# LONDON SOCIETY.

An Illustrated Magazine

OF

LIGHT AND AMUSING LITERATURE

FOR

THE HOURS OF RELAXATION.

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# LONDON SOCIETY.

## JANUARY, 1865.

### OLD-FASHIONED WINTERS.

WHAT has become of them? Why have we no snow now-a-days? Why is the Thames never frozen over? Why are the people never lost in snow-drifts? Why have skates become as obsolete or as much things of the past as stage-coaches and Hessian boots? How is it that, in these days, we import our ice from foreign countries, and sell it by the pound like tea and sugar? Grapes ripened by the sun of the south are not so very much dearer than water frozen by the icy breath of the North. The confectioner sends home our ice in a pretty pail, as if it were something dainty and precious. There are children who can walk and talk among us here in England who never saw snow. Snow, in fact, has gone out of fashion. I can well remember when it first

*began* to go out of fashion. It was about twelve years ago. At that time I had some hand in 'getting up' the Christmas Number of an illustrated paper. I was tremendously proud of being so engaged, for I was but a mere lad in my teens, and by no means a brilliant youth. Nevertheless I was intrusted with the writing of an article about Christmas, and my general instructions were to introduce snow, icicles, holly-berries, mistletoe, and robin redbreasts. And I believe I did introduce them,—laid them on thick; and at least, as regards quantity, gave plenty for the money. It was a snowy number altogether. The woodcuts all represented snow scenes. I remember there was a mail coach struggling along a country road against a blinding drift, the outsides muffled up and holding their heads down to catch the snow on the tops of their hats, there was a deserted street several feet deep in snow, with nobody showing but a solitary policeman, all the rest of the community being supposed to be indoors sitting round the blazing yule log, drinking punch, kissing under the mistletoe, and wishing each other a merry Christmas and a happy new year; there was a wood scene with footsteps through the snow, and a single robin sitting on a bare branch in the foreground; there was a lively display upon the ice, where the skaters were depicted in all the familiar attitudes of leaning forward and lifting up one leg, and of poising themselves on the very centre of their backs with their heels in the air, signifying that they had come to grief, there were boys snowballing; and there was a country manor-house, with gleaming windows, in which a friendly party was supposed to be snowed up, and telling stories to each other, there was a picturesque boy with a shovel and a broom, ringing a bell, and saying, 'Clean your doorstep, sir?'—in fact, there was snow in all our pictures and snow in all our articles; and I at least felt satisfied that we had held the 'mirror up to nature' as it ought to be at Christmas time.

You will understand that this number was prepared some weeks beforehand. Indeed, I believe the artist had set to work on 'The Manor-house snowed up,' early in July, when of course he had to draw largely upon his recollections and his imagination. The articles, too, were all finished by the end of November, when our inspirations were chiefly derived from fog. But no doubt it would come all right. Christmas would arrive, as he had been accustomed to do, wrapped in his mantle of snow, and all that our pens and pencils had depicted would be highly appropriate. But no, just as if to spite us and bring all our picturesque labours to nought, Christmas arrived under an umbrella, with a drop at his nose not frozen. Coaches and carriages instead of ruling parallel ruts in the soft white snow, splashed the foot-passengers with mud; no living creature stood upon one leg but the miserable fowl seeking shelter from the rain, if any one presented himself with his heels in the air, it was owing to the greasy mud on the pavement, or possibly a piece of orange peel. Instead of the prominent ware in the shop windows being bundles of skates, it was bundles of umbrellas; if the boys in the streets pelted each other it was with stones; if there were parties at country manor-houses, half the guests were laid up with catarrh.

People came and stood under umbrellas looking in through the window at our snow pictures and smiled grimly. It certainly was very provoking. Who could believe my description of 'Snowbound in a Highland Shieling at Yule,' with the streets running with rivers of mud, and the thermometer ten degrees above freezing point? They could not sympathise with it at any rate. And think of the effort I had made to realize the scene! Before I began that article I went round to the wheelwright's and procured a large chump of wood for a yule log. Being ready to begin I made up a blazing fire with the chump on the top; drew my curtains close, tried to imagine that the fog outside was snow, hung up before me a view of the Alps, and began to write with

the servant girl blowing through the keyhole to give me an idea of the howling wind. And all for nothing.

I am bound to say that the editor of the illustrated paper held on by his belief in a snowy Christmas-day most manfully; but he was disappointed so often that he was fain to give in at last. On calling us together after three or four muddy Christmases, he said, 'We must drop the snow, boys; it's no use; it only makes the old people laugh and puzzles the rising generation altogether.' I remember it was suggested by a very disgusted contributor, that the best thing to do under the circumstances would be to go in and abuse Christmas. It may have been under the influence of such disappointing and depressing circumstances that the late Robert Brough composed his famous Christmas Carol, of which I remember this verse:—

'Oh, rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
But be prepared to meet the ills
That come on Christmas-day
And, mind, a respirator buy,
A good thick shawl also,
For in this jolly Christmas time
The asthma's all the go.

