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"THEY ARE SO ENGROSSED WITH ONE ANOTHER THAT FOR THE MOMENT THEY DO NOT PERCEIVE HER."

"NO INTENTIONS."

BY FLORENCE MARRIAT.

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

CHAPTER IX.

"Lord Muiraven, my love—friend of our new member, staying with Sir John Coot—desires an introduction to you," continues Colonel Mordaunt, in explanation, as he perceives that his wife and her new acquaintance both look awkward, and neither smile at nor address each other, as is usual under similar circumstances. But Irene's head is swimming, and all power of action, or of acting, has deserted her.

She tries to smile, but the effort dies away in a sickly flicker about the corners of her mouth.

She tries to speak, but no sound issues from her trembling lips except a nervous cough. She hears the words her husband utters, but her mind is rendered incapable of understanding them.

For in the first shock of this most unexpected meeting, she remembers nothing, except that Eric Keir is there, and that he is Eric Keir. She forgets the reputed insult cast on her affections; the irreparable injury wrought poor Myra; her mother's misery; the orphanhood of her adopted child; forgets the silence, heartlessness, and shame that intervenes between them and their last meeting; and remembers only that the friend—the lover—from whose presence she has been exiled for two weary years has come back to her again.

Muiraven thinks no more than she does—the rencontre falls on him with quite as great a shock as it has done on her—but feeling that he must say something, he stammers forth mechanically the first words that come to his assistance:

"May I have the pleasure of this waltz with you?"

"Most happy!" rising from her seat.

"Going to dance together!" exclaimed Colonel Mordaunt, with unfeigned surprise and a good-tempered laugh; "well, this beats everything! You come out, Irene, under a vow not to stir from this sofa all the evening; and when, after considerable trouble, I find some one with similar tastes to sit by and talk to you (I have offered to introduce Lord Muiraven to all the prettiest girls in succession, but he refused my good offices), the first thing I hear is that you're going to spin round the room like a couple of teetotums!"

"Not if you do not wish it, Philip," says Irene, drawing back, and already repenting of her bewildered acquiescence.

"My dear child, what nonsense! I like nothing better than to see you enjoy yourself. And I think Lord Muiraven pays me a great

compliment in choosing my wife for a partner, when he has refused every one else. An old married woman like you, Irene—why, you should feel quite proud!"

"It is I," says Muiraven, looking steadily away from Irene and into the face of her husband, "it is I who have reason to feel proud at Mrs.—Mrs.—Mordaunt's gracious acceptance of me as a partner."

"Oh, very well! settle it between yourselves, my lord. For my part I must be off to find some less fastidious gentlemen to accept the honors you declined. No sinecure being master of the ceremonies, I can tell you. It's the first time I ever accepted such a responsibility, and I'll take good care it shall be the last. It is fortunate that I have not more of the ruder sex upon my hands, with your idiosyncrasies, my lord!"

"You shall have no further cause to complain of me," replies Muiraven, with an uneasy laugh, as the Colonel leaves them; "I will be as tractable as a lamb from this moment." And then the wretched victims are left alone in the crowd standing opposite each other, and neither daring to lift a glance from off the floor.

"Trois-temps, or deux-temps?" inquires Muiraven, in a low voice, as he puts his arm round her waist.

"Whichever you please."

"It must be as you like."

"Trois-temps, then."

The dance has been going on for some minutes, and they start at once. But by this time Irene's mind has recovered its balance, and enables her to realize the position in which her sudden nervousness has placed her. Clearly and forcibly she recalls with whom she is whirling about in such familiar contiguity; whose arm is firmly clasped about her waist; whose hand holds hers;—and with the recovered powers of judgment comes the recollection of that cruel day in Brook Street, when the scent of the stock and mignonette and the strains of the "Blue



Danube" mocked her agony, and her mother—her poor mother, who never recovered the shock which this man's insult caused her—came to her with the news that he had NO INTENTIONS!

No intentions! With the old hackneyed phrase comes back, in a flash, as it used to do in those past days, the remembrance of the looks, the words, the actions by which he had raised her hopes, and made her believe him to be false as themselves.

The looks, the words, the actions which were doubtless but a repetition of those by which he lured poor Myra to her doom!

"Oh! let me go!"

The words burst from her lips—not loudly, for even in our moments of worst agony, the stern conventionalities of society, which have been dinned into our ears from our youth upward, will make us remember where we are, — but with a ring in them of such unmistakable earnestness and entreaty, that he is forced to listen.

"Are you not well?"

"Yes!—no!—I cannot dance; we are all out of step!" she falters; and her pale face alarms him, so that he stops, and draws her arm within his own, and leads her, half blind with dizziness, to the sofa where she sat before.

Then he stands for a few moments by her side, looking awkward and fidgeting with the button of his glove, but making no further comment on her change of mind. She sits still, burning with contempt, ready to weep with indignation, and longing to be able to tell him to leave her presence and never enter it again—whilst he would give the world for courage to seek an explanation with her, or say one word in defence of his own conduct.

One word—one cry for forgiveness—the present opportunity is all his own, and he may never have another; and yet his tongue is glued to his mouth, and he cannot utter a syllable. They are in the midst of a crowd of strangers—the conventionalities of society surround them—and neither of them can speak, except conventionally. So much are we the slaves of custom.

"Are you really not going to dance again?" he says abruptly.

"I cannot—I do not wish to—"

"Then perhaps I had better—Colonel Mordaunt is so much in want of partners—perhaps I had better—join him."

"Yes!—do!"

"It is your wish, Mrs.—Mordaunt!"

"Yes!" And the next moment he has bowed and left her. They have yearned for, and mourned over one another for years; yet they can meet and part like other people, excepting that their words are characterised by more brusqueness than strangers would have dared to use. A sore heart often strives to hide itself by a short manner. It is only men who are indifferent to one another, and women who hate each other, that take the trouble to round their sentences and mind their periods. The two hearts are so flustered and so sore that they do not even observe the want of politeness with which they have questioned and answered one another.

"Why, Irene!—sitting down again, and Lord Mulraven gone!" exclaims the voice of Colonel Mordaunt, who is making the tour of the ball-room with another gentleman, unknown to her. She has been alone, she is hardly conscious for how long her thoughts have been so bitter and disturbed, but her equanimity is, in a great measure, restored, and she is enabled to answer her husband's inquiry with a smile which is not to be detected as untrue.

"Yes; I made him go, for my attempt at dancing was a failure—I am really not up to it, Philip."

"My poor girl! I am so sorry. We must talk to Dr. Robertson about this, Irene. By-the-way, let me introduce Mr. Holmes to you."

The stranger bows, and takes his station on the other side of her.

"And where is Lord Mulraven, then?" inquires Colonel Mordaunt; "dancing?"

"I suppose so: he went in search of you, I believe, to procure him a partner."

"There he is!" observes Mr. Holmes, "wandering about in an aimless manner at the end of the ball-room. He's the strangest fellow possible, Mulraven, and never does anything like another man. I shouldn't be in the least surprised to see him ask one of those girls to dance before he has had an introduction to her."

"He will scandalise her if he does. Glottonbury sticks up for the proprieties," says Irene quietly.

"I must go and save him from such a calamity as the scorn of Glottonbury!" exclaims her husband. "Besides, there are half-a-dozen pretty girls dying to be introduced to him in the other room." And off he hurries to the aid of his new acquaintance.

"Have you met Mulraven, Mrs. Mordaunt?"

"My husband brought him up to me just now."

"But before to-night, I mean."

"He used to visit at our house long ago, when my mother was alive; but he was not Lord Mulraven then."

"Ah! that was a sad thing, wasn't it? No one felt it more than he did."

"I don't know to what you allude."

"His elder brother's death. He was a jolly fellow; so much liked by all of us; and he was lost in an Alpine tour last summer. Surely you must have heard of it."

"Indeed I did not: I have been living very quietly down here for the last twelve months, and taking very little interest in what goes on

in the outside world. It must have been a very shocking death."

"Well, I am not so sure of that, you know. He was over the glacier and gone in a moment. I don't suppose he had even time for speculation on his coming fate. But Lord Norham felt the blow terribly; and this fellow, Eric—Keir he was called then, as of course you are aware—who was making a little tour in the United States with me—why, from the time we heard the news all our fun was over. I never saw a man more down in my life."

"I suppose he was very much attached to his brother."

"They are, without exception, the most attached family I ever knew. Mulraven has only one brother left now—Cecil, and he is to be married this season. I don't know what Lord Norham would do if my friend were to go in double harness also. Yet he ought to do it, you know—being heir to the title—oughtn't he?"

"Doubtless he will in time," she answers coldly.

"I'm afraid not—at least there seems no likelihood of it at present. We call him Banquo at our club: he always looks so gloomy in a ball-room. He is by no means what the Yankees call a 'gay and festive cuss,' Mrs. Mordaunt."

She makes no reply, but plucks the marabout trimming off the heading of her fan, and scatters it carelessly about the floor.

"But he's the best fellow in the world," continues Mr. Holmes, warming up at the sight of her apparent indifference; "the most kind-hearted, generous, and (when he chooses to come out of his shell) one of the cleverest men I ever met with."

"A paragon, in fact."

"How cynical you are! You are laughing at my enthusiasm. Now I shall not say another word about him; but should you ever happen to be thrown in his way, you will acknowledge that I am right. Here comes your husband again. I trust he is not going to drag me away from paradise to purgatory."

"Holmes, you must speak to your friend. He insists upon leaving the ball-room, and his departure will consign half the damsels of Glottonbury to despair."

"Just like Mulraven. No one has ever been able to keep him on duty for more than an hour. But I will go and reason with him. This is not pleasure, but business. He will ruin my reputation with my lady constituents."

"Philip, might I go home? I have such a dreadful headache," pleads Irene, as the new member disappears.

"Certainly, my darling, if you wish it. It must be stupid work looking on; but you are a good girl to have done as I asked you. I will go and tell Isabella you are ready."

"I shall be sorry to disturb her if she is enjoying herself."

"She is as tired as you are. Besides, she could hardly wait for me. I cannot leave until the very last." And he fetches his sister, and takes them down to the carriage together.

"You are very silent, Mrs. Mordaunt," observes Isabella, as they are driving homewards.

"What do you think of the entertainment?"

"Oh, don't ask me, please. I was in pain from the first moment to the last. I have no wish to think of it at all," she answers in a tone sufficient to make Miss Mordaunt hold her tongue until they stand in the lighted hall of Fen Court. There the ghastly pallor of her sister-in-law's face strikes her, and she cannot refrain from observing:

"Why, surely you must be ill. I never saw you look so white before."

"I am ill, Isabella. I have been so all the evening; and now the excitement is over, I suppose I look worse."

"Do let me get you something," urges her companion, with more interest than she is in the habit of expressing.

"No, thank you, dear. No medicine will do me any good. All that I want is rest—rest! And with a quiet 'good-night,' Irene drags herself wearily up the staircase, and enters her own room. Phoebe is waiting to disrobe her mistress, and she permits the girl to perform all the offices needful for her toilet without the exchange of a single syllable—a most unusual proceeding on her part—and appears barely capable of enunciating the word of dismissal which shall rid her of the servants' presence. But when she is at last alone, she finds an infinite relief in the mere fact, and, laying both her arms upon the dressing-table, bends down her tearless face upon them, and remains wrapt in silent thought.

Colonel Mordaunt, returning home at about four o'clock in the morning, scales the stairs without his boots, takes three minutes closing his dressing-room door, for fear that it should slam, and, finally, having extinguished the candle, creeps to bed like a mouse, lest he should rouse his wife, and for all his pains is saluted by the words, "Is that you, Philip? I am so glad you are come," in a voice that sounds dreadfully wide awake.

"Why, Irene; not asleep! How is this?"

"I cannot sleep, Philip. I have been listening for your footsteps: I wanted to see and speak to you. Oh, Philip, do tell me. Have I made you happy?"

She has turned round on her pillow, and sat up in bed, and is straining her eyes in expectation of his answer as though she could read his features, even in the dark.

Colonel Mordaunt feels his way round to her side of the bed, and folds her tenderly in his arms.

"My dearest Irene, what a question! Made me happy! Why, what had I in the wide world

before you came? You have glorified my life for me."

"Oh, I am so glad! I am so glad!" she murmurs, as she puts her head down on his shoulder, and begins to cry.

"My darling, what is the matter? Do let me send for Robertson. I am sure that you are ill."

"Oh, no. I am better now. If I were sure that I made you happy, Philip—quite, quite happy, I should have so—so—much peace."

"But you do make me happy, Irene. No one could make me happier. This is mere excitement, my dear. You must be feverish—or has any one been worrying you?"

"If I believed," she goes on, without noticing his question, "that I had always done my duty to you, even in thought, and that you knew it, and we were assured that, whatever happened, it could never be otherwise, and that, if I did fail, it would be unintentional—so very unintentional—"

"I am assured of it, my child; I only wish I were as sure that I had made you happy."

"Oh, Philip, you are so good; you are so good!"

"I am not good, Irene. What you call goodness is pure love for you. But I know that even love, however unselfish, is not always sufficient to fill up a woman's life, and that I have labored under heavy disadvantages, not only because I am so much older than yourself, and so little calculated to take your fancy, but also because you came to me with a heart not altogether free. But you were frank with me, my darling, and I loved you so much, I hoped, in time, that the old wound would be healed."

She gives two or three gasping little sobs at this allusion, but there is no other answer to it.

"But, if I see you subject to these fits of melancholy," he continues gravely, as he presses her still closer in his arms, "I shall begin to fear that my hopes were all in vain, and that I have no power to fill up the void that—"

"You have—indeed you have," she utters earnestly. "Philip, I never want any one but you."

"I hope not, dear. Then why these tears?"

"I don't know. I felt depressed; and you were away. Oh, don't leave me again. Always keep by my side—close, close to me; and let us stop at home together, and never go out anywhere. It is all so hollow and unsatisfactory."

"What a picture, my darling. Why, you are more upset than I thought for. Fancy an old fellow like me marrying such a pretty girl as this, and keeping her all to himself, shut up in his castle, like the ogres of old. What would the world say?"

"Oh, never mind the world. I love you, Philip, and I hate balls and parties. Promise me I shall never go to any of them again."

"It would be very silly of me to give you such a promise. But you shall not go if you don't wish it, and particularly if the excitement has such an effect upon you. Will that content you?"

She clings to him and thanks him; and he kisses and blesses her, and, imagining that the worst is over, lays her down upon her pillow (not quite unwillingly, be it said, for the poor old Colonel is very sleepy), and proceeds to occupy his own portion of the bed. But he has not been asleep long before he is roused by something audible, which in the confusion of his awakening sounds very like another sob.

"Irene, is that you? What is the matter?" he repeats almost irritably. It is provoking to be shaken out of slumber by the obstinacy of people who will not see the necessity of sleep in the same light as we do.

"What is the matter?" reiterates the Colonel; but all is silence. He stretches out his hand towards his wife's pillow, and, pacing it from her shoulder upwards, lights upon her hair. She is lying on her face.

"Irene," he whispers softly. There is no answer. She must be asleep. It is only his fancy that he heard her sob. And so the good Colonel turns round upon the other side, and is soon lost to all things visible.

But she lies there in the darkness, wide awake and silent, overcome by a trembling horror that she cannot quell. For all the shame and confusion and repentance that have overtaken her arise from but one cause—the fatal knowledge that she has deceived herself.

All the good fabric, built up of conviction and control, which for two long years has been reared upon her prayers and earnest desire to be cured, has crumbled before an interview that lasted fifteen minutes. She has never met Eric Keir since the fatal day on which she learnt he had deceived her till this night; and though she knows him still to be unworthy, believes him to be false—though she despises him and hates herself, she cannot shut her eyes to the stern truth—she loves him still!

Colonel Mordaunt comes downstairs next morning in the best of spirits. He seems to have forgotten the little episode that occurred between Irene and himself the night before, and can talk of nothing but the ball and the supper and the company, and the general success of the whole entertainment.

"It was certainly a very happy thought," he says, "and the prettiest compliment possible to Mr. Holmes. They tell me Sir Samuel originated the idea, and if so, I give him great credit. I don't think I ever saw so many of the county families assembled before, unless it was at the subscription ball we gave on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' marriage. There were several people there I had not shaken hands with for years: Sir John Cooté among the

number. Was Sir John introduced to you, Irene?"

"No. What is he like?"

"An elderly man, my dear, rather bald, but with a fine upright figure. Was one of the stewards, you know: had a rosette in his buttonhole, the same as myself. Holmes is staying with him; so is Lord Mulraven. Sir John thinks very highly of Holmes; says he's quite the right man for the borough, and intends to lay that vexed question of the railway monopolisation before Parliament at the earliest opportunity. By-the-way, I introduced Holmes to you. What do you think of him? Was he pleasant?"

"Very much so. He talks well, too: a *sine qua non* in his profession."

"What did he talk about?"

"I forget," commences Irene; and then, blushing hastily, "Oh, no, I don't. He talked chiefly of his friend Lord Mulraven, and of his brother being lost whilst on an Alpine tour last summer."

"Ah, a sad catastrophe. Sir John mentioned it to me. By-the-way, I was greatly taken by Lord Mulraven's face. Very thoughtful for so young a man. Is he what the women call good-looking, Irene?"

"I should imagine so. What do you think, Isabella?"

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt, I never looked—that is to say, how could I be any judge—but then, of course—and if you consider him handsome—"

"I never said so," she answers wearily, and turns towards Tommy as a distraction. The child's violet eyes meet hers sympathetically.

"Mamma got bad head?" he inquires in a little, piping voice.

"He has very remarkable eyes," continues the Colonel, still harping on Mulraven's attributes, "and finely-cut features. By-the-way, Irene, that child has blue eyes. I never noticed them before."

"Oh, all children have big eyes," she says confusedly; "and so have kittens and puppies. He won't have large eyes when he grows up—You have finished your breakfast, Tommy. Say your grace, and run away into the garden."

"But I want more," urges Tommy.

"Then take it with you. You'd spend a couple of hours over each meal, if I allowed you to do so."

"My dear, we have not been seated here more than twenty minutes."

"Never mind—Let him go—he can take another roll with him."

"Does he worry you, Irene?"

"I am very tired, and when one is tired the prattle of a child is apt to worry. Besides, he is happier in the garden than here."

"He has certainly beautiful eyes," repeats the Colonel, as the child runs away, "and has much improved in appearance lately. Talking of Lord Mulraven, Irene, reminds me that Sir John asked me to go over to Shrublands to luncheon to-day. Very kind of him, wasn't it? He saw I was taken with his guests."

"Sir John Cooté owes you a debt of gratitude for the manner in which you keep up the county pack: I don't think a luncheon is anything out of the way for him to give you. Doubtless he is only too glad to have an opportunity of showing you any politeness."

"That is a wife's view to take of the invitation, Irene. Now I, on the contrary, was not only pleased, but surprised; for Cooté and I have not been the friendliest of neighbors hitherto, and it had vexed me."

"Then I suppose you are going?"

"Certainly—unless there is any reason that I should remain at home. I wish they had asked you too. I tried to get near Lady Cooté for the purpose, towards the end of the evening; but it was an impossibility. She was hemmed in all round, six feet deep, by a phalanx of dowagers."

"I am so glad you failed, Philip. I could not have accompanied you. I am far too tired."

"Then it's all right, my darling; and I will leave you to recover yourself during my absence."

He comes back just half an hour before dinner-time, if possible more enthusiastic than before.

"Never met with a more amiable young man than Mr. Holmes in the whole course of my existence. And so sensible, too. Enters as clearly and readily into the question of the Glottonbury drainage as though he had spent his life in a sewer. We shall get on with such an advocate as that. Having been settled for so many years in the county, he was pleased to ask my advice upon several evils he desires to see remedied; and I gave him all the information I could in so limited a time. I am vexed that, in consequence of his being obliged to leave the day after to-morrow, he was unable to spare us a few days at Fen Court."

"Did you ask him?" says Irene. She is lying on the couch in her bedroom whilst her husband talks to her, and as she puts the question she raises herself to a sitting posture.

"I did—urged it upon him, in fact; but he was quite unable to accept the invitation. Mulraven will, though."

"Who?"

"Lord Mulraven. His time is his own, and he seems very glad of an opportunity to see a little more of the country."

"You have asked him here?"

"Where else could I ask him? I am sure you will like him immensely—you have no idea how well he can talk—and his company will enliven us. I invited him to stay as long as he chose; but he limits his visits to a few days. Let him have the best bedroom, Irene. I

should wish him to be made as comfortable as possible."

Her brows are contracted—her breast is heaving—her eyes are staring at him angrily.

"And what on earth made you think of asking him?"

"My dear!"

"Of asking a perfect stranger," she goes on rapidly—"a man we care nothing for—whom you never set eyes upon till yesterday—to become one of us—to share our home—to—I never thought you could be such a fool!"

Colonel Mordaunt is more than shocked—he is angry.

"What do you mean by speaking to me in that way, Irene!"

"Oh! I was wrong—I know I was wrong; but you have upset me with this news. Am I not the mistress of this house?—have I not a right to be consulted in such matters?—to have a voice in the selection of who shall and who shall not enter our doors?"

"When you behave as you are doing now, you forfeit, in my estimation, all right to such consideration."

"I know I oughtn't to have used that word to you, Philip—it was very disrespectful of me, and I beg your pardon. But, if you love me, don't ask Lord Muiraven to come and stay at Fen Court."

"What possible objection can you have to the proceeding?"

"We know so little of him," she murmurs indistinctly.

"Quite enough to authorise a casual visit, such as he intends to pay us. I do not suppose, from what he said, that he will remain here more than two or three days."

"A man may make myself very disagreeable even in that time."

"But what reason have you to suppose Muiraven will do so? I never met a fellow better calculated to make his way at first sight. You are incomprehensible to me, Irene! No trouble appears too great for you to take for a 'ne'er-do-well' like Oliver Ralston, or a child who has no claim upon you, like Tommy Brown; and yet, now when I wish to introduce into the house a man unexceptionable in name, birth, character, and position, you raise puerile objections, simply, as it appears to me, to give annoyance."

"I have not been in the habit of giving you annoyance, Philip."

"No, darling! of course not; but in this instance you are most unreasonable. Do you not begin to see so?"

"If it is unreasonable for a wife to wish to be consulted before her husband takes any step of importance, it may be the case."

"Step of importance! stuff and nonsense! What do you call, then, bringing a beggar's brat into the house to be reared as your own son? You didn't stop the consult me before you pledged yourself to that undertaking, Irene!"

He turns away, puzzled and irritated by her conduct, and she sees that she has played a wrong card. If the evil that assails her is to be averted, it is not by threatening or complaint. She tries the female remedy—coaxing.

"Philip, dear!" putting her arms about him, "don't ask Lord Muiraven to come here."

"Why?"

"Because I—I don't like him."

"For what reason?"

"How can I give a reason?" impetuously. "It is not always one can say why one does or does not like a person. I don't like him—that's sufficient!"

"For you, perhaps, my dear—but not for me. It is useless to say, 'Don't ask Lord Muiraven,' because I have already asked him, and he has accepted the invitation. Nothing therefore remains but for you to play the hostess as agreeably as you can to him; and I trust," adds the Colonel gravely, "that, for my sake, and for your own, you will do your utmost to make our guest's stay here as pleasant as may be."

"You must do that," she returns shortly. "He is not my guest, and I have no wish he should be so. You must take the charge of him and of his pleasure yourself. I decline to share in it."

"Very well, my dear—be it so," replies her husband coldly, as he rises to leave her. "I hope you will think better of your inhospitable resolution; but if not, I dare say I shall be equal to the occasion. However, the spirit in which you receive my caution confirms me in one thing—Lord Muiraven's visit to Fen Court shall not be put off, if I can avoid it."

In the evening she makes another attempt. "Philip! pray do not bring Lord Muiraven to our house: I ask it of you as a favor."

Colonel Mordaunt wheels round on his chair (he has been writing letters at his study table, while she sits beside him reading one of Mudie's last importations), and stares at his wife with unfeigned surprise.

"This is the most extraordinary thing I ever knew in my life!" he exclaims. "Pray where, and under what circumstances, have you met with Lord Muiraven before?"

At this point—blank question, so sudden and so unexpected, Irene naturally loses somewhat of her confidence.

"Met him before! Who says I have done so?"

"No one says it; but no one could help inferring it. Your evident aversion to his becoming our guest must have its root in something deeper than a mere dislike spontaneously conceived, for a stranger who has not taken your fancy at first sight!"

"One has at times presentiments of evil," she replies in a low voice.

"Presentiments of fiddlesticks! I don't believe in presentiments at all, in the first place, and certainly not in those that come over one at a ball. But what may your evil presentiment tend to?"

"That Lord Muiraven's presence at Fen Court will create dissension between us."

"In what way?"

"I hardly know in what way; but I—I don't like him, and you evidently do—and the mere difference of opinion may be the cause of a quarrel."

"I don't see that! I don't like many people that you do—yet we do not squabble about them—your nameless protégé, for instance—"

"Unfortunate little being! Cannot any topic be introduced between us without dragging him in by the neck and shoulders?"

"Hardly, when the topic is one of diversity of opinion concerning another, and when I feel that you owe me a concession, Irene. For I have given up more of my own idea of what is consistent and becoming, in permitting you to adopt that child, than you seem to be aware of."

"Oh! let it pass, then—I concede everything. I resign my own opinion on the subject of Lord Muiraven staying with us."

"Had you done so or not, my dear, it would have made no difference to the fact, which, as I said this afternoon, is already an established one. But I am ready to allow that I prefer your going hand in hand with me in this, as in all matters, to attempting anything like a defiance of my wishes. So I trust we have safely tided over this little difficulty, and that when Lord Muiraven appears amongst us he will find his hostess as ready to welcome him as I shall be."

