you come?" she asked, faintly. "You can have nothing to say to me now."

He came towards her with a look of mingled pity and reproach in his great blue eyes.

"I did not wish to come, indeed," said he; "but they insisted that I, being an old friend, should bring you the news."

"The news! What news? That you are going to be married?"

She suddenly remembered herself, and drew up her head with the old proud gesture.

"If I seem startled or confused, excuse me," she said, in her ordinary self-possessed manner. "You see," looking down at her dress, "that it is my wedding day. I am naturally a little nervous. Allow me to congratulate you on your approaching marriage, though you have not paid me that compliment yet," she added, with something of her old manner.

"That is not my errand to-day. Can you bear very bad news?"

He looked at her searchingly, then hurried on—

"I have come to tell you that you cannot be married to-day. Thornton fell dead with heart disease this morning, just as he was stepping into his carriage."

Lurline stared at the speaker blankly for a moment, as though the words made no impression on her brain; then, as their meaning dawned upon her, she swayed backwards and forwards slightly, and with a low cry fell in a dead faint at his feet.

When she came to herself again, Ray Nelson was bending over her, chafing her limp hands, and Ray's voice was passionately repeating her name over and over again, coupled with all those tender epithets that lovers know.

For, seing her lying there so white and death-like, he forgot that she was all but another man's wife, and that, had not a potentate more powerful than love itself interfered, he would have been guilty of the deepest sin in allowing such words to pass the portal of his lips.

Then Ray explained everything.

How last Christmas he was at the point of death with brain fever, and how, after a slow recovery, he had written letter after letter, which had never reached her, until finely he could wait no longer, but came himself, only to hear on the way to her house that it was her wedding day.

Then someone had met him with the news of Thornton's death, and bidding him go tell Lurline, hurried off before he had time to refuse.

Lurline had a long story to tell, too, and when he heard all, Ray forgave her for what looked like inconstancy.

It was found that Thornton had duly executed a will, leaving his entire property to Lurline, with the exception of a legacy to Harold, sufficient to support him in comfort the rest of his days.

But Lurline would not touch a single penny of hers.

She made it all over to a charitable institution, and she and Ray live in modest elegance in the very house in which he wooed and won her girlish love.

SUSPICIOUS PEOPLE.

Depend upon it that people who suspect everybody are unworthy of anybody's confidence. Accurate self-knowledge is at the bottom of their universal distrust. It is the consciousness of evil designs in their own hearts that causes them to doubt the existence of honest intentions in the hearts of others. Of course they are very unhappy, and we know of no remedy for their discomfort except self-improvement. Let them root out of themselves the treachery, the meanness, the greed, or whatever other vicious propensity it may be, which they suppose to have its counterpart in the breasts of all mankind, and their opinions of their fellow-men will at once change for the better. But in the meantime avoid them. People who have no faith in their kind are very dangerous persons to deal with. Taking it for granted that everybody with whom they come in business contact is bent on overreaching them, their object is to spike the enemy's artillery by being the first to everreach. Candour is lost upon them. They consider it refined hypocrisy. Favors they look upon as cunningly-devised lures, intended to lead them into a trap, and while receiving them willingly, chuckle inwardly at the thought that they are old birds and cannot be caught by any such devices. These creatures think they understand human nature! Poor wretches! of all the thousand springs of human action they know but one, and that the worst—selfishness. Let them stop that spring in their own moral machinery, if they can. Let them do it for their own sakes, for they can never know how much of good there is in the world until they do.

"HOP-PICKING IN GERMANY."—By Rudolph Hirth.

"THE SAVOYARD'S BREAKFAST."—BY MEYERHEIM.

"THE FAVORITE"

TERMS: INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

THE FAVORITE........... $2.00 p an
THE CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS......... 4.00 "
THE CANADIAN PATENT OFFICE RECORD AND MECHANICS' MAGAZINE.... 1.50 "
L'OPINION PUBLIQUE........ 3.00 "

THE DESBARATS LITHOGRAPHIC AND PUBLISHING COMPANY; Montreal; Publishers.

SUBSCRIPTIONS PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.

All remittances and business communications to be addressed to,
THE MANAGER,
DESBARATS COMPANY, Montreal.

All correspondence for the Papers, and literary contributions to be addressed to,
THE EDITOR,
DESBARATS COMPANY, Montreal.

When an answer is required, stamps for return postage should be inclosed.

THE FAVORITE

SATURDAY, MAY 9, 1874.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

We request intending contributors to take notice that in future Rejected Contributions will not be returned.

Letters requiring a private answer should always contain a stamp for return postage.

No notice will be taken of contributions unaccompanied by the name and address of the writer (not necessarily for publication,) and the Editor will not be responsible for their safe keeping.

AUTHORSHIP.

One of the indispensable conditions necessary to an author's success, is that he should understand the spirit of his time, or that if he does not understand it, he should do what perhaps is better, feel it, and be sympathetically influenced by it. A man may have great knowledge, but that will not suffice; he may add to knowledge talent, and yet fail; he may even add to knowledge and talent tact, and still be unsuccessful, unless he is moved by the peculiar genius which belongs to his own era. We hear a great deal now and then about "creating a taste;" this man is said to have created a taste for this, and that other man for that, and is glorified accordingly. We are bound to say that we regard a great deal of this assumption as fustian, as mere "leather and prunella." Those who say so, no doubt believe in their literary creed, but it is not any the more true for all that. It may be humbling to genius, but it is true that no man or set of men ever yet created a taste for which men were not prepared, ever yet made a thing or a doctrine palatable or popular, for which the world had not begun to feel the necessity. It may be that the world's voice is often almost dumb in its inarticulateness, but those who do great things always manage in some form or other to translate its mystic utterances. It may be that the world's necessities are often shadowed forth not definitely, but as a craving for that, "we know not of," and expressed dimly and fitfully by an uneasy restlessness; but it is the part of genius to give these necessities a form, body, and colour, and voice, and, by lending them a definite expression, lead them on to their own accomplishment.

Indeed, it seems to us the great task of genius, its own peculiar mission, to interpret the dark utterances of the period, and to send them forth in tones of music, or dignity, or deep solemnity as best befits their import. He who neglects or is unable to do this, does little or nothing in his own time. If he catches the spirit of the past, the present neglects him, and that dead past can never furnish him forth a fitting reward. If lifted high above his own age, standing almost prophet-like upon the topmost ridge of the *Now*, he peers through the dim confines of time and catches the accents of futurity, the present neglects him too, and he must wait for the future to give him his meed of praise, after the green sod covers him and the worms have preyed upon his mortal frame. No man gathers in the vintage of last year or the next year's harvest. The present urged onward by the ever-moving necessities of the moment does its own work, without consciously caring much for what has gone or what is to come, and like a husbandman paying the labourers in his own field, and not in those of his neighbours, rewards those who work for it, in its own coin. It regards those who look backward or forward as not belonging to it, and neglects them. Often it seems to say, "those who are not for us are against us," and persecutes them; and so those who would thrive or gain power or wealth, who would have audiences and inculcate opinions, must study the world's spirit, and in some respects conform to it; must serve its present needs and wants, and give an articulate expression to its inarticulate longings and dumb desires.

It may not be flattering to those who pour forth their rivulets of thought, like tributary brooks to the great stream of progress, constantly running on towards the ocean of human perfection, or if perfection may not be, at least of improvement, to say that they do not move the world so much as the world moves the; that they do not so much create a taste, as give expression to a taste already struggling for a development. Though it may not be flattering, it is the fact; and those who recognize and accept the fact, will find themselves in illustrious company. The recognition and the acceptance of this truth, more or less consciously, has influenced and helped to make great all the men who have done much to decide the destinies of the world, either as thinkers, writers, or actors. Shakspeare was made, so to speak, by the Reformation. Wanting as he may appear to be in religious sentiment, it was the free thought upon all subjects, let loose by that important religious movement, that gave point and soul to his genius. He took that free thought, wanting in individuality as it was, interpreted it, and gave it an expression not individual but universal; not good nor bad wholly, but human, and hence his greatness. The Puritan tendencies of a later period, the strong religious enthusiasm of the Commonwealth, directed Milton's genius, turned his mental eyes, after his bodily eyes had closed for ever, to the regions of divinity, and produced his "Paradise Lost." The inductive reasoning of Bacon did but picture forth the public want consequent upon an unexpressed re-action against the unproved or unprovable theories of the mystic and imaginative philosophers. The speculations of Locke were prompted by, as well as fostered that material movement which strives to set up reason against faith. Sir Walter Scott gave voice to the love of legendary lore which was working in the hearts of the people. In a word, there can be no doubt that the literature of an age expresses its tendencies—that every age, every necessity brings forth its great man to give it voice, and that those who are great in their own time are the exponents, the priests we might almost say, rather than the rulers or prompters of the spirit of the era.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

"THE SAVOYARD'S BREAKFAST."

The poor Savoyard boy, who, sometimes tempted with promises of fortune by villainous "padroni," sometimes seeking on his own account a living less hard and precarious than that yielded by his own native mountains and valleys, has long been found wandering all over Europe and the States, has frequently been treated as a theme for pity by poets and sentimental writers. A painter—Herr Meyerheim, an excellent German artist—has, but not for the first time, taken him up, in the picture, charming for its naiveté and natural feeling, which we have engraved. The boy himself differs but little from his fellows: one could tell his origin without hearing his patois or becoming a victim to his music. Happily, however, in this instance an accordion replaces that native instrument of keenest torture, the genuine hurdy-gurdy. He is accompanied by a little sister, and of course, the traditional marmot forms one of the party. They have wandered into some district of Rhenish Germany, judging by the costume of the little girl standing beside the cow and the timber-built cottage beyond; and here they find sympathy from that comely, good-natured milkmaid, in the practical form of a breakfast of newly-drawn milk at discretion. To the marmot its kind mistress gives her first attention; and to the other children, that quaint little animal is evidently the most interesting of three little strangers.

"HOP-PICKING IN GERMANY."

Notwithstanding all that is said and sung of their Rhine wine, the Germans are pre-eminently a beer-bibbing-race. If beer is not drunk universally, the great majority who imbibe it more than make up by the quantity they consume for the small wine-drinking minority. It is well known that a Bavarian will make nothing of swallowing about ten quarts of beer at a bout. Bavaria, indeed, is the beery paradise of Germany. The Bavarian's talk is of beer; the most important subjects of discussion are the amount and quality of the annual brewing; in the great towns, as in the small, the largest and most imposing buildings are the breweries. As October approaches the beery fermentation, both moral and material, reaches its height; the one great anxiety is to discover where the best brew is to be found, and, when ascertained, the place becomes the general resort till all the right tap is exhausted. The hop season is also a time of considerable excitement, and the yield is a matter of national concern, though hops are not employed in German brewing in so large a proportion as with us, means not practised here being adopted to retard the final stages of fermentation. The plant, however, is common enough; for the *hopfen* grows everywhere wild in the hedges, and the Germans were the first to use it in brewing — i. e., as early as the ninth century. Great prejudice was entertained in this country against the wholesome tonic yielded by the pretty foliaceous cones of the female plant. Old Fuller says, in his "Worthies of England," that a petition was presented to Parliament in the reign of King Henry VI. against the wicked weed called hops; and "hop-vines" were accused of drying up the body and increasing melancholy. What would have been thought of our modern bitter beer in those days? Here, in this clever picture by Herr Rodolph Hirth, we have a scene of hop-picking in Germany. All hands, old and young, are pressed into service, in order that the hops, when picked clean from leaves and stalks, may be conveyed as soon as possible to the kiln to be dried: the detached portion of the "bines" are carried for picking under cover of a cottage or farm building. Mark the amorous youth in the picture who is much more attentive to the comely lass at his side, and who even pays more heed to the inevitable pipe than to the work in hand. But there is no great harm in this, except in the eyes of the taskmaster or the jealous girl on the youth's left.

NEWS NOTES.

A lock-out of 15,000 miners is threatened in Cornwall.

Gov. Washburne has been elected to fill Sumner's place.

The derelict steamship l'*Amérique*, has foundered in Plymouth Harbor.

The sentence of the Bishop of Pernambuco has been commuted to simple imprisonment.

Despatches from Calcutta state the condition of the famine in the afflicted districts is improving.

Garcia has again assumed the Presidency of Costa Rica, a conspiracy to overthrow him having failed.

The Queen has sent a message to the House of Commons recommending a grant of £25,000 to General Sir Garnet Wolseley.

Baron Schwarz Senborn, the newly appointed Austrian Ambassador to the United States, will leave for Washington in the latter part of May.

The plebiscite taken on the revision of the Swiss Federal Constitution resulted in a majority of a hundred thousand in favor of the revision.

The Porte has authorized the Khedive of Egypt to keep the Suez Canal in working order should M. De Lesseps persist in his refusal to abide by the decision of the International Commission.

Mr. Holker having accepted the new English Solicitor-Generalship, has issued an address to the voters of Preston, asking for re-election. It is understood that Mr. Jacob Bright will contest the election.

A rupture has occurred between the Argentine Republic and the Government at Montevideo, because President Sarmiento arbitrarily closed the river Uruguay against vessels from Oriental ports. It is hoped a settlement will be effected.

A joint resolution has been introduced in the Senate, declaring it the duty of the United States to recognize Cuba as one of the independent nations of the earth, and that the United States will observe strict neutrality between the contending parties.

An attempted revolution at Lima, Peru, was frustrated on the 16th March, a Government Agent having discovered the plot. The plan of the conspirators was to seize the President and secure co-operation of the troops. The ring-leaders are now in irons.