And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy'

Certainly a very great change has been coming over the seasons of late. What does Admiral Fitzroy say to it? Has M. Mathieu (de la Drôme) any theory on the subject? Can Murphy's weather eye discern the cause? Is Zadkiel Tao Ze able to account for it in any way? Is the earth changing its axis, and turning us into the torrid zone? Shall future generations of Britons hunt elephants and gorillas in Epping Forest? These last questions assume almost a serious shape when we go back over the record of past winters, and note how frost and snow are deserting our northern parallel. In the year 1035 there was a frost in England on Midsummer-day so intense that the corn and fruit were destroyed. In 1063 the Thames was frozen over for fourteen weeks. In 1234, there was a severe frost all over Europe for many weeks. The Mediterranean was frozen over, and merchants crossed in carts with their merchandize. In 1434 the Thames was frozen over from below bridge to Gravesend From this time frosts in this country have gradually decreased in severity and duration. In the last and present centuries, the great frosts were as follows:—In 1716 the frost was so intense that a fair was held on the Thames. In 1732 there was a great fall of snow in the north of England; flocks of sheep and lambs were lost, and the rivers were frozen up for many weeks. In 1762 there was a snow storm in England which lasted for eleven days. In January 1776, occurred the greatest fall of snow ever known in this country. From November to January 1789, the Thames could be crossed at the Custom House, the Tower, Execution Dock, Putney, and Brentford. In 1808 there was a very severe snow storm, and many persons lost their lives; some were frozen to death; others were killed by carriages upsetting. Upon the north road the snow drifted in many parts to a depth of from forty to fifty feet. In the vicinity of Biggleswade, the mail coaches were completely buried, and it was only by the greatest exertions that the passengers could be rescued. At Bury there was a county ball, on Thursday, the 11th of February, and in the morning the snow was so deep that the company were detained there until the following Sunday. This was something like a snowing up; but instead of telling stories, the company made themselves comfortable by having a public ordinary each day, and a ball in the evening, at the Angel Inn. A similar occurrence took place at Stamford, Thursday being the night of the ball and the assembly. All the families of the neighbourhood who attended were snow bound, and were obliged to take up their abode for some days at the inns.

On the nights of January 10th and 11th, 1814, there was a heavy fall of snow in the west of England. It lay twelve feet deep in the middle of the road, on Hall-Down, four miles beyond Exeter. The mail coaches were greatly delayed. The

drifted snow between Bridport and Dorchester presented such a formidable barrier, that notwithstanding every effort, no passage could be gained through it after four hours' digging by a gang of labourers with spades and shovels. The mail coach was obliged to return to Bridport. Again in 1816, the roads were blocked up and the mail coaches stopped.

'But Lor' bless you, sir, there is no real winter weather now-a-days' This is not my own deliverance, but that of an old gentleman who has seen ninety-five winters, and who, on a certain December day in the last century, saw Dr. Samuel Johnson walking through the snow down Fleet Street I don't know that it can be satisfactorily established as a fact that the winters are becoming permanently less and less severe in this latitude, but there is certainly a very wide-spread impression in that direction. Perhaps in the vast expanse of time it is a mere temporary change, attributable to a whim

of the winds. Hoops went out; but they have come in again. Frost and snow have gone out; but they may be fashionable once more.

However, my impression is precisely that of my nonagenarian friend —that there is no winter weather now-a-days. When I was a lad— about the third of ninety years ago— there were snow storms worthy of the name.

There was a proverb, which proved that a rainy Christmas was a much-dreaded exception to the natural rule of weather. 'A green Yule will make a fat kirkyard.' There have been a great many green Yules lately. I don't remember more than one in all my school time. About the middle of November we always looked for snow, and rarely looked in vain. I remember that, about this time, I had always a double row of nails driven into

the soles of my boots to be ready for the slides. The rainy, muddy, foggy, sloppy winters now in vogue, are looked forward to only with dread. People who have the means fly away south, to avoid them, like the swallows. But in the good old times the first flakes of snow were hailed with demonstrations of delight, with shouts of glee and clapping of hands. Snow made winter not only picturesque, but comfortable. We all like to read of snow storms; we all like to look upon snow pictures; for, somewhat paradoxically, they are suggestive of warmth, and jollity, and cosiness. The very perils of a snow storm are enjoyable. I have a lively recollection of