"It is utter bad taste on his part coming at all, without some intimation on mine that his visit is desired."

"At it again, Irene!" says the Colonel with a sigh, as he returns to his papers. "Well, I must totally refuse to continue the discussion with you. As long as I am master of Fen Court, my will here must be law."

Which is a maxim the good man is very fond of repeating, little dreaming the while that, of all the inmates of the Court, he has his way perhaps the least of any.

She has done everything that she dares in order to prevent Eric Keir being thrown in her society again; but her efforts have proved futile, and she becomes despondent. Yet she is resolved of one thing: the new guest shall receive nothing at her hands but the barest courtesy. If, after all that has passed, he is sufficiently devoid of feeling and good taste to force himself into her presence, she will make him conscious that it is unwelcome to her: she will be his hostess, and nothing further. Never again shall the hand of the man who betrayed poor Myra and trifled with herself touch hers in friendship and good-fellowship. Armed with this resolve (which pride and the remembrance of her bitter pain alone could enable her to fulfil), Irene receives Lord Muiraven on the day of his arrival at Fen Court with a degree of dignity and coldness she has never assumed to any one before.

Her husband, who has met him at the hall-door, bring him with some trepidation to the drawing-room, to be presented to a beautiful statue, who, with features pale as death and lips tightly pressed together, acknowledges the honor of his presence there in chilling tones, that would have induced an ordinary visitor to return in the same vehicle in which he came.

But Muiraven knows the cause—his heart acknowledges the justice of the sentence—and he replies so humbly to her icy welcome as half to deprecate the anger that induced it.

Not so Colonel Mordaunt, who stands by watching them, indignant that Irene should so palpably disregard the warning he administered to her, and resolved to show their guest double the attention he otherwise should have done, in order to atone for his wife's unpoliteness.

He is almost fearful that her contrary mood may take the turn of not considering Lord Muiraven's comfort as she should; but here his vexation does her wrong. The dinner that follows has been ordered with consummate care—every arrangement is perfect—too perfect, indeed, not to intimate that she feels, and intends to maintain, a great distance between herself and the man who has so suddenly been thrown amongst them.

At the dinner-table, Muiraven and the Colonel have the conversation all to themselves, for Isabella does not dare to speak, and Irene will only reply in monosyllables. They talk of politics, and hunting, and agriculture, and travel; and then they veer round to the London season, now fast approaching.

"Do you go up to town this year?" demands Muiraven.

"I think not. My wife cares nothing for gaiety, and the love for it has mostly died out of me; yet she used to be very fashionable before her marriage—usedn't you Irene?"

"Wonderfully so."

"But you have discovered the superiority of a quiet life, I suppose, Mrs. Mordaunt."

"I have not been out since my mother died," she answers coldly.

"But for you," continues the Colonel in order to change an unpleasant topic, and addressing Muiraven, "the gay metropolis can hardly have lost its charm. Are you looking forward to a vigorous campaign?"

"I shall not be in town this season."

"Indeed! you surprise me. With your advan-

tages, I should have thought it resolved itself into a very paradise of society."

"It was so once."

"And how long is it since you turned misanthrope, my lord?" says the Colonel, laughing heartily at what he supposes to be his guest's affectation, and never expecting to receive a serious answer to his query.

"Since two seasons ago."

At this juncture Irene rises to leave the room. Muiraven holds the door open and gazes earnestly at her as she passes through. She chooses to take his words as covert insult—his look as malice—and answers both with a flash of indignant scorn. He interprets her glance rightly, returns to his seat at the dessert-table with a sigh.

When the gentlemen rejoin the ladies in the drawing-room, Mrs. Mordaunt professes to be sleepy, but rouses herself at their entrance and directs her attention for the remainder of the evening to the columns of the "Morning Post."

Colonel Mordaunt is supremely vexed at her behavior, but he will not mention it again to her; even after he has had a cigar with Lord Muiraven in the smoking-room, and parted with him at his bedroom door, he meets his wife in silence, and still in silence betakes himself to rest. Only, her conduct puzzles as well as vexes him, and his curiosity is all on the alert; whilst Irene, lying sleepless, reviews again and again the scene she had passed through, and wanders if she has been harsh or wrong—or could have met Muiraven differently had she wished to do—and always arrives at the same conclusion, that whilst his past conduct remains unexplained, it is impossible she can receive him as anything but a cruel and deceitful foe.

She comes down the next morning with no kinder feelings in her breast towards him, but conscious that his presence is losing its first strange sting for her, and that she shall be able to greet him with more ease than she had done the day before.

As she passes her morning-room she hears the sound of Tommy's voice within, and enters prepared to find him up to mischief amongst her ornaments or flowers, for like most children, he is of an inquiring turn of mind, and apt on occasions to do great damage in his researches after the origin of all he sees about him.

But as she crosses the threshold she starts back amazed, for at the further end of the room, comfortably ensconced in an arm-chair, she perceives Lord Muiraven, and on his knee, playing with his watch and chain and babbling of everything that comes within the scope of his horizon, is Master Tommy. They are so engrossed with one another that for the moment they do not perceive her.

"My mamma got a tick-tick," the child is saying, "a very little one, with white and green stones on his back. I like my mamma's tick-tick; but he's too small for a man. When I'm big man, my mamma going to give me big tick-tick—my mamma says so," he winds up with, confidently.

"And who is your mamma, Tommy?" inquires Muiraven.

"Don't you know my mamma? Good mamma, who loves Tommy! Why—why there she is!" exclaims the child, in a burst of glee, as he discovers Irene standing in the doorway, and wriggling off his new friend's lap, rushes noisily to greet her.

"Mrs. Mordaunt!" ejaculates Muiraven, as he leaps up from his position, "I beg a thousand pardons; I did not perceive that you were there."

"There is no need to apologise," she answers as coldly, though more calmly, than before. "Tommy, you know you have no business in this room; I have forbidden you to come here."

"Pray don't blame the child—it was my fault; the room looked so cool and pleasant, I turned in for half an hour's reading before breakfast, and hearing his voice in the hall, called him in, and we have been amusing ourselves admirably since."

"You forgot to bring mamma her rose this morning, Tommy," says Irene, fixing her attention on the child. "Won't you go and pick her one now?"

"Yes! I go get a bootiful rose—a very big one!" he answers, darting from her side.

"Mind you put on your hat!" she calls after him into the hall. Poor Muiraven is standing by the window meanwhile, looking sadly conscious of not being attended to.

"A very intelligent little boy," he says presently, with a nervous smile; "what age is he?"

"Three and a half."

"Only three and a half! why, he seems to understand everything. But—pardon me—I don't quite comprehend the relationship between you—a nephew?"

"There is no relationship between us, except that of a common need. Tommy is my adopted child."

"And you permit him to call you mother?"

"No! I never encourage him to call me by that name. His mother," and here Irene stops moment to recover confidence, "his mother is gone from us; but he must call me by some name, and 'mamma' is most convenient."

"And you have adopted him—how very good of you," returns Muiraven musingly. "Well! I should think the little fellow would repay your kindness. I don't think I ever saw a brighter child; he interested me strongly. And he appears to have so thorough and affectionate a reverence for you—"

"Breakfast is ready," says Irene, as she cuts

short his eloquence by leading the way into the next apartment.

Two or three days pass in the same sort of manner; outwardly all is well, though rather constrained; inwardly there is much heart-burning and unpleasantness.

The stranger (owing probably to the hostess's evident avoidance of his company) has made more than one attempt to end his visit, but Colonel Mordaunt, determined to show his wife that she cannot have everything her own way, refutes all his arguments with respect to the advisability of leaving Fen Court; and Muiraven, hoping perhaps that time may bring the opportunity he covets for an explanation with Irene, is nothing loth to linger on.

And so they continue to meet at breakfast, and luncheon, and dinner, and life is a slow torture to her. For, since she caught Muiraven and little Tommy in the morning-room together, a new dread has sprung up in her bosom: the wonder whether she will be acting right in keeping the knowledge of the relationship between them a secret from the father. The horror with which her soul recoils from the shame of making such a communication is almost swallowed up in the pain with which she contemplates a parting from the child. Until she felt it, she could not have believed that in so short a time he would have wound himself so closely round her heart. To give up little Tommy!—to miss his dear little voice calling after her all over the house; his lisping words; his childish caresses—the idea is misery. She could hardly shrink from it more where he indeed her own. But yet, who has the better right to him, on whom has he the higher claim?

Is she injuring the boy's prospects by keeping from him the protection of so influential a father; or would the fact of his parentage turn Lord Muiraven's heart against the child?—and she would lose him only to see him turned over to the care of hirelings—brought up amongst them, as such unhappy children generally are, without one of those advantages which it is in her power, as it is her wish, to give him. Will such a discovery do her darling harm, or will it do him good? This is the thought that harasses Irene now, and adds gravity and depression to her former coldness of demeanor. The change is too palpable not to strike Colonel Mordaunt, but he does not shape his suspicions into facts until Mrs. Quekett is good enough to sid him.

"Your good lady don't look much lately, does she?" she remarks casually, as she is gathering up the money for the weekly bills, almost the only phase of the housekeeping department which remains in her hands.

"In what way, Quekett?" demands the Colonel, as he enters the amount in his ledger. "Mrs. Mordaunt is quite well, I believe; at least, I have heard nothing to the contrary."

"Oh! I don't mean in health exactly, though she's been going off in her looks too during the last few months; but her spirits are lower than usual, surely—she's shut up in her room one half of the day, and terrible moody when she's about."

"I think you must be mistaken, Quekett; she was never what is termed bolterously inclined, and I believe she was rather put out at my inviting Lord Muiraven to the house—"

"Ah! why should she object to him now? A fine young man as ever I saw! Most ladies would be proud of such a companion—unless, indeed, there's a reason for it!"

"What reason could there be?" says the Colonel quickly.

"Well, there's no saying—she may have met him before, and seen too much or too little of him, as it may be."

"Mrs. Mordaunt has never met Lord Muiraven before!"

"Lor! Colonel—you must be joking!"

"It is a fact, Quekett; she told me so herself."

"Well, then I'm mistaken, and there's an end of it."

"Mistaken in what?—how?—do explain yourself, Quekett?"

"I'd rather not; least said, soonest mended; and if madam tells you she never met this gentleman before, of course she never did."

"Of course not! I would sooner doubt my own word than Irene's."

"Just so, Colonel; and therefore it would be useless to pursue the subject. But she has certainly enjoyed very bad spirits lately."

"What do you attribute them to?"

"Who can tell what a young girl like that may be thinking of? Perhaps she's getting tired of the country—"

"She was saying only yesterday that she loved it more than ever."

Mrs. Quekett laughs incredulously.

"Well, I'm wrong again, then, that's all. Perhaps the care of the child's too much for her."

"I have implored her again and again to leave him more with Phoebe, but she will hardly let the boy out of her sight."

"Ah!—hum!—it does seem to come wonderfully natural to her to be fond of him, doesn't it? 'Tisn't often that young women that have never been mothers take to a stranger's child like that; I hope it'll turn out for the best, Colonel. Well, if it's neither one or the other that worries Mrs. Mordaunt, perhaps this new friend of yours puts fancies into her head."

"How do you mean?—do speak out!"

"Lord Muiraven may remind her of some one she has known in old times, or—"

"Quekett! you are torturing me. Why on earth should a chance resemblance, even if it

exists, make my wife low-spirited? Her past is gone and done with, and she is far too good and—"

"Oh! very well, Colonel—very well. Let us change the subject; it only came upon me from you being so certain they had never met before—which I'm sure I'm quite willing to believe. He's a handsome man, this new lord, isn't he? Quite the ladies' style. Young and tall, and with such fine eyes; I daresay there are a good many after him."

"I daresay they are."

"Quite a catch for the London ladies. I wonder why he isn't married?"

"There's plenty of time for that, Quekett."

"I don't know, Colonel. They say 'better late than never,' but it doesn't apply to marriage; 'no fool like an old fool' is a more appropriate motto for that."

"At this home thrust the Colonel becomes uneasy, and tries to shift the subject."

"Lord Muiraven will remain here for some days longer, Quekett."

"Ah! will he? Has he ever been in this part of the country before, Colonel?"

"Not that I know of; why do you ask?"

"There is an uncommon likeness between him and that little boy there. They're the very moral of each other; everybody is talking of it!"

Colonel Mordaunt flushes angrily.

"What absurd nonsense! I do beg you'll do your best to put such gossip down. If there is any resemblance, it is a mere accident."

"It generally is, Colonel."

"Quekett, I thought you had more sense. Do you think for a moment, that even supposing Lord Muiraven, had been near Priestley before (which I am sure he has not), a man of his position and standing would lower himself by—"

"Making love to a pretty girl! Yes! I do, Colonel! and that's the long and the short of it. However, I don't wish to say any more about it; I only mentioned they were very similar, which no one who looks at them can deny. Good-night, Colonel. I hope your lady's spirits will get better; and don't you think too much about them—for thinking never mended heart nor home—and I daresay she'll come round again as natural as possible."

With which piece of consolation, Mrs. Quekett leaves her master in the very condition she aspired to create—torn asunder by doubts and suspicions, and racking his brain for a satisfactory solution of them.

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Meanwhile Muiraven, who is always on the look-out for a few private words with Irene, which she appears as determined he shall not gain, professes to have conceived an absorbing interest in Tommy, and teases her for particulars concerning his parentage and antecedents.

"I don't know when I met a child that interested me so much as this protégé of yours, Mrs. Mordaunt. He doesn't look like a common child. Where did you pick him up?"

"You speak of him just as though he were a horse or a dog; why don't you say at once, 'Where did you buy him?'"

"Because I know that the only coin that could purchase him would be your benevolence. But, seriously, does he belong to this part of the country?"

"He belongs nowhere, Lord Muiraven. He is a wretched little walf and stray whose mother was first betrayed and then deserted. A common story, but none the less sad for being common. I think the heaviest penalty for sin must be incurred by those who heartlessly bring such an irretrievable misfortune upon the heads of the unwary and the innocent."

"I quite agree with you," he answers abruptly.

"How hardened he must be to show no signs of feeling at the allusion," is her comment as she regards his face, half turned away.

"But to return to Tommy, resumes Muiraven, 'do you really intend to bring him up in your own station of life—to rear him as a gentleman?'"

"I have not yet decided."

"But if you do not decide shortly you will injure the child. Having once permitted him to assimilate himself with gentlemen and gentlewomen, it will be cruelty to thrust him into the company of a lower class."

"You misunderstand me. I do not intend that Tommy shall ever again descend to the class from which, at all events on one side, he sprang; but, at the same time, I am not sure that Colonel Mordaunt will permit to have him educated to enter a profession, or that it would be kindness in us to permit him to do so. He will most probably be brought up to some business."

"Poor child!—not because he is going into business (I often wish I had been apprenticed to some good hard work myself), but because, wherever he goes, the stigma of his birth is sure to rest on him."

"Poor child, indeed!" she repeats, with an angry flash in his direction, which Muiraven is totally at a loss to comprehend; "but, so long as he is under my protection, he shall never feel the cruel injury which has been done him by those who should have been his truest friends."

"You say, 'so long as he is under your protection,' Mrs. Mordaunt; but—forgive me for questioning—suppose anything should happen to withdraw that protection from him; your death, for instance (we are not children, to be afraid to mention such a probability), or Colonel Mordaunt's disapproval; what would become of Tommy then?"

"God knows," she answers sadly. He is speaking to her so much as he used to speak of old, when they were wont to hold long conversations on topics as far removed from love or matrimony, that she is becoming interested, and has almost forgotten the rôle she has hitherto preserved towards him of haughty indifference.

"I wish you would make me his second guardian," he says quickly, with an access of color in his face.

"What do you mean?"

"That, in case of this child ever being thrown upon the world again, I am willing to carry on the protection you are so nobly according to him now!"

"You!"

"Yes, I—why not? I have no ties, Mrs. Mordaunt—nor am I likely to make any—and I have taken a fancy to this little boy of yours. My own life has been a great mistake—it would be something to guard another life, as fresh as mine once, from the same errors."

"You—you want to take Tommy from me—oh! Lord Muiraven, you don't know what you are asking for. I cannot part with him—I have grown so fond of him—pray don't take him away!"

In her surprise and agitation, Irene is forgetting the manner in which the proposal of her companion has been brought about; and, only remembering the prior claim he has upon the child, for the moment that he is aware of and intends to urge it.

"I will take every care of him," she goes on impulsively, "of course I will, loving him as I do—but leave him with me. He is all I have."

"What have I said?" exclaims Muiraven, in astonishment. The question brings her to her senses.

"I—I—thought you—you—wanted to adopt the child!" she says, in much confusion.

"Only in case of his losing his protectress, which God forbid," he answers gravely. "Perhaps I have been impertinent, Mrs. Mordaunt, in saying as much as I have done; but I have not been able to help observing, whilst under your roof, that your husband does not take quite so kindly to this little bantling as you do; and I thought, perhaps, that should any difference ever arise concerning him, you might be glad to think that I was ready to carry on what you have begun—that Tommy, in fact, had another friend beside yourself. But if it was presumptuous, please forgive me!"

"There is nothing to forgive," she answers sadly; "the thought was kind, and some day, perhaps—"

"Perhaps—what?"

"I will tell you—or write to you the particulars—all that I know, I mean, about the sad case of this poor child."

"Some day you will write, or tell me all the particulars about the sad case of this poor child," he repeats slowly and musingly. "I wonder if, some day, you will let me write, or tell you, all the particulars about a case far sadder than his can be—a case that has wrecked my earthly happiness, and made me careless of my future."

There is no mistaking the tone in which he says these words: there is a ring of despairing love in it which no laws of propriety can quell or cover over.

"Lord Muiraven!" she cries indignantly, as she retreats a few paces from him. But he is bold to pursue her and to take her hand.

"Irene! I can endure this misery no longer. It has been pent up in my breast for years, and now it will have its way. I know you have had hard thoughts of me; but, if I die for it, I will dispel them. Irene, the time is come, and I must speak to you!"

.....

(To be continued.)

PLAYS.

BY GEORGE HOBY.

I once on a time
Saw a comical rhyme,
Which was called, as I think, "A Bill Poster's Dream,"

Where the notices placed,
Were so interlaced
That the reading should strange and ridiculous seem.

So I had an idea,
Which may seem rather queer,
That the plays on the stage would make such a verse,

And I write it below,
In order to show,
What I mean to express, which simply is thus:—

There was "Barney the Baron" on a stroll in
"Central Park,"

Just "Under the Gaslight" and also "After
Dark."

With "Little Nell" behind him to hear what he
might say,

While "Leatherstocking" watched for fear she
would be "Led Astray."

Next came the "Man of Honor" gazing at
"The Wicked World,"

Beside the "Ticket-of-Leave Man" with his
blonde wig nicely curled;

Then "Wilkins Micawber," with his quaint
"Geneva Cross,"

Who, from sweet "Madeline Morel," was suing
for "Divorce."

All the "Belles of the Kitchen" had "A Decided
Case,"

With jolly "Rip Van Winkle," "The Wrong
Man in the Right Place";

While the "Lady of Lyons," with her blood-red
"Convict's Braud,"

Was teaching "Humpty Dumpty" how at
"School" to be "On Hand."

Then "Fritz" and "Alixé," ("Man and Wife,")
for "Rosedale" made a start,

Behind came "Max" and "Agnee," with some
one's "Marble Heart."

While "Eillean Oge" quite lightly into the line
then fled,

Together with the "Femme de Feu" and "Ma-
dame Angot's Child."

Then we next saw "Lord Dundreary" oft posted
as a "Liar,"

Together with his "Brother Sam," who had
been "Playing with Fire;"

While "Kit, The Arkansas Traveler," with
many "A Cup of Tea,"

Throughout the long "Streets of New York,"
was giving "Charity"

To those "Black Sheep," who cried for "Help,"
and cursed their cruel "Fate,"

Tho' treading upon "Delicate Ground," com-
pelled to "Watch and Wait;"

Next "Mimi," "Mora," and "Follins," all look-
ing rather funny,

They'd been caught in a "Regular Fix" and
none of them made "Money."

The next I saw old "Daddy O'Doud," stuck up
in many places,

With "Fanchon" (Little Barefoot) trying on
some "Masks and Faces;"

When "Enoch Arden" ("Lost at Sea") quite
rudely spoiled their sport,

And took both of them, "Neck and Neck,"
away to "Atherley Court."

Then I saw the "Connie Scogah" "Hand in
Hand" with sweet "Frou-Frou,"

Reading both from "Onole Sam," by Victorien
Sardou,

While close behind was "Kerry," side by side
with "Jesse Brown,"

Who from the "Clouds" o'er "Notre Dame" had
just been "Hunted Down."

And so the Plays went fitting by, some well-
known and some rare,

But there were some for which I looked, but
which I found not there;

For where was "Henry Dunbar," where "Fal-
staff" and "Jack Cade"

Their names have vanished from us, but their
memories ne'er shall fade.

And so my rhyme is ended, which, Reader,
cease to mock,

I've sat up toiling at it while the hands went
"Round the Clock";

So take the thing for what it's worth, no matter
for the cost,

But let me know, when all is done, 'tis not
"Love's Labor Lost."

THE WHITE CAT.

I.

Some years are profitless when we look back to them, others seem like treasures to which we turn again and again when our store is spent out—treasures of sunny mornings, green things, birds piping, friends greeting, voices of children at play. How happy and busy they are as they heap up their stores! Golden chaff, crimson tints, chestnuts, silver lights—it is all put away for future use; and years hence they will look back to it, and the lights of their past will reach them as starlight reaches us, clear, sweet, vivid, and entire, travelling through time and space.

Our children have never ceased to speak of the delights of a certain August that some of us once spent in a Presbytery with thick piled walls and deep out windows and an old enclosed courtyard. The walls and windows were hung with ancient clematis hangings, green, and starred with fragrant flowers. They were dropping from the stones where the monks, who once lived in the old presbytery and served the Church, had nailed them up, a century before. These sweet tangled hangings swayed when the seawind blew villagewards; sometimes a bird would start from some hidden chink, and send the white petals flying into the room where we were sitting at the open window, or upon the children's yellow heads, as they played in their shady corner of the courtyard. Played at endless games—at knights, kings and queens, sleeping beauties, fashionable ladies, owls in ivy towers, beggars and giants. Tiny Dodo and baby Francis are the giants, and Marjory and Binnie are the reasoning knights, and little Anne is the captive maiden with a daisy in her hat.

We have all, been children at more or less distance of time, and we can all remember the wonderful long games, the roses and daisies of early youth—their sweet overpowering beauty. Once upon a time there was a great French cabbage rose at the end of a garden pathway, hanging to a wall behind which the sun always set. A little girl, a great many years ago, used to fly to that rose for silent consolation, and after half a lifetime, being still in need of consolation, came back to look for the rose—and found it. The rose was still hanging to the wall, scenting the air in conscious, sweet flush of

dignity. The charm was still there. Something of the same aspect seemed to cling to the straight poplar roads, to the west and east of that wide and tranquil land—where the lights broke into clearer changes day by day, where a family party had assembled after long separation. The elders and the children had come from two ends of the world; H. and I arrived first, then came Major Frank and his wife, with their Indian boxes, H. scarcely believing in her own tender heart's happiness as she clasped her son once more. Its happiness had been hardly earned by many a long hour of anxious watch; by many a cruel pang of terrified parting. But she may rest now for a time. Hence bats, owls, apprehensions, new's tongues, evil things—come peace, innocent pleasures, good coffee, and fine weather, golden content, friends meeting, and peaceful hours in the old Presbytery, which has opened its creaking gates to us.

There is a courtyard in front of the house, enclosed by crumbling walls, wreathed, as I have said, with clematis and straggling vines, in neglectful profusion. Outside our great gate the village passes by, in blouses, in cotton nightcaps and cart wheels, in chattering voices, that reach us, with the sound of bells from the Norman tower of the church. We can hear them from the garden at the back of the house, which Madame Valentin, our landlady, used to cultivate herself, with the assistance of her cook. Madame was to be seen opening her shutters in her camisole and nightcap to the sound of early chirrupings and singings, in the light of morning dew-drops and rainbows. The old Presbytery garden of a morning seemed all strung with crisp crystal. They broke from the mossy apple trees, flashed from the spiky gooseberry bushes, hung from trailing vine branches that the monks had nailed up against the grey stone. It was almost a pity the monks were gone and had given place to the very unpoetic and untidy old lady, whom we used to see clipping her lettuces from the Prior's room.