The announcement is made that the Tehuantepec Railroad Company have completed a contract for the construction and equipment of a railway from Minatitlan across the Isthmus to Santa Cruz, a distance of 145 miles, the work to be finished by August 1st, 1876.

Dr. Kenealy has applied for a new trial for Orton, the Tichborne claimant, on the ground of Chief Justice Cockburn's misdirection to the jury, interference with the testimony, and that the verdict was contrary to the evidence. Application was refused as to the Chief Justice Cockburn's conduct, but on the legal points, the Court reserved its decision.

The funeral of Dr. Livingstone took place on the 18th ult., in Westminster Abbey, and was attended by a great throng, including a full representation from the Royal Geographical Society. There was a special funeral service early in the day, and another was held by Dean Stanley on Sunday. The grave is in the centre of the west part of the nave of Westminster Abbey, near that of Stephenson, the celebrated engineer.

In the English House of Lords Earl Russell has given notice that on May 4th he should ask for copies of the correspondence of the British Government with the Governments of Germany, France, Russia and Austria relative to the maintainance of peace; also, that he should call for a *copias* of the instructions sent to Sir Ed. Thornton, Minister at Washington, in regard to the Oregon boundary question; and further, for an account of the compensation made by the United States for damages caused by the Fenian raid in Canada.

THE WAYFARER.

BY N. D. U.

Before and behind, all white with snow,
The dim path under the moonlight shines,
Begirt by hedges, ragged in row,
Or the forest grim, and with frosted pines;
Yet still the wayfarer toils along,
Shifting his bundle to and fro,
And humming the air of an old love-song
Whose rhythm was sweet in the long-ago.

Years have gone since he crossed the wave,
Fortune to seek in far-off lands;
And his cheek is brown, and his young brow grave,
And the rivers that roll through golden sands
Have ingots yielded and shining ore,
In spite of his air and his homely dress;
Yet mind and heart are troubled and sore
As his weary feet the old pathway press.

One by one—and his heart beats quick—
Around him rise, as he nears the farm,
Orchard and wheat-field, barn and rick,
With many a hint of the hearthstone warm.
But, she, ah! she, for whose fair white hand
He wandered and toiled in the fields afar;
Does her love for him still steadfast stand
Through the long dark years his guiding star?

With the deep snow crusting its time-worn thatch,
The old house stands in its withered vines.
His strong hand shakes as it lifts the latch
Of the gate; a light at the window shines.
But his wavering knock at the door is heard;
He moves to the group at the bright fire-place:
They gaze at him strangely, without a word,
At his tattered garb and his bearded face.

The farmer and wife look up from their meal,
And eye him askance, with a curious stare,
And the fair-haired girl at the spinning-wheel
Pauses and looks with a troubled air;
Till the stranger speaks, and, with one wild cry,
The fair bright girl is upon his breast,
And the farmer and wife are hovering nigh,
And the wayfarer hath his reward and rest.

Gold on the table in glittering heaps—
Wrung from the earth by years of toil;
And into his palm a soft hand creeps
Better and dearer than golden spoil.
Winter without and summer within,
With true love still shining, a steadfast star
And joy that a prince might sigh to win,
Form the wayfarer's welcome from lands afar.

BETWEEN MAN AND WIFE.

Old Mr. M'Vey had been watching his nephew's wife put the boys to bed through the half-open door. He cleared his throat as she came in, and stroked down the white beard on his chin.

"Your mode of training your boys is different from that which I used with mine," he said. "It was enough for me to point to the clock at bedtime, and they went without a word, without a word."

"My boys are such strong fellows," said little Mrs. Harold, as she sat down and took up her work again.

Her hour's struggle with them, coaxing, scolding and bribing, had left her with a pain in her head and shortness of breath.

The Harolds were poor. They kept but one servant.

M'Vey was Harold's uncle, and helped in his education. It was to assist their narrow income that he now boarded with the young people. But the experiment had not added to Susy's happiness. Old Mr. M'Vey was sincere and earnest, but he was also imperious and dogmatic. Many would have called him narrow-minded. He had not even charity for those who thought differently from himself.

Susy's instinct, rather than reason, told her from the first that this surly, obstinate old man was her enemy, perhaps without his even knowing it. Nature had made the two mutually antagonistic. Susy thought him hard and cruel.

"He wishes to bend every one to his own will," she said to herself.

M'Vey regarded her as a weak, spoiled child. "What a mistake Harold made," he thought. "Instead of being a helpmate she will be a drag on him, and that for his whole life. This comes of a pretty face."

He could not do justice to a character like Susy's. He could not even understand it. She instinctively sought to rule by love; he would rule by the rod, and an iron one too.

A very few weeks of this antagonism had worn Susy out. Her husband, she saw, was daily falling more and more under the influence of his uncle. He was daily becoming more and more estranged from her, she told herself. She felt that she could not endure this state of things much longer. And this very night matters were destined to come to a crisis.

Presently the supper bell rang. They went down to the dining-room, a dull apartment, with a square table, on which was an oil lamp and a frugal meal. The men sat down, and, after

grace, began to eat, with preoccupied and knitted brows, talking to each other, and ignoring Susy. Her heart ached to think how different it was from the old times; such cozy teas as they had then, she and Ben, when the boys were asleep! Sermons and sewing were put away, and the fire stirred till it blazed: and there was a hot pot of fragrant tea brought up to the sitting-room, and some jam—for Susy had a child's sweet tooth yet: and all so snug and convenient.

"You do not eat," demanded M'Vey, looking up at last at Susy.

"I don't feel very strong, and—oh! I should like a cup of tea, Ben!"

There was a moment's pause.

"Just as you please, Susan," said Mr. Harold, in the calm, gentle tone which had become habitual to him. "You entered willingly into our agreement to refrain from the use of tea and coffee for the benefit of the building fund of the church. But if you feel unable to fulfil it, it is a matter in which no one has a right to interfere. It lies between your conscience and yourself. I will order tea for you to-morrow, if you wish."

"Allow me," the uncle said, lifting his hand persuasively. "Would you consent to place to a drunkard's lips the intoxicating cup because he was weaker than you and craved it? Would you be less faithful with your wife?"

"The cases are hardly parallel," Mr. Harold said, his fair face flushing a little.

"To me they are," he replied, swinging off delighted into the argumentative tone. "To me they are. Tea is to women what stimulants of other character are to men. To my niece here ——"

"Pardon me," said Susy, with a certain gentle dignity of her own. "It is not necessary to say anything more. Shall we go upstairs? Uncle has finished his supper, Benjamin."

The two men followed her up the stairs, in silence, feeling that the little lady had somehow mastered the difficulty.

But Susy's humiliation was most bitter. It was not fitting, she felt, that she should have been left to fight her own battle.

"The time has been when Benjamin would not have suffered his wife to be insulted!" she thought. "Insulted! Yes, it was that!"

Her mind wandered off to her earlier days. It was such a little while ago since she was Lucy Ludlow! She remembered how young Dr. Thorpe, now become a great man, had loved her, and how she had preferred Harold to him. She did not regret her choice. But she could not help thinking that, if she had married the richer man, she would not now be living in so small a house. What a flower garden that was at home! If she had some of its treasures now to put in this room; she thought she could breathe in it then. It was full, not of air now, but of dry heat. This was about the time when she used to be buying her autumn dresses. She had as keen pleasure in gay, bright silks and feathers as in gay, bright flowers.

She thought of them now, thirstily, as she did of the tea. There was a certain blue velvet suit and hat which she had worn just before she was married. She remembered her own charming arch face in it, with a blush, and then a chill, as a ghost might think of its own flesh and blood self. She had been altogether alive then, it seemed to her. She kept quite clear of books, it is true; but she had had dozens of friends, and loved them with all her soul. And she had gone to concerts, and drunk in the music with as keen a thirst and delicate taste as any connoisseur his rare wine; and she had danced and joked, and taken care of the poor, and sat up with those who were ill and ministered to them with incessant zeal. Whatever Susy Ludlow did was done with her whole heart and full strength. She had been so energetic even in her fun so different from the other lackadaisical belles of the village, that when Ben Harold married and carried her off, people said she would make a good clergyman's wife, if she gave her mind to it.

"I did give my mind to it," thought poor Mrs. Harold, drearily.

What was the matter then? There was not a wilted leaf, blown to the ground to rot to night, of less use than she.

"Husband, children," she said, bitterly, "were indifferent to her."

Every nerve relaxed with a sense of exhaustion and craving.

"Have you forgotten that this is the meeting-night?" asked her uncle.

"I had forgotten. Yes," she said, with a start, looking up from her reverie, and turning appalled to the basket of darning. Then, with an appealing look to her husband, "I have a great deal to do, Benjamin."

"Duties never clash," said her uncle.

"You will go with me, Benjamin, won't you?" she said, at last with a frightened glance out of the window.

"I really do not see how I can. Uncle's road and mine lies in directly the opposite direction. It is barely dark, my dear. Indeed, you must not be such a baby. You must cure yourself of this cowardice."

"We were called on for greater sacrifices in the path of duty," said her uncle "than to walk alone at night."

Her husband said no more.

Susy pinned her shawl, and went forth at that without farther words; but she did not leave the house. She stopped in the narrow entry, looking back. This night, with its pretty crosses and deprivation, was but the repetition of countless nights that had gone before. Why should it seem to her the crisis of her life? But he did so. The years seemed to have stopped short, and rendered up their account, as if now the future was to be decided. What was this dreadful gulf between her and her husband? She made a step to return. She would fling herself into his arms, as in the old times. She stood irresolute, crying out from her soul, but making no sound with her lips:

"Oh, Ben, Ben! It is not that I want to shirk my duty! It is death, I think, that is at work with me."

If he had only seen her at that moment, and realized how weak she was, he would have taken her in his arms, as he used to do, and have soothed her like a spoiled baby, and all would have gone well. But she only uttered this last, despairing cry to her own soul; her lips framed no words. M'Vey spoked at the same moment; both he and her husband thought she was gone.

"I am sorry for your sake that your companion halts in the way. You certainly try to make her burdens light," said the pitiless adviser.

"I think they are light," he rejoined, irritably.

"She obstructs your usefulness," said the uncle, sententiously. "It militates very much against you. A stronger woman, mentally, would have been a more suitable helpmeet for you."

"Yes," assented Harold, absently.

He hardly heard, so great was his annoyance, what the speaker said; hardly realized what was his own reply.

But Susy heard. She put up her hand, and stood scared and stunned for a few minutes; then she went out.

Yet even the belief that she had lost her husband's love for ever came to her as through a dead brain and nerves, and hardly quickened into pain. Going down the street, she paused in front of a chemist's shop, looking thirstily at the crimson and violet lights in the window. The clear, radiant color strengthened her, she could not tell how. Farther on she reached the opera-house, to which crowds of carriages were driving up. Beautiful women, delicately dressed, sprang out of them, all life and gaiety, and vanished in the brilliantly-lighted vestibule. From within came the broken strains of music: now a burst of swelling triumph; then a woman's voice alone, carrying its ecstasy of joy and passion, it seemed to her, up to the gates of heaven itself. Susy knew all that was within: color, beauty, light, harmony, in unstinted overflow. She stood still on the lower step, not knowing, in fact, what she was doing.

Just at the moment some one touched her.

It was her husband and M'Vey, for she had wandered a long distance out of her path.

The latter was too outraged to give Harold time to speak.

"What do you do here?" he cried. "Is this gate of perdition a fit place for a minister's wife?"

Her husband, at the same moment, gave her his arm.

"Come," he said.

They took her part of the way to her meeting, and then left her.

But Harold went his way perplexed and disturbed. He was exceptionally fond of his wife; but within the last year or two he had begun to feel that she was not suited to his life. He had imbibed his new notions altogether from M'Vey. To-night, her pinched face and sharp voice had frightened his old love back into life; and now strange doubts began to disturb him. Did the service of this all-wise and loving Master really demand that the life which He had made so beautiful and bountiful should be starved? Ought the strongest powers, the most refined and highest tastes and emotions, which He had given to them, to be thwarted and trampled down? Was such a view right?

But the doubt had not long time to vex him.

He had ventured to say to M'Vey, as they walked along:

"Perhaps we were too hard on Susy. She seems to be suffering from nervous prostration."

"When a man or woman resorts to nerves as an excuse, my dear sir," said this uncompromising companion, "you may be sure it is the soul and conscience that are short-coming. Nerves!"

There was this to be said for the speaker, he believed his own doctrine. Privately he had no good-will to Mrs. Harold. Mr. Harold was bringing into notice the church in which he officiated, but his wife did nothing, she was a drawback. The more M'Vey rejoiced in the growing fame of the church, the more he was impatient with Mrs. Harold, the more it irritated him to hear of her nerves.

He kept a fox's eye on Harold through that evening, gibing and spurring him when he caught him lax in interest.

As for the poor young man he was between two fires. One minute he found himself agreeing with his uncle, the next moment his heart ached with pity. Poor Susy, after all, was but a child. What if Heaven had given her to him in charge, and he——

Meanwhile Mrs. Harold did not reach the meeting. It was held in an upper chamber, and when she came to the long, dark stairs leading to it her heart gave way, and she sat down in a corner on one of the landing, out of the way, and, utterly exhausted, fell asleep. She awakened presently on a low wooden seat. There was a gray-haired old man, standing a little in front of rows of glittering bottles, watching her anxiously. There was some subtle stimulant at her failing brain. Strong hands grasped her wrists just at that place where she so often feared they would fall to pieces. That trifle strengthened the worn-out woman. At last somebody thought it worth while, and knew how, to take care of her—even her! The deadly torpor overpowered her again, just as she heard some muttered words about "the minister's wife," and "congestion of the brain." The voice was curiously pleasant to her. It was familiar, yet unfamiliar; it brought back all the old times, when she was a girl, when she was Susy Ludlow.

It was Dr. Thorpe, whom the chemist had seen passing in his carriage, and had brought in to attend to the woman that had been found insensible on the stairs. Dr. Thorpe had practised in aristocratic circles for many years, and it was not likely he would be known to the poor preacher or his wife. In spite of his youth, he stood pre-eminent as a consulting physician, and his charges were enormous. It was the fashion to have some recondite ailment which only he could cure. He was a young man, but his face was habitually grave, and his hair and whiskers were already touched with gray.

"Not starvation, is it?" said the chemist.

"N—no; something like it. Tut, tut! There's been shameful neglect here!" fluttering over the prostrate body, from eyelid to pulse, with the swift abruptness of a hawk beaking its prey; then turning to the jars on the shelves, he filled a glass with the same sharp decision.

"Troubles in the head?" muttered Forbes.

Dr. Thorpe nodded.

"Can she pull through?" picking up the lean, dry hand with a certain tenderness. "There's not much life left here to fall back on."

"If you know who she is, and what nursing she's likely to have, you can judge of her chances better than I. If she has a noisy miserable home to go to, as I think it likely, I would advise you to persuade her friends to let her be removed to one of the hospitals. It's always the safest plan for the poor."

"She won't go to the hospital," cried the shop-boy, staring under Susy's bonnet. "That's Harold's wife, round in Carter Street."

Dr. Thorpe untied the bonnet quickly, and looked keenly into the pale, delicate face. He said nothing, his countenance did not change; yet Forbes had an unaccountable fancy that the boy's words had given him some shock. But Dr. Thorpe was not a man to be questioned.

"Where is this man, Harold, to be found?" he asked, presently.

Mr. Forbes told him, adding:

"It's very kind in you, doctor, to break the ill news to the poor fellow."

Dr. Thorpe went out without reply, getting into his carriage with a sterner face than usual. He certainly had no especial care how the news was broken to Harold. "That is she," he muttered again and again. "That is she. How to get her out of the brute's hands now?"

But Dr. Thorpe usually accomplished his purposes. He soon found Harold.

The husband was overcome by the shock, not only of finding his wife so near to death, but of the prospect of bringing her home ill and helpless.

"Heaven knows, sir," he said to Dr. Thorpe, the grave concern on whose face went direct to his heart. "I'll do what I can. But if life depends on quiet, I am at a loss to know what to do."

It was the most natural thing in the world that Dr. Thorpe should offer her a room in his own institution for invalid gentlewoman.

"You can visit her when you please," he said. "I have exceptionally difficult cases there under the charge of my own nurses. The expense to me will be nothing, and, as her affection is peculiar, and one which I wish to study, you will do me a favor if you will allow her to be removed thither at once."

His manner might be dry and repulsive, but the meaning was good. Of course Harold consented, followed her out, and for the first few days, while she lay in a stupor, hung over her, night and day. When the danger was past, M'Vey reminded him of his church and children. There could be no doubt they needed him. He turned his steps, therefore, reluctantly back.

Dr. Haller, who shared the institution with Thorpe, had some doubts as to Mrs. Harold's admission.

"The case is bad enough, likely to kill, no doubt, but it's not rare. You'll meet swarms of such overworked men and women. We cannot fill up with them. What do you mean, my friend?"

Dr. Thorpe was frank. It was the best way with the keen eyes of his partner.

"I've been used to well-fed patients lately. This was starvation of every kind, soul as well as body," he said, "and interested me for the moment. When I found that the woman was one whom I had known years ago, I had a whim of being actively charitable. That is all."

That was all. The first sight of her face had given him for the moment a new sensation; and Dr. Thorpe was at that pause in middle age when new sensations are rare in the life of an unmarried man, when the firmest zeal in a profession begins to chill in dull daily work. He seized upon the chance of prolonging this temporary excitement. What long dead fancy had been connected with her he did not clothe in words, even to himself. He stood over her bed, looking at the fleshless hands and sunken face, with a queer, pathetic smile, as though laughing at himself.

"But if the dead can be raised out of this skeleton, I'll do it," he said.

One of the nurses, Agnes, was at the bedside. She shaded Susy's eyes and looked up smiling.

"She has such an unusually fine, sensitive face, doctor," she whispered.

"Eh? It's unusually homely to me," and he sauntered off.

He was quite sincere. The old ghost of his boyhood might meet him, but he was not afraid of it, so long as it wore a shape so questionable.

* * * * * * * * * *

"Not be taken home for a month, Agnes? Not lifted or carried?" asked the patient of the nurse.

"Not with safety, Mrs. Harold."

Susy turned restlessly, covering her head with the quilt.

"But my boys? I might see George or Joe, once—only once? And my husband? It is so long since he was here."

Agnes escaped her, to hurry out into the hall, there to meet Dr. Thorpe.

"She cannot speak of her husband without increase of fever. Would it not be wiser to admit him?" she said.

"I will see her in the morning. Let me know as soon as she is dressed."

Now even Agnes, not given to idle curiosity, wondered why, since the crisis was past, and she was conscious, Dr. Thorpe had not met Mrs. Harold as a physician, but had given over the care of her to Dr. Haller, only paying her formal visits as a friend.

He stood by the window, beating his boot with his cane.

"The brute held her to his heart till he had frozen her to death," he said to himself, "and now that I have nursed and warmed her to life again she begins to whimper for him!"

He laughed bitterly. At least until her cure was completed, he could keep her to himself. One week out of a lifetime was not much to ask!

Dr. Thorpe would have been willing that day to open his purposes in the sight of any man. He believed himself to be always honorable and a gentleman. This woman, whom he had brought from the grave back into her first health and beauty, he held to have been foully wronged. If any loss in his own life, growing out of her wrong, made him irrationally bitter, he was not conscious of it.

Fortune helped him. Early in the morning, M'Vey came out, and was admitted by Dr. Haller to Mrs. Harold. He had a lurking suspicion that half of her complaints were shamming, and visited her to assure himself of it.

"Whether they are or not, she will come home to make a slave of Harold. It will keep one man at work ministering to her new whims, unless she is judiciously taken down," he thought, as he tramped up the stairs.

He started as she turned her head, eagerly, to meet him. Skill, care, and nourishing food had done their work. The sallow skin was gone. This was the old-time creamy, delicate flesh of Susy Ludlow. The blue eyes sparkled. There was a confident, tender smile on the nervous mouth.

Susy's face fell when she saw how it was.

"I thought Ben was behind you," she cried, with a sob.

"N—no!" he said, sitting down in a chair. "It's very well for you to lie by, Mrs. Harold, when you feel like taking your ease. But you can hardly expect him to neglect his duties, even for his wife, at least every day."

"It is so many days since he was here. Did he send a letter, or message?"

"No. I can't say that he did."

On the whole, he thought it as well to leave her in ignorance of how often Harold had been turned from the hospital door.

"He's very busy, I suppose?" ventured poor Susy.

"Yes," cheerfully. "Mrs. Wagner is at the house now, the widow, you know?"

"Yes, I know," and Susy's cheeks turned the color of the sheet.

"A valuable woman, Mrs. Wagner! Quite revolutionized the house. Such a cook! And a baker too. Harold finds his labors diminished one half. Refers to her, while writing, constantly. She is his amanuensis in fact. Ah, she is a fit woman to be a companion to a minister."

Susy, in the strongest health, was weak and full of jealous fears; and Mrs. Wagner had been the bugbear of her married life. She lay quite quiet, picking the quilt with her trembling fingers.

"A stronger woman would have been a better helpmeet for him," she thought. "And while I was at the edge of the grave they looked about to find her, and have her ready!"

Her visitor watched her shrewdly.

"That medicine'll work," he thought. "Though as for trying to make a Mrs. Wagner out of this pink-and-white-faced doll, I needn't hope it! You don't ask for your boys?" he said, aloud.

"They will not let me see them;" and then she suddenly flushed scarlet.

If she were only well again, with George and Joe in her arms, she felt she would be strong enough.

"No," was the cool rejoinder. "You'll not see them for some months. Harold has sent them out of town to a boarding-school."

"Without a word to me! Without one kiss for their mother, who had been so near to death!"

"Now don't excite yourself. The less you say about death the better. When you talk of lying by, taking a short holiday, that we all understand—that hits your nail on the head. The school is an excellent one. Mrs. Wagner selected it. She thought it was time that the children were removed from home, and subjected to some sort of discipline."

Susy did not answer. In the breathless stroke

that had fallen upon her the man or his jibes were as the idle wind that passed her by. He talked on, until the nurse coming up, and seeing her face, motioned him to go.

"Tell my husband to come to me," she said.

He twirled his hat uncertainly.

"Well, it's not likely he will be here soon. He's going on a journey, and is considerably pushed for time. I said I would take any message you may have for him."

"I have none."

"All right. I'll tell him you're looking better."

"There's no use in explaining Harold's arrangements to her as long as it can be helped," he reasoned, going down the avenue. "I'll take good care he don't see her till my visit has time to digest."

"Your wife's as rosy as a milk-maid," he said, meeting Harold on the road. "But they won't let you in—doctor told me so. Excitement, and all that."

"You told her about my going?" laughing excitedly. "What did she say, M'Vey? How pleased she would be!"

"She did not seem particularly pleased or interested."

Harold was silent a moment.

"But about the boys?"

"I told her they were gone. But she asked no questions."

"She is so feeble, I suppose. It was difficult when I saw her for her to articulate." said Harold, with a bewildered face.

"Mrs. Harold does not appear feeble to me. What a luxurious nest she has there! The nurse told me Doctor Thorpe was an old friend of hers. If contrast with her home life will cure her, he will be successful."

Harold laughed uneasily. He was glad that, in any way, ease and comfort should come to his wife; and yet if he could have given it to her! Strange too that he knew nothing of Doctor Thorpe's old friendship.

A few hours after Doctor Thorpe came into Susy's room and found her apparently senseless.

"What does this mean?" he asked, in alarm.

"She has been in this stupor since the man left her," said Agnes.

Mrs. Harold lay with her hands clasped over her head, her eyes set and starting.

The doctor touched her.

"Do you want to go home?" he said; but he had to repeat it once or twice before she heard him.

"Home! Home!" she muttered. "What does it matter whether I go or not! Ben would not care."

Doctor Thorpe was silent so long that the nurse looked up at him. Then he said, cheerfully:

"Lie still, my child. You have nothing to do but to sleep now."

Something in his tone startled her. She looked up at him steadily.

"You are very kind to me!" she said. "Nobody is so kind to me as you."

She shut her eyes to hide the tears.

He stood a moment irresolute and then sauntered off, thinking as he went of what this woman had been to him, and how late in the day it was when she found out even that he was "kind." He wiped the cold perspiration impatiently from his face. Was he a boy that passion should shake him thus?

* * * * * * *

The month passed by. The letters that came from Harold to his wife accumulated in a pile on M'Vey's desk. Some day, he told himself, he would walk out and deliver them. To do him justice, he only meant to administer a little wholesome neglect to a woman whom he believed to be shirking her duty in guilty idleness.

Meanwhile, Susy lay through the long days, believing husband and children had forsaken her. One lives fast in those quiet watches of the sick-room. The sharp, stunning agony passed, and then, harder to bear, came the doubt, which follows disappointment in married life, whether it had not been all a mistake.

"He never loved me," moaned poor Susy. "I never was meant to be his wife. Or how could we have wandered so far apart? I tried to do my best."

And then she suddenly saw how, for the first time in years her real self had now the space to unfold and bloom; and in all her pain there was a half-conscious delight in this; the natural satisfaction of a plant restored to its natural soil, of the animal when breathing the air for which its lungs are fitted.

Susy had a certain proud reticence. She was not going to show her trouble to any alien eyes. She could only be helpless and keep silence as the days came and went. She could not help the flowers that were heaped about her pure, beautiful room, the rare prints on the walls, the music that charmed her to sleep every night. Doctor Thorpe read to her every day, taking Agnes's place. It did not occur to her that the books chosen touched her peculiar tastes by a magnetic sympathy. But they touched her the more because of this very ignorance.

Doctor Thorpe had the skill and subtlety to move strong men at his pleasure. This was a woman, and a weak woman; and behind all his acquired arts lay the master passion of his life, open and dominant, to give them force. For he no longer hid to himself what it was that he would do.

It had never entered into Benjamin Harold's mind that both his wife and himself had an infinite range of talents, tastes and sympathies, and that just as these were developed together they became living creatures, and their love worthy the name. But Doctor Thorpe knew this secret which ought to underlie all married life. Not an hour passed in which his magic did not waken in Susy's new sensations and consciousness, exquisite flashes of pleasure, which she, perforce, associated with him.

One day, a cold winter's day, no flowers came. There was neither music or books. Doctor Thorpe, the nurse said, was absent. Mrs. Harold hardly, she thought, regretted him; she had but more leisure to wait all day for the message from home. She waited all day by the dull window, her eyes fixed upon the narrow road that split the snowy plain like a black belt. If she could but see M'Vey's gross shape lumbering along it! If she had but one word from one of her noisy, loving boys! Ben she thrust out of her thought now with a dull rancour. She had one picture of him, dictating to the florid widow. It maddened her brain. Today she was left alone with it.