The children had never been abroad before, and to them (as to their elders, indeed) the commonest daily commonplaces of life in the little seaport were treats and novelties. The white caps, the French talk, the country-women and vegetables in the market-place, the swaddling babies, the fishermen coming up from the sea, with their brown bare legs and red caps, carrying great shining fish with curly tails. Madame Valentin, our landlady, herself was a treat to our children, though I must confess that their mother and H. and I all fled before her. There was also a certain Madame Baton next door who kept a poultry yard, and who for Marjory and Binnie, and the rest of them, seemed to be a person of rare talent and accomplishment. She milked a cow (she kept it in a room opening out of her kitchen); she made lace on a cushion; she was enormously rich—so the bathing woman had said in the water. She clacked about in her wooden shoes for hours before the children were up, drove a cart, and had rabbits in a hutch. She wore a great white cotton nightcap, with a tassel at the end, which seemed to possess some strange attraction for little Binnie especially. One day I found the little girl standing alone with the old peasant woman in the courtyard, quietly facing Madame Baton, with little folded hands, and asking endless questions in her sweet whistle, to which Madame Baton answered in the gruffest French, while the cow stood by listening and nodding its stupid head. Binnie could not understand what Madame Baton was saying, but she invented it as she went along, and thought it was grand-mama's story (so she told us afterwards) about the cotton nightcaps. "Would the cow and the farm fly away if Madame Baton took off hers?" said little Binnie; "O I wish, I wish she would try!" H. and I used to tell the children a story about enchanted caps and hard-working peasant people, who prospered so long as they kept to their caps and labored in their fields; and who lost all their prosperity when they threw off their homely head-gear and went away in fine feathers and ribbons to walk in the streets of the neighboring towns. Then came the sprites to clear their stores, to ruin their farms, to suck their eggs and milk their cows, and the hens ceased to lay, and the crops dwindled and dwindled, and the fish failed in the nets. It was a very self-evident little apologue. But Binnie and little Annie firmly believed in it. Marjory, who was older, had her doubts. Meanwhile, we all took to calling the place "White Cotton Nightcap Country."..... They are playing at ogres in the courtyard in front of the happy little day. H. and I sit listening to the happy little voices that reach us in a cool, green-lighted room, which the priests once used as a refectory and whence we hear all the choir, of flutes and dulcimers, of sweet childish prattling and piping in the sunny court. Our landlady looks out, in her camisole, from a bowery shutter; the priest, who is lodging in the empty wing of the house, crosses in the sunshine, with a long shadow zigzagging after him. The little golden-headed ogres stop short in their game to watch him go by. As he pushes at the great gateway, a lean, black-robed figure thrusting at the rusty bar, the swinging bell begins to ring, the great gates suddenly fly open, the priest starts away, and a stranger walks in quickly.

He carries no breviary in his hand, but a newspaper under his arm. He wears a straw hat, no black ropes flap about him; but as he comes towards us, walking straight and quickly across the yard, H. and I, who from long habit guess at one another's thought, glance at the retreating priest, and then look at each other and think of the preachers who, coming in; commonest garb, teach true things to true men;

preach the love that endures truth; preach with living voice and clear-eyed looks, scorn for oppression and for the mean surrender of the strong; preach help and wisdom for the weak; preach forbearance to the impatient; preach sacred endeavor; men, standing on the high step of a mighty altar, whose voices we of the great congregation listen to, day by day, as their noble words

"touch enough
The verge of vastness to inform our soul."

This friend has walked five miles from his village "best loved of sea-coast nook-full Normandy" to welcome us. There is a little gooseberry and pear-tree orchard at the back of the house, where the vines are tangling green. Albinia and her husband have been sitting there for hours past on Madame Valentin's green bench. Kind H. carries off our friend to see her new-come children, who have travelled so many Indian miles to hold her hand once more, and our visitor has surely earned a broken chair and a cup of Angele's good coffee, after his hot and tiring walk. He must rest for an hour in the shade, while the day is burning on and ripening among the mossy things; and the golden flames are in the pears hanging overhead, in the great dahlias blazing in gloomy splendor; the birds seem on fire as they flash past us; the clouds in heaven are tinted; the children come up in unwearied procession—they are fairies now, they say—except Francis, who is tired, and wants always to be an ogre. Then the bell begins to swing from the Norman tower.

Angele comes out and brings cups of milk and hunches of bread, and pinafores to match, and immediately the fairies become little children again, and elude ready for their tea. And meanwhile we elders sit in this apple-tree bower, talking over one thing and another. As we talk on, of Angele with her wooden shoes and flapping cap, of the flat country, of the evening light, the quiet seaside place, that we like we know not why, the people living near; the poet puts a meaning into homely words, and touches us with his wings, as poets do, and out of common talk and of discordant things his genius strikes the key-note dominating all.

II.

Long after our guest had taken leave and walked home by the sands, we sat on in our garden. Madame Valentin came mysteriously through the twilight, carrying a lettuce for her supper; she also had a letter in her hand, which she was scanning in the moonlight.

"That gentleman who had been here; did he expect a letter?" she asked. "Was his name Hug, Gourlay?" The postman, knowing we were English, had sent the letter by the miller's wife. Madame Valentin explained he was gone home, his aunt was ill; and then she showed a letter, addressed in a commercial hand to "Mr. Hugh Gourlay, Château de Latouche, Joyeux, Calvados."

"But why do you not send it to the Château?" said H.; "it is not for us." Madame Valentin thought this a good suggestion; she had forgotten for the moment that they had English relations at the Château. Mademoiselle Blanche's mamma was an English Protestant; Mademoiselle was a good Catholic, notwithstanding. She was to make her profession next month. "Next month?" asked H.

Certainly, it was true, said Madame Valentin. There were those who, with Madame, think it a pity, but she was not one of them. Mademoiselle de Latouche the elder was a saintly woman, and would never force her niece's inclinations. . . . H. had heard a different version.

The crimes that people commit are not all done in a minute; they seem to come into existence, little by little—one by one—small selfish considerations, jars, vanities, indolences they do not even come to a climax always. It is not a consoling reflection that the sum of the evil done by a respectable and easy-going life may be greater in the end perhaps than that of many a disastrous career. Notwithstanding Madame Valentin's opinion, it seemed to me that old Mademoiselle de Latouche put all her vanities, her selfishness, love of domination, into her religion. No wonder it was fervent. She kept herself from the world because she was lazy, and loved her own comfort better than anything else. She let the widows and orphans come and see her, or wait at her door till it was convenient to her to admit them; it rather amused her to dole out her small benevolences, and to hear their unreserved thanks. She certainly denied herself, to, but not for, others.

She had made up her mind that Blanche was to edify the religious world of Joyeux and St. Rambert. The sturdy Châtelaine did not feel that her health was equal to the rigid rule of a conventual life; but Blanche was younger, and of a less nervous temperament.

When any one spoke of a different fate for the little thing, Mademoiselle replied placidly that Blanche herself had decided upon entering the cloister, and that it was a subject she did not care to discuss. It was her hour for repose or meditation, and she must beg leave to retire.

There were few people more difficult of access than Mademoiselle de Latouche, who, between her excessive pieties and vanities and long hours of slumber and refreshment, found life well filled, and scarcely suffering to its enjoyments; above all, to its necessary repose. Woe betide the household if Mademoiselle was awakened suddenly! It is possible that there may have been a little sameness in Mademoiselle's life which was so entirely devoted to one person, and that person so disagreeable a one, as H. once said. But I think H. scarcely did the Châtelaine justice. Many people had thought her

charming in her youth. She had a curious power of influencing people, of impressing her own opinions upon them, and leading them her own way. So few people have a will, that it does not require any great amount to make a great effect. She was handsome still. Little Blanche thought her perfectly beautiful. She could talk agreeably when she liked, be generous on occasions; Mr. le Curé de St. Rambert seemed as if he had scarcely words to utter the benediction which flowed from his heart as he left her room the day we did ourselves the honor of calling upon the Châtelaine. . . . "You will not receive him, most dear, most generous friend," I heard the Curé saying as we came into the room. "You must control your too generous impulses; promise that you will not receive him." He was a tall, lean man, standing in an attitude, over the old lady, who accepted his homage very placidly; but he rather overdid his warnings.

"It must depend upon my state of health," murmured Mademoiselle de Latouche. "I suffer greatly; do I not, Mathilde?"

"A martyrdom," murmured the Curé.

"Yes; Mademoiselle has great courage," said Mathilde. (She was the companion; a little lean, delicate woman, a great contrast to Mademoiselle, who was stout and flushed, with curly red hair, scarcely streaked with grey.) "She is scarcely strong enough to receive a visitor. Perhaps these ladies may know the name—Mr. Gourlay—out of the Yorkshire."

H., who always remembers names, said she had once known a Mr. Gourlay, a manufacturer: "an elderly respectable man," said H.

M. le Curé de St. Rambert all this time was standing in the window, blankly benevolent, with his hands meekly slipped into his sleeves. Little Mathilde had subsided into a chair near the door of an inner room. What a comfortable interior it was, rich and warm, with the prosperous lady, tucked up in her satin dressing-gown, by the fire, with clocks of every century ticking and pointing to the hour! . . . "This is Mademoiselle's hour for receiving, they seemed to say—there o'clock, three o'clock." They seemed to be as oblivious as the rest of the household. Mademoiselle went on to explain—"This gentleman, not knowing of my poor brother's death, has written to him on the subject of a machine, that I confess we had put away without much idea of future use. I have invited him to come over and examine it for himself. He makes me an offer for it which I consider sufficient, for my dear brother had initiated me into his affairs. A large offer. So much the better for your poor, M. le Curé," she said, archly, speaking in the sing-song voice which is so much used by the extra good in common conversation. (At one time of my life I was inclined to respect this tacit profession of superiority, but I now doubt whether anything which is not in itself superiority is of much use, either to the impressor or to the impressed.)

"My poor will pray for you, day and night," said the Curé. "Chère Mademoiselle, I have not yet seen our dear child!"

"She is in the next room, M. le Curé; Mathilde will call her, if you wish to see her. You will find her very happy, very firm in her determination. It is very beautiful," she said, turning to us; "I have two sisters in convents, and this dear child, orphan daughter of my brother, is now about to profess. She has come home to bid us farewell—a sweet farewell for her—but for me the sacrifice is terrible—is it not, Mathilde?"

"Oh, yes, Mademoiselle! I tell her it is too much," said Mathilde, nervously; and, appealing to the Curé: "Monseigneur, persuade them to defer this beautiful sacrifice. Mademoiselle needs the society of her niece. She often tells me that it is a new life to her."

The Curé, I thought, looked slightly puzzled; he was about to speak, when the door from the inner room opened, and the "Blanche" of whom they had been speaking, came in. She was dressed in a white dress of some loose and soft material; she wore a big white apron, and her long sleeves fell over her hand, so that nothing showed but five little pink finger-tips. She came gently into the room, looked round, and then, seeing the Curé, deliberately turned away again, passed back into the room from which she had just come, and softly closed the door. It was all so gentle, so sudden, that we none of us knew what to say, until the Curé suggested "timidité" after her long seclusion. Mademoiselle laughed, showing a row of white dazzling teeth. H. flushed up, and said it was time to go.

"I hope," she said, as she took leave, "that you may be able to make up your mind to keep your niece with you. I quite understand your feelings; a child with the gift of life and with years of happiness and usefulness before her—it is a fearful responsibility that you take when you put her away from it all." H. stood looking into the old lady's face, with kind, constraining eyes.

"Oh, yes, indeed, madame!" said Mademoiselle, solemnly—and indeed she spoke with some emotion. "But who would dare to go against a true vocation? Blanche is not the first in our family to give herself up to this holy service of love; and I, who am the last of the Latouches, must not shrink from my share of the sacrifice."

H. could not trust herself to speak; she was almost crying, and quite overcome, and I was glad to get her away. There were all sorts of stories about the family at the Château. Madame Valentin, our landlady, worshipped "the grande Mademoiselle," as some of the people in the place used to call her. She was one of the

privileged admitted to her presence. The castle was left jointly to Made moiselle and to Blanche—so she told us. "At Mademoiselle's death everything would go to Blanche. Some people thought it strange that the father should have made such a will; but he knew with what a saint he had to deal," said Madame Valentin. "Look at this dress. It was hers, and she gave it to me."

"A saint! Why does she not go into a convent herself?" said H., still trembling. "That poor child is to be robbed of her life—of God's life—which is her right; she is told that it will please Him that she should spend her strength and youth in valueless dreams and prayers and repetitions. It makes my heart ache to think of it. . . . I have had sorrows enough, but oh! would I give up one of them, one parting, one pang of love, to have loved less—"

My dearest H.! I comforted her as well as I could, and then Frank came in, and we told him of our interview. "I shall go up and call when this Gourlay is there," said the sociable Major; "Perhaps we may find out some way of rescuing your nun, mother. You shall give me an introduction to him. I have always heard he was a very respectable man."

III.

What is a respectable man? Joseph Gourlay, of Gill Mills and Gilwick Manor, was a respectable man, very much looked up to in his own neighborhood, of which indeed many acres belonged to him. Acres enclosing the handsome stone-fronted house in which he lived, in which his wife had died, in which his three sons had been born. All his life and his fortune seemed to be enclosed in the Yorkshire valley which you might see from the dining-room window, flooded with green, while sudden smoke-volleys burst from the tall chimneys of the mill. The valley is crossed again and again by the stream that comes dashing from its source in the distant hills, straight to the mills at the foot of the great crag. Wick Gill sparkles with the fortunes of the Gourlays, dashing over rocks and ridges a limpid and rainbow-tinted torrent, well fit, as Mr. Gourlay had foreseen long ago, to turn the creaking cogs of his water-wheels, to boll up his steam-engines, to wash and purify his cotton in many waters, while the threads of his fortune spun on their thousand bobbins, glistening as they whirled, drawing wealth with every turn of the quivering line. Hugh, the youngest son, as he sat in the little counting-house, could hear the family fortunes beating time overhead as they passed from the mountain gill and the raw cotton heaps to the Gilwick wharfs and bank in family credit, and in the close packed bales of which his two brothers were so proud. Bathurst and Ben were soon to be admitted partners in the business. Hugh's turn was yet to come, but meanwhile he had perhaps found for himself another more absorbing interest undreamt of by Joseph and his elder sons. It was not one that Hugh could share with any one. The habit of the house, the steady reserve, the north country mistrust of fine speaking and flimsy sentiment, had influenced the younger as well as his elders.

More than once old Gourlay had found Hugh leaning back, absorbed and forgetful, with a pile of unanswered letters on the desk beside him. The old man would tap him on the shoulder, point significantly at the heap, frown and stump off to his own well-worn desk in the inner room. What was there breeding in Hugh's mind? Often of late he had seemed scarcely himself, and answered vaguely. Was he getting impatient? Was he like other young men? did he want to grasp more power in his hands? Old Gourlay had a morbid horror of giving up one shred of his hard-earned rule. He would suspect others of doing that which he himself would have done unto them. He was both true and unjust in many of his dealings. He remembered his own early impatience of all authority. He had labored hard to earn his own living and his children's. Now, he thought uneasily, the day was come when they were children no longer, but young men nearly as capable as he had been at their age. Sometimes old Gourlay would throw out gloomy hints of giving up work altogether, and look sharply into the young men's faces to catch their expression. Ben never had any expression at all in his round pink cheeks: Bathurst, who knew his father, and was not afraid of him, would burst out laughing: "Yes, father, that would just suit you," he would say. "You might walk about with your hands in your pockets all day long; or you might take to croquet. Ben would give you some lessons." Hugh sometimes flushed up, and a curious questioning look would come into his eyes, when his father talked of a change. It was this look his father could not understand. "Well, Hugh," he would cry impatiently, "can't ye speak?" But Hugh would walk on in stolid silence; he was not so much at ease with his father as Bathurst, and he shut himself more and more away from him. Ben, who had nothing to shut up, might keep the talk going if he chose. Poor Hugh had reached one of the flat stages of existence. Life is scarcely to be compared to the inclined plane that people describe it, but to something in the shape of a pyramid, with intervals of steps between each effort. Hugh had made a great effort of late. He was not without the family good sense and determination, and he could see as plainly as his father or his brothers the advantage of a definite career and occupation. What he had within him might as well be expressed in the intervals of business as of leisure, but at the same time this strange feeling was swelling within him. An impatience and distaste for all he had been used to, a long-

ing for fresh air, for expression, for better things than money-making. It is in vain some people lead monotonous lives. Events without form or sound, mental catastrophes, great sweeps of feeling and opinion, who is to guard against those silent, irresistible powers? He had tried to make friends with the mill hands, but he had tried wrongly, perhaps; anyhow, some discontent was set to his interference, and Mr. Gourlay had angrily forbidden anything of the sort in future.

There had been some words at the time. Hugh had walked over Gill Crag, feeling as if he could bear this slavery no longer. He envied the very birds their freedom as they flew across the path. He forgot that to be condemned to freedom from all care, restraint, internal effort, is, perhaps, the greatest bondage of all. But as yet I have said it was not for nothing that Hugh Gourlay had been born a Yorkshireman; he was sensible and clear-headed for all his impressionable poet's nature. He had begun a book which he finished in after-years, and published at his own expense; a sort of story embodying a system of practical philosophy.

Mr. Gourlay might have been relieved if he could have read his younger son's mind as clearly as the debit and credit figures in the books in his counting-house. It was not his father's power that Hugh envied and would have grasped. It was something very far distant from old Gourlay's horizon, a voice coming he traced not whence that haunted him as an evil spirit, "You are wasting your life, it is wasting, wasting, wasting." The turning wheels had seemed to say so, the torrent had seemed to say so, every event of the day and every dream of the night had only seemed to repeat it. Minor poets, people born with a certain fervor and sensibility which does not amount to genius, are often haunted by this vague want. They require the domination of the unforeseen, the touch of greater minds to raise them from themselves. They have the gift of imposing their own personality upon the things around them, upon the inanimate sights they see, upon the people they live with; and then they weary of it—common life only repeats their own moods to them, instead of carrying them away from themselves. Great poets are different; they are like Nature herself—supreme, indifferent. Their moods may be storms or mighty calms, or the broad stream of day-light falling upon common things, but they are masters all the while, not servants; and yet even servants faithfully working need not be ashamed, either of their work or of the impulse which urges them on and tells them they are unprofitable at best.

After church on Sundays (Mr. Gourlay was very particular about attendance in the church) it was the family habit to walk straight to the back yard and let the dogs out of their kennels, and to march round and round the grounds until the dinner bell rang. Family discussions often take place on Sundays. This family usually walked in silence with the dogs yelping and leaping at its heels. The garden was very green and very black, as these north country places are. Tall chimneys showed above the golden birch trees; iron hurdles fenced off the green clipped lawn; the beds were bordered with some patent zinc ornament; geraniums were blooming in leaden pots. In one place there was an iron fountain with a statue, in another a tin pavilion. A grass-cutting machine stood in one corner of the lawn, with a hose for watering the plants; double-locked greenhouses were built along the western walls, with alternate domes and weathercocks for ornament. There was a croquet lawn planned by Ben, who was the social member of the party; and beyond the garden and the mill and the sheds lay the valley, wide and romantic as Yorkshire valleys are, with rocks enclosing, with rising turf crags, leading to widening moors, and the sound of water and the cry of birds coming clear in the Sunday silence. Ben was whistling as he walked along. Hugh was trying to get up his courage to make a certain request he had at heart. Bathurst was leaping the iron fence, followed by two of the dogs. "Hi, Ju! well leaped," cried Mr. Gourlay, who was always very fond of his dogs. "First the mill, then the dogs. I don't know where we come in," Bathurst used to say to his brothers. Mr. Gourlay was not so absorbed in Ju's performance as to forget his sons entirely. He looked round uneasily.

"Where is Hugh? Look up, Hugh. What is the matter with him, Ben? he seems always moping."

Hugh had stopped short, and was looking at the gravel path in a dreamy, dazed sort of fashion. Henriug himself called, he looked up. "Father," he said, suddenly, "I—I have been wishing to speak to you for some time; I may as well speak now. I want a change. I—Will you let me go to college for a couple of years? You said yesterday that you would make me an allowance. Will you give me two years at college?"

There was a dead silence. Ben, as usual, began to whistle; Bathurst came back with a leap over the hurdle. Then the old man spoke—"No, that I will not do," said Mr. Gourlay, growing very red and looking Hugh full in the face, and striking one of the iron fences sharply with his stick. "College! what has put such d—stuff into your head, Hugh? Who wants college here? I am a plain man of business. Have I been to College? But I have made my own fortune and yours by my own brains; d'ye think they will teach you brains at those places? What the devil is it ye want? Is it to fine-gentleman-it over your brothers and father?" Old Mr. Gourlay was working himself up as he went on more and

more vehemently. "Two years—just when you are beginning to understand the business. Is this your gratitude for all that's been done for you? Look at me, sir; you know as well as I do what I am worth; if I choose to give up work this day, I could leave off and not change one shilling's worth in our way of living. Here I am, an honest man respected in all the place; have I gone off with quirks and fancies in my head? No, I have stuck to my work like a man, and paid my way, and given in charity too upwards—"

Here Bathurst, who was devoted to his younger brother, tried to stem the storm. "Father, he hasn't your head for business, not even mine, but he has something I have not got. He can see what is amiss, and bring a new light to it, while I am only trying to set things straight with the help of the old one. Hugh saved us 1,500*l.* last year by that alteration in the spinning mules. There is that Frenchman's patent he was speaking of last night, for spinning the finest yarns; it would be the very thing now we are getting in the new machinery."

"Hollo! Bat," said Mr. Gourlay, recovering his temper and wheeling round suddenly; "it was not college learning put that into your head. Come now, let us make terms. Hugh wants a change, does he? let him go over and travel for a bit, and see about the Frenchman's patent; I remember it. I'll write him a line. He left me his address, and Hugh shall go and see it. We will put by our savings to pay for it, hey? against the time he brings me home a daughter-in-law to help to spend the profits. Will that satisfy ye, Hugh?" And so it came about that Hugh Gourlay started one summer's day for Normandy with full instructions as to the address of the ingenious Frenchman, who was to add to their fortunes. His father had given him one other commission. He was to bring home a French poodle. Mr. Gourlay had long wished for one.

IV.

Hugh tried some short cut from the great seaport where he landed to Joyeux, the little fishing village to which he was going, and the short cut turned into a long belated journey, leading him by closing shadows and rough country ways, by high cliffs, into a windy darkness, through which he travelled on hour after hour, listening, as he jolted on in the little country cart, to the sudden bursts of a wild storm chorus, shrieking above the angry moan of the not distant sea. The sea note changed sometimes with the wind that blew the pipes of this giant music; but the rain dropped monotonously all the while, and the jolts and creaks of the wheels turning upon stones, and the muttering of the driver, did not vary very much. The driver was drenched, notwithstanding his striped woollen blanket; he was an old man, and he seemed to have accumulated many oaths in the course of a long life. The horses were patient, struggling and stumbling. Hugh had pulled his wideawake well over his eyes, and sat contentedly enough watching the solitary storm overhead, listening to the thunder of breakers, and the onslaught of wind and water. It all seemed to take him out of himself, and he felt as if he could breathe again for the first time for many days.

"If I had known, I should not have come out with my horses on such a night," said the driver. "Poor people have to go thro' all sorts of cruelties to please the rich. Heu! Eu! Who knows?" he went on grumbling; "if the truth were told, we many of us have got as much credit at the bank as those who call themselves masters. There is Madame Baton—devil take me, I wish the horses were in her stable now—she has 10,000 francs of income, and more than that. Heu! Eu!..... He does not understand one word—imbecile Englishman!..... Poor old Pierre might be forgiven a little ill-humor under the circumstances. His was not a morbid nature. For him the storm only brought rheumatism. He did not aspire to anything beyond a good feed of corn for the horses, a glass of hot wine and a pipe for himself, and a supper off garlick-stew that Madame Baton was famous for concocting. For him the inner voice only said, eat, smoke, drink, Peter Botvin, and to-morrow when you die M. le Curé will see to the candles for the altar of the Virgin, and get you into Paradise, by his knowledge of the prayers and the saints. Pierre was not without hope that there might be as good wine in Paradise as at Madame Baton's. Why not?"

"Chateau Latouche," says Pierre, as they shook and clattered under a dripping beech avenue that led to the village. "It is the house opposite the church," and as he spoke in the darkness they seemed to pass between sudden walls and the swaying of trees at night. Was that booming the sea or the wind among the church bells? Chill mistful night-spirits seemed about, a stir, a scent of leaves and clematis—old Pierre began to swear once more by many R's and S's, he could not find his way one bit, and the wind was rising—again the church clock struck ten, and everything seemed asleep. The children were asleep in the little room out of mine, and a night-light burned dimly in the window. I could just see the two little yellow heads lying on the pillow, and the great black crucifix hanging to the wall. Everything was silent in the great overgrown garden except for the sudden gusts of wind and rain. A mouse ran across the room as I sat reading, the lamp spluttered, and suddenly the surly bell in the courtyard began to ring. It startled us all. Frank was away. Albinia had gone to bed early. H., who was sitting talking to her by her bedside, came running into mine, and found me on my

way downstairs. "Can it be the Major," she said; "is he come back?"

I said I would see, and as I got into the yard the bell rang again, and a sudden fury of wind put out my lamp.

Old Pierre's voice sounded from without, growling and grumbling, and then a younger and pleasanter sound came on the wind.

"Is this the Chateau Latouche; are we expected?"

Poor things! I was sorry to send them on their way through the storm for another half-mile along the road; but what could I do? It was impossible to take in old Pierre, to say nothing of the horses and the strangers.

Now-a-days suppers scarcely exist except at the play in Alfred de Musset's poems. Mademoiselle de la Touche had supped in her youth, and still more in her old age did she persistently cling to the good old custom. She was never hungry at dinner-time, she said, and the evenings seemed long at the Castle, and Mathilde liked supping cosily by the fire in the little dining-room. Sometimes M. le Curé de Joyeux would join the ladies on these occasions; sometimes M. le Curé de St. Dives (St. Dives was another little fishing village on the coast, of which the road ran past the gates of the pretty old Castle). How pretty it looked when the grove of chestnut trees rustled, and the moon dropped behind the pointed roofs and the towers, with their Normandy caps; and the lights were shining from one window and another—from Mademoiselle's dressing-room, from the great hall and the little saloon, in Léonie's tower over the door-way, in Mathilde's modest garret!

He was looking for the entrance when a sudden flash of lightning illuminated the whole front of the old house—out of blackness shone a fairy palace. The window-panes, the gilt gateway, the very nails on the front door, wet with rain, shone like jewels and enamel; the roses and creepers clustering from the balcony overhead bloomed into sudden life. Each tiny star and flower was fragrant and dropping a diamond drop. Hugh's hand was wet with flowery dew as he let go the iron bell. The flash was gone, and everything was dark again.