The next she was left alone with it, and the next. The snow fell steadily. The sky was unbroken gray. She made them lift her into a chair, by the window, and sat shivering. When the nurse came to carry away her meals they were found untouched.

"I thought Georgey would come to-day, or Joe," she said, looking up at her, with wide, dry eyes.

The nurse, a stupid, good-hearted creature, was touched with pity, and set off through snow into town. She came back at night-fall.

"I went to your husband's house," she burst out in a fever to tell the ill news, "and it's locked up. He's gone for good—packed up and gone, and Mrs. Wagner went with him."

"Very well, Mary."

Mrs. Harold stood quite erect until the woman had left the room, then she sat down by the window and looked out into the night."

An hour after she saw a glimmer of light in the room, and Doctor Thorpe was beside her.

"Are you alone?" he said.

It seemed to her as if this man had the right to drag the secret from her soul.

"Yes, I am alone," she answered, standing up before him. "I have neither husband nor child. I gave them all the love I had. But I have nothing—nothing," stretching out her arms with a despairing cry.

He put her down again, and chafed her cold hands in silence, until she was still.

"You have your friend," he said then, in an ordinary tone.

But the violent trembling of his hands frightened her.

"I have distressed you by my trouble, Dr. Thorpe," she said. "I am so selfish! But you have been so kind to me that I could hide nothing from you," laying one of her hands on his gently.

The touch was more than he could bear. He pushed her from him, as he stood before her in the dim lamp-light.

"Are you blind?" he cried, desperately. "You—you have fallen into a pit and dragged me with you, woman; and yet you cannot see the truth! You tied yourself to a boor—to a log, and called that marriage! See to what it has brought you. I ought to have been your husband. I loved you, though you have forgotten that you ever saw my face. I love you now." His tones sank to low and subtlest entreaty. "I know you, my darling, as no other man ever did. Come to me."

She looked about her bewildered, trying to push him back.

"I never thought of this!" she cried, feebly. "I love Ben."

"Are you sure you do?" the grave face and passionate eyes close to her own. "In your soul you know I am your kinsman. He is a stranger. He has drawn away from you year by year—left you alone. Is that marriage? What can you do? He has shaken you off. Your children are taken from you. Have you been so blind," angrily, "that you have not seen I was trying to show you that here was your home, that the man who understood and loved you should have been your husband?"

"I did not see it," said Susy, with an effort at an ordinary tone. "I'm a very dull woman. Will you let me go now, Dr. Thorpe? I must find my husband."

He drew back. For a moment the man and woman faced each other. There were signs of deeper suffering on his face than hers. He held his arm suddenly across his breast, with a quick, long breath.

"I do not remind you," he said, "that I am ready to give for you the good name and hopes of my life. But I want you to remember that I love you."

After all, some one loved her; she was not a strong woman.

He saw his advantage, with a hawk's eye.

"I know it is a shock to you. Yet I ask very little; only to be your friend. You are alone. Even if your husband were waiting for you, you could not return to him."

She looked up, a nameless terror in her eyes.

"Yes," he said, hastily. "I mean that. Your sojourn here has been misinterpreted. You cannot return to him with a tainted name. I will be your friend and protector until I have learned how to win your love. Then you shall be my wife. This old life shall be cut as a dream."

The uncertain light rose and fell. Susy understood it all, now, at last. She was utterly alone. Before her was dishonour.

She put out her hand.

"What did you say?" she said, breathlessly. "I did not hear. Give you time? Yes—yes."

He placed her on a seat, and then left her, leaving the door open.

The room beyond was full of warmth and light. The home of beauty and ease, which he offered her, rose before her. And, as he had said, she was homeless. Yet she had but one thought, it was that her peril was extreme, and that her only refuge was death.

On the table were some phials. She chose one, and, hiding it in her hand, opened the French window and went swiftly out into the night.

Passing round the building, she sank down in the snow, upon the step, at the foot of an iron railing.

He would follow. There was not a minute to lose; but a minute would be enough. She looked up to the cloudy sky.

It was so bitter cold to go out there alone. She was so young—so young. And Georgey and Joe—never to see them again.

A hand was laid on her shoulder. It was good, motherly Agnes. Susy hid the phial again. She must send Agnes away. No human being could bring her help. She must send the nurse away.

Agnes did not seem surprised at finding her patient there.

"You should not be here, my child," she said, "I heard you had bad news from home; but——"

"I have no home. I have no husband, nor child, nor good name."

"You have Heaven."

Susy shuddered. Pain and fear had quieted down into a dull impatience to be at rest. Heaven seemed very far off to her.

She drew the cork from the phial. She heard Dr. Thorpe's step on the crushed snow. She was driven to bay! Even death was cut off. If she had but one moment.

"See who comes, Agnes," she said, hurriedly. "I will be here when you come back." She held her hand hidden under the shawl. "And, Agnes," detaining her with a quick breath, "if you see Ben, tell him I loved him!"

Agnes, thinking her mind wandered, put her hand about her quickly.

"Yes, child," Agnes said, cheerfully. "It will all be right. Don't lose your trust in Ben, and all will be well."

Then she drew away, and went down the quadrangle, and Susy was alone.

She held the phial to her lips.

"Trust in Ben! Trust in Ben!"

Did Heaven speak that to her?

The hot blood rushed like a torrent from her heart. The poison fell from her hand, and burned the pure snow.

"I'll trust him. I'll trust Ben a little longer," she said, and then stood still and waited.

Agnes's eyes shone as she came back.

"It was Dr. Haller; he is looking for his patient," she said, hurriedly, wrapping her shawl about Susy, and bringing her into the hall. "You are waited. It is a visitor, and I think it is Ben!"

A quiet, country parsonage, a plan little house, with woods and old-fashioned gardens about it. Here is a congregation who wordship their new clergyman as only country congregations know how; here is the school where George and Joe are trained to exhibit more mercy in their management of their mother than of old; here is Harold growing into benign, portly middle-age, with a watchful eye always fixed on his rosy little wife, as a man guards something of which death had almost robbed him; and here, in the middle of all, sunning, coloring, warming all, is Susy, with her head full of all the troubles of the village, her busy hands full of help, and her heart, I'm afraid, so full of "Ben and Georgey and Joe," that there is not much room for anybody else.

Now and then, a visitor from town drops into the pretty, drowsy village, and inquires if Harold does not regret his old fold of usefulness.

"I came that my wife might find room to live," Ben sometimes answers; "and I find no less work to do here than in a more compact settlement."

"But your assistants, sir? What can you do without such valuable help as you left? Mrs. Wagner was a host in herself. You miss your uncle, too, don't you? An energetic, resolute man!"

"We manage as well as we can," Mr. Harold replies, with a mischievous glance at his wife.

Mrs. Harold's system of religion is very concise. She often gives it to her sons.

"Trust in Heaven, boys," she says, "no matter how hardly you're pushed. And if you forget to do that, trust in the people you love. I've had that serve me very well at times."

A DUEL OF THE GENTLER SEX.—It is related that two girls in the Royal tobacco factory at Madrid recently had killed each other in a hand-to-hand contest. The mode adopted by the combatants was as romantic as it was barbarous. The antagonists, who were both about twenty years old, and remarkably handsome, repaired, one Sunday morning, accompanied by certain of their comrades, to a village some four or five miles distant, where they breakfasted sumptuously at different tables. The repast ended, they closed the window-curtains, stripped themselves to the waist, and requested their friends to leave the room. Then, at a given signal, they attacked each other with their navajas, and slashed and thrust, until both fell to the floor mortally wounded! When a few minutes had elapsed their friends re-entered the room. Estefania, one of the combatants, had received ten wounds, from which she bled to death in about half an hour. Caslina, her antagonist, died somewhat sooner from a ghastly wound in the neck.

SPRING.

Arise, ye merry maidens!
  Away to pastures free!
A thousand birds are chanting
  Their May-day melody.
From many a leafy woodland
  The tuneful echoes ring
With glad triumphant chorus
  Of welcome to the Spring.

The lark at earliest day-dawn
  Leads up with joyous note,
The lusty blackbird follows,
  And thrush with speckled throat.
Then comes the little linnet,
  With new-preened plumage gay;
The nightingale, sweet songster,
  Joins in the roundelay.

Arise! Leave drowsy slumber
  To dull the sluggard's brain?
Spring calls on all to follow
  Rejoicing in her train.
She bids the milk-white hawthorn
  Its pearly buds unfold,
And clothes the flaunting May-flower
  In gorgeous robes of gold.

She tints the eastern heaven,
  She paints the western sky,
With hues whose brilliant colors
  All human art defy.
Up! Up! The cuckoo calls thee,
  The lark is on the wing,
A thousand voices bid thee
  Go forth to meet the Spring!

MATTIE ELLISON.

Mattie Ellison stood looking from the window of her own cosy room upon a bleak winter landscape, and the lowering clouds and very gloomy prospect seemed to be faithfully mirrored in her own face.

It was a face that needed the sunshine of cheerfulness and happiness to make it pretty, round and child-like, with a rosebud mouth, and large blue eyes, shaded by curling lashes of the same sunny brown as her short, clustering curls of hair.

But though Miss Mattie, standing at her window, was arrayed in a new and most becoming dress, her face was doleful, and her fingers tapped on the sill a slow, melancholy movement, as if the monotonous motion was indulged in to keep back a fit of crying.

Her thoughts ran something in this fashion—

"I suppose I must go down pretty soon, or the dinner bell will ring, and papa won't like that. Besides, I must be introduced, and might as well have it over. Oh, dear! I thought such a will as grandfather's never existed out of a story-book, and here I am the victim of one. But I won't marry Bernard Cooper. I won't."

And, seemingly nerved by this heroic resolve, Mattie turned from the window, adjusted her ribbons and ringlets a moment, and went slowly to the drawing-room, where her father sat in earnest conversation with a tall, quiet-looking man, who rose as the little lady entered.

The introduction of Mr. Cooper to "my daughter Martha" was courteously acknowledged by both parties, and the conversation became general until the dinner bell rang.

The will of the late Herbert Creighton, the father of Mattie's long dead mother, and of which Mattie considered herself a victim, had left that young lady half of a large fortune, the other half going to the adopted son, Bernard Cooper, who was the only child of a friend of the old man's.

Left an orphan at ten years of age, Bernard had been taken at once into Mr. Creighton's home, where pretty Fannie his daughter, petted him for six months before she married, and went with her husband to a distant city, only living two years, and leaving Mattie motherless before she was out of long clothes.

Left childless, Mr. Creighton centred all his affections upon the son he had adopted, and Bernard Cooper had every advantage love and wealth could offer him.

From mere boyhood he was a scholar, following his adopted father into fields of learning and scientific reading, when most lads are devoted to tops and marbles; and giving his heart to books, when that organ might have been naturally supposed to be thrilled by blue or black eyes, and voices feminine.

Dreamy, studious, and talented, he had accepted his adopted father's support and protection as lovingly as they were given, and had faithfully filled the place of a devoted son, making of his many studies, one specialty that might win him bread when he was left alone in the world.

"I can always teach Greek, Latin, and mathematics," he thought, "and may get a professorship or school of my own."

Once only had there been almost a quarrel between these two, after twenty years of loving intercourse, and then Mr. Creighton lay upon what proved to be his deathbed.

He had sent for his lawyer, and was making his will, Bernard being in the room.

"I leave all my fortune to my adopted son, Bernard Cooper," he said, "Put it into legal shape for me, but all for him."

"Stop, sir," Bernard said, as the lawyer was gathering up his papers; "surely, sir, you cannot mean to forget Fannie's child."

"What is the girl to me?" said the old man "I have never even seen her."

"She is Fannie's child," Bernard persisted, very pale, but quietly resolute—"your heiress in the eyes of the law."

There was a long silence in the room.

The old gentleman had keenly felt for many years the slight of his son-in-law, who had never taken his child to see her mother's father, and all his love was given to Bernard.

Yet it was Fannie's child he was disinheriting, and after lying in deep thought for a long time, he said:

"Leave us for a little while, Bernard. I promise you not to forget Mattie. I will leave her half my money. Will that satisfy you?"

Only a pressure of Bernard's hand answered him, as the young man left the room.

But after the funeral, when the will was opened, the legacies were followed by the express desire on the part of Mr. Creighton that the severed fortune should be reunited by the marriage of his adopted son and his grandchild.

It was not made a condition of the will; merely a strongly-worded request.

"If she is like my Fannie, Bernard must love her," the fond father thought, "and I could wish no better fortune to any woman than to win Bernard's love."

So when Mattie bowed in grave courtesy in answer to Bernard's words of greeting, each knew that the other was considering the question of a possible future marriage.

But while Mattie felt only indignant rebellion at the idea of being so disposed of, Bernard's heart was full of tenderness.

He remembered the beautiful girl who had comforted his first grief in his orphanhood, and who in her brief married happiness had sent him boxes of birthday and Christmas gifts, over whose death he had shed such bitter tears, and whose memory was next his own mother's in his heart.

He was sincerely desirous of fulfilling the wishes of his life-long friend, and though shy in his manner, there was a tender chivalry about him that touched even Mattie's wayward heart.

But having resolved to dislike him, to have her own way in matrimony, as she had had in everything else all her petted life, Mattie persistently looked only at the dark side of the proposed alliance.

Her father had but informed her of her grandfather's desire, and laid no command upon her.

"Half the money is yours, at all events," he told her, "and you will have what I leave, so do as you please. But I hear only good of Bernard Cooper, Mattie; he is a gentleman born and bred, high principled, learned and talented, so do not be hasty. Let him come here as he proposes, and see if you cannot like him."

But wilful Mattie, having romantic notions in her pretty little head, saw only that Bernard was shy and awkward in manner, that his clothes did not fit him well, that he had large feet and hands, and drew up his eyes, because he was near-sighted.

When he was gently respectful to her, she tried to think he wanted to secure her half of the fortune divided between them.

Then she tried to drive him away, in pure perversity.

Because he was grave and rather sad, she became lively and gay, flitting from one party to another, seemingly entirely absorbed in the preparation of finery for one scene of gaiety or another, and chatting only of opera, ball, or concert.

By Mr. Ellison's request Bernard became his guest for the winter, and Mattie neglected him as far as politeness allowed, leaving him alone in the library, while she visited and seemed absorbed in frivolous pursuits.

At first he accepted her invitations to accompany her, but finding there were plenty of dandies only too willing to be the escort of the young heiress, soon declined to mingle in scenes entirely uncongenial.

Apparently, it would have been impossible to find two people more entirely uncongenial than Bernard Cooper and Mattie Ellison: one grave, reserved, and quiet, a scholar and close student —the other, bright, lively, and gay, a pet of society and a little of a coquette.

And yet when Mattie had been almost rude to Bernard, refusing to sing for him, sarcastic in her inquiries about his favorite books and pursuits, she would go to her room, and in long reveries, would wonder if any of her dandy beaux could ever be as wise and gentle as Bernard.

Would find herself recalling the tenderness of his large soft eyes, the winsome smile of his finely-cut mouth, and the low tones of his rich, full voice.

And Bernard, stung by her flippant rudeness, would yet think wistfully of her resemblance to the mother whose picture, hanging in Mr. Creighton's library, had been the object of his boyish worship for years.

Would think her voice the sweetest, her face the fairest in all the worlds, and wonder sadly hop a gawky fellow of thirty could ever think to win this winsome fairy of eighteen for a wife.

Spring came, and Bernard was talking of going home

He had invested his share of Mr. Creighton's fortune, as he hoped, profitably, and he was desirous of returning to the home of his childhood.

It was while Bernard was thinking of this that there came disaster and ruin upon his hospitable host.

Several promising speculations, in which Mr. Ellison had invested not only his own, but Mattie's fortune, failed utterly, and the man who had accumulated his fortune in years of constant struggle, saw it swept away in a night.

Selfish in his misery, forgetting the child he left to bear poverty and sorrow alone, Mr. Ellison took his own life.

It was a blow sufficient to crush a much stronger nature than Mattie Ellison's.

Recovering from one shock, she was forced to face another.

Her tears were flowing for the loss of her indulgent father, when she was told of his financial ruin.

And while her white face still looked piteously at the lawyer, he was obliged to add the information that her legacy from her grandfather, left in her father's guardianship, was gone also.

But the last blow, instead of utterly crushing her, steadied her.

It come to her with a keen but wholesome pang, that she was no longer an heiress, to live in idle luxury, but a beggar who must work for bread.

Bernard, who had seen her go in to meet the lawyer, tearful, pallid, and trembling, saw her come out, pale still, but quiet, and with a resolution in her blue eyes he had never seen there before.

In the days of misery following Mr. Ellison's death, there had been no thought in these young hearts of the question that had so long separated them.

Mattie was orphaned in sorrow, alone in a measure, though she had many warm, true friends around her, and Bernard thought only of sparing her in every possible way.

He directed the funeral, he took charge of all the many duties so trying at such times.

He guarded the sorrow-stricken girl as long as possible from all further trial, and she thankfully accepted his care and tenderness.

In one week these two understood each other better than they had ever done in the previous long winter.

So when Mattie came down from her interview with the lawyer, she was not surprised to find Bernard in the drawing-room, evidently waiting for her.

In his pitying eyes she read that he knew already the news she had just heard, and she smiled bravely in his face, saying:

"Mr. Watts has told me I must spend no more time in idleness, Bernard."

Then Bernard spoke.

He could bear no more, loving her with all the tenderness of his great, warm heart, and he begged her to be his wife, and give him the right to keep her from toil.

Something of the old fire flashed into Mattie's blue eyes, as she cried:

"You insult me! How dare you offer me your pity? You do not love me, and you want to force upon me the rest of my grandfather's fortune. Oh, Bernard, how can you?"

Then she burst out crying, and Bernard bent over her, and took her hands into his own.

"I do love you," he said; "and your grandfather's money was all invested in those unfortunate speculations, mine as well as yours. If you cannot love me, I will never force my love upon you; but if you can, oh, Mattie, I will work like a slave for you! Mattie, look up. Must I go away and leave you to toil here alone, while I break my heart longing for you, Mattie? Mattie. God bless you!"

For she had suddenly sprung into his arms, nestling against the broad chest that seemed fitted to shield her from all life's storms, and looking up into the tender, true face with her blue eyes love-lighted.

"I do love you," she whispered; "and now that all that odious money is gone, I will be your true little wife. I will cook and sew for you while you—by the way, what will you do?"

"I have accepted a professorship in the college where I was educated, and as your grandfather's house is still left from the wreck of our mutual fortune, we shall not be homeless, dear,"

And a month later a quiet wedding sealed the fate of Mattie Ellison.

An Ex-Bricklayer's Luck.—An extraordinary marriage is reported at Eastbourne. The facts are stated to be these: Some few months since a middle-aged man visited the town in search of work, and took a job of brick-cleaning at one of the martello towers. He formerly, it appears, was in very good circumstances. When young, he emigrated to the Cape and carried on the occupation of a grazier, but the Caffres descended upon his farm and robbed him of all he had. The misfortune caused him to return to England, and for a considerable time he resided with his brother, who is in a large business near Bedford square, London. Getting at length tired of an idle life he resolved to seek employment, and fate or fortune led him to Eastbourne. After trying one or two kinds of work, first as brick-cleaner, and next as bill-poster and deputy town-crier the *ci-devant* grazier started as a bath-chairman, and was constantly engaged by a lady staying in Hartington place. Being well informed, and able to converse in French and German, her chairman proved a very agreeable companion, and an intimacy sprang up between the two which culminated in the sometime Cape grazier, brick-cleaner, and bath-chairman leading the lady to the hymeneal altar. The marriage created a good deal of sensation, the lady, it is stated, having an income of £8,000 a year.

ARE WE?

Are we kind enough to "old folks?"
Are we tender every day?
Will we think so that to-morrow
That is not so far away?

When the trailing of their garments
Trips our own impatient feet,
Do we chide them tha' they linger
On life's upward-sloping street?

When they fail our speech to answer,
Do we call them rudely back
From youth's dreamland, where they linger,
To the rough and dusty track.

When the eyesight groweth dimmer,
And the smoke of battle o'er
Still beclouds the crystal mirror,
Left to light life's latest score?

Let us all be truly kinder;
Life may bring us friendships new,
But the heads so white beside us,
They, alas, are all too few.

Newer loves may meet us may be,
Coming with to-morrow's dawn,
But they cannot fill the places
Of the "old folks" dead and gone,

ANNIE LISLE'S VALENTINE.

CHAPTER I.

"I don't care if you do you tell-tale-tit, you—there!"

And these defiant words were accompanied by a look as threatening from a little low-bred urchin, while another administered a vicious kick to the small back that stooped over his refractory brother.

The low moan of pain was drowned in passionate shrieks from the turbulent children, which brought up the narrow cork-screw stair a dirty, slatternly mother, whose features were now anything but inviting.

Rage sat on her brow, hastened her footsteps, and strengthened her arm as she dealt a short, sharp blow to each of the aggressors, and a longer series of cuffs, pinches, and shakes to the poor little nurse, nothing more than a child herself, who had flung herself to sob from pain and weariness on the lower stair.

"Get up, you good-for-nothing, ungrateful, bad-tempered young hussey, to set the children by the ears like that, when you know I'm busy! But you shan't come down to have any of the good-things to-night—no, that you shan't!"

While the blows were falling on the young girl's shoulders, a gentleman pushed softly open the outer door and entered.

"Gently, gently, Mrs. Hyam! Pray, what is the matter?"

And the broad pale brow knit itself, the clear-cut lip quivered, and the full grey eye took keenly in the whole scene before him — the coarse, angry woman; the insolent, ill-bred children; the victim, a girl of about fifteen, possibly, whose chief characteristics were rags and dirt.

The Reverend Rupert Thorold was a man of peace—a clergyman, a curate of one of the large City churches.

He was cold and proud, and not given to interfere in squalid scenes of riot.

But he could not pass over what took place immediately beneath his eyes, and latterly these domestic storms had obtruded themselves somewhat unpleasantly upon his notice, and he had asked himself whether, even upon his slender income, he could not ensure quieter quarters elsewhere.

At his expostulation a treacherous calm stole over the woman's countenance, an oily smile wreathed itself around the false lips.

"Ask your pardon, I'm sure, Mr. Thorold; had no notion the door was ajar. 'Twas you, Jimmy, as opened it, you naughty boy. Children will be children, and want a tight hand over them sometimes, sir."

"Children?" repeated the clergyman, with raised brows. "But that—that girl's she seemed to be the scapegoat, Mrs. Hyam."

"'Deed, and she's as troublesome a young wench as ever you see, sir. My husband he took her when a little one, and has found her food and drinks, and been as a father to her, and she's that ungrateful——"

"I'm not," sobbed the girl.

"Hold your tongue, Ann! How dare you speak before the gentleman?—the likes of you, indeed!"

Mr. Thorold looked with an air of weary disgust at the scene before him, and began to ascend the stairs.

But there was an expression on his face of annoyance, as though there were a wrong to be set right, which he was neglecting his duty in passing over.

Suddenly he stopped and turned round.

"Mrs. Hyam, I—I will speak to Ann, if you like, and———"

He looked at the girl with disgust.

He would fain have added—

"If she cleans herself."

But in delicacy he forbore.

The visiting amongst the lowest of the London poor was Rupert Thorold's cross.

However, Mrs. Hyam was sharp-witted, as well as sharp-tongued, and she guessed his meaning.

"You'll do her and us a kindness, Mr. Thorold, if you'll say a few words to her," she answered, quickly; "and when she's cleaned herself up a bit, she shall come to you."

The clergyman only nodded and passed on, and Mrs. Hyam, with a parting shove to the object of her indignation, dived to the regions below.

"Won't you catch it! He, he!" chuckled the biggest urchin, while the younger again essayed the thumping and pinch.

But Annie Lisle only said feebly—

"Don't, dear; you hurt me. Come here, and I'll tell you a story."

Then, as the clergyman sat and wrote, perfect quiet reigned, save for the faint murmur of the girl's voice, soft and soothing, in the distance beyond.

Some time elapsed, and then a soft, slow, footstep sounded on the stairs.

It paused outside the door of the room in which Rupert Thorold sat, and there was a tap on the panels.

"Come in!" said Mr. Thorold; and Annie Lisle stood before him.

His was a busy brain, and he may be forgiven if in the three hours that had elapsed since the incident of the morning, he had forgotten that the culprit stood there at his own bidding.

Very modestly she kept close to the door, her large dark eyes cast down, her pale cheek even paler than ordinary, her pretty ripe lips quivering.

"Oh, I did not ring. Ah, let me see; I am forgetting. Dear, dear! this morning, to be sure."

And the curate looked troubled and perplexed.

Then rising, he poked the fire to gain time for reflection, and turning on the rug, surveyed the criminal.

"Criminal! poor little girl!" he thought, as he looked for the first time at the splendid hazel eyes now raised piteously to his, at the gorgeous, dark, unkempt hair falling over her shoulders, at the perfect mouth, now open, and showing the pearly teeth within. "Poor child, she's very pretty. I never saw a sweeter face, and"—here the Reverend Rupert Thorold proved himself a true man—"she's more sinned against than sinning, I'll be bound."

But while these thoughts flitted through his masculine brain, the Reverend Rupert maintained an exterior as cold and impenetrable as any monastic anchorite.

"What is your name?" he began.

"Annie Lisle, sir—at least, so they say," replied the victim, meekly.

"So they say," he repeated. "Who say?"

"Uncle and aunt, as they tell me to call them. But uncle got me out of the Foundling Hospital, and he's no kin to me, and they gave me the name there."

"Now do you not think, Annie—come away from the door, child—that in taking you from a public institution into their home circle, making you as their own daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Hyam were very good to you, and that the least you can do to show your gratitude is to behave kindly to their little children?"

The girl had come from the door at his bidding, and now, as she stood before him, he was keenly susceptible, in spite of the still ragged attire, of the latent beauty in the form it shrouded.

As he gazed sternly at her—that very sternness assumed to conceal his growing admiration—she raised her beautiful brown eyes to his, and spoke, with tears welling in their glorious depths.

"Sir, indeed I do try. I often ask myself is it all my fault? The children want to do things their mother will not allow them, and then they scream and cry out falsehoods of me when I do not let them, and so I get into trouble always—always, from morning till night."

Here she burst into tears, and Mr. Thorold walked rapidly up and down the room.

He trembled from head to foot at the sound of the girl's sobs.

If they continued, he should be unmanned.

"Annie, Annie!" he said, quickly; "do not sob so, poor child! We have all something to bear. This life is full of trouble."

He felt in his waistcoat pocket, and drew forth a new shilling.

"There, take this, little woman, as a Christmas box from me, for it is Chrismas Eve. Try and bear bravely the evils that fall to your share."

As he forced the coin into the girl's hand, she looked up at him.

A look that went deep into his heart.