He did not, however, have long to wait. The doors were opened by some string or pulley from within, and old Pierre made a sign implying that he was to enter. The Castle was a curious mixture of various tastes and fancies that had crossed the minds of its different inhabitants. The hall was large and empty; a Louis Quinze interior, with old-fashioned chairs and shining boards; a great fire burnt at one end, in a tall chimney-piece; a great clock ticked upon a bracket of which the hands pointed to ten; the family arms were fixed at intervals along the walls. These consisted of hands with "Tenir," the motto of the Latouches, and each held a light. Hugh was rather bewildered by this sudden blaze, and if old Pierre had not given him a push from behind, might have hesitated to cross the threshold. There was not only light to dazzle, but a confusing sound of music coming from some inner room, and a very sweet and melancholy voice singing to the accompaniment of a piano, singing to rocking measure; it went running on in his head for many days after:—

Mais de vous en souvenir
Prendrez-vous la pelue,
Mais de vous en souvenir
Et d'y revenir—

A minor chord, and a melodious little flourish.

A Saint Blaise, à la Zuecca,
Dans les prés fleuris cueillir la verveine.

A door opened, the voice ceased singing, an old man-servant came out with a white respectful head, followed by a little woman in a grey dress, carrying a lamp. She seemed to pat or drift across the floor, so lightly made and pale and slim was she. Was it possible that this could have been the songstress? She spoke in a little flute-like voice that was scarcely above a whisper. Old Peter undertook to be master of the ceremonies.

"He does not understand one word of French," he said, pointing to Hugh. "Madame expects him. It is all right. I am going to put the horses in the stable."

The little grey lady evidently expected her guest. She bowed, whispered a few words to the man-servant, and gave him the lamp, and the old man beckoned to the young traveller and led the way across the black and white marble pavement of the hall to a side door opening into a great drawing-room, brilliantly lighted, decorated with panelling, hung with white and brown damask. Everywhere stood lovely old china, and ticking clocks (Madame de Latouche had a fancy for clocks), but there was no one to wind them up; their hands pointed to every possible hour and in every direction. The place seemed enchanted to Hugh after this long dark journey, dazzling and unexpected. The piano was open, but the musician was gone; a pair of gloves lay upon the floor by a little table, upon which stood, along with some slight reflection of finger-biscuits, a scarcely touched glass of wine. Hugh, who was hungry after his long expedition, cast a glance at this little table; but his guide beckoned him on, and presently led him through a small boudoir into a bedroom on the ground floor, opening into a comfortable set of rooms, in one of which his luggage was displayed, and from whence the grey lady suddenly issued, bowing in her list slippers. She had been to see that all was in order—the last match in the matchbox; the pink soap and water in the crust-like washstand; the elder-down floating on the natty little chintz bed.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more

unlike the steady four-post respectability of Hugh Gourlay's own home—than this little chintzied nest which had been prepared for him, with a small sofa to recline upon, a blue glass inkstand, a little cup of holy water over the bed, the glazed and painted portraits of one or two amiable-looking young saints, the sugar and water apparatus on the smart walnut drawers, and a neat little square mat for his feet. Hugh imagined his brothers' expression at seeing him thus installed, but no Bathurst was there with sarcastic jeers, nor Ben with ill-suppressed fits of laughter.

"I hope you will find all you want," murmured the lady. "The supper will be ready immediately, if you will take the trouble to come down."

As she spoke, a girl in a Normandy cap came in with a jug of hot water; the old servant rolled up a comfortable arm-chair; a second man who had come in, rapidly unpacked Hugh's portmanteau.

"Has Monsieur got everything?" asked the girl in a loud shrill voice. The lady put her fingers to her lips: "Hush, Madame sleeps!" she said.

Hugh could understand just so much. The servants now seemed to creep about with redoubled care. The house was perfectly still, with a faint aromatic perfume that Hugh associated with it ever after, but not without confusion.

Hugh was not many minutes dressing and drying his wet hair and hands, and he was only just ready when some one came tapping at the door, and a hungry man with a less knowledge of the language might have understood the meaning of the word *supper*, which some one uttered in the same whisper as the others.

Hugh's agreeable speculations as to his company were disappointed. Nobody supped except himself. There were two places laid, but the little grey woman came in and motioned to the young man to begin, and Hugh sat down to a solitary meal. The grey woman was in and out of the room attending to his wants with the greatest kindness and assiduity, but whenever he had attempted to speak, she smilingly placed a finger on her lips and pointed to the adjoining room. What she meant he could not conceive; but meanwhile he went on with his meal, and did ample justice to the excellent food that was set before him in white *soupières*, *marinades*, and fruit-dishes and hot plates, all of foreign and unusual shape. An omelette came in leaping in the dish; there was even a slice of melon, and some champagne in a long-necked bottle. Hugh finished off one dish after another, not a little surprised and amused by his adventure, and looking often to the door in hopes of seeing it open. When he had quite done, the little housekeeper came creeping in once more in her list slippers, carrying a little tray with coffee and with liqueurs. Then she crossed and softly opened the door into the adjoining room, and the mystery was explained. Hugh saw a large and well-furnished drawing-room. A lamp burnt dimly in one corner, casting its circling green light all round about. The rays fell upon polished floors and furniture of ancient date. There were bookcases and cabinets, brass locks and shadows; an old looking-glass repeating the scene; an ancient bureau, open and heaped with paper, against the wall. The windows were still closed and safely barred against the storm. On one side of the table stood a great arm-chair, and in the chair reclined a sleeping figure. The housekeeper crept with a noiseless tread across the room; behind the nodding head she gently placed a pillow, and then returned as swiftly as she had entered. But Hugh had time to see his hostess. The light fell upon Mademoiselle de Latouche's profile. Even in her sleep she seemed to hold her own and to reign from her slumbers.

When Hugh turned round he found that he was no longer alone. A young lady, dressed in white, had come in by another door—a beautiful person—who advanced part of the way towards him with an undulating movement, and then stopped short, looking back towards the door. Hugh thought at first that she was going to run away.

"Are you there, Mathilde?" she said; and then the little grey woman stepped forward from behind and said something in French, and once more the lady turned towards her guest.

"My aunt has taken her sleeping draught," said the lady, in a natural voice. "We need not be afraid of awakening her." Then, turning to Hugh, "You must be fatigued after voyaging all day," she said; "you must repose and refresh yourself. Will you not sit?"

Hugh had started respectfully to his feet. Could this be the real lady of the house after all? Was this beautiful young creature Madame de Latouche? She was a very young lady, although her costume was scarcely suitable to a girl, for the dress was of some sort of white stuff, trimmed with swan-down; her beautiful little head was set softly into a thick lace ruff; she had an innocent round face with two wondering and tender eyes. Her soft brown hair was smoothly parted in a Madonna line. She came forward very gently, hesitating, with soft footsteps and burning cheeks. When she spoke to Hugh her voice seemed to vibrate with a peculiar tone; but then, she was speaking English, and carefully considering her words; when she turned to Mathilde and to French again, the plaintive voice struck into another key.

She did the honors very prettily, with a gentle hesitation and swift precision. Coffee was now served. There was not much talk, but a clink of cups and silver spoons, and somehow, when all was over, Hugh seemed to have made

his hostess's acquaintance. He had been rather afraid of her at first, and had scarcely known what to say; but she once asked him to give her some milk, and then suddenly looked up with eyes that innocently asked for confidence; and he began to feel as if he knew her somehow upon the strength of that one enquiring glance. The hands of the clock were now pointing to eleven, and the old man began to clear away the belated little meal.

"Good-night," said the lady, in her pretty English. "I hope my aunt will be well enough to receive you in the morning; I am sorry that I shall have to leave home for the day."

"Oh, Mademoiselle!" remonstrated the companion.

The young lady gave her a little pat on the cheek. "Will you be quiet, Mathilde?" she said.

Hugh held out his hand, English fashion. She half put hers out—then pulled it back again; and, as she did so, he saw that a gold bracelet was fastened to her arm, to which hung a tiny gold locket with a picture.

The lady had to Hugh her name before they parted; she was Blanche de Latouche, she said; her aunt was the real lady of the house. Hugh went to bed dreaming of the hostess.

(To be concluded in our next.)

A SPRING DAWN.

The gray morn breaks, and the horizon-line
Slow reddens into crimson; with a sigh
The river-rushes, rustling, bend and quake,
And, passing o'er the primrose with a kiss,
The south-west wind rings elfin music in
The nodding petals of the violet;
The yellow crocus beds are all aflame
With myriad golden glories, and the thrush
From yet bare sycamore pours forth his song—

Creeps the frail, naked, shivering, first-year'd
lamb
Close to the fostering fleece of mother-ewe,
Bleating, poor piteous stranger, with a wail
Of world-unburdened woe; the black-and-
white
Of bandit magpie snows amid the firs,
As, eager with the love instinct of Spring,
He seeks a willing mate.

Thus is it that
Earth's vigor is renewed; the Winter-sleep
Of bird and beast and plant hath passed away,
And all creation wakes to coming Spring.

JOHN HART'S WIFE.

The room was brilliantly illuminated; on bed, chairs and tables were strewn numerous articles of female attire, as if they were hastily thrown down while the owner was in the act of dressing; the silence was unbroken except by the sobs of a woman, who crouched near the sofa, her trailing robes of white satin falling about her in gorgeous confusion; the white bridal veil, pushed back from the tear-stained face, formed a framework to the trembling form, which now raised itself from the sofa and neared the grate, where burned a bright fire. Into this fire the trembling hands dropped a bunch of withered violets, and then she fell, a mass of crumpled drapery, to the floor.

At that moment came a timid tap at the door, followed by the entrance of a young girl dressed as bridesmaid,

"Heavens, Lily! Is she dead?"
The fainting girl was raised tenderly, and with gentle care brought back to life. With a sigh, her eyes opened, large luminous orbs, with a look of silent pain gained from past sad experience.

"You're better now, are you not, Lily?"
She arose, holding the hand of Claudia for support.

"'Tis past now, Claudia; 'twas only the last link broken between my girlhood and the dawning life. I am now ready for my bridal. John Hart need wait no longer for his bride."

The door again opened to admit the matronly figure of Mrs. Brent, who pompously led her only child down the wide staircase to the arms of a young man, who, with beating heart, claimed her as his bride. Half-an-hour later, Lily Brent was no more; in her place stood Lillian Hart, the wife of a man in every way noble and good, and who held her as a "jewel beyond price." The beauty of the young bride, the gorgeous elegance attending the whole affair, was long the leading topic among the *bon ton*.

We will now go back a year in the life of Lillian Hart, that you may better understand the outburst of emotion with which this story opens.

Lily Hart and Walter Leaton loved each other, and were engaged, he loving her fondly, but having one great fault, pride—or, rather, false pride—as regarded some things. After a quarrel on some trivial subject, Walter would not ask forgiveness, he being in the wrong, but broke the engagement, only to renew it, a few months later, with vows of everlasting affection. Lily, woman-like, forgave, forgetting the past, and happy in the present, until some time later, when a letter from her lover, who was absent, angered her, and in a moment of wounded pride and pain she said words which he considered sufficient to end all between them. Pride gave way before her great love for him; she begged

to have all forgotten, and called to his mind the many times she had forgiven harsh words and actions of his. But it was all to no effect; he remained stern and cold, refusing her even his friendship.

The young girl's heart seemed breaking, and, after waiting to see if time would not bring Walter to his old allegiance, she became the wife of John Hart, not before telling him, however, the past, only withholding the name of him she loved; and John Hart opened his manly heart to the broken reed, loving and treasuring his wife more for the fiery ordeal of suffering through which she had passed.

Two years had passed, and Lily was quietly reclining upon an ottoman before a window of her summer residence. The bridal trip was over, and John Hart, with loving consideration, had never burdened his wife with unnecessary demonstrations of affection, only anticipating the small everyday wants of her life, as well as large ones; so no wonder Lily had fallen into a quiet contentedness seemingly impossible to disturb. Although unable to love her husband as yet, his every wish was immediately fulfilled; and, had he been her first love, she could not have made him a better wife.

Mrs. Brent and Claudia Hart were spending the summer with Lily and John. Every morning the latter rode into the city, Lily generally going to the train in her little pony-carriage to meet him in the evening. But for some reason or other she did not care for it this evening, and the coachman had gone instead. Why was it the past seemed so vivid this evening? Walter had not been in her presence since the wedding-day, nor had she heard of him; she wondered if he were married—if he ever thought of her.

"Are you asleep, Lily?"

"Twas Claudia that startled her from her dreams, 'One would have thought you in the spirit world from the expression of your face. The Misses Lawler have a crowd of friends from the city, and I invited them over this evening; did I do right, dear?"

"Perfectly, Claudia; but I do not feel like myself to-night; you must play hostess."

"You shall not say that, for there is one among the guests who has not seen you since your wedding-day, and I want you to look your prettiest, and prove that John has taken good care of you. The gentleman's name is Leaton—Walter, I think I heard the Lawlers call him. I must tell Belle that to 'change the name and not the letter, is to change for the worse.' Ah! here comes John," as the sound of wheels was heard on the gravel.

But as Lily did not move, Claudia came over and found she had fainted away. John was summoned by the frightened Claudia; one moment and he was bending tenderly over Lily. When she opened her eyes, she was on her own bed; a smile of patient regret was on John's face.

"We will let the young folks enjoy their own society to-night, little wife, for you are not well."

He spoke very kindly; but Lily shook her head.

"I feel better now," she said petulantly. "Don't deny me, John; I would much prefer going down."

It was late when she entered the parlor, her sudden illness being the excuse; but Claudia had proved an efficient hostess, to judge by the merry peals of laughter. Walter Leaton stood by the mantelshelf. Claudia sprang forward to meet Lily.

"Are you better?" Then, turning to Walter, she added, "Here is an old acquaintance of yours, Lily. I need not introduce you, I suppose."

Walter scanned the features of the woman before him; but to him they were a sealed book. She held out her hand, looking full in the face of her old lover.

"I am happy to meet you, Walter, though sufficient time has elapsed for us to grow out of each other's memory."

The words were firmly and sweetly spoken, and even after Claudia left them, they appeared as if but passing acquaintances, Lily never showing the slightest remembrance of the past.

Several weeks passed away, and the intercourse between the two families continued without interruption. Walter, being the guest of the Lawlers, was a frequent visitor at Lily's home, coming in and out of the house at will. Claudia and he were great friends; but Lily, although treating him with the greatest courtesy, never remained alone in his society. And Walter? In these last few weeks of constant intercourse with her, he again felt the old love gaining mastery over him, and repented the act that had caused the separation, longing for one kind look from those eyes that never even smiled into his now, if only to prove that the past was not wholly forgotten. False hope! Lily still maintained a matronly dignity impossible to change, though the fire in his breast burned more tempestuously; if by any chance he came upon her suddenly, her manner was cool and calm; not the least agitation was visible, but as soon as convenient she would find occupation somewhere else.

Walter was driven almost wild by these silent rebukes, and, determining to leave the place, and never gaze on that face but once again, he walked through the garden toward the house. He started with pleasure as he neared it, for fortune favored him; in the summer-house, deep in thought, sat Lily; one arm held up her head, while the loose sleeve revealed its perfect shape; her eyes were upon the ground; but the pale face proved that her thoughts were painful.

"Good evening, Lily."

She started from her reverie, and hastily

lifted the book which had fallen to the ground.

"You do not often remain alone in this summer-house?"

"No; and even now the dew is falling. I was in a deep reverie; I must hasten to the house, for my dress is thin."

She approached the opening as she spoke, but Walter faced her determinedly.

"Lily, you shall not pass me thus. My God! Can you not see the love which is consuming me? Are you made of stone, that you can see me suffer unmoved?"

He spoke passionately. For one moment the blood surged over Lily's neck and face, then left her deathly white.

"Mr. Leaton, allow me to pass. You are mad!"

"Never, until you look me firmly in the face and say if this calmness be real or not. Look at me!"

He caught her arm as he spoke, but she sprang back with flashing eyes.

"You have forgotten yourself, Mr. Leaton! Were it not for fear of wounding my husband's feelings, I would have you ordered from the grounds."

Walter leaned, with folded arms, against the summer-house.

"Continue, madam; I forget nothing—the past is all before me; but my love for you overbalances all. Answer me; is the past forgotten?"

"Forgotten!" with scornful emphasis. "No, it still lives, to play the part of a dark background to the beautiful picture of my husband's love."

"Lily! My God! is it true—you do not love me? Darling, my life will repay you, if you but come to me!"

His voice from passion broke into a wail, as he held his arms open to her.

"Mr. Leaton, you add insult to injury. When you ceased to be a man—noble and generous to the woman you had made love you—I ceased to respect you. From this moment we are not even friends."

With flushed face and compressed lips Lily passed by him. Walter did not detain her, but gazed after the retreating form in anguish. They never met again.

This sketch of a few passages in a woman's life ends here. Some months later, when the tall shadows stretched themselves along the grass, Lily stood at the same window at which we have seen her before; but now her husband's arms were about the slight form, and her head lay confidently upon his shoulder; as she watched the sun sinking low in the west, she told him all the story of her past.

"John, dear, you remember the secret I entrusted to you before our marriage?"

"Yes, darling," he fondly answered.

"But I never told you the name of the hero of that tale of unhappiness to me then; it was Walter Leaton."

In place of the look of surprise she anticipated, there rested only a smile of satisfaction upon her husband's face.

"I knew it, darling, from the first moment you met in this house. I never gave my knowledge vent, for fear of paining you; but, darling, in those days of constant intercourse between you, I suffered keenly. Yet I trusted you, and now—"

"I love you, my husband. You won me, John, by the perfect faith and loving trust you have always placed in me."

Reader, if you be a man, let me tell you something: never marry a woman whose word under all circumstances you would not trust; whatever else she lacks, let her simple yea or nay be sufficient in your eyes against all the world. With perfect respect and kindness toward each other, a contented love much exist between man and wife.

HOW SHE GOT RID OF HIM.

"Going to stay another month at Cedar Glen?" said Mr. Fortescue. "Then I'll go there too."

Mr. Fortescue, according to his own statement, was nine and forty, Miss Geraldine Grey was barely nineteen, and they were engaged.

How did it happen?

How do all these things happen? Colonel Grey was poor and proud, his lovely daughter was dowryless, save for the golden treasures of her hair and eyes; and Carson Fortescue was rich. That was all.

"I'll go to Cedar Glen too," said Mr. Fortescue. "But it is very inconsiderate of Geraldine to stay so long, when she knows I prefer the city in October."

So Mr. Fortescue packed his portmanteau, bought his ticket, and set out for the lovely retreat where Miss Grey was recruiting her roses for the winter's campaign.

Miss Grey was sitting with half a dozen other dimpled, white-muslined damsels—a delicious picture, framed in by sunset and autumn leaves and waving vine-tendrils, when the letters came.

"How provoking!" said Geraldine Grey.

"He's coming."

"Who's coming, dear?" said Daisy Morrison.

"Mr. Fortescue," said Geraldine; "the gentleman I am engaged to."

"Engaged!" repeated Daisy, opening her

gentian-blue eyes very wide. "Geraldine Grey,

you don't mean to tell us you really are engaged all this time?"

"Yes," said Geraldine, coloring like a bit of sea-coral, and drooping her lovely golden eyelashes, "but—but I had almost forgotten it."

"And Albert Garland?"

Geraldine began to cry.

"I don't care," said she—"I don't care! I love Albert Garland, and I can't bear old Fortescue. And I never, never will marry him, not if I end my days in an 'Old Maid's Home!' If only I wasn't so afraid of papa."

And then she told her pitiful little tale of how she had been coerced into the engagement because Carson Fortescue was rich, and Colonel Grey was deeply in debt.

"And he has lent papa ten thousand pounds already," sobbed Geraldine; "and—and—what shall I do? I love Albert, but I dare not break the engagement with Mr. Fortescue, lest poor dear papa should get into trouble about it."

The other girls gathered around her with tender, loving expressions of regret and sympathy.

Daisy Morrison leaned her curl-fringed forehead on her hands, and contracted her pretty chestnut-brown brows thoughtfully.

"And he is coming here, you say?" she questioned.

"He'll be here at nine o'clock; and I had promised Albert every waltz upon my tablet," sighed Geraldine.

"Horrid old thing!" said Minnie Apthorpe. "Why couldn't he have been sensible enough to stop away until after the ball?"

Geraldine threw both her arms around Daisy Morrison's neck.

"Dear Daisy," she coaxed, "you are splendid for getting girls out of scrapes. Can't you help me?"

"My dear," said Daisy, in a patronising and motherly sort of way—she was just eighteen months older than Geraldine Grey herself—"there's only one way out of this dilemma. If you don't like to break this obnoxious engagement yourself, you must make him do it."

"Oh, if I only could," cried Geraldine, clasping her hands. "But he won't."

"We'll see about that," said Daisy, composedly. "Minnie, your room is next to Geraldine's."

"Yes," Minnie wonderingly responded.

"Well, you must come and sleep with me a few nights, just while Mr. Fortescue is here; and the landlord must be instructed to give Geraldine's ancient lover your deserted apartment."

"What for?" questioned the girls in chorus. "Oh, you'll see," answered Daisy, nodding her head. "The partitions are thin. I've often heard Minnie and Geraldine talking to each other while they dressed."

"But," cried Geraldine, in amazement, "you don't expect me to talk to Mr. Fortescue through the—"

"Not exactly," said Daisy, "with the air of a superior fairy, but I expect you to talk for his benefit."

"But, Daisy, dear—"

"Do, pray, keep quiet, every one of you," scolded Daisy Morrison, "until I post you in your various roles."

Fifteen minutes later, Geraldine Grey was stopped in the wide, cool corridor which led to her apartment by a young gentleman in velvet shooting costume.

"Hold on, Gerry. Whither so fast? Not until you have given me a kiss."

"Oh, Albert! I can't; he's coming."

"He? Whom do you mean? Is there only one masculine individual in creation?"

"The old gentleman I told you of—Carson Fortescue."

"Is that all?" said Mr. Garland, composedly.

"Don't fret, Geraldine; I'll pitch him into the brook with the greatest pleasure in life, if only you say so."

Geraldine shook her head.

"It wouldn't do a bit of good, Albert; I am engaged to him. And I never ought to have allowed myself to—care for you."

"Break the engagement."

"But I dare not, Albert. He has lent papa ten thousand pounds."

"Hang the ten thousand pounds!" said Mr. Garland, impatiently. "Is this whole world made up of money? Is love to be sold by the pint, peck, or bushel? Let's elope, this very night, dear little Queen of Hearts."

Still Geraldine shook her head.

"Then you don't love me as I love you," he said, reproachfully.

"Oh, I do, Albert, I do. Only I dare not offend him, for papa's sake. Only wait until to-morrow."

"Why until to-morrow?"

"Perhaps," Geraldine faltered, "perhaps he may change his mind."

"Is that likely?" Garland somewhat bitterly demanded.

"But we'll wait and see. Don't be unreasonable, Albert, dear, when I am so wretched. Hush! there is the whistle of the train now."

And away she ran, before Albert Garland could put in another word.

The yellow gold of the sunset had faded out of the sky, and the chill of an October evening filled the air, as Mr. Carson Fortescue, bundled in various strata of woollen wrappings, entered his room.

"Whew! I'm glad I'm safe here at last, after three hours' ride. Walter, tell 'em to light a fire here at once, and to send up some hot water and a devilled chicken and a tumbler of brandy and water, hot, d'ye hear? And tell 'em to look sharp about it."

"Yes, sir."

The waiter bowed, and disappeared. Mr. Fortescue sat down and unpacked his slippers.

"If there's to be a dance here to-night, I may as well freshen up for it a little," said he to himself. "But Geraldine must be made to understand, when once we are married, that this sort of thing isn't to go on every evening of the week. I wonder where I put that 'Corn Ointment.' I wonder if my dressing-case—"

But his reverie was checked by the sudden sound of voices in the adjoining room.

He listened a minute or two.

"Geraldine, by Jove!" he muttered, *otto voce*, "Geraldine and a lot of other girls. Getting ready for a dance, I suppose. How plain I can hear what they say."

Miss Grey's voice rose high and shrill above the others.

"Give me my hair, girls—the long switch, you know, and the two curls. There, that's right."

Mr. Fortescue sat motionless, the bottle of "Corn Ointment" in his hand.

"False hair, false hair!" he muttered, ominously, under his breath. "She has been deceiving me all this while. I hate false things. Hush! What is she saying now?"

"Daisy, am I too pale?" demanded Miss Grey. "Have I got too much of the pearl powder over my left eyebrow? Do, someone, reach me the pot of rouge—that's soon set right."

Crash went the precious bottle of "Corn Ointment" to the floor.

Mr. Fortescue's eyes were growing round with horror.

"Rouge!" he gasped to himself. "Pearl powder! No painted Jezebel for me. How is it possible that I have been thus far deluded?"

"Here are your teeth, Geraldine," giggled Minnie Apthorpe. "I declare I don't see how you keep 'em in your mouth. What would your old beau say if he could see you now?"

"Hush!" cried Geraldine sharply. "Walls have ears, and I wish you'd hold your tongue."

Just then the door flew open, and in came two waiters—one bearing the tray of devilled chicken, brandy and water, etc.; the other carrying in his arms half a dozen sticks of wood, to kindle a fire—and no more of the conversation in the adjoining room was audible.

But Mr. Carson Fortescue had heard quite enough already.

"False hair, false teeth, a false complexion, in place of the golden clouds of *orepe* tresses, the ever-gleaming pearls, the roses and lilies of Nature's own manufacture, which he had so fondly believed. What next?" he despairingly asked himself.

"Grey has deceived me shamefully, atrociously," he indignantly told himself. "But I won't marry the girl; I—I'll find some excuse to cut loose from the bargain; though, I suppose," he added, dejectedly, "I'll have to lose the ten thousand pounds out and out."

"Please, sir," asked the waiter, his preparations at last completed, "master told me to ask you will you take a ticket for the ball to-night?"

"No, I believe not," said Mr. Fortescue, with a shudder at the idea of facing his *désillusionné* idol, teeth, hair, and all. "I'm tired out. I shall go to bed early."

"Queer old fellow that," said the waiter to himself, as he shuffled out. "Looks like he might have a stroke of paralysis any time."

Mr. Fortescue sent for Colonel Grey the next morning.

"Colonel," said he, striving to speak in an off-hand way, "I'm not so young as I was, and—I—that is—I am beginning to see the folly of a man of my age aspiring to the luxury of a young wife. In fact, I—I have written to your charming daughter, asking to be released from my engagement."

"Eh!" ejaculated Colonel Grey, pulling savagely at his long moustache.

"But," hurriedly resumed Mr. Fortescue, "I shall of course regard any little business arrangement between us as permanent."

"Oh," said the gallant Colonel; "in that case, I can offer no opposition to your serious convictions, although I may wonder at your fickleness."

And so Mr. Fortescue ransomed himself out of the hands of the enemy.

Geraldine's eyes sparkled when she received a letter.

Carson Fortescue's letter. She went at once to her father.

"Papa," she cried, impetuously, "he has treated me shamefully."

"My dear, my dear, don't judge too hastily," said the colonel, looking a little confused. "A man has, of course, a right to change his mind—and Mr. Fortescue has behaved very honorably about pecuniary matters."

"But, papa," pouted Geraldine, "it's a dreadful thing not to be married at all, after this fuss."

"I don't see how we are to help it," said the colonel, stroking her hand, "unless, indeed, young Garland—"

"That's just it," said Miss Grey, looking down demurely. "Mr. Garland has proposed to me. Can I marry him?"

"Marry whom you please," barked out the colonel.

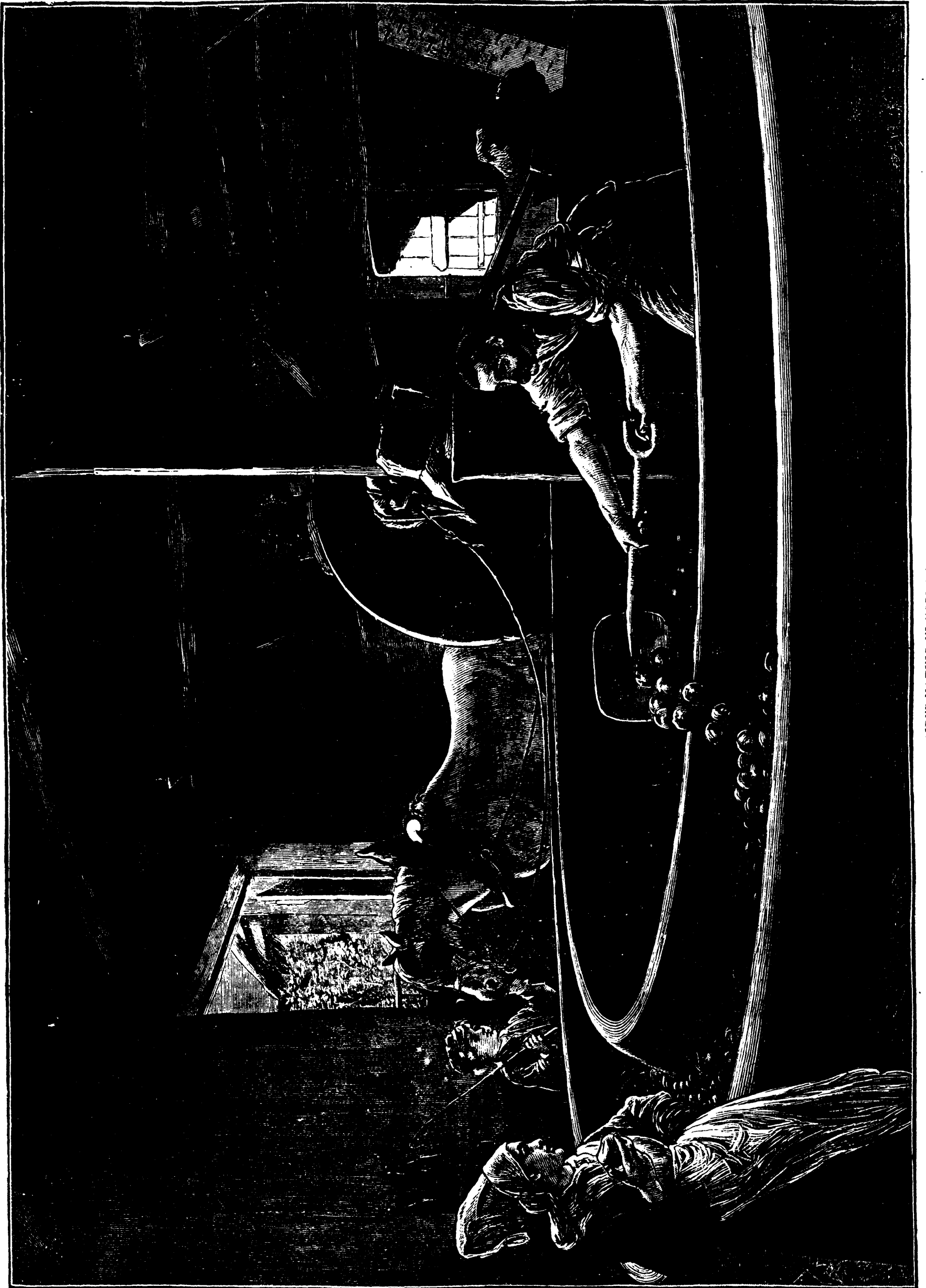
Geraldine did not see Mr. Fortescue again until he congratulated her on her new engagement, and then he scrutinised her closely.

"I didn't know they could get up these false things to look so natural," he said to himself. "Poor Garland! how I pity him when he finds it out."

But apparently Mr. Albert Garland never did "find it out," for, to all appearance he was well satisfied with his bargain.



"SEALERS CRUSHED BY ICEBERGS."



CIDER-MAKING IN NORMANDY.

"THE FAVORITE"

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THE FAVORITE

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 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.

SORROW.

"Give sorrow words," is Malcolm's bidding to Macduff, when the paralyzing words are broken to that valiant Thane of the slaughter of his household—wife, children, servants, all that could be found,—killed in his absence! Presently he will, at Malcolm's further bidding, dispute it as a man; but Macduff must also feel it as a man. And, for the moment at least, he is stricken dumb by the ghastly intelligence, and hides his face from the light and from his friends. It is on seeing him thus shattered, thus speechless, that the prince seeks to make despair outspoken rather than dumb:

What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
 Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak,
 Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.

We are told of the celebrated French surgeon, Dupuytren, as regards the hospital patients upon whom he operated, that so long as they suffered quietly, he acted as if he were their guardian angel; but that as soon as they complained, especially when they "cried out for trifles," he had no farther compassion on them. This probably arose from a defect of temper in the eminent operator; for a patient is relieved by crying aloud under a severe operation. When acute pain is felt, the nervous system receives a shock, the evil effects of which are increased by the efforts used not to give way to nature and cry. Vanessa pathetically declares, in one of her appealing letters to Swift:—"For there is something in human nature that prompts one so to find relief in this world that I must give way to it." Sir Walter Scott has this characteristic entry in his diary:—"At twelve o'clock I went again to poor Lady So-and-so, to talk over old stories. I am not clear that it is a right or healthful indulgence to be ripping up old sores, but it seems to give her deep-rooted sorrow words, and that is a mental blood-letting." To an endeared friend and his wife, who had lost a son, Frederick Perthes writes:—"Cling to one another in your griefs; let neither conceal it from the other; do not try to calm one another down, but rather let your sorrow flow out into a common stream."

It is of Corinne that Madame de Steel says, describing her desolate dejection, that the sorrow of which no one speaks to us cuts deeper than reiterated blows. Her amiable friends, the Prince of Castel Forte, follows the usual

maxim, which bids us do our utmost towards teaching a mourner to forget; but there is no oblivion for the imaginative, Madame remarks; and she pronounces it better to keep alive their memories, weary them of their tears, exhaust their sighs, and force them back upon themselves, that they may reconcentrate their own powers.

Madame d'Arblay, in her "Diary of the Court," expatiates on the silent and solitary sufferings of her royal mistress on the eve of the King's illness, in 1788. "The queen is almost overpowered with some secret terror. I am affected almost beyond expression in her presence, to see what struggles she makes to support her serenity. To-day she gave up the conflict when I was alone with her, and burst into a violent fit of tears. It was very, very terrible to see. To unburthen her loaded mind would be to relieve it from all but inevitable affliction. Oh, may heaven, in its mercy, never, never drive me to that lonely solitary anguish more! I have tried what it would do; I speak from bitter recollection of past melancholy experience."

It is commonly remarked that the suppression of external signs of feeling makes feeling more intense. The deepest grief is that which makes no violent display; because the nervous excitement, not discharged in muscular action, discharges itself in other nervous excitements—arouses more numerous and more remote associations of melancholy ideas, and so increases the mass of feelings. Montaigne deprecates the formal suppression of natural signs of emotion, and bids us allow the ordinary way of expressing grief by sighs, sobs, and palpitations. What matter that we wring our hands, if we do not wring our thoughts? In an extreme illness, it is cruel to require too much composure. Concealed sorrows may be compared to those vapors which, being shut up, occasion earthquakes. That man is truly miserable who cannot get rid of his miseries, and yet will not unfold them. Why should we hug a poisoned arrow so closely to our wounded bosoms? Neither griefs nor joys were ever ordained for secrecy. The tongue, which is to other animals but an instrument of tasting their food or roaring for their prey, was in men gifted with language, to be the great bond of human fellowship, by communicating with more than electric speed between heart and heart the ten thousand emotions which arise therein.

CONVERSATION.

Nature weighs our talents and gives to us unequal shares of sensibility, judgment, and moral perception. With this diversity of intellect as a basis of argument, many remain silent, crowding the store-house of the mind until they shall have amassed a fabulous array of mental riches, maintaining that conversational power is a gift inherent, and not an art dependent on sowing or culture. There are few, however, who will persistently deny that the web of meditation becomes thin and moth-eaten when thought finds no expression, and that all the finest impulses of the soul are corroded by a holding back of the sympathy of words. Talking is not always conversing. Parrots have learned to rehearse fine phrases and sentences without the least show of harmony or pretension to interchange of thought by language. As this bird is supposed to be destitute of the various mental faculties belonging to man, and its dialect merely an imitation of the human voice, so inarticulate sounds formed by the organs of speech belonging to the human species too often prove a toy with which to while away the hours.

Take some trifle of your acquaintance for an example. Watch his conversation though a single day; collect all the marrow thereof, find its solid worth, put it in the balance against a fly, and if it weighs more the scales are false. Since for every idle word we shall give an account in the day of judgment, we should guard against talking too much for fear of saying too little. It is doubtful whether slanderers, gossips, and busybodies in other men's matters, ought to receive the appropriation of a Christian name; and when hoary hairs are guilty of the vices above-named, their presence becomes as disgusting to the lovers of the good and truly beautiful as the odor of a vault in contrast to the perfume of June roses.

Some take an unaccountable liking to positive affirmation, and in every story, true or false, which they relate, make your case hopeless as to contradiction. They tell you that it is true, and that it is not false, until you are forced to believe their earnestness nothing more than a cloak for the deceit which at first emanated from the devil. It is said that "opinions gather strength from opposition;" but preserve us from that which has been very properly termed "the duel of debate," especially when either of the opponents is an exemplification of vociferated logic. He is always in the right, of course; and the best, and, indeed, the only alternative is, to fall back in one's chair and pretend to be exceedingly interested in everything he has to advance, replying discreetly in monosyllables, and taking care to get them in the right place. If the one-sided argument has been successfully maintained in your own home, the gentleman will take his leave with a still more flattering idea of his own intellectual strength, smiling as he thinks of the similar castigation which you are to receive when he shall have accepted your very pressing invitation to call again.

There is another sort of person who belongs

to the class of "mighty good kind of men." Catch him committing himself if you can! He would not dare to assert in a positive tone that the nose on his face belonged to him. With an admirable hesitation he "presumes" it may be so, he "hopes" it is—so do we! His evidence, in point of law, would do more towards hanging an honest man than imprisoning a thief. Another class shows plainly lack of brain and culture in the long invention of a longer tongue, embellished now and then—and oftener—with "He said," "So said I," "Goodness gracious!" "Dear me!" and "You know."

Then there is the cautious speaker, who loves dearly to whisper in the face of his neighbor, as though each phiz had been drawn towards the other by the attraction of a magnet. His communication proves to be nearly as important as the charge of a popgun or the contents of an empty barrel. Others employ their health in telling how often they have been ill—how it seemed at times as if the disease must triumph, in spite of the physician's skill—then when nature rallied, and they were almost themselves again, how they happened to put on a damp nightcap, which caused a relapse, and then they thought they should die, they suffered so!

Poetry may be able to paint the constraint under which many individuals suffer in society, but we are sure that colors could not do justice to the matter. Conversation no matter what may be the chosen theme, should "flow like music after summer showers," leaving no room for monotony, trifling, slanders, conceit, shallow mindedness, exaggerations, regrets or embarrassments.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

CIDER-MAKING IN NORMANDY.

This seasonable occasion is to the Norman rustic folk what the vintage is to those of Burgundy or the Gironde, for cider is the wine of an extensive fruit-growing district on the shores of the Channel, and in some measure likewise in the west of England. The making of cider is a process requiring skill and care, but more especially in controlling the fermentation after the juice of the apples has been drawn off into casks. Before this stage of the manufacture the crushing of the apples to pulp, called "must," and squeezing of the juice out of the must, are performed by very simple machinery, as is shown in our Engraving of an apple-mill. This consists of a circular stone trough, 18 ft. in diameter, with a heavy round grindstone, which is set upright in the trough, and which is trundled around the circle by a horse or other animal, harnessed to the moving beam above. The apples, placed in the trough, should be so completely ground as to reduce the rind and the core to pulp, and to break the seed-pips; a handful of must, when squeezed in the fist, ought to pass out between the fingers. It is then poured a thick sticky mass, upon cloths, or upon layers of straw, which are piled on each other, and are so placed together in the cider-press. The juice is left standing awhile in tubs or vats, but is transferred to other vessels for the critical fermenting process.

"SEALERS CRUSHED BY ICEBERGS."

The interesting and effective picture, painted by Mr. W. Bradford, which is copied in our Engraving, represents the disastrous experiences of a fatal season for the fleet of seal-fishing vessels that yearly sails from Newfoundland. One of those unfortunate vessels is shown among the icebergs, hopelessly crushed by the heavy hummock ice, and hastily abandoned by her crew. Some of these are scrambling over the ice to the nearest vessels, while some are preparing, with what they can pack up and carry away, to get off in a boat, through an open "lead" of water, to other ships or to the land. Upon the occasion referred to there were thirty vessels crushed and wrecked within three days; more than 1000 men were thrown out upon the ice, to save themselves as best they could; and 600 of them, who went over the ice and were able to reach the land, came very near starving to death before provisions could be sent to relieve them. But, happily, no lives were lost; and although this service is attended with such danger, there is never any lack of men to embark in it. They seem rather to like the danger, for there are no seamen in the world more brave and venturesome than the Newfoundlanders. The iceberg seen behind the brig in Mr. Bradford's picture is about 250 ft. high. Such an iceberg is often fast aground in a depth of 500 ft. of water. Sometimes, when a vessel is caught by the ice, no water can be seen from the mast-head, and all the other vessels within sight are in the same predicament. The burning vessel seen in the distance has been set on fire after being stripped by her crew. It is usual, in such cases, to fire the vessels and destroy them completely; for else, later in the season, when the ice melts, they would be carried down the coast by the great Arctic current, would drive out across the Banks, and, floating in the track of vessels crossing the Atlantic, would cause much danger of collisions. In Mr. Bradford's picture the brilliant emerald tints on the ice were much remarked. They result from the local color of the water, a beautiful emerald green, being reflected on the ice. The blue of the ice in shadow is as pure and delicate as that of the sky; in the holes and caverns of the ice it is a deep cobalt blue.

NEWS NOTES.

A famine prevails in Anatolia.

The Comte de Chambord arrived at Versailles the week before last.

The session of the German Reichstag was closed on Friday week.

It is rumored that the Carlists have asked Marshal Serrano for an amnesty.

Castelar has written a letter in which he declares in favor of a Federal Republic.

The French Government has ordered a rigid investigation in the case of "L'Amérique."

The Bill abolishing sugar duties from May 1st has finally passed the British House of Commons.

The English Premier has advised the Queen to bestow a mark of distinction upon Capt. Glover for his services in the Ashantee War.

In the same House a bill has been passed authorizing the seizure and destruction of liquor kept for illicit sale in districts where no licenses are granted.

The Arkansas dead-lock still continues, Brooks having refused to accede to Baxter's proposal to allow a competent tribunal to pronounce upon their claims.

The Halifax House of Assembly has adopted a resolution to erect a memorial in the Legislative Hall to the memory of the late Joseph Howe and Judge Johnston.

Advices from Constantinople report that the Suez Canal difficulty has been settled by Mr. De Lessep's acceptance of the tonnage rates prescribed by the international commissioners.

The British House of Commons has voted a reduction of income tax one penny in the pound, and the abolition of the horse license duty as recommended in the annual budget.

The Marquis of Salisbury, Secretary of State for India, stated in the House of Lords that the next harvest in India promised to be abundant and the present provision against famine was undoubtedly ample.

The French steamship "L'Amérique," having been freed from water, has been examined. Her hull was found to be right, but the valves were open. Her crew were telegraphed for, and she proceeded to Havre on Monday week. The Admiralty Court have fixed her bail at £125,000. The rescuers have instituted proceedings for \$400,000 salvage.

A motion censuring the late British Government for the suddenness of the dissolution, was brought up in the House of Commons by Mr. Smollet, who, in speaking to his motion, used exceedingly strong and personal terms. After indignantly refuting the statements made against him, Mr. Gladstone left the House. The motion was negatived without a division.

The Mississippi began to fall on Sunday week. Much damage was caused by the floods. It is stated that in the northern portion of the State of Louisiana 12,500 persons were in actual want. Other districts of the back country swelled the number to 25,000. The overflowed district comprises five millions of acres and a population of 178,000. A quarter of a million of acres of cotton were submerged, besides 100,000 acres of corn. An appropriation of \$90,000 for the purchase of rations for the sufferers has been made.

The veto of the Finance Bill by the President of the United States has created confusion in the inflationists. Several rumors are abroad as to the steps the latter are about to take. At a recent caucus, according to the *Journal of Commerce*; it was arranged for Morton, Logan, Carpenter, Ferry, of Michigan, and West, to issue an address to the Republican party of the country, replying to the President's veto, charging him with inconsistency, arguing that the Veto Message will depress the industrial interests of the country; that it represents only the President's views as against a majority of the people; and that the Republican party is not responsible for it. It is also stated that the leading inflationists in the House of Representatives have proposed to offer the substance of the vetoed banking bill, or an amendment to one of the appropriation bills, and express confidence that in this shape it will pass and receive the sanction of the President. They assert that the President would not take the responsibility of vetoing an appropriation bill even if it contained very objectionable legislation. Another despatch says the result of several private conferences of inflationist Senators is announced to be an understanding that the vetoed bill shall receive, when the question is put to pass it, notwithstanding the President's veto, every vote that it received when it was passed before. A measure providing for free banking with the retiring of percentage of greenbacks seems now most likely to be probably considered.

GINGER CAKES.—Rub a quarter of a pound of butter into half a pound of flour, mix one egg, three ounces of powdered loaf-sugar, and half an ounce of ground ginger, with the butter and flour, and make them altogether into a paste; roll it out a quarter of an inch thick, and cut into round cakes, about two or three inches across; bake them in a warm oven, on iron plates.

LEFT BEHIND.

The twilight deepens round me,
All alone for evermore,
Still clinging to a clay-cold hand,
Ne'er cold to me before,
As I hear my children's voices
Pass laughing by the door.

God help me! I am wicked
But I cannot bear their mirth—
They all innocent of sorrow,
I the saddest soul on earth.
O my husband, was it only
The wife who knew your worth?

Love, try to look upon me,
Clasp my fingers once again,
For my woman's heart is breaking
With its bitter load of pain,
As I lay my head beside you
And call you—all in vain.

Never more to nestle by you,
Never more to hear you laugh,
Never more to run to meet you
Coming up the garden path!
Was the Hand that took you from me
Raised in mercy or in wrath?

Did I love you all too dearly?
Am I punished for my sin?
But I cannot live without you
Who my strength have ever been;
And you did not want to leave me—
Darling, tell me once again!

Must your little ones forget you?
Will they wonder when they see
Their widowed mother weeping as
She lifts them on her knee,
Their little cherub faces each
The counterpart of thee?

O my darling, I am weary
With my weeping here below,
While the moonlight through the curtains
Glimmers faintly on your brow;
I am half afraid to kiss it,
For it strikes so coldly now.

Yet I cannot bear to leave you
Lying there so still and white,
Though I hear my baby's walling
Pierce the silence of the night,
And I know that, while I sorrow,
You have passed into the light.

NOT SO BAD AS HE SEEMED.

CHAPTER I.

Westbury is a pretty little watering-place on the eastern coast, and is the favored resort of people in search of pure air and sea-bathing. In the summer season it is liberally patronised by invalids for the repose it affords, and the vigor imparted by its bracing atmosphere to languid constitutions.

At that select marine retreat has resided for the last ten years Mrs. Rowland, the relict of a deceased surgeon, who left her in fairly prosperous circumstances when she shuffled off this mortal coil; but wishing to increase her means, she furnished a large house here in a very handsome and comfortable style, which she let out to visitors. Mrs. Rowland neither acted as, nor considered herself, a lodging-housekeeper, and only condescended to be on friendly terms with her lodgers on rare occasions.

She did not forget her late husband had been a surgeon of some note, who though as killful man, never care to be raised to the dignity of an M.D. He had worked a marvellous cure upon some person of high degree, who was on the point of giving him a helping hand in his profession, when death suddenly put an end to his career. His widow, though amply provided for, deemed it a sin not to increase her means while she could, especially as every one around her did the same thing.

The season of Westbury usually commenced in May. Then it was that most of the health-seekers flocked to the gay little town, to recruit themselves by daily ablutions in the sea.

On the present occasion, Mrs. Rowland let all her apartments—even one of her own rooms, to a pale young lady of great personal attractions, and her little daughter, an interesting child of three years old.

This lady's name was Mrs. Steward; that of her companion, Gwendoline. They lived in retirement, and never received company. They had been about three weeks in Mrs. Rowland's apartments—the little girl always called her auntie—when, one day, the postman appeared, and presented the lady of the house with a letter which evidently caused her no small astonishment.

"Why, I declare it is from my brother-in-law, the Colonel!" she said, in surprise.

An expression of alarm came over the young lady as she dropped her work, and gazed at the other till the latter had quite finished the reading of the epistle.

"This is, indeed, most extraordinary," remarked the landlady, looking thoughtfully at Mrs. Steward. "Listen, my dearest child, to what he says:—

"MY DEAREST SISTER-IN-LAW,—

"Five years have elapsed since we met each

other. My medical man (not one of your late lamented husband's sort, who was not content unless chopping off his fellow-creature's limbs) thinks Westbury will work wonders for me, and I have determined to visit it, as it is just the same to me where I go. Wherever I turn I still remain a miserable father, cursed with two of the most incorrigible sons in creation. For you must know, Jane, that one of your sister's lads is breaking stones in America, and the other is an engine-driver. A nice state of things, truly; but we shall do well not to think of it further.

"Perhaps, however, I had better open my heart to you by letter, though I shall probably ruin a dozen quills in my rage, than wait till I see you. Well, Howard, my eldest hope, wrote one day to inform me that he was sick of the army, and wanted to know whether I objected to his selling his commission; but he left the service, and apprenticed himself to a blacksmith of the name of Starr. Doesn't it seem incredible?"

Mrs. Rowland paused, and looked inquiringly at her blushing young lodger.

"Three months later, this ne'er-do-weel writes again, asking me to consent to his union with the said blacksmith's daughter, Miss Agatha Starr. I told him he could do as he pleased, but they should never darken my doors. My son Howard was a lieutenant in the army, and as he had chosen to abandon his position, he was no longer relative of mine. Well, the boy wrote, and so did Agatha; the old blacksmith and his wife did the same. I allowed them to write as much and as often as they pleased, for I never intended to take any notice of their appeals. One day, however, the boy arrived himself. I withdrew at once into my own study; but, would you believe it? he had the impudence to force his way to my very door, and plead forgiveness. I kept the door bolted till he quitted the house, after swearing that he would never again enter it until I had recognised my fault. So I suppose he married the blacksmith's precious daughter. This was four years ago; but what do you suppose took place last year? Vincent, my other son, a rising young barrister, wrote to say that he was on the point of accepting an appointment in America, if I had no objection to his going there. Did you ever hear such rubbish? Of course I said he had better stay where he was. No reply came to this for some time, till I got a letter dated from Liverpool, telling me he had started. So you can now imagine the joys of a father! I beg, however, you will never allude to my undutiful boys when I arrive, which will be on the 28th of May. Hire me a sitting, bed, and servant's room.

"Good-bye, my dear Jane."