"Yes, I will take it," she cried passionately; "but not to spend—no, never! But to keep in remembrance of the only man who ever looked and spoke a kind word to me in my life, and if ever I can repay the gift, I will repay it!"

Then, as if her bosom was full to bursting, she rushed from the room.

CHAPTER II.

Ten years have elapsed since our last chapter.

Poor Mrs. Hyam and her husband are in their grave.

One troublesome boy has emigrated to New Zealand.

The other, redeemed by a good wife, bids fair to be a better man than he promised.

And of their little dark-eyed help what news?

Annie Lisle is no more.

"Dead?" you ask a neighbor.

"Well, yes, she thinks so. She had a fearful cough six winters back."

The old gossip will add:

"And the doctor did say as she was consumptive."

And here the thread is lost.

That Annie Lisle was claimed by her kith and kin, sent for education abroad, and ultimately turned out a lady, is a romance of which Cooper's Court never dreams.

When the Hyams left it, Ann sought a situation, and Cooper' Court lost sight of her.

And what of the Reverend Rupert Thorold? He was a poor man then.

He is a poor man still.

A very short time after he gave little Annie Lisle her Christmas box, he left the Court, securing only by that means, he felt, his peace of mind and purity of heart, for the poor child whom he had counselled, assumed each day a deeper interest in his eyes.

He listened for her step on the stairs, for the sound of her voice, for the rustle of her dress.

Day by day this intensity of feeling deepened, until in his right principle Rupert Thorold determined to leave Cooper's Court.

This resolution was well-nigh impeded by his little dark-eyed heroine, who innocently, childlike, threw herself at his feet, and implored him to take her with him.

It was the fourteenth of February, cold and damp.

The curate had just hastily finished his cup of coffee, and was strapping his portmanteau, when Annie Lisle, flushed and sobbing, rushed into the room.

"Oh, don't go—don't go, Mr. Thorold!" she cried passionately. "You're the only one as ever speaks a kind word to me."

"But — but I must, Annie," stammers the curate, pale with emotion.

"Then—then, take me with you. I can make your breakfast and dust your rooms," cries the poor girl, piteously.

"Annie, Annie!" exclaims Mr. Thorold, gravely, catching both her hands in his and looking into her dark eyes with strong feeling. "You are a child."

"I am over seventeen," she pouts. "Old enough and strong enough to do a great deal—"

"Of mischief," he says with a sad smile. "My dear," he adds quickly, "always think of me kindly, as one who cared for you even while he left you, never better. Good bye, and God bless you."

Longing to hold her in all her rags to his heart, Mr. Thorold, with one light kiss on her brow, quitted the house, leaving behind him in his pride, all that was most precious.

And there the poor child lay, clasping and kissing the precious gift — his gift, that on a black ribbon lay always around her neck.

And thus the romance of ten years ago was over.

But it was Rupert Thorold's one love dream, and sometimes now in his Yorkshire curacy, he, so invulnerable to the shafts of all the north country belles, would sit and dream in the twilight of Annie Lisle's raven hair and hazel eyes.

He was in one of these fits of deep musing, when the past came back to him most vividly, as the shadows of night fell and darkened his small study,

Rupert Thorold had good health, but he had contrived to catch a cold at a funeral, which had culminated in a severe cough, that made him nervous, and he shivered as he sat alone in his armchair.

"Poor Annie," he murmured, softly and fondly to himself. "Strange if my end were to be like hers — consumption they said. Ah, well, she will know then, when all is over, that I left her, because I loved her too dearly; my darling," he whispered, and then he dozed again and woke with a start, to fancy it was Annie who entered, but it was only the old housekeeper bringing his tea.

"Then you won't go out to-night, sir?" she said. "Shall I send them word, as your cough is but poorly?"

"To-night?" he repeated, bewildered, then, with sudden recollection, "Oh, yes, do, Mrs. Hardy—or stay, I'll write a note and send Tom with it, if you'll light my lamp."

In a few minutes, the curate had written a polite missive and dispatched it by the housekeeper's son, to the Honorable Mrs. Astley, of Astley Court.

"There, my dear, you'll have to wait a little longer for a sight of your hero," cried Mrs. Astley, tossing the letter to one of a group of young ladies, who were discussing some knotty point beneath the chandelier in the centre of the room.

One, the handsomest, most queenly-looking, and apparently the oldest, took the note, read it with a quivering lip, and then came up to Mrs. Astley—her rich velvet robe trailed around her — the pearls in her dark hair were real and costly; rings glittered on her white fingers.

"Mrs. Astley," she whispered; "you see what he says—he is ill, cannot come," and her bosom heaved.

The diamond cross on it rose and fell with each pulsation.

"Conny, you foolish girl," said the wise matron, looking keenly at the heiress, and having a cousin and nephew both desirous of attaining the prize.

"I never thought he'd come—cough? Yes, he's got a cough and looks ill, but——"

"Oh, of course it's nothing to you," replied the lady of the diamond cross, with a fierce flash in her dark eyes, and she turned away angrily and left the room.

She ran upstairs with a full heart, and sitting on her window seat looking into the park beyond, which the room was faintly gilding, she held a revision of her life.

She saw herself a little white-capped, long-mittened girl at the Foundling, then the dirty little scrub of the Hyams in Cooper's Court, then the lady's maid to old Madame Montpensier in Paris, who had left her money, with which she had given herself—a brilliant, quick-witted woman—some education, then the advertisement which had attracted her notice, and which when followed up, had proved her to be the illegitimate child of Sir Edmund Gaveston, whose last days on earth she was called to soothe, and who left her sole heiress of his name and wealth.

So had run the fate of Annie Constance Lisle Gaveston up to the present time, when, instead of being one of the white-robed angels her lover pictured, she had grown into a splendidly handsome velvet-robed woman of six and twenty, heart whole, in spite of many assaults upon it, and true as steel to the one love of her early youth, as she shows by the intensity with which she draws forth from the bosom of her dress a faded black ribbon with a tarnished coin suspended from it and kisses it passionately.

"It is Valentine's Eve," she murmurs.

"Ten years ago he gave me this. I wonder if he would know me now. And they say he is not married."

As she murmurs this, a deep blush spreads over her cheek and brow, for Annie Gaveston is a pure woman, and she feels now with deeper comprehension how much she had offered to this man, and how much he had refused—for her sake refused it, she felt sure.

"I must see him," she cries impatiently, "if only to thank him for all his goodness to me when a child. I so depended on his coming to-night."

And she sighs.

* * * * * * * * * * *

"Won't be down again; got a headache."

"Too bad!" muttered half a dozen male voices in Mrs. Astley's drawing room.

Mrs. Astley drew her husband aside.

"Charlie," she whispered, "Conny's put out, because the hero of her youthful days, Rupert Thorold, has written to say he won't come — cold or something. I wish one of you men would go and rouse him up."

"I'll go my dear; it's only just across the park," said the good-natured husband. "Oh, nonsense! he must come."

And, in less than half an hour, Mr. Thorold, rather pale, with a nervous hacking cough, stood in the drawing room at Astley Court.

There was a listlessness about Mr. Thorold which showed that he had yielded rather from politeness than inclination, for, in compliance with her wish, nothing had been said as to whom he was to meet.

When a little polite conversation had been carried on, the young people had organized a dance, and Mrs. Astley had stolen up to her little one, and from thence to the chamber of her contumacious young friend, the Honorable Charles Astley drew his clerical guest, by arrangement with his wife, into the library.

So it came to pass that, with the simple words "excuse me," the squire, after showing the curate a new picture in which he had invested, left the room.

Mr. Thorold occupied the interval with his handkerchief and his cough.

When he looked up, a lady stood in the room, gazing at him; a grand, tall, velvet-robed dame, whose gorgeous starry eyes gave him the first consciousness of involuntary infidelity to the heroine of his youth.

So they stood opposite each other, till the past rushed back upon each in one moment, and the voice that cried—

"Mr. Thorold, don't you know me?" was Annie Lisle's.

The touch on his hand was Annie Lisle's

The gorgeous beauty of those lustrous eyes belonged to Annie Lisle.

Yet the step he took was backwards; his eyes were averted from hers after the first flash into his, and though she still clung to his hand, there was no response to her passionate outpouring.

"Mr. Thorold, you have forgotten me," came almost with a wild cry from her lips; "but those days when you were so good to me have ever been held in remembrance. I am not now a little, idle, worthless, untaught thing as I was then, but I have never, never forgotten your goodness to me in that terrible past. See, I have kept the coin you gave me, and will keep it here till I die."

She drew it from her white bosom.

"My darling," he murmured, "I was staggered—I had fancied you—worshipped you so long as one of God's angels, that I——"

"That you were disappointed to find I was not one!" she murmured, pouting.

"No, no!"

And he laughed.

She pressed close beside him, laid her hand on his shoulder, and looked intently in his face.

"You are ill, Mr. Thorold."

He started.

"Aye, I believe sick unto death, Annie."

"No, no!" she cried, winding her arms round him, "it must not be. Everything that earth can give shall be yours."

Then she stopped, and again the bright flush suffused her cheek and brow.

He threw his arms round her and strained her to him.

Her head drooped on his shoulder.

"Dearest," he whispered, you have been the one love of my life. From first to last—the one woman in the world to me."

"Rupert," she answered, softly, "you see I have not forgotten your name. I have said it gently over to myself ever since we last parted. Dear Rupert, I am rich now. Let me try and pay back some of your goodness to me in those old days.

"I think I can teach you to live for me," she murmured.

Strange to say, as heart to heart they stood for another half hour, Rupert Thorold was not heard to cough, and when a year afterwards his infant son was put into his arms, he was a stout, hale man, the clerical squire of Gaveston Court—beloved by all, and the very idol of his young wife's heart.

Yes, there was no fear that Valentine Rupert *fils*, dear though he was to his mother, would ever eclipse Rupert *père* in her eyes.

Her husband was the one love of her life, to whom she owed her first happiness — indeed, all that had ever gladdened her strange existence.

"Rupert," she said, one day three years after their marriage, with her head on his shoulder, and her splendid eyes uplifted to his, while she toyed with the coin that still religiously kept its place on her white neck, "Rupert, dear, St. Valentine's Day has been an eventful one to us.

"On St. Valentine's Day you left me for ten years, and I hung this around my neck, and have worn it ever since."

And she fingered the relic of the past lying so sacredly on her bosom.

"On St. Valentine's Day you came back to me, and on St. Valentine's Day our boy was born. It is the most blessed of all the saints' days to us."

Mr. Thorold arched his brows.

"I never could make out Annie, that Valentine was an orthodox saint; but for all his mercies and blessings to us, we will canonize him, my dear wife, and prove, what we truly are, most heartily thankful. He shall be reverenced by us and by our children for evermore."

GOD SHIELD THE POOR.

The cruel wind is abroad to-night;
 How it howls in its frantic glee!
How it chases the flakes, in its conscious might,
That flee away in sore affright
 From the giddy, wild boree!

It shakes the lattice and tries the latch,
 It beats on the window-pane;
It tugs and pulls at the time-worn thatch;
But the rushes laugh, "You have met your match!
 Ha! ha! You rage in vain!"

It grasps the cloak of the passer-by
 But he draws it closer still.
It plucks at his beard with a pettish cry,
But he only laughs, "Oh, fie! Oh, fie!"
 For he feels not its bitter chill.

But one in a doorway crouches low
 Ah! cold is his bed of stone!
How dances the wind! How it shouts, "Ho! ho!"
As it tosses the tatters to and fro,
 And jeers at its victim's moan!

A shattered casement and broken door
 Are in league with the heartless gale
It enters the garret with angry roar,
And spurns the wretches that litter the floor,
 And shiver, and shrink, and quail.

God shield the poor from the cruel wind!
 The word is on every tongue;
But the hand is wont to lag behind
With the deed that would gladden the eyes long blind
 With tears from sad hearts wrung.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

THE Siamese, like the Chinese, wear their finger-nails very long. The ladies sometimes have them tipped with silver.

THE simplicity of the Great Republic is evidently on the wane. An *Elite Directory* of New York is announced—the volume contains a list of the "best" families.

A CORRESPONDENT points out a curious yet perfect anagram—"Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne, Baronet," transposes into "You horrid butcher Orton, biggest rascal here."

ARTIFICIAL nests have been suspended in many of the trees in the Bois de Vincennes, near Paris, with a view of attracting birds that may prove useful in destroying insects. The attempt was first made last year, with the result of filling about sixty per cent. of the nests.

A RELIC FROM THE "ATLANTIC"—A curious relic of the wreck of the "Atlantic" was brought to light a few days since in the shape of a passenger's ticket printed half in German and half in English, from that ill-fated steamship. It was taken from the stomach of a preserved salmon in the possession of Mr. James Notman, of St. John, N. B.

WHITE COAL.—They have found in Australia a new natural fuel to which the name of white coal has been given, though it is really a felted mass of immemorial vegetable fibre made much harder than peat by an infiltration of exceedingly fine sand. It covers great tracts of land, near the surface, and burns easily, with a beautifully bright flame.

A WIDE-AWAKE Aberdeen minister, who found his congregation going to sleep on Sunday before he had fairly commenced, suddenly stopped and exclaimed, "Brethren, this isn't fair; it isn't giving a man half a chance. Wait till I get along, and then if I ain't worth listening to, go to sleep; but don't before I get commenced give a man a chance."

IN 1585 there was an old house near Billingsgate where there was a regular school to teach boy to pick pockets. The streets swarmed with pickpockets, from whose ingenuity Fagin himself might have learned a lesson. They used to put a horn thimble on the thumb to support the edge of the knife when cutting away purses.

A KENTUCKY legislator was recently missing for three days. The fourth found him back in his seat. To the inquiries of his friends he replied that he had been sick. Being asked what the matter was, "Well," said he, "some folks call it nervous chills, others pronounce it a kind of affection of the heart, but, to be candid, I call it a plain case of old-fashioned drunk."

SOME one has recently published the following *data* in regard to the growth of men and women: Average weight of boys at birth, $6\frac{1}{2}$ pounds; average weight of girls at birth, $6\frac{1}{4}$ pounds; average weight of males at twenty, 143 pounds; average weight of females at twenty, 120 pounds. Men acquire greatest weight, on an average, at thirty-five, weighing 152 pounds; women, at fifty, weighing 128 pounds.

FOXY.—A Paladilhe relates that foxes are tormented by fleas, and when the infliction becomes unbearable they gather a mouthful of moss and slowly walk backwards into the nearest steam until only the mouth is left above the surface of the water. The fleas meanwhile take refuge on the little island of moss, and when the fox is satisfied they have all embarked he opens his mouth and the moss drifting away with its freight the wily animal regains the bank, evidently satisfied at his freedom from his tormentors.

SERVANTS' REGISTERS AT LIEGE.—The servants' agencies at Liége keeping register of the characters of many of the householders in the town, from one of which the following extracts have been made:—"Madame has a light hand. Monsieur is too familiar. The bread-and-butter are locked up, and the servant must spend her wages to get a full meal. No presents are given. There is a perambulator to wheel. The parents always think that the children are in the right. One is sent on curious errands. There is but a thin cotton counterpane on the servant's bed. One is not allowed to go out," &c., &c.

SPANISH GIPSIES.—It is impossible not to be struck by the originality and cleverness of the gipsies even in their vices. A gipsy man was at confession one day, and, whilst he was confessing, he spied in the pocket of the monk's habit a silver snuff-box, and stole it. "Father," he said, immediately, "I accuse myself of having stolen a silver snuff-box." "Then, my son, you must certainly restore it." "Will you have it yourself, my Father?" "I? Certainly not, my son!" "The fact is," proceeded the gipsy, "that I have offered it to its owner, and he has refused it." "Then you can keep it with a good conscience," answered the father.

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.—A well-known wealthy Parisian has had himself painted by an eminent artist, "As he was," "As he is," and "As he will be." "As he was" represents him at the age of twenty-five, a poor wretch in ragged garments, with his toes peeping through holes in shoes, slinking, half famished, by the side of the wall. "As he is" figures him fat and jolly as an alderman, well dressed, with gold chains decking his waistcoat and diamond rings blazing on his fingers. And in "As he will be" he is made a hideous corpse. Not the least singular feature of such a singular freak is the fact that he has the paintings hung in his drawing-room.

MAKING LIQUEUR BONBONS.—The manner in which liqueur bonbons are made is extremely simple. The sugar preparation, reduced to a fine powder, is spread over a tray, and upon this single drops of the liqueur are allowed to fall; the tray is then shaken, and the pulverized sugar forms a coating round the several drops of fluid, which can be increased at will to any thickness. The manufacture of bonbons is carried on all over France, and in Paris alone there are nearly 200 shops devoted to it, employing over a thousand hands. The men get from a franc and a half to eight francs a day, and the women from one to four francs; while the amount of indirect industry, such as making boxes, packets, crackers, and fancy goods, is enormous. The last published statistics show that the sweet-meat trade of France exceeds twelve million francs. Perhaps the greatest marvel is to find that the country itself expends ten millions of this sum.—*The Engineer.*

WOMAN'S RESENTMENT.—Entire reconciliation is difficult with a woman. She invariably keeps certain reserves. When she has once parted from you in spirit, she will hardly return. Though she seems to, she does not. She gives her hand again—perhaps her lips; but the heart is no longer in one nor the soul in the other. Kiss her you have once roundly quarrelled with —if it be not a mere lover's quarrel — and you will find the statue under the crimson curve, the chill of the marble through the bounding blood. A keen observer may determine in society whether you have had discord with a woman you meet. However perfect the breeding, however disciplined the manners, the past discord leaves a shadow that will not be lifted. The old wound may be closed; it is not healed, nor can it be

by the highest skill in spiritual surgery. Frequently men like one another better after fighting; women never, be the foe of either sex. With these the bloom of favor is taken off, not to be restored. They feel, though they may not say or even think it, that slight or injury admits of no atonement. Woman reads the proverb: To err is feminine, to forgive impossible.

OLDEST WORKED WOOD IN THE WORLD.—Probably the oldest timber in the world, which has been subjected to the use of man, is that which is found in the ancient temples of Egypt. It is found in connection with stone-work, which is known to be at least 4,000 years old. The wood, and the only wood used in the construction of their temples, is in the form of ties, holding the end of one stone to another in its upper surface. When two blocks were laid in place, then it appears that an excavation about an inch deep was made in each block, into which an hour-glass-shaped tie was driven. It is, therefore, very difficult to force any stone from its position. The ties appear to have been the Tamarisk, or Shittim wood, of which the ark was constructed, a sacred tree in ancient Egypt, and now very rarely found in the valley of the Nile. These dove-tailed ties are just as sound now as on the day of their insertion. Although fuel is extremely scarce in that country, these bits of wood are not large enough to make it an object with the Arabs to heave off layer a after layer of heavy stone for so small a prize. Had they been of bronze, half the old temples would have been destroyed ages ago, so precious would they have been for various purposes.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

MR. J. REIDY, an inventor, has introduced a new pick for excavating and other purposes. By the introduction of a socket-head on the end of the shaft of the pick, a taper hole passes through the head and handle, through which a cast-steel blade or tool can be inserted and withdrawn at pleasure, at a saving of time and expense as a number of cast-steel blades can be taken with a pick. It is said the blade will resist the hardest substance, and the head or body will always remain fit for use.

DECORATING WOOD BY PRINTING.—Mr. Thos. Whitburn, at a recent meeting of the English Society of Arts, described a process, recently patented by him, adapted to express, on flat surfaces of wood, effects of light figures on a dark ground, or dark figures on a light ground, or of figures light and dark in parts on a ground intermediate in shade. The designs or patterns are engraved in the ordinary way on box-wood, and, from the blocks, the wood is imprinted on a common hand printing press with printer's ink. The process is capable of being used with two or more colors, and is designed for the ornamentation of door panels, furniture, etc.

HOW TO TREAT BURNS.—The less that simple cuts, bruises and burns are meddled with, the better. If they are kept clean and excluded from the air, nature will take care of the healing process. The salves and lotions so commonly used are generally irritating rather than beneficial, and hinder rather than hasten the cure. For cuts, a little court-plaster to keep the edges of the skin together; for bruises, wet cloths; for burns, a covering of dry wheathen flour are usually all the treatment, and the very best, that can be used. If from an unhealthy state of the body or from external irritation, inflammation is produced, something more may be required, the remedy varying with the special case.

A CASE OF OPIUM CURE.—*The Druggist*, of London, says that a young lady who had been long accustomed to the use of opium applied to an eminent physician to make hypodermic injections of morphia. He commenced by making the injections as desired, of morphia and water; by degrees the quantity of morphia was lessened without her knowledge, until within a few days nothing but pure water was injected; after each injection she would lapse into a quiet sleep, in the same manner as she had been accustomed to do under the actual use of morphia. This treatment was continued for several months, during which time tonics had been used, to strengthen the system and bring about a healthy condition after being so long a time under the influence of opium. When he considered it safe to do so, he told her plainly that she had not taken a particle of morphia for several months, and was entirely free from its influence; this statement of course was received with intense surprise, as well as unbounded joy. The lady is to-day entirely free from any desire for opium.

A GERMAN invention, recently patented, and which may be useful to draughtsmen and others, has for its object the rendering more or less transparent of paper, used for writing or drawing, either with ink, pencil or crayon, and also gives the paper such a surface that such writing or drawing may be completely removed by washing without in any way injuring the paper. The object of making the paper translucent is, that when used in schools, the scholar can trace the copy and thus become proficient in the formation of letters and outlines without the instruction usually necessary; and it may be used in any place where tracings may be required, as by laying the paper over the object to be copied it can be plainly seen. Writing paper is employed by preference, its preparation consisting in first saturating it with benzine, and then immediately coating the paper with a suitable rapidly drying varnish, before the benzine can evaporate. The application of varnish is by preference made by plunging the paper in a vat of it, but it may be applied with either a brush or sponge. The varnish is prepared of the following ingredients: Boiled bleached linseed oil, 20 pounds; lead shavings, 1 pound; oxide of zinc, 5 pounds; Venetian turpentine, ½ pound; mix and boil eight hours. After coiling, strain and add white gum copal, 5 pounds, and gum sandarac, ½ pound. Thus prepared, the paper will be found to possess all the requisites for use, as stated above.

ALL housekeepers have some time realized the difficulty of lighting a fire in a still, damp morning, when the chimney will not draw, and vigorous blowing proves ineffectual. Science explains the trouble as "caused by the difficulty encountered in overcoming the inertia of the long column of air in the pipe or chimney, by the small column of air that can be forced up through the interstices of wood and coal, at the bottom of which the fire is kindled." This may be remedied by first lighting a few bits of shavings or paper placed upon the top; thus, by the heated air forcing itself into the chimney and establishing there an upward current, the room is kept free from the gas or smoke which is so apt to fill the room; and the fire can then be lighted from below, with good success.

CRAMP.—When cramp occurs in the limbs, warm friction with the naked hand, or with the following stimulating liniment, will generally be found to succeed in removing it: Take of water of ammonia, or of spirit of hartshorn, one ounce; olive oil, two ounces. Shake them together till they unite. When the stomach is affected, brandy, ether, laudanum, or tincture of ginger affords the speediest means of cure. The following draught may be taken with great advantage: Laudanum, forty or fifty drops: tincture of ginger, two drachms; syrup of poppies, one drachm; cinnamon or mint water, one ounce. Mix for a draught. To be repeated in an hour, if necessary. In severe cases, hot flannels, moistened with compound camphor liniment and turpentine, or a bladder nearly filled with hot water, at a hundred degrees, or hundred and twenty degrees Fahr., should be applied to the pit of the stomach; bathing the feet in warm water, or applying a mustard poultice, to them, is frequently of great advantage. The best preventatives, when the cause of cramp is constitutional, are warm tonics, such as the essence of ginger and camomile, Jamaica ginger in powder, &c., avoiding fermented liquors and green vegetables, especially for supper, and wearing flannel next the skin.

A NOVEL STREET RAILWAY.—A merchant in Chicago has recently patented a device for a street railway, dependant upon gravity for the motive power. The railway itself consists of a series of inclined tracks, elevated upon a framework of heavy pillars and trestles, upon which the wheels which carry the car travel. The central posts are heavy timbers, twelve inches square, into which are set the cross joists which support the double tracks on each side. The inner track is set one foot from the post, and the outer is eighteen inches from the inner. The tracks are set on beds, two by fourteen inches, and are braced to the trestle work and to each other. The cars do not run on the tracks, but a set of four wheels with grooved edges travel on the half-round rails, and the car is suspended from the axles of these wheels by wire rope. On starting at the highest point of the first section of track the car is hung about one foot clear of the ground, and as the sections are one mile long or more, and the grade is about twenty-five feet to the mile, it is evident that the car would strike the ground within a very short distance. Two obviate this a large wheel, five feet in diameter, is placed at the front end of the car, on the side. This wheel is turned by spoke, like a ship's wheel, and the bold pilot of the car occupies a little platform where he can keep a lookout for passengers and work the machine. As the wheel descends the incline, the operator winds up the car a distance corresponding to the vertical fall, by means of his large wheel and a series of pinions wheels which turn the shaft to which the supporting rope is attached. The car is thus kept constantly at the same distance from the ground at which it started, and the exertion necessary is not great, owing to the lightness of the car and the leverage obtained by the gearing. Each car carries ten persons, for each of whom a seat is provided with a sliding door for each seat, and, when they are filled, no more passengers can be carried. The cars weigh about 500 pounds each, and cost from $75 to $100. It is thought that the road will not cost over $2,000 per mile where the incline is not over twenty feet to the mile.

CAISSA'S CASKET.

SATURDAY, May 9th, 1874.

**** All communications relating to Chess must be addressed* "CHECKMATE," London, Ont.

CORRESPONDENCE.

J. A. RODIER.—Thanks for problem. If correct, it shall appear soon. Examine our problems and games this week; they will be found interesting. Shall we count on you for the tournament?

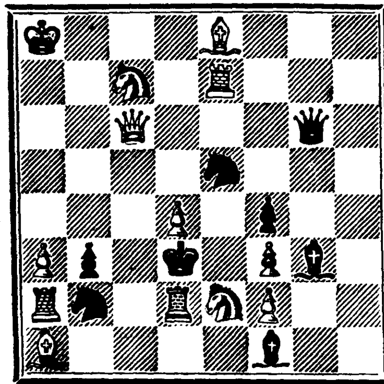
J. CHARLTON, Newcastle.—*Chronicle* to hand containing your excellent chess and draughts departments.

CONUNDRUMS.

No. 61.

BY F. C. COLLINS.

BLACK.



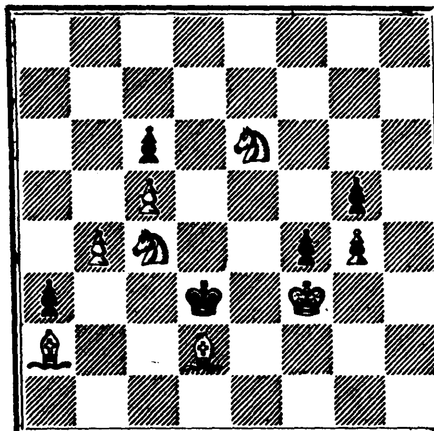
WHITE.