Mrs. Rowland dropped the epistle on the table, saying, "What do you think, my dear niece, of this strange coincidence? To me it seems most extraordinary. You come from the north for the benefit of your health, and the Colonel from the south. It, however, places me in an anomalous position. Indeed, Agatha, I can't help thinking that you had better leave this place at once."

The young mother with a melancholy glance, asked, "Why, aunt? Do you suppose the blacksmith's daughter is frightened of her father-in-law?"

"Child, you never felt his crushing sarcasm—his power of wounding sensitive people."

"He'll not crush me, auntie. The blacksmith's daughter is steeled, and steeled iron cannot be bent, much less crushed!" Agatha replied with warmth.

"I know that, dear; but you must remember it is quite possible to break it, and I made a solemn promise to Howard that I would watch over you with a mother's care. You must write to him immediately, and tell him what has happened."

The young lady, who had been gazing thoughtfully upon the floor, looked up, as if a bright idea had come into her head.

"Auntie," she said, firmly, "I shall stay here, and say nothing whatever to my husband respecting his father's letter. It may be for the best, since it is worth while trying, to heal this sad breach between father and son."

Mrs. Rowland started as though terror-stricken.

"What are you dreaming of, Agatha? It is certain you don't know the man you would wheedle. Colonel Steward would only laugh at you, if you said that before him."

"I shall keep to my resolve, nevertheless," was the determined reply. "I form no plans, but when the time arrives I shall act. In which room are you going to place the Colonel?"

"I going to place him?" queried the aunt in growing alarm. "What can you be thinking of? Do you suppose I would have him in my house? Never! No; he shall be as far away from me as possible. There are two capital lodging-houses near the beach, which I know are still unoccupied; he can take rooms in either of these. And if it is true that he's ailing, as he seems to fancy he is, there is all the more chance he'll not trouble me much with his company."

Mrs. Steward felt for her father-in-law. She thought he needed better attention than he was likely to receive from strangers, and would have gladly offered herself for the office had she dared; while the widow was more flattered by the Colonel's unexpected proposal of visiting Westbury than she liked to confess.

Agatha noticed she was not so indifferent to her military brother-in-law as she tried to appear. Notwithstanding the long walk to the beach, Mrs. Rowland trudged briskly along, followed by a porter, carrying a huge basket full

of necessary comforts, in the shape of linen and plate, evidently determined to superintend the arrangement of the Colonel's future abode herself.

The young wife sat at home alone, with her thoughts recalling the past. Up to the present time she had borne the estrangement which existed between her husband and his father with calmness, though not indifference.

In her opinion, the Colonel had shown a great want of feeling towards his son Howard, her husband, because of his change of profession. As far as the rest of the quarrel was concerned, she had held herself completely aloof from it. But when she went to Westbury for the benefit of her health, and there met her aunt, who listened kindly to the out-pourings of her heart, and seemed, with the rest, to sympathise with her, Agatha thought of the Colonel's desolate, unloved position, and could have fallen upon her knees to ask his pardon on her husband's behalf, for having been so antagonistic to his wishes.

She was not, however, without hope that she could influence him whenever they met, and looked forward to an interview with some anxiety. The only daughter of wealthy parents, spoiled by the love of an over-indulgent brother, and worshipped by a passionately-devoted husband, Agatha had taken life very easy, since she had only seen the best side of human nature.

Her father had really once been a blacksmith; but his inventive genius caused him to soar above his brotherhood, and made him the wealthy possessor of a renowned machine factory.

His son-in-law, formerly lieutenant in an infantry regiment, had fallen in love with his daughter Agatha, and on his marriage sold out, in order to take a share in the iron-master's business. He got on so well in his newly-found employment, and led such a happy life with his wife's family, that the Colonel's obstinacy was not dwelt on by any of them. Occasionally, however, Howard felt that something was wanting to make his life one of complete joy, and this his wife knew to be caused by this estrangement from his father.

This it was which strengthened her resolve, since she felt that both husband and the Colonel would be eternally grateful to her for healing the wound between them. She was good-natured enough not to feel hurt at the Colonel's unkind remarks about her parents, and the locksmith's aristocratic wife; she, therefore, determined to bear with all the old man's caprices, and even to love him, looking forward to the hour when she should meet the Colonel, expecting his scruples would banish the moment he saw her.

CHAPTER II.

Fortunately a day and night, and yet another day, had to pass before the Colonel was expected to arrive, so Mrs. Steward had ample time for meditation.

The widow, during that interval, told Agatha all sorts of anecdotes of the Colonel's eccentricities and rudeness, which cooled her enthusiasm considerably before the time arrived.

Indeed, she now looked anxiously forward to the moment when she should see him, and her feelings were not altogether unmixed with dread. But the widow only shook her head sagely at this, and warned her against being too hasty.

The evening was hastening into night. The ladies would gladly have gone out for a ramble upon the hills before sundown, if the Colonel's intended arrival had not prevented them doing so. Both looked impatiently at the clear sky, lit by the last rays of the sinking sun, when a carriage dashed down the street, pulling up as it approached the house.

"It is he," said Mrs. Rowland eagerly to Agatha, as they stood at the window. "Go into the next room, and listen unseen. Your sanguine hopes will soon vanish. The carriage has stopped. How aged and infirm he has grown—yellow and haggard—poor old creature!"

"Poor old creature!" echoes Agatha, softly, whilst the Colonel made an effort, with the help of his man, to leave the vehicle.

It seemed to be a work of time, for some minutes elapsed before he attempted to leave the vehicle. To all appearance, he was paralysed or bent double by rheumatism.

Agatha trembled with sympathy. She would like to have run down and assisted him herself, but that was not necessary. Suddenly a hand was laid upon the servant's shoulder, and the Colonel actively descended the uncomfortable steps of the cab.

As he did so, however, his gloves and cigar case fell upon the ground without anyone's noticing them.

Agatha saw what happened, but before she had decided whether she should call out or not, her little daughter, Gwendoline, darted from the hall, and picking them up, handed them with unstudied, child-like grace to the Colonel.

He took them, and looked wonderingly at the lovely little girl who gazed so confidently into his face.

A visible smile illumined his countenance as he did so. He then bent forward, and laying his hand on her golden head, asked, with tender interest, "What is your name, little miss?"

The widow, who just then came downstairs to welcome her brother-in-law, looked nervously at the child, alarmed lest it should mention its surname, as it did sometimes.

But she breathed more freely when it answered, "My name is Gwendoline. Are you ill, like my mamma?"

The Colonel looked astonished at the child's sympathy for him, and watched Gwendoline

taking up the invalid's hand and tenderly kissing it.

"Heaven bless it," cried the widow, touched visibly by the scene; and the Colonel responded warmly, whilst he shook his sister-in-law's hand.

The trio went up-stairs together after the cabman had been told to convey the luggage to the lodgings hired for the new comer, close to the sea.

Agatha fled into the adjoining room. Her fancied courage deserted her when she saw him alight.

The old gentleman entered the drawing-room, laughing.

"By Jove, sister, you live quite in a princely style here! What lovely furniture—all gold and glitter, I declare!"

He allowed his coat to be drawn off, and giving his travelling cap and gloves to the attendant, remembered all at once the child who had greeted him.

"Oh, by the bye, sister," said he, settling himself comfortably upon the sofa, "what little lady was that who picked up my gloves and cigar-case for me?"

The widow, completely taken aback by the question, began to wonder what answer she should make.

"A lady? Oh, you mean the child! She is the daughter of a stranger, who, like yourself has come to be cured by our sea air and bathing. The child is a general favorite, and calls every-one uncle and aunt. Her name is Gwendoline."

"I knew that before. She's a regular little flatterer, I suppose?"

"Oh, no! She is often cool and wise beyond her years. She certainly behaved remarkably well to you. She must have taken a fancy to you."

The Colonel stroked his gray beard, and said, ironically, "I really shouldn't have thought my old face had much attraction for the female sex in general. But you are wonderfully well preserved, sister. However, that is because you have not the pleasure of possessing such sons as mine."

"You are very wrong to despise your sons in the way you do. You had ample time to assert your authority whilst they were boys; but now that they are close upon thirty years of age, I do think they might be allowed to judge for themselves. Howard only entered the army at your express desire; he never really cared for the profession."

"That's true enough," exclaimed the Colonel; "nor have I any objection to his being an engine-driver. The only thing I stipulate for is not to be disgraced—by his presence."

"What ridiculous nonsense! You know very well that he's no engine-driver, any more than Vincent is a lumberer, as you call his profession, in America!"

"Did Vincent enter the law against his wish, too? Am I the cause of his living abroad now? Yes; that's always the way if sons go to the dogs; it's the father's fault. I wonder why Providence gives to fathers boys at all!"

"There is no good in talking to you," replied the old lady, rising, before her brother had time to say anything that could wound the listener in the next room.

With this, she began to prepare his tea, and avoided questioning him upon any point that could possibly bring his sons into the conversation again.

During tea Gwendoline skipped into the room, and asked, hurriedly, for her mother. Upon the old lady's answer, that she was coming presently, the little creature seated herself gravely upon a low stool, and begged for a cup.

The way she asked for it, and her graceful, engaging manners, pleased the old Colonel completely. He could not take his gaze off her. She noticed this, and nodded roguishly at him. There was an indescribable charm in this confidential little gesture. A feeling very much like real affection crept into the old warrior's heart, and he began at once to call the child by some endearing names.

She clapped her hands with pleasure, and laughed in her merry way, saying, with child-like boldness, "You are a dear man, and I like you very much. Just wait till I've done my bread and butter, and I'll kiss you."

The little one stuffed the remaining portion of her bread into her mouth, and then ran eagerly towards him. He lifted her upon his knee, and stroked her hair tenderly; and, after giving him a hasty kiss, the child sprang from his lap, and rushed quickly from the room.

"That is a charming little creature!" he said, quite delighted. "I never saw any one like her before!"

"Oh, that's only because you are unaccustomed to children," replied Mrs. Rowland, in dry tones, though her heart was beating with joy at the praise. "He is catching itself in his own net," thought she, and already pictured to herself the re-union of the long-estranged family in her own house.

"I've seen plenty of children in the course of my life," exclaimed the Colonel, jovially; "indeed, I've always been a friend and admirer of the other sex, and have often wished I had been blessed with a couple of daughters, instead of those young heathens of mine."

"I think it's uncommonly lucky you had no girls," cried the widow, with an expression of feigned horror. "They would have died long ago, under their father's tyranny."

"Do you think so, Dame Wisdom?" asked the Colonel, good-temperedly. "If so, you are wrong. I should have sought to make myself so beloved, that my slightest wish would be obeyed."

Up to this point, Agatha had listened impatiently in the adjoining room, wondering whether it would be desirable to show herself and by that means commence her attack upon the unsuspecting Colonel.

But now that he had begun to talk upon fatherly love, she thought it would be opportune to step forward; so, turning the handle of the door, she appeared on the threshold, exactly opposite the Colonel, who was seated upon the sofa.

The widow greeted her with a look of astonishment, but the Colonel rose gallantly, and measured her from head to foot.

Agatha hurried at once towards him, and seized his hand passionately.

"I have some claims to this love you say you would have possessed for a daughter!" she said, with fervor. "Surely you cannot be angry any longer with my poor Howard? Time has softened your heart—give up your obstinate prejudices!"

Poor Agatha! she had rushed headlong into the subject, not minding what she was saying.

The Colonel stared for some time at her in sheer amazement; but when she talked of his prejudices, his annoyance became apparent to both, and the admiration the lovely child had just awakened in him, departed, leaving only gall and wormwood in its stead.

The Colonel made use of the first pause Agatha allowed herself, by saying, "Dear me, madam! you take me evidently for one of those fathers in a tragedy; but you are mistaken, I assure you. According to my views, time can never soften me, nor make me wish to increase my family by adopting my sons' wives. If you have any further request to make, I am quite at your service; otherwise I should ask you at once to retire behind the scenes again, where you waited before so admirably for your cue. We cannot remain together in the same room!"

The widow's woe-begone countenance showed that she had expected nothing else but this discomfiting reply, and Agatha, bewildered at the rebuff she had received, stood like a statue.

She was assured the breach between her husband and his father was indeed impassable. She ventured no further words, for she knew not what to say. Delicate in health as she was she now felt the imprudence of an encounter with the hard old man; therefore, with a beseeching look, she disappeared.

A painful silence ensued. The Colonel did not seat himself again; but prepared to leave. The widow, who was rather angry with Agatha for forcing herself into the Colonel's presence, in spite of her advice to the contrary, put no obstacle in his way. She rang the bell for her maid, and asked her if the Colonel's servant was there ready to attend his master to his lodging. She gave herself no trouble to disguise her ungracious mood, and made no attempt to assist her relative to his conveyance.

The widow knew well where to touch him most.

Her conduct frightened him, as he was thoroughly dependent upon her; so he said, good-temperedly enough, on taking his leave, "Good-bye, my dear sister. When the locksmith's daughter has left you, I shall come and pay my respects to you again, not before. You might have known, Dame Wisdom, that such explosions of effect and surprise would be wasted upon me. You had better go now and comfort your weeping *protégée*, for, of course, tears are necessary, aren't they?"

With this, he laughed, and quitted the house.

CHAPTER III.

A week passed without the Colonel making any inquiry about his sister-in-law's health. He was comfortable in his new quarters, which overlooked the beach, and had a charming view. He began at once to try the water cure, and to see how far that would restore him to health and strength.

In the meantime, Agatha Steward took her departure. She had always intended leaving Westbury at the end of May; but the meeting with her father-in-law had decided her to quit the place at once. Mrs. Rowland, too, had taken offence at Agatha's refusal to follow her advice. Words ensued between the two ladies, which made farther residence under the same roof very disagreeable to both. Agatha, grieved at the blunder her inexperience and self-confidence had led her into, hardly possessed courage to tell her husband what she had done.

After some little time, however, she did manage to confess all that had taken place between herself and the Colonel, and was rejoiced to find Howard entirely approve of her proceedings. He was indignant at his father's harshness towards his wife, and could not help harboring bitter feelings, and hoped an avenging Nemesis would overtake the invalid, who had shown himself so harsh and unforgiving.

The Colonel carefully acquainted himself with the movements of all the inmates of Mrs. Rowland's establishment, and paid the latter a visit the day after Agatha's departure. She received him as if nothing had happened.

Amidst pleasant gossip, in which the old soldier revelled, tea was served. Presently the Colonel inquired where the little girl was he had seen there, and why she did not come in as usual.

"The child has gone, Colonel," replied the widow, thinking he knew to whom it belonged. "Of course its mother would not let it remain here without her; and as you ordered Agatha away in such a peremptory fashion, she natu-

rally got frightened of you, and took herself and child off."

The Colonel's hard heart felt a sharp twinge at this information, though he said nothing on the instant. He was nettled to think that the lovely little child was his discarded son's daughter; but when he recollected she had called him a "good man," and allowed herself to be fondled by him, the Colonel could not restrain a sigh as he asked, reproachfully, "Why didn't you tell me that Gwendoline was my grandchild?"

"What good would it have done?" was the reply. "Gwendoline is her mother's daughter."

"Really, Dame Wisdom? But the child seemed to take a wonderful fancy to its grandpapa."

"So did its mother, for that matter," interrupted his sister, promptly; "else she never would have begged for her father-in-law's affection, as she knew his character very well before doing so. But the affair is passed; drop the subject."

It was the first time in his life the Colonel obeyed a request when it went against his own wishes.

The image of the little girl to whom he had taken such a fancy never quitted his memory, nor did he make an effort to efface it.

Pondering over his own lonely state, he said, "I am almost tired of the world. I shall soon retire from the service altogether, and buy some little hermitage in which I may end my days in peace."

"Stuff and nonsense about a hermitage! If you would only see the error of your ways, you could end your days in the bosom of your family, who would love and tend you properly."

"Hush!" interposed the Colonel, beckoning her to silence.

And the subject dropped.

CHAPTER IV.

The residences facing the sea presented the advantages of the country with the comforts of the town. The Spa, where the waters were drank, lay in the midst of a group of such houses. In consequence of these, all the invalids resided in this part of Westbury.

The day after the last described scene, the Colonel noticed two strange ladies strolling along the beach. They were simply clad, and their manners and carriage were more distinguished than those of the generality of persons resorting to Westbury. The elder was evidently a great sufferer; her steps were uncertain, although she grasped her companion's arm with firmness.

The young girl at her side, dressed in simple gray linen, with a low, broad-brimmed hat on her head, had some charm about her more than beauty, that drew general attention to her.

The ladies just then passed the spot where the Colonel was seated under a shady rock. Always civil to strangers, he at once raised his hat, without, however, addressing them, and then turned away.

No sooner had he done this, than he heard the elder remark to her companion, "That must be he, Isabel."

"I am almost sure of it, mamma," replied the daughter, in low, modulated tones.

The Colonel has distinctly heard the conversation, with evident surprise. Who could they be? But he comforted himself with the knowledge that four-and-twenty hours would not be passed before he should find out all about them.

After the ladies had gone a short distance, the elder lady seemed to grow tired, so her daughter at once led her back again to their lodging. As soon as her mother had reached there, the girl left her, and returned quickly and resolutely towards the Colonel, who had now taken his seat upon a bench.

She bowed quietly when she had reached him, and said, "Colonel Steward, I presume?"

Agreeably surprised and charmed with the girl's frank and easy manner, the Colonel at once rose, and answered in the affirmative.

"You will wonder at my addressing you without having previously gone through the form of an introduction. I am Isabel Landville, and am fortunate enough to possess your son Vincent's affection."

The Colonel, who would gladly have turned to the right about, said something in his usual sarcastic manner, which contrasted forcibly with the polite reception he had just accorded her.

But Miss Landville seemed not to care in the least degree for the change, but continued quickly, "I persuaded mamma to bring me here, as Vincent told us you were visiting this place for a short time."

The Colonel listened to her, although the ironical smile was still upon his lips; but he now seated himself upon the bench again, and invited the young lady to take the vacant place beside him.

"Let us sit down, Miss Landville, and then we shall have a better chance of arguing with one another."

"Well, then, Colonel, what I propose is to appeal to your sense of justice, and submit myself to your scrutiny. Four weeks will surely be sufficient to judge whether I am worthy of becoming your son's wife. I require your consent first. But do not fancy, Colonel, that I shall seek your favors with signs of affection, emotion, or pretended respect."

"Indeed, I don't think you will give me any opportunity for fancying such a thing," smiled the Colonel.

"Very well. You understand me, I see. Vincent will return from America in a week. He will have told you so by letter—"

"May be," replied the Colonel. "I do not read his rash letters."

"You have done yourself more injury than any one else. You know Vincent has been engaged to me for two years, and that a marriage between us is the greatest wish of our life."

Isabel then explained to the late Colonel, who began to exhibit symptoms of impatience, that Vincent went to America on business for her father, and had succeeded in saving some property belonging to his deceased brother; that though he did so without the Colonel's consent, out of affection for her, winning her parents' gratitude for the services he had rendered to them in this business, it was against his personal feeling to do so; and wound up by asking him if he would promise to decide his son's fate without any prejudice in respect of the act of insubordination of which Vincent had been guilty.

The Colonel smiled sardonically, saying, "And supposing I pronounced you worthy at once, without any further delay?"

"I should know that you intended to treat him as you did Howard, whom you told to do as he pleased."

"But you would marry him just the same?" "Never without your consent!" exclaimed she, with firm resolve.

The Colonel took her hand, and promised all she asked him. She looked, with an expression of deep emotion, into his stern face, and pressed his hand warmly. After this, she raised her head proudly, and walked back quickly to her lodging.

The Colonel looked after her, and said, "I wonder whether she would keep the promise? I feel a desire to humiliate this proud, self-sufficient young damsel."

CHAPTER V.

In the afternoon, when Mrs. Landville was taking her usual nap, her daughter prepared to pay a visit to her lover's aunt. She had brought a letter of introduction from Agatha with her to Westbury, and had already sent it on.

Mrs. Rowland gave her the kindest welcome. She had never shared her brother-in-law's views or principles on any point whatever, least of all his unfounded objection to the objects of both his son's choice. Agatha had explained in her note that Miss Landville (whose cleverness and good sense had evidently made a great impression upon her) was going to tackle the Colonel, and bring him to her way of thinking; but she did not mention how this change was to be brought about.

So the old lady inquired what Isabel's plans were.

Isabel told her she had already made a beginning that morning.

The widow listened, and shook her head.

"You are calculating wrongly, my child," she said, sorrowfully. "You will never gain your object in that way. I know my brother-in-law. Ah, no matter what promise he has made you, he'll find some means of cheating you."

Isabel smiled, with an air of triumph, and said, "Trust me, the Colonel cannot persist so far in his obstinacy as to make one who never did him an injury, miserable for life; and when he has once confessed himself conquered, it will be easy enough to settle matters between Howard's family and himself."

"Would you really keep your word, and not marry Vincent?" inquired the old lady doubtfully.

Isabel, with evident emotion, assured her solemnly that nothing should induce her to do so against the Colonel's wishes.

"Isabel, you are standing on the brink of an abyss. Don't be too confident. Your happiness, and that of Vincent, is at stake. Think of what you are doing. Does Vincent know of your resolve?"

She replied in the affirmative, and added that he entirely approved of her plan.

"With the full understanding that he is to give you up if his father remains obdurate?" asked the widow, with considerable astonishment. "This is, indeed, a strange piece of heroism, or else shows his implicit and blind confidence in your persuasive power."

Isabel was not to be shaken in her resolve, and promised to see her again next day, after she had been to the Colonel.

The girl went happily back to her lodgings, to attend once more to her invalid mother's wants. That evening she enjoyed a pleasant walk in the sea-breeze; and next morning awoke refreshed by sleep, ready for an early stroll before her mother rose. The probability of meeting the Colonel may have done something towards inducing her to walk thus early. Nor had she deceived herself.

She had not gone far before she saw the old gentleman advancing in a stately manner towards her. He greeted her, from some distance, with a far pleasanter voice than she had expected.

They met in a very picturesque spot, overlooking the sea, with shady nooks, formed by the rocks, on every side.

"You must possess some superhuman power, Miss Landville," he said, with apparently forced frankness; "for you have succeeded where everyone else has failed. I never slept a wink all night!"

The girl raised her beautiful face, and said some words of regret at his discomfort.

"But I know now I shall escape any more of such wakeful nights," continued he, taking no notice of her kind words. "The plans you have formed for your own benefit, and mine too, as you seem to think, were the entire cause of my

miserable. You have regularly beset my path and hope that I may capitulate some day; but, my dear young lady, this is the last hour I shall remain in Westbury. I'm off now to Whitehill, to further my cure without interruption—good-bye!"

Isabel looked like some beautiful statue. All life seemed to have fled from her glowing young features, and her arms sank enfeebled by her side.

"Is this my sentence?" asked she, in scarcely audible tones.

"Take it as you please. Marry my boy; I have nothing to say against it. Farewell!"

Isabel's lips moved to repeat these words, but she could not succeed in giving utterance to them. Silently she bent her head, and stood there as if unable to move.

The Colonel left her, his face beaming with satisfaction. After he had gone some distance, he turned and looked back.

Isabel was standing in the same position gazing across at the horizon. He arrived at home, and looked again back towards the beach, but the girl still lingered, exactly as he had left her.

He went into his room. Was it curiosity to gaze unseen upon his sacrifice, that made him take his field-glass? He arranged the focus, and turned it upon her his son loved, and whom he had so cruelly wounded.

Isabel had not moved—had not even changed the position of her arms; she seemed to have forgotten that she existed—not to know that her tears were coursing each other slowly down her cheeks. Thus the Colonel saw her, and his heart began to beat fitfully. He paced his room restlessly to and fro. Several times he hesitated at the door; then he hastily took up his glass again. Isabel was coming calmly, with seeming unconsciousness, towards her lodging again. On seeing this, he jumped into a fly, and went on his road to Whitehill without having deigned to wish with his sister-in-law good-bye.

CHAPTER VI.

Whitehill was five-and-twenty miles from Westbury. It was a poor little fishing village, with no charms about it except the sea. It consisted of a few scantily furnished lodgings, occupied only by some cripples.

The Colonel saw, immediately, that he had regularly exiled himself. His temper was not improved by the wretchedness of the apartments he had taken, and which, he had been told, were the best in the place. A florid paper, no carpet, hideous chintz curtains hanging to the low windows,—all these discomforts reminded him of his school-days; but had not the effect of cheering him.

He had to submit to the inevitable, however, as he knew he could not return to Westbury without yielding.

Three weeks were passed in the greatest misery. Nothing happened. The time approached when Vincent was expected from America.

"Pack up my things, Craven," ordered he, one evening, as he sat in his stuffy little room, gazing at the setting sun, till he was almost blinded by it. "Pack up my things, and order a carriage to take me to the station. I am going to Southport."

The man stared at his master, in astonishment.

"To Southport?" repeated he.

"Yes. We shall go through Eden *en route* for ——" He left his explanation unfinished, and began moving about restlessly.

Steam is a splendid means by which to carry out quietly some project, and the man who sits in his *coupé*, with ticket in his pocket, hurries on to meet his fate. If it had not been for this, the Colonel might have changed his mind ten times during the journey; but he reached his destination before he had time to do it. When he arrived there, the well-known manufactory, belonging to Starr and Company, was immediately pointed out to him, as well as the almost princely mansion where the family resided.

At the Colonel walked up the gravelled path leading to the mansion he saw, sitting on a garden seat, Agatha. By her side stood Howard, who, holding her hand affectionately, tried to console her for the disappointment which had attended her appeal to his father.

The sharp, crisp, regular tread of the haughty officer on the gravel, grated on their ears, and caused both to turn in the direction from whence the sound came, when, to their astonishment, they beheld the man who, of all others, they dreaded most to meet.

Howard, to avoid a scene, hastily drew his dejected wife along a side-walk which led to the house, in which they were speedily lost to sight; while the Colonel passed on, as though he had not noticed the sudden flight.

He walked up the broad stone steps leading to the noble portico without a moment's hesitation and opened the door, which led into a wide and lofty hall.

Through folding-doors he beheld a female figure, standing in the adjoining room, gazing through the window. He stepped in.

"Good morning, my dear," said the Colonel, and his voice sounded with more resonance than when last he saw her, and told her it was impossible for both of them to remain under the same roof.

The lady turned round; but only for a moment; in the next she rushed forward to meet him, and threw her arms round his neck.

He had not deserved this much. An inward voice whispered that to him; and he took care not to say so. He mentioned nothing about the retreat from the grounds.

Agatha next rushed to the door, and called excitedly to her husband, child, parents, and brother.

All obeyed the summons, in the greatest alarm; but the fright was turned into joy when they saw the Colonel standing in the centre of the room.

Howard advanced, and they both, clasping hands, gazed affectionately at each other. Their hearts were opened without a word of explanation from either.

And now Gwendoline came jumping in with a look of astonishment, and a smile passed over her bright little face.

"You!—where have you come from?" asked she, clasping her hands merrily.

"Am I still a nice man, my pretty one?" asked the Colonel, lifting his pet high in the air. "Have you really not forgotten me yet?"

"No—really not!" answered the child; "and I'll give you a kiss for coming to see me again."

After a while the storm began to lay itself. The family became quieter, and the Colonel asked Howard if he had heard from Vincent lately, and if the ship the latter was coming in had arrived in England. He at once declared his intention of going to meet his son.

Agatha and her husband exchanged looks. "Have you had any news of Miss Landville?" asked the Colonel, noticing the glance between husband and wife.

They replied in the affirmative. "We have a letter, to deliver into Vincent's hands on his arrival, from Isabel."

"Give it to me. I will be love's postman for once?" laughed the old gentleman.

Howard went to fetch the letter. The Colonel took it, looked at it on every side, and tore the envelope open.

His son jumped up in alarm, ready to prevent its perusal.

"Leave me alone," cried the Colonel, good-temperedly; "I will take all the responsibility upon myself."

He stepped to the window, and commenced reading.

It was some time before he had mastered its contents—much longer than necessary, considering the length of the letter, as Isabel had not used many words to express utter hopelessness. But the contents were only intended to be read by the man to whom they were addressed, and whom the girl loved better than the whole world put together.

The noble submission with which she took her humiliation from the Colonel's hands was stated uncomplainingly, while she told him that she could not consent to see him again till his father was willing to allow her to enter his family, though she was afraid that happy time would never arrive.

There must have been something in Isabel's unshaken self-government that had the power of touching the Colonel more than anything else. Be that as it may, Agatha declared that he changed color several times during his perusal of the lines.

When he had read the letter, he asked for a new envelope, pen, ink, and sealing wax.

Howard obeyed his request, though he hardly liked his task, for he was afraid of any rash words the Colonel might be guilty of. He had suffered much at his father's hands, and, knowing Isabel well, and, being fully acquainted with her irresistible fascinations, he was glad to hear of the plan she was going to adopt towards the Colonel, and was almost sure of its ultimate success: for who could resist such a girl long? Therefore, he was doubly anxious now, knowing how much happiness and misery depended upon the stroke of a pen, or even a misinterpretation of words.

The Colonel acted as if he were the only man in the world, and as if no one could be in the least interested in anything he was about to do. He dipped his pen in the ink; then, laying Isabel's letter in front of him, glanced very uneasily upon the neat handwriting, and wrote in large characters, upon the top of the paper, "Your resignation will not be accepted."

Agatha had been watching Colonel Steward's hand with anxiety, and when she discovered what he wrote, rushed into her husband's arms, whispered the joyful intelligence to him.

The Colonel heard her. He turned round, and said, with a mocking smile, "I suppose you thought I had the nature of a bear in me, Agatha? I tell you what, Howard, you had better give your wife some lessons in natural history. There I now for my fate."

He sent the letter off, so that Miss Landville received it before the return of Vincent.

All was right again between them. It is not possible to describe the happy re-union of a family that has been at strife with each other for a long time. Gwendoline received most of the Colonel's kisses; but one could tell, by the way he watched her, what an impression Agatha had made upon the obstinate heart.

Of the meeting between Vincent and the Colonel, we can only say that the sight of his stately old father was sufficient to fill him with hope.

Father and son agreed at once to see the Landvilles.

"You must go to the father; I to the daughter, said the Colonel, with mock seriousness.

"Don't you think exactly the contrary will do as well?" asked Vincent, laughing. "I am longing to meet darling Isabel."

"She won't see you till I've spoken to her," replied the Colonel, calmly. "Something has happened between us that—"

Vincent gazed at his father in alarm.

"Isabel is proud," whispered he, with some agitation. "I do hope nothing will come to prevent our happiness."

The Colonel shrugged his shoulders, but did nothing to calm his son's doubts.

"The uncertainty of the next four-and-twenty hours shall be your punishment for going off to America without my consent, and without taking leave of me."

Vincent knew of old, that all questions on his part would be of no avail; so he was silent, and counted every station in secret that divided him from the girl he loved.

At length, the last was reached, and a carriage took both gentlemen—the old one laden with good resolutions; the young one provided with proofs of his efficiency, in securing a fortune which had well-nigh been lost to the family for ever—in front of the Landvilles' house.

Isabel's father, who had already been made acquainted with Vincent's arrival in England, received him with exclamation of joy and gratitude; while she hid herself behind the door, and waited anxiously for the key to the riddle which had been sent her in the shape of her returned letter, signed by the Colonel's hand.

The latter advanced to her, and led the trembling girl to the window. Then, laying both his hands upon her shoulders, he gazed intently into her lovely face. There must have been something in his expression that appealed to her heart; for, bending her proud head low, she pressed herself affectionately to his breast. He embraced her silently and tenderly, and whispered, in a voice of emotion, into her ear alone.

"Can you really dispense with my love, as you told me you could when we last met?"

"The words, father, were hastily spoken," she replied.

Further explanation was unnecessary.

Vincent won his happiness through his own efforts on the other side of the ocean, and all obstacles to his love vanished.

If the reader wishes to know which daughter-in-law the Colonel likes best, he must look farther than his conduct to both of them before he can judge rightly. Agatha is the object upon which he vents his sarcasms, while on Isabel he bestows warm adoration.

Gwendoline, the sweetest of grandchildren, has won a throne in her grandfather's heart which nobody else can dispute—not even if he should be blessed with a dozen more grandchildren.

One day, the Colonel penned the following lines to his sister-in-law, Widow Rowland:—

"The fear that you might be seeking me in the moon, after my sudden disappearance from Westbury, induces me to write an acquaintance you with the fact that I am at present residing with my son Vincent's intended wife's family. You may laugh away, my dear—it cannot hurt me. I, too, often have a good laugh at the expense of an old fellow named Steward, who has given up the part of a 'bear,' to play that of a— Well, sister, there's no writing so difficult on earth to a person as penning an admission of his own faults, so I out with the truth—to play the part of thoroughly happy father and grandfather.

"Come and judge for yourself, and see your worthy brother-in-law fondled affectionately by Agatha, the blacksmith's daughter, dancing a galop with that romp Gwendoline, and making love to the proud daughter Isabel.

"In four weeks Vincent is going to be married; and he expects his aunt Rowland to attend his wedding in the stiffest of silks and the smartest of bonnets. I conclude by assuring you that I am still old Colonel Steward, but I have found my hermitage in my son's house, where I intend to remain till the end of my days, doing penance for my sins."

Of course, the widow did not wait for a second invitation, but hurried at once to Eden to see her fondest hopes realized. We may also be sure that she was greeted with some of the Colonel's cutting speeches; but as she was a lady well able to take care of herself, she probably answered him in a proper spirit.

ETHEL'S STORY.

She was a very beautiful, attractive woman, black-eyed and crimson-cheeked, with a splendid bust, and arms which she did not mind showing.

I was a little, pale creature, neither ugly nor pretty; but I did not envy her.

Let all the men on earth admire her; one loved me.

If I was fair in his eyes, I cared nothing for the rest.

The other girls were jealous at times.

Madge Burt and Barbara Brown declared that there was no such thing as getting any attention from any one where she was.

Certainly she tried her best to fascinate every man, single and married, who came near her.

Millicent Bray was her name, and I understood that, young as she was, she was a divorced woman.

It may have been that she was very much ill-used by her husband, and had then the injured party altogether.

I presume it is often so—but pure women will bear a great deal rather than sever the holy tie that binds them to a husband's side; and there is always a doubt about a divorce.

Some of the ladies at Mrs. Norton's shrugged their shoulders, and wondered what the old lady had been thinking of to take Mrs. Bray in.

The gentlemen, however, fought in her defence.

Beautiful, musical, fond of flirtation, and apt at flattery, she won her way into their liking.

For my part, I did not respect her one whit. I did not see anything to love in her, but I admired her.

Unlike most women, I always found myself able to see the charms that men see in a personally attractive woman.

But were I a man, I could not do as men do: flatter these flirts at the expense of true-hearted women, who love them with all their souls.

When good Mrs. Carman went to her room with tears in her eyes, leaving Mr. Carman whispering soft nothings in Mrs. Bray's ear; and when little Effie Fay crimsoned and trembled with anger, because her lover forgot her while he turned the beauty's music and looked down into her eyes, I often thought to myself that those were poor triumphs after all, that those men who gave them to her were but silly creatures.

She liked none of them.

She mocked them, and had little nick-names for each.

She was as cold in heart as she was warm in manner.

Her impassioned glances were those of an actress, nothing more.

She gave those glances to my Harry as well as to others, but I had no fear of their effect.

Of course, he knew she was handsome, and that she sang well, so did I.

We had met at Mrs. Harlan's.

I was an orphan, and taught music for my bread; he was a young clerk in a large wholesale house.

At our first meeting we had liked each other, and he was the only lover I had ever had.

When I gave him my betrothal kiss, it was with lips that had never met those of any man before, and I was glad to think of it.

We had been engaged three months, and were to be married in the spring.

We were wrapped up in each other, and I believe concerned ourselves very little about Mrs. Bray.

I did not.

It pleased me better to think of better women.

There were others whose minds were continually running on her, however.

Jealous Effie Fay could not quite forget her.

Over and over again she sat in my room, with tears pouring down her cheeks, and talked of her.

"She's a wretch," she declared, "a bold, forward, cruel creature. She knows Charlie is engaged to me. She knows it. I see it in her eyes; and she works so hard to get him to herself. Charlie doesn't know what he is doing for himself. I shall break with him yet, and I do love him so. No one will ever love him so much."

Then she would cry again, and begin the old story of Mrs. Bray's conduct, of her looks, her contrivances, her becks and wretched smiles. I felt sorry for the child, she was but sixteen; and sorry too for Charlie, who was acting as most foolish boys do under such circumstances.

But one morning she began another strain.

"Mrs. Bray is at work with your Harry now," she said, "and she'll twist him round her finger soon, as she does my Charlie. It's witchcraft those women have—an unholy power of some kind. You'll see, Ethel, you'll suffer as I do soon."

And then she spoke of words, and looks, and actions that had quite escaped me, but which, spoken of, made me strangely uncomfortable.

I had utter faith in Harry, but I did not like to hear such things.

At first it was only that, but after awhile it was more.

As the days went on, I noticed one or two things that were suspicious.

I saw that she contrived to meet my lover in the hall, and on the stairs, to sit near him at dinner time, to go out upon the balcony when he did.

Charlie Beach was allowed to slip back into his old place in Effie's heart, and my Harry was Mrs. Bray's object.

Effie had been sharper than I; but Harry was too strong in his love for me to yield, I felt sure.

It was about the time that Harry's business compelled him to choose a lodging farther away. He left Mrs. Norton's, and only called to see me in the evenings, and we began to write to each other.

I have the little notes he wrote me carefully hidden away even now.

They are very precious to me.

As I read them over, they bring those hours back again, and I am a young and loving girl once more.

I never loved Harry more tenderly than when I sat down one morning to tell him of a little festivity which I had been invited to attend, and to ask his escort.

I shall never forget that day.

After I had posted the letter, I sat in my room, and sewed upon the pretty dress I intended to wear, thinking all the while that it was Harry's favourite color, and that he would be sure to like it.

Effie, happy in her recovered lover, sat with me and read aloud from a little book of verses Charlie had given her.

They were not fine verses, nor was she an elegant reader, but there was love in them and in her heart, and that sufficed.

We are so unaccountably happy sometimes, just as we are unaccountably sad at others.

It is as though unseen spirits, good, or bad, hovered about us and whispered to us.

I was gloriously content that day. Outside the sun was bright and the air soft. The geranium that stood in my window was full of crimson blossoms.

My canary bird sang shrilly. Effie, with pretty smiles on her face, basked in the bright firelight, and between her verses talked of dear Charlie.

I had finished the dress, and sat looking down into the street, when I saw a boy hurrying along.

It was the errand boy at Harry's place, and Effie, who had seen him also, ran downstairs to bring my note to me, for we both knew that it was my answer that shimmered in its little white envelope in my hand.

She ran down gaily, humming a tune. She returned with a very serious face.

A note was in her hand with my name upon it in Harry's writing.

But her expression frightened me so that I caught my breath.

"What is it, Effie?" I asked.

"Ethel," she said, very sadly, "I must tell you, though you'll hate me. The boy who brought that note brought one for Mrs. Bray."

I was so relieved that I burst into a fit of laughter.

"Why should that trouble me?" I asked.

"Don't you see your Harry must have written both?" she asked.

"No," said I, "I do not. I am not jealous of Harry."

Then I broke the seal, and these were the words I read—

"MADAM,—

"I have another engagement and am obliged to decline yours.

"H. HEATHCOTE."

I put the cold billet down with a strange chill at my heart.

What had I done to deserve this? What did it mean?

What should I do?

A note like this from a betrothed lover, from whom I had parted with the tenderest caresses. Effie saw that I was in trouble and forbore to question me, but she glided out of the room and did not return for an hour.

When she came back, her face was wet with tears.

"You cannot tell me what it is?" she asked. I answered—

"I must have offended him unconsciously. I can't say anything more."

When the dinner-bell rang, I went downstairs as usual.

Passing the parlor door, I saw Mrs. Bray. She was reading a note aloud.

"I declare I never was so surprised," she said. "I thought he was in love with that little girl. Ah! there she comes."

She hurried away as she spoke, in assumed terror.

The next moment I saw Effie speak to her, and a white paper pass into her hand.

Whatever it was she knew, and she would tell me.

She did.

That evening she brought a letter into my room—a letter that Mrs. Bray had exhibited to all the house—a love-letter from Harry Heathcote, tenderer and more passionate than any he had ever written to me, and with his undoubted signature as its foot!

It was no forgery.

I even knew the paper, a rare and costly kind, with his own monogram upon it.

It began "Darling," and ended "Your own Charlie."

I did not scream, I did not swoon; I faced the terrible truth as best I might.

She had won him from me, but I was in no wise to blame.

I was true.

I was sinned against, not sinning, and the blow should not crush me.

I did not even allow myself to play the mourner.

Contempt of my lover had taken the place of love.

He should know I did not grieve for him; and I asked good old Mr. Harlan to be my escort, and went to the party next evening with a smile on my face, though my heart ached sorely, and life seemed a cold and cruel thing to me.

They told me I was gay that night.

I chatted, I ate and drank, I danced whenever I was asked to do so.

All the while the words of that letter Harry had written to Mrs. Bray were in my ears.

When old Mr. Harlan took me home, he told me I had "wearied myself out, and was beginning to feel it."

But I was strong yet.

To-morrow I had work to do that would demand all my strength.

To take the matter into my own hands, to write an adieu to Charlie, send him back the gifts and letters in my possession, and ask mine of him.

As I went upstairs old Mrs. Norton looked out of her room.

"Your beau was here to-night," she said. "I expect he was out up to find you out, but Mrs. Bray took care of him."

I tried to laugh.

All my life I felt I must laugh when I had rather cry.

I must hide my heart.

No one should ever call me a "disappointed" woman.

No one should speak of me as one who had been jilted.

I wrapped myself in my dressing gown and sat before my fire.

I could not sleep.
I could not even lie down.
The clock struck twelve, one, and still I watched the dying embers.
Ten minutes more had gone by, when suddenly a frightful shriek rang through the house—another and another.

I rushed to the door.
Other people were in the entry.
The shrieks came from Mrs. Bray's room, and ere we could open it, it was flung wide and she rushed towards us, her long, white night-robe all ablaze, a horrible moving column of fire.

I don't know what I thought.
I don't know what I did.
I cannot remember anything more, until I had her down upon the floor, with a blanket I had snatched, wrapped about her.

I heard myself crying—
"Lie still and you will save your face."
And I saw the flames choked out and the light, black tinder floating about me, and knew that I had at least saved her from being quite burnt to death.

Soon I knew that I have saved her life.
It was night again when someone came to my door, and told me that Mrs. Bray wished to see me.

Of course I went to her.
She was lying in her bed, wrapped in bandages, and she could not stir, but she looked at me earnestly.

"Send them out of the room," she said. "I want to speak to you alone."
And when the nurse had closed the door behind herself and Mrs. Norton, she looked at me again in the same strange way.

"You saved my life," she said, "Yes, and I remember what you said. 'Lie still and you'll save your face.' Most women would have liked me to spoil my face, had I used them so. And you don't know the world either. Go to that desk. There's a letter there. It's yours. I wanted to make you jealous, and I wrote to your beau, to ask his escort somewhere."

"Two notes came at the same time to the house.

"I knew very well that there was a mistake made—that mine had been put into your envelope, and yours into mine.

"I scratched your name out of that one you have there, and showed it about to make you jealous.

"He's as true as steel to you. I love you for saving my face, and I tell you that. Now try to forgive me."

I was too happy to do anything else.
I knew that what she said was true and when she asked me, I stooped down and gave her a kiss. It was our last interview.

When Mrs. Bray recovered, she left Mrs. Norton's, and Harry Heathcote never knew anything about those two miserable days until I had been his wife too long to have any secrets from him.

AN AUTUMN MEMORY.

BY F. P. A.

'Twas long ago in the gloaming
Of so Autumn day gone by,
When we went out a-nutting,
My lost, lost love and I.

I see her as she stood there,
While I held down the bough;
Ah, eyes, what wouldst thou barter
To gaze upon her now.

That bright young form so stately,
That face so sweet and fair,
Crowned with a golden glory
Of clustering auburn hair.

The music of her laughter
Sounds yet upon mine ear;
Her voice still haunts my dreamland—
So far and yet so near.

And now, when leaves are falling,
When sinks the sky-king red,
I think upon the glory
Around my darling shed.

I think, till thought is sorrow,
Of happy days gone by—
When we went out a-nutting,
My lost, lost love and I.

STRANGE VISITORS.

A few winters ago, myself and friend, who had been stopping for some days in a northern town heard by accident that there was a few miles away an old mill that had the unenviable reputation of being the home of ghosts. Of course we laughed at the idea; but our informant assured us he had himself seen the apparitions, and would never enter the mill again after dark.

"Was the mill uninhabited?" we asked.
"No; Mr. Brown, the owner, lived there. He was a man of high standing, unimpeachable honor, and he, too, had frequently seen the ghosts."

Here was a puzzle which we resolved to unravel.

"Could we get an order to sleep at the mill?"
Our informant promised to use his influence to procure the required permission. The next

day we received a letter, stating we could, if we still felt so inclined, stay at the mill that night; but we must excuse the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Brown, as they had been called away suddenly to see one of their children, who was at school. Accordingly, at nightfall, Tom Selford and myself made our way to the ghostly tryst.

When we arrived, we were well received by Mr. Brown's foreman, a jolly-faced north countryman, called Tullock, who proceeded to show us over the mill, as if to prove that there was no deceit, in the same manner as a conjuror allows one to examine the inside and outside of the box into which he puts, and out of which he afterwards takes, such marvellous things without unlocking the casket.

It was a strongly built stone mansion, that had at one time evidently belonged to some great family, but had now become the residence of the miller, who had built the mill out of the left wing of the house, so that the machinery was not in the old building at all.

As we walked through the rooms, my friend and I took care to express our disbelief in ghosts, and show our revolvers; but the only effect produced upon our guide by this display was a shrug of the shoulders and a broad grin that would have done honor to Grimaldi. We took up our position in the "second best room," if I may use that term, the chief apartment being the one just above.

We mounted cigars, drew a table up close to a wall, lit two candles, placed them on the mantel-piece, and two others we put upon the table; then seating ourselves with our backs to the wall, so as not to be taken by surprise, we prepared a bowl of "bishop" to cheer us up and keep out the cold.

After sitting some time, we were disturbed by the stamping of feet overhead—a heavy tread, followed by a quick scuffling sound, that made our hearts beat fast as we gazed at each other. We knew the room was empty, for we had locked the door after carefully examining the chamber, and the key was now on the table at which we sat.

Seizing a candle and the key, I hurried upstairs, followed quickly by Tom. I unlocked the door, and threw it open. The room was empty. We sounded the walls thoroughly, examined the floor and the ceiling, but could not detect the slightest thing to give us cause to imagine we had been imposed upon.

"Nobody is here," said Tom. "It's very strange!"

"Very," I replied.

"I propose that we fetch up our wine and candles, and watch here," he said, after a pause.

"I think we had better," I replied; "but I shall take the precaution of fastening up this room until we return, so that there may be no intruders."
Carefully looking the door, we began to descend the stairs, but paused before we were half-way down them. We heard, distinctly, other steps keeping time with our own, until we reached the place whereon we stood; we felt a cold wind waft by, and the steps went on until we reached the foot of the staircase, when, turning to the right, they entered the room where we had commenced our watch.

I need not say how terribly frightened we were, for nothing could we see. It seemed to us that had we beheld the most ghastly sight, it would not have been so awful as these sounds, without any apparent cause. At first we felt inclined to beat a hasty retreat; but we plucked up courage, and carried out our purpose of keeping watch in the ghostly chamber.

There was nothing in the room at all of an unusual nature. The walls were neatly papered, the fireplace was a modern one, having evidently been but newly erected; two large cupboards stood at each side of the chimney, and these we most carefully examined. We found them empty, and, therefore, contented ourselves by locking them. Unlike the haunted room described in Mr. Thomas Hood's beautiful poem, there was here no secret inspiration to whisper us that

"That chamber is the ghostly."
Having drunk one or two bumpers of wine to keep up our spirits, we took up our stations, with our chairs placed close to the wall, so as to command a full view of the room. We heard so many strange noises, that at length we grew used to them, and began to laugh at the sounds.

Suddenly there came a loud rapping at the cupboard door, which Tom declared must proceed from Old Mother Hubbard, who was resenting the cupboard being bare.

The joke seemed to have the effect of stopping any further proceedings in the cupboard; whereupon, Tom suggested that "ghosts did not like jokes, as they were grave subjects."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, than the knocking commenced upon the room door.

"Come in," cried Tom; "the door is locked, but I suppose that does not matter to you."

With a tremendous crash, it flew open; but nothing could we see. We each took a candle, and went out into the passage, but there was not a creature there. We next carefully examined the lock, and found the bolt had been shot back; therefore, the door must have been unlocked from the inside, for we had left the key in that side of the door, and there it still remained.

"This is very strange!" said Tom in that peculiar whisper, which shows that a person is being forced by awe to believe against his will; "this is really unaccountable!"

"It is strange, I allow; but that it is inexplicable I do not."

"Then how do you account for it?" demanded Tom.

"My dear Tom, because I cannot solve it, is no reason it should not be capable of solution. How do we know the bolt actually shot into the lock? The key may not have turned properly. Now, if that be the case, some sudden gust of wind could have blown the door open."

"Gusts of wind don't rap at doors to ask permission to come in," replied Tom. "For my own part, I freely confess that this is one too many for me. Still, my fear—for I admit I was frightened on the stairs—has given away to curiosity; and, therefore, we will see it out."

I agreed with Tom and having once more carefully fastened the door, we resumed our seats.

I can't say that I did not feel uneasy, and yet I should not like to acknowledge that I was frightened. I had a strange, irritable feeling. I had come to the mill to discover what I considered a fraud; and here, after two hours or more careful watching, I found myself believing, in spite of myself.

Tom and I talked and laughed incessantly, much the same way as

"Children whistle in the dark."

The sound of our own voices was a comfort to us, and gave us more confidence.

In the midst of a merry peal of laughter we paused. Our mouths remained open, but the laughter died away! Our gaze became fixed, and our muscles rigid, as though we had beheld the head of Medusa, and had been changed into stone.

Again the room door opened but this time slowly and silently. No sooner had it done so, than a weird figure entered.

It was that of an old man, dressed in a long, loose robe or gown. His hair, which was quite white, flowed in long tresses from underneath a skull-cap. His face was livid, and covered with a long white beard, which flowers down to his waist, and would have given him a venerable appearance had it not been stained with blood. His long, thin, veiny hands were stretched forth as if to grasp something. The whole expression of the countenance was that of hatred, mingled with fear.

With noiseless step, the figure advanced towards us.

Quickly recovering myself, I caught up the revolver, and fired at it. The ball passed through it, and struck the cupboard door. The next moment, the figure had vanished.

"This is fearful!" groaned Tom.

"It is, indeed!" I exclaimed. "There is some mystery here, that I am determined to fathom."

At that moment, there came a sharp rapping on the room door followed by the voice of the miller's foreman, demanding if there was anything wrong? Quickly slipping my hand over Tom's mouth, to prevent him replying, I called out, in as careless a tone as I could assume, "Nothing, I am glad to say; although there might have been a serious accident, through my carelessness. I was playing with my revolver, and somehow managed to pull the trigger hard enough to left it off. Thank goodness, no one is hurt."