White to play and mate in two moves.

No. 62.

BY R. W. JOHNSON.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play and mate in three moves.

SOLUTIONS.

No. 53.

BY F. C. COLLINS.

White.	*Black.*
1 R to Q B 3rd	1 P to K 6th best
2 B to Q Kt 1st	2 Kt takes P best
3 R to Q B 2nd	3 K to K 5th
4 R to B 4th dble ch and mate.	

No. 54.

BY REV. L. W. MUDGE.

White.	*Black.*
1 Q takes Q P.	1 Any.
2 Mate acc.	

CAISSAN CONTESTS.

No. 28.

The following game played between those celebrated English players, Messrs. Macdonnell and Bird, we take from the *Westminster Papers.* The notes are by Mr. Whisker:

Muzio Gambit.

White. MR. MACDONELL.	*Black.* MR. BIRD.
1 P to K 4th	1 P to K 4th
2 P to K B 4th	2 P takes P
3 Kt to K B 3rd	3 P to K Kt 4th
4 B to Q B 4th	4 P to K Kt 5th
5 Castles	5 P takes Kt
6 Q takes P	6 Q to K 2nd (a)
7 P to Q 4th	7 Kt to Q B 3rd
8 B takes P at K B 4	8 Kt takes Q P (b)
9 Q to Q 3rd	9 B to Kt 2nd (c)
10 B takes Q B P	10 Kt to K R 3rd (d)
11 P to K 5th	11 Q to Q B 4th
12 B to Q 6th	12 Q to Q Kt 3rd (e)
13 K to R sq	13 K Kt to K B 4th
14 K to Q B 3rd	14 Q takes Q Kt P
15 B takes K B P ch (f)	15 K to Q sq
16 Q takes Q Kt	16 Kt takes Q
17 Kt to Q 5th	Resigns.

NOTES.

(a) This defence to the Muzio, which we believe is invariably adopted by Mr. Bird, was brought into notice by Messrs. Kling and Horwitz, who published an analysis of it in their admirable book on End Games. This analysis was entitled "The Defeat of the Muzio Gambit;" but it proved that this formidable opening was not to be so easily disposed of. The inventors had, as not unfrequently happens, overlooked the proper move. 6 Q to K 2nd for the second player is bad, and ought to lose the game. The best defence is that beginning

	6 Q to K B 3rd
7 P to K 5th	7 Q takes P
8 P to Q 3rd	8 B to K R 3rd, &c.

(b) It would have been better had the Bishop been brought out at once as K Kt 2nd. This capture only serves to bring White's pieces to the front.

(c) The game is virtually over. There is no better move than this, though it entails the loss of a Pawn and the further detriment of Black's position.

(d) The impossibility of bringing out this Knight satisfactorily is the great defect—a defect without remedy—in the Kling-Horwitz defence.

(e) The Queen is now shut out, as well as the rest of Black's pieces.

(f) Mr. Macdonnell has played excellently throughout. The combination, of which this is the first move, forms an unusually pretty termination to a lively game.

No. 29.

Played between Messrs. STEINITZ and B. and taken from the same source as No. 28.

Allgaier Gambit.

White. MR. STEINITZ.	*Black.* MR. B.
1 P to K 4th	1 P to K 4th
2 P to K B 4th	2 P takes P
3 Kt to K B 3rd	3 P to K Kt 4th
4 P to K R 4th	4 P to Kt 5th
5 Kt to K 5th	5 Kt to K B 3rd
6 B to B 4th	6 P to Q 4th
7 P takes P	7 B to Q 3rd
8 P to Q 4th	8 Kt to R 4th (a)
9 Kt to Q B 3rd	9 Q to K 2nd (b)
10 B to Q Kt 5th ch	10 Kt to Q sq (c)
11 Castles	11 B takes Kt
12 P takes B	12 Q takes R P
13 R takes P (d)	13 Kt takes R
14 B takes Kt	14 P to Kt 6th
15 Q to K B 3rd	15 R to K Kt sq (e)
16 P to K 6th	16 P takes P
17 B takes K Kt P (f)	17 Q to K Kt 4th
18 Q to K B 7th	18 P to K 4th
19 Q takes R ch	19 Q takes Q
20 B to K R 4th and mate next move.	

NOTES.

(a) The style of defence of which this and the three preceding moves are the essentials, was once deemed irresistible. Its popularity dated from the match between Messrs. Lowenthal and Harrwitz, in which the former employed it with decisive success, and it lived in favor long after the publication of Staunton's "Praxis." It is now as completely exploded as the Sicilian opening, or the Damiano Gambit. The present game forcibly illustrates the inevitable triumph of the attack when properly conducted. Some advocates of this defence preferred to play Kt to R 4th first, and some the Q to K 2nd; but the result ought always to be the same.

(b) If the Knight advances to K Kt 6th, White may advantageously answer with B takes K B P, making Black a present of the Rook, or he may steer a steadier course by moving K R to R 2nd.

(c) 10 K to B sq is better.

(d) Much better than B takes P. Black is compelled to take the Rook; otherwise he could not try his only chance, the advance of the Pawn to Knight's sixth. By this sacrifice White retains his deadly Queen's Bishop, which in this situation is worth much more than the Rook.

(e) Checkmate being threatened by the White Queen's Bishop, it would be fatal on the part of Black to check with his Queen.

(f) Very fine indeed; if either Queen or Rook take the Bishop, mate follows obviously at once. The remaining moves, and indeed the whole game, on the part of White, are very elegant.

CHIPS.

We have heard from several who will join our tourney.

The prospects of an American Chess Congress during the coming summer are said to be encouraging. It will probably be held at Chicago.

Mr. T. M. Brown, the celebrated problem maker, leaves New York for Great Britain about the first of June. Mr. Brown is a pianist of fine taste and culture and is a member of a prominent concert company.

Captain Crawley says:—"Chess is, of all in-door games, the most ancient and honorable. It is, in fact, the first of scientific recreations. Chance is an element of all other games, but in Chess pure skill, knowledge, and practice invariably triumph over rashness and inexperience. As a mental exercise, the game of Chess has no equal, and it has this advantage over all other games, that it is seldom or never played for large stakes, or made the subject of rash wagers. It has been said that a first-rate Chess player would make a good general; for the same quality of mind which enables the Chess player to dispose his men advantageously upon the mimic battle-field, represented by the chequered board, would serve to marshal a host of living warriors upon the tented plain.

There on the pigmy field two armies spread;
This, pale as new fall'n snow—that, blushing red.
Intense the interest that their leaders take,
As though a kingdom were indeed at stake."

$3.00 LORD BROUGHAM TELESCOPE.

Will distinguish the time by a church clock five miles, a FLAGSTAFF and WINDOW BARS 10 MILES; landscape twenty miles distant, and will define the SATELLITES OF JUPITER and the PHASES OF VENUS, &c., &c. This extraordinary CHEAP AND POWERFUL glass is of the best make and possesses ACHROMATIC LENSES and is equal to a telescope costing $20.00. No STUDENT OR TOURIST should be without one. Sent Post free to all parts in the Dominion of Canada on receipt of price, $3.00

H. SANDERS,
Optician, &c.
163 St. James Street, Montreal.

Illustrated Catalogue 16 pages sent free for one stamp.

AVOID QUACKS.

A victim of early indiscretion, causing nervous debility, premature decay, &c., having tried in vain every advertised remedy, has discovered a simple means of self-cure, which he will send free to his fellow-sufferers. Address, J. H. REEVES, 78 Nassau St., New York. 2-13-1 an

Printed and published by the DESBARATS LITHOGRAPHIC AND PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1, Place d'Armes Hill, and 319, St. Antoine St., Montreal.

HUMOROUS SCRAPS.

AIR of importance—One's first breath.

POWER OF EVIL.—A power of attorney.

PAWNBROKER'S MOTTO.—Always keep advancing.

THE way to make a fire quite hot, is to keep it thoroughly coaled.

APPROPRIATE.—Very blonde hair is known as the "light fantastic tow."

THE colour of the wind was discovered by the man who went out and found it blew.

WHY is Hymen represented with a torch?—To throw a light upon those little imperfections love is blind to.

COOING is well enough before marriage, but the billing doesn't come till after; and then it comes from tradesmen.

How to become practically acquainted with the "Rule of Three"—Live with your wife, mother, and mother-in-law.

A MAN out West who has married and buried three sisters, now comes up smiling at the altar, having begun on a new family.

"Molly," said a farmer to his dairymaid, as she was about to commence cheese-making, "you'll never be able to proceed if you don't see your whey clear."

A CURIOUS FACT.—Two Dublin sisters, who are twins, have to be told everything together, for the young ladies are so alike that they couldn't be told apart.

AN embryo poet, who is certainly a close observer of human nature, remarks, "Time marches on with the slow, measured tread of a man working by the day."

AN old toper who had joined a temperance society said he was at a loss what to drink—he couldn't have anything to do with water because it is so constantly drunk now-a-days.

BOX FOR A CENTENARIAN.—Sir George Rose's doctor once gravely assured him that he would live to be a hundred; whereupon the baronet promptly remarked, "Then I suppose my coffin may be called a "cent'ry box."

A MODERN philosopher thinks it a mistake to suppose women have stronger attachments than men. A man is often attached to an old hat; but he asks, "who ever heard of a woman being attached to an old bonnet?"

ONE evening, at a Paris *café*, a group of idlers were discussing politics and people who change their opinions. "Well," said one, "I've never cried 'Long life anybody!'" "Quite so," remarked another; "but then you're a doctor.'

MADDENING.

Husband. "IF, AS I SAID BEFORE, MATILDA, YOU STILL CHERISHED THAT FEELING OF AFFECTION FOR ME WHICH YOU ONCE PROFESSED, MY WISH WOULD BE LAW TO YOU. I REPEAT IT, MATILDA—LAW!" *Matilda.* "LOR'!"

THE following epitaph, on a tombstone in a graveyard on the eastern shore of Maryland, touchingly commemorates the sad fate of a husband and the sorrow of his afflicted widow:—

"Almira, sorrowing, rears this marble slab
To her dear Ike, who died of eating crab."

RESPECT old age. If you have a maiden aunt forty years old, and she is passing herself off for a girl of twenty-three, there is no need for you to expose her. The more you respect her age, and keep quiet about it, the more she will respect you.

A LITTLE Aberdeen boy, who had been taught that time is money, appeared at the bank the other day, and remarked that he had an hour given him, and he would like to spend a quarter of an hour, and would take the change for the other three-quarters.

"DOES your arm pain you?" asked a witty lady of a gentleman, who, at a party, had thrown his arm across the back of her chair, so that it touched her shoulder. "No, madam, it doesn't pain me. But why do you ask?" "Oh, I noticed that it was out of place—that's all."

COURT NEWS.—A well-known lord was attached to a certain princess some time before he ventured to propose. This became known to her royal mother, and she invited him to dinner.

GEOGRAPHY.

"THE *DUTCH* COME FROM *RUSSIA*, DON'T THEY, MAUD?"
"NO, DEAR! ONLY THE *DUCHESSES*!"

TRUE LOVE—AT HER MAJESTY'S.

Leonora. OH, CHARLES! DO PRAY LOOK AT THE STAGE AND LISTEN TO THE MUSIC.

Charles (not married yet, but in hopes). OH, LEONORA! I SEEM TO FEEL THE MUSIC SO MUCH BETTER LOOKING AT YOU.

During dessert she handed him a very fine pear, with the simple words, "Marie Louise." He took the hint.

"WHERE'S that twelfth juror?" exclaimed an Idaho judge, on the Court's resuming business after a recess, scowling as he spoke at the eleven jurors in the box, one of whom rose and said, "Please, judge, it's Ike Simmons as is gone. He had to go on private business; but he's left his vuddick with me!"

A YOUNG BLACKSMITH wrote his advertisement, stating that all orders in his business would be promptly executed; but it came out, "All others in this business will be promptly executed." On seeing this fearful notice, an old blacksmith threw up his hands, and exclaimed, "Has it come to this, after thirty years of honest toil?"

THOSE PRINTERS AGAIN!—A poet who wrote a flaming poem on martyrdom, in which occurred the line—

"See the pale martyr in his sheet of fire,"

was cut to the heart when he saw it come out in the village paper—

"See the tall martyr with his shirt on fire."

A GENTLEMAN brought home some pâté guimauve for his wife the other evening. His wife wears false teeth. The lady helped herself generously to the sticky sweetmeat, and planted both rows of teeth in it. There they remained. Strenuous were her efforts to release them, but she was not successful. She wanted her mouth free that she might say something to him. She wanted to say something to him that the gum not only prevented, but the tone of which from its prominent quality it thickened. But she could not get her jaws apart. Then she went to her bedroom, and dropped the whole mass, teeth and gum, into a basin. Again she looked at him as if she was on the point of saying something he would be interested in, but every effort was broken up and destroyed by the orphaned jaws. Imagine a woman—a direct descendant of Eve—in such a fix. Think of the mighty thoughts surging and battling through her brain; think of the torrent of eloquence bursting from her throat, and striking out into the air a vapor; think of the blazing eyes, the distended nostrils, the trembling frame, the nervous hands. Picture her thus, and go and marry a girl with a set of false teeth; but if you do, don't bring home pâté guimauve.