"I thought it might be you'd seen Old Jasper or Agnes, and had a pop at them; you wouldn't have been the first one who wasted powder and ball in that way."

I laughed, as if the idea of the thing was too absurd to require answer, and we soon heard the old man descending to the kitchen.

"Why did you not let him come in?" said Tom, who was nearly as pale as the spectre. "You surely don't mean to stop here any longer?"

"Indeed I do. Look here, Tom; this may, or may not, be a ghost; but one thing is evident—it can't hurt us."

"It does look like it," said Tom rather reassured.

"The first thing," I continued, "is to examine the door."

We did so; and, to our amazement, found it securely locked from the inside, just as we had left it. This, of course, made us wonder more than ever, and so shook Tom's nerves, that he vowed he would not stop in the room unless it was left unlocked, so that there should be no impediment to his escape, should he wish to fly. I easily consented to this; for as he argued, the door and lock had already proved that they could not shut out these strange visitors.

Once more we resumed our seats; Tom making me very uncomfortable by the nervous glances he cast round the room, and the readiness he showed to grasp the pistol to the least noise; whereby I augured the likelihood of an accident.

Slowly the time passed, for Tom would not talk. I must confess I began to have somewhat of contempt for my companion, and felt proud of my courage. I felt sure that, come what might, having passed so firmly through my first introduction to the phantom, that I should feel much more at my ease upon my second one.

Tom's fears, as time went on, began to diminish, and gradually he dozed off to sleep. I had just looked at my watch, and replaced it, thinking that I would wait another half-hour before I gave it up, when my attention was attracted by a rustling of silk in the further corner of the room.

I looked up, and beheld a little woman. She was neatly, but richly, dressed. Her tight-fitting bodice showed off a comely figure; a handsome small lace shawl was placed over her shoulders, and fastened on her bosom by a massive brooch; her head was disguised by a huge cap, such as you now and then see in old family portraits. Whether she was young or old,

ugly or pretty, I could not tell; for she walked with her head bent down so low, I could only see the top of her cap, which concealed her hair entirely. On her left breast she held her right hand, with a convulsive pressure, as if she had a terrible pain at the heart. With her left, she pointed to the ground close by her feet.

I can solemnly aver I felt no fear. I took up my pistol, and presented it at her, thinking that enough to make her halt. It had no effect. With a terrible slowness, she advanced towards me. I let her come on, taking care to keep her well covered.

When about four feet from me, she paused, and, raising her left hand, pointed straight at me. Then, with a movement, the terror of which I cannot describe, she lifted her head, and I beheld the face.

I was horrible. No words can describe it. Blackened and swollen, as if by blows; livid as that of a corpse. The orb sockets glared at me, as if endued with sight.

With a loud exclamation, I rushed at the figure, and fell senseless on the floor.

When I came to myself, I was in the kitchen, Tom standing on one side of me, and Tullock, the foreman, on the other.

It was some time before I recovered sufficiently to tell what I had seen to the foreman; but when I did so, he shook his head, sorrowfully, and said, "I thought it was her. Few people can bear the sight of her. It's a dreadful story."

"What is it?" I ejaculated. "I thought no one knew anything about the unearthly shadows that fit about here?"

"Ah, so it is said, sir," replied Tullock. "You see, Mr. Brown doesn't like to hear these sort of things talked about, neither did his father before him; and, therefore, he discouraged the people from mentioning it, so it died out."

It is said there is a skeleton in every cupboard. I set to work to discover the one here, and at length succeeded in learning the tradition associated with Brown's house.

Many, many years ago, there dwelt in this old house one Sir Jasper Forsythe, a cruel, bad man. With him there lived his wife and only son, Percy. These—so the story goes—he treated so badly, that the boy ran off to sea, and was for many years thought to be lost. However, the loss of his son did not seem to trouble Sir Jasper Forsythe much; indeed, if all accounts be true, he was rather pleased at it. Things at the Hall grew worse. Dark tales of orgies and wickedness were muttered by the people, and as for the high folk who lived about here, they shunned Sir Jasper as they would the plague.

Poor Lady Forsythe bore all patiently.
One day a pretty, buxom lass came to the Hall to be housekeeper. Sir Jasper had met her somewhere, and fallen deeply in love with the girl, and had promised her that, when his wife died, she should be Lady Forsythe.

No one knows what this girl Agnes did to the poor wife; but it was evident every cruelty was resorted to, in hopes the poor creature would break her heart; but the lady thought of her boy, and for his sake bore all patiently.

"One day, in the depth of winter, when the cold north-east winds came blowing across the moors from the German Ocean, some shepherds, seeking for a stray sheep, came upon the body of a woman who had evidently frozen to death during the night. Wrapping it in their plaids, they carried it to the village, where it was recognized as that of Lady Forsythe.

Of course there was a great stir made. Sir Jasper brought forward witnesses to prove that the poor lady was mad, and had strayed away during the night, when everyone was asleep.

Soon after his wife's death, he married the pretty Agnes, with whom he was supposed to have lived happily, though his love for riotous living in no way abated.

One night, years after, a sailor came to the village, and whilst having some refreshment at the inn, learned what had happened. He said nothing, but, pulling his cap over his brow, paid his score and left. That stranger was Percy Forsythe. Making his way to the Hall, he entered it unperceived, and creeping stealthily from room to room, found his mother-in-law in the room in which the watchers kept revel.

The miserable creature knew him at once, and, stretching forth her hands, implored mercy. Without one word, he plunged a dagger into her heart.

As he rose from his terrible work, he beheld his father, standing horror-stricken at the sight. The old man turned to fly, but, quick as lightning, the son flew after him, grasped him tightly by the arm, and, leaning over his shoulder, smote him to the earth.

Percy was never heard of afterwards; since that time, the house has been the nightly resort of strange visitors.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

LETTING THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG.—According to a Cologne newspaper, there is in that city a booth in which is exhibited a "bearded lady." At the entrance is stationed a girl to take the money, and recently a visitor, having feasted his eyes on the strange phenomenon, thinking on his departure, to have a joke with the little money-taker, said to her, fondling her under the chin the while, "Well, little one, so I suppose the bearded woman is your mamma, eh?" "No, sir," replied the child, "she is my papa."

NEW DRESS.—The Jupécloche, or bell skirt is to come out at Paris. The bell is to be "as

light as an umbrella-case," exceedingly plain, with a few gatherings behind, and indescribable circular ornaments of untold gracefulness all around. With a tight bodice or corselet, over which comes a rich scarf of cambric or lace, tied up in an opulent bow behind. Ladies whose *torse* does not correspond with artistic proportions, or those who have the figure selected by Balzac as indicative of a kindly disposition and faithful heart, are allowed by the *arbitrer elegantiarum* to wear a velvet or other jacket over the treacherous corselet.

TANNING HIS OWN HIDE.—At the Gillesgate Tannery, last Saturday night, a man employed at the works, whilst proceeding with the aid of a dim light from a horn lantern down the tannery, suddenly found himself tumbling in one of the pits, and lost his light. After wading about some time, he contrived to land, and made the best of his way to his own cottage. His extraordinary appearance startled his better half, who failed to recognize William, her spouse. His skin is now stained a dark green morocco color by his immersion in the warm liquor, and so strong is the tan that in all probability the man will die a bookbinder's green.

BOYS AND GIRLS.—Boys at mixed schools, as a rule, evince the greatest contempt for the intellectual and general capacities of their female companions. What an active principle of demoralization is here! The girl who is to become the working man's wife, his friend, and the mother of his children, is looked upon as a poor frivolous creature, fit only to be the associate of his idle humor, the minister to his material wants; and the effect of such opinion works equally ill for the one as for the other. A woman cannot properly respect a man who entertains a low opinion of her sex; nor can she do justice to herself, but will either sink to the level of his opinion or despise him.

SPANISH GIPSIES.—It is impossible not to be struck by the originality and the 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.

NURSES.—No mother ought to engage as nurse one who has any sort of physical peculiarity or defect whatever, such, for instance, as a nervous twitching, a cast in the eye, lameness, or disagreeable voice and manner of speaking, it might even be said that personal beauty in a nurse or nursemaid, or in any attendant who is constantly about young children, is a necessity, at any rate a valuable quality, for children are wonderfully imitative, and really do insensibly gain a very noticeable resemblance to those with whom they constantly associate; and there is very little doubt that refinement and a love of beauty may be implanted and fostered in the infant mind.

TALE-BEARERS.—Look into families, and you will find some one false, paltry tale-bearer, who, by carrying stories one from another, shall inflame the minds and discompose the quiet of the whole family. And from families pass to villages or towns; and two or three pragmatical, intriguing, meddling fellows (men of business, some call them), by the venom of their tongues, shall set the whole neighborhood together by the ears. Where men practice falsehood there will be perpetual suspicions, evil surmising, doubts and jealousies, which, by souring the minds of men, are the bane and pest of society; for society is built upon trust, and trust upon the confidence that men have of one another's integrity.

SIMPLICITY REWARDED.—Doctor Erskine a celebrated Scotch divine, was remarkable for his simplicity of manner and gentle temper. He returned so often from the pulpit minus his pocket-handkerchief, and could tell so little how or where it was lost, that Mrs. Erskine at last began to suspect that the handkerchiefs were stolen as he ascended the pulpit stairs by some of the wives who lined it. So, both to baulk and detect the culprit, she sewed a corner of the handkerchief to one of the pockets of his coat tails. Half way up the stairs the good doctor felt a tug, whereupon he turned round to the old woman whose was the guilty hand, to say, with great gentleness and simplicity, "No! the day, honest woman—no! the day. Mrs. Erskine has sewed it in."

A DOG was accidentally present during Divine service in a Scotch kirk, where the worthy minister was in the habit of speaking very loud in the sermon, and, in fact, when he got warmed with his subject, of shouting almost at the top of his voice. The dog, who in the early part had been very quiet, became quite excited, as is not uncommon with some dogs when hearing a noise; and from whining and whining, as the speaker's voice rose loud and strong, at last began to bark and howl. The minister, naturally much annoyed at the interruption, called upon the deacon to put out the dog; and he at once expressed his readiness to obey the order, but could not resist the temptation to look up to the pulpit, and to say, very significantly: "Aye, aye, sir; but indeed it was yourself began it."

NEW FOSSIL MAN.—A third skeleton of a troglodite has been discovered by M. Riviere in the caves of Mentone. This new skeleton, judging from the various and numerous implements by

which it was surrounded, lived at an epoch far more remote than that assigned to the skeleton now in the Museum of Paris. The warlike instruments and objects found with them, though composed of flint and bone, are not polished. They are only sharpened, and by their coarse execution appear to belong to the palaeolithic age. On the upper part of the remains was a large number of small shells, each pierced for stringing as a collar or bracelet. No pottery nor any bronze object was found. Our readers may recollect that the first skeleton found in the same neighborhood, on the bank of a railway cutting on the sea margin, appeared to have been crushed by a fall of rock.

FOG OR WHISKY?—The fog doesn't agree with some people. During the latest fog in this city Brown returned home very fatigued. He said to his wife, "Mariah, lesses gotobed."—"What did you say?" asked his wife.—"Lesses growbed."—"What, in heaven's name is the matter with you?" asked the uncomprehending wife. "Dono—guess rits re frog."—"Frog!" said the wife, with contempt in every tone of her voice. "It's the hot rum and whisky punches you've been drinking, you miserable old rum bottle. Go to bed, you incomprehensible old fool, or I'll throw a pail of water over you!"—Brown is disgusted with the treatment of himself by the partner of his income. But women, he says, never could understand scientific matters. They don't know the difference between fog and whisky.

RICH WITHOUT MONEY.—Many a man is rich without money. Thousands of men with nothing in their pockets are rich. A man born with a good sound constitution, a good stomach, a good heart, good limbs, and a pretty good head-piece, is rich. Good bones are better than gold; tough muscles better than silver; and nerves that flash fire and carry energy to every function are better than houses or land. It is better than a landed estate to have the right kind of a father or mother. Good breeds and bad breeds exist among men as really as among herds and horses. Education may do much to check bad tendencies or to develop good ones; but it is a greater thing to inherit the right proportion of faculties to start with. The man is rich who has a good disposition—who is naturally kind, patient, cheerful and hopeful.

GIRLS.—Girls do not always know their power. It is far greater than they think; and, were they true and brave enough to exert it, they might almost, in a generation, revolutionise society about them. Exert your power for good upon the young men who are privileged to enjoy your society. Gentle and good, be also brave and true. Try to exhibit the ideal of a woman—a pure and good woman—whose life is mighty as well as beautiful in its maidenly dignity and attractive loveliness. Do not let it even seem that dress and frivolity constitute your only thoughts; but let the elevation of your character and the usefulness of your life lift up the man that walks by you side. Some of you are in intimate associations, which, under exchanged promises, look forward to a nearer and more enduring relation. In these hours do nothing to lower, but everything to refine and ennoble each other's character.

ASHANTEE WOMEN.—The Ashantee women are much handsomer and more coquettish than in other parts of Africa, some of them being really beautiful. In many instances they have regular Grecian features and figures of the greatest symmetry, and their movements are even more graceful than those of their civilized sisters, as is but natural, considering the difference of training. Their eyes are soft and tender, and the expression of their countenance is usually pleasant and cheerful. Some of them darken the edges of their eyelids with lead reduced to a fine powder—imitating in their way the artistic appliances by which so many European ladies preserve the gloss of their charms. They dance, of course, and do so with much more elegance than might be supposed. There is one evolution in particular which closely resembles our own waltz—the man encircling the woman with a piece of silk which he flirts about with his right hand, supporting her the while round her waist, and receiving her head on his breast.

HEROIC OBEDIENCE TO DUTY.—Many can still recollect when tidings came of the silent heroism with which more than five hundred soldiers, in the wreck of the "Birkenhead," met death in the spirit of obedience to duty; and that, too, when there was none of the excitement of battle and of victory to cheer them on. The soldiers stood in their ranks on the deck of the sinking ship while the women and children were quietly put into one of the boats. "Every one did as he was directed," says Captain Wright, one of the few who escaped to tell the tale; "and there was not a murmur or a cry among them till the vessel made her final plunge. All the officers received their orders, and had them carried out, as if the men were embarking instead of going to the bottom. There was only this difference, that I never saw any embarkation conducted with so little noise and confusion. When the vessel was just going down, the commander"—not of the soldiers, but of the ship—"called out, 'All those who can swim, jump overboard, and make for the boats.' The officers begged the men not to do as the commander said, as the boat with the women must be swamped. Not more than three made the attempt. And so they sank among the waves, carrying the habits of duty, which they had learnt as soldiers, into that last act of self-sacrifice."

A NIGHT OF TERROR.—During the reign of

Joseph II., the sexton of St. Joseph's Cathedral at Vienna, being a man of extraordinary nerve and boldness, was accustomed to stand on the pinnacle of the tower, whenever the Emperor made a grand entrance into the city, and wave a flag as the pageant passed by. When, however, Leopold II., who had just been chosen Emperor at Frankfort, was about to enter the city, the loyal sexton, still anxious to be true to his old custom, but finding that years had told against his nerve, declared that any one who would take his place successfully should win his daughter. Gabriel Petersheim, who was disliked by the sexton, but beloved of the daughter, at once accepted the offer, to the disgust of the sexton, who then arranged with two villains to close the trap-door of the upper stairway while Gabriel was above, thinking that, as the Emperor was to enter toward evening, no one need be the wiser, and the lad must certainly fall before morning. The two accomplices did their foul work, and their intended victim, finding his way down again, was then confronted with the alternative of clinging to the slender spire, through a cold wintry night, with his feet resting on a surface hardly ten inches in circumference, or of precipitating himself to the pavement at once, and thus ending the matter. Gabriel was a youth of firm will and hardy constitution. He clung to the cold column till morning. But the story goes that when he was released his curling locks were white as snow, his wonted rosy cheeks yellow and wrinkled, and his eyes, before so bright, now sunken and dim. One night of horror had placed him forty years nearer his grave.

OUR PUZZLER.

98. DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Farewell, farewell, a long farewell
I bid to friend and foe;
In other climes I seek a home,
Where mighty rivers flow.
I've often loved to gaze upon
My first and last most dear;
But now for ever they are gone,
I shed a silent tear.

1. Whatever be your lot below
Be always what the first will show.
2. Be also this in everything;
If not, you many troubles bring.
3. This one the contest will decide:
No one his judgment should deride.
4. Upon the shores of this you may
Perceive the noble ships at bay.
5. These crawl about amongst the mud,
Yet are esteemed as human food.
6. A fish, curtailed, will quite suffice,
For you to catch, though not so nice.
7. A foreign river this will show,
Whose waters ever onward flow.
8. This an affection of the mind;
It sways the heart of all mankind.
9. I hate this horrid, nasty stuff;
The doctor says I've had enough.

99. ARITHMETICAL QUESTION.

A and B engage in trade. A's capital; B's capital: 3:2. The profits amount to 5000 on the sum of their capitals; and B's share of the profits is £30 10s. Find their respective capitals.

100. CHARADE.

To speakers my first's a relief,
As doubtless you may be aware;
Yet oftimes me ladies fair
Place right round a white handkerchief.

My second shows part of a gun,
Yet 'tis but a tuft of fair hair;
But what holds a door 'twill declare,
And gates though which calm waters run.

If you would my total obtain,
Seek in old woods a free-growing plant;
And, when you have found what you want,
You'll possess a most dangerous bane.

101. IRISH TOWNS.

1. An animal, a fragment, and an exclamation;
2. Part of the ear, and a rock;
3. A body of water, and a residence;
4. A fight, and a city;
5. A fluid, herbage, and a mountain;
6. A metal, and a bird;
7. Fresh, and a stronghold;
8. An animal, and a curse;
9. A Scotch lake, and an animal;
10. A mist, and a Peninsular hero;
11. A number, a measure, and a city;
12. A trick, and unfeeling.

102. LOGOGRI'H.

A vocalist of talents rare
My total will describe;
Transpose me, and I then will make
One of the feather'd tribe.
Then if this bird be now curtailed,
An orator 'twill leave,
Whose name upon the scroll of fame
You plainly will perceive.

103. NAMES OF TOWNS.

1. An English river, and a girl's name;
2. Wickedness, an opening, and native metal;
3. A tree, and something worn on ladies' necks;
4. A French coin, and related;
5. A shrub, and anger;
6. Two parts of an ox;
7. An English river;
8. To spoil, and an author;
9. Some English serving-men.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

SUNFLOWER OIL. is being discussed in Bombay as a substitute for the ordinary olive oil. This newly-discovered delicacy has been examined by Dr. Lyon, the chemical analyser, who reports it to be perfectly clear and strongly resembling the oil extracted from the olive, in both taste and odor, but free from any disagreeable and injurious properties.

TRANSFERRING PICTURES TO GLASS.—Coat the glass with a varnish of balsam of fir in turpentine, then press the engraving on smoothly and evenly, being careful to remove all air bubbles. Let it stand for 24 hours, then dampen the back sufficiently to allow the paper to be rubbed off by the forefinger, rubbing it till a mere film is left on the glass, then varnish again.

NON-EDIBLE MUSTARD.—A high medical authority makes the following statement as one that should be generally known:—In making a mustard plaster no water whatever should be used, but the mustard mixed with the white of an egg; the result will be a plaster which will "draw" perfectly, but will not produce a blister even upon the skin of an infant, no matter how long it is allowed to remain upon the part.

CEMENT FOR IRON.—A correspondent of the *English Mechanic* says that he has used the following recipe with the greatest success for the cementing of iron railing-tops, iron gratings to stoves, etc., and with such effect as to resist the bows of the sledgehammer: take equal parts of sulphur and white lead with about a sixth of borax; incorporate them so as to form one homogeneous mass. When going to apply it, wet it with strong sulphuric acid and place a thin layer of it between the two pieces of iron, which should then be pressed together. In five days it will be perfectly dry, all traces of the cement having vanished, and the iron will have the appearance of having been welded together.

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for a case it will not benefit. Indeed, so strong is my faith, I will send a *Sample, Free*, to any sufferer addressing me.

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69 WILLIAM ST., New York.

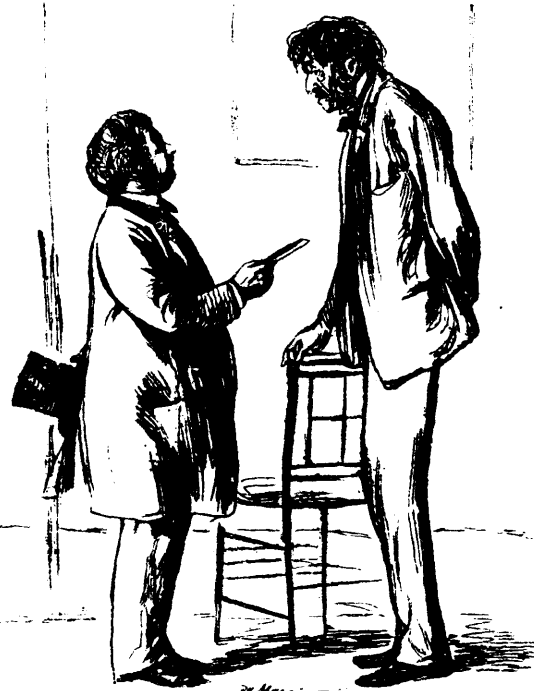
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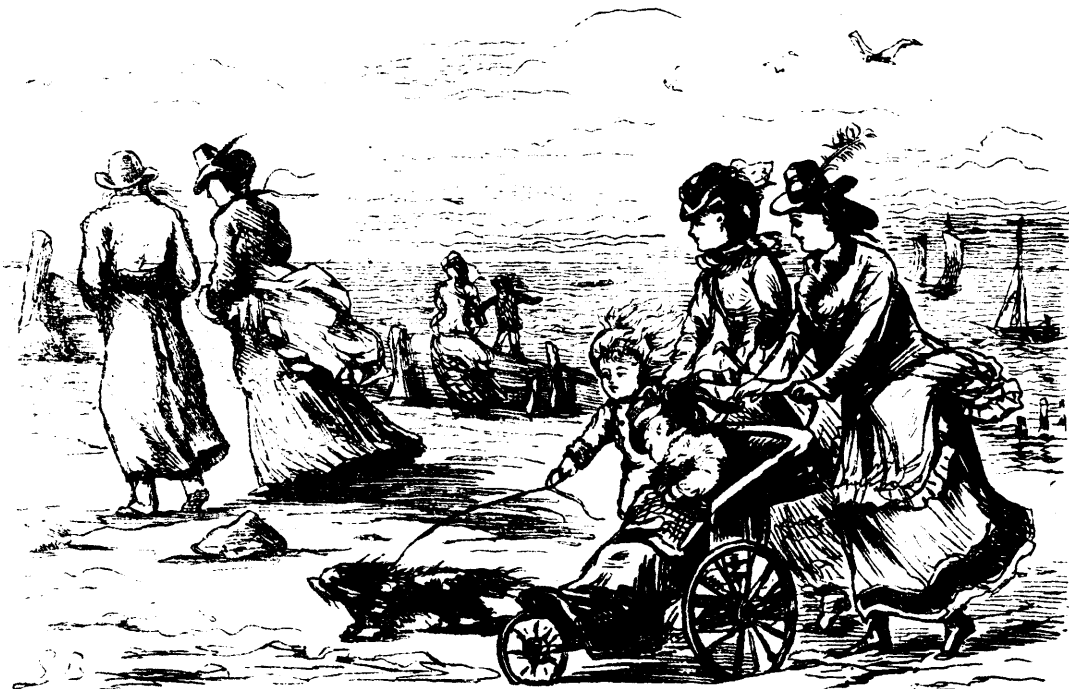
THE ROUND OF THE STUDIOS.

Afable Stranger. "GOOD MORNING, MR. M'GILP! I HAVEN'T THE PLEASURE OF YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, BUT A BROTHER OF MINE MET YOU, SOME YEARS AGO, AT A GARDEN-PARTY, AND I THOUGHT YOU WOULDN'T MIND MY CALLING TO SEE YOUR PICTURES, AND—ER—BRINGING SOME COUSINS OF MY WIFE'S!"
(Our Artist bows low, to dissemble the too exuberant rapture that beams all over his tell-tale countenance.)



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FLATTERING IMITATION.

Sarah. "THERE, MARY ANN, THAT'S THE 'AT AS I TOOK MINE FROM!"



"BUSINESS!"

Bath-Chairman. "I S'POSE THE DUKE OF EDINBORO' AND HIS MISSIS WILL BE BY DIRECTLY!"
 Policeman. "NO, THEY WON'T. THEY AIN'T IN TOWN."
 Bath-Chairman. "AIN'T THEY!—I SAY, IF THAT OLD LADY IN MY CHAIR ASKS YOU, SAY 'YOU DON'T KNOW,' 'CAUSE SHE'S A WAITIN' TO SEE 'EM, AND I'M ENGAGED BY THE HOUR!"



THE RIGHT MAN AT LAST.

Old Gentleman (to Party of the Irish Persuasion). "VERY WELL, THEN; YOU WILL COME IN THE MORNING, AND TIDY UP THE GARDEN A BIT. IT WAKES DOING VERY BADLY."
 Party of the Irish Persuasion. "SURE, SOB, IF YE WANT IT DOOIRS BABBY Y'E JUST ZEE BOY FOR YE."



MANNERS!

"MAY I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF ENGAGING YOU FOR THE NEXT VALER?"
 "ALL RIGHT! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?"
 "MY NAME! OH—ER—LORD ALGERNON PLANTAGENET MONTGOMERY DE—"
 "O, BOTHER! WHAT A LOT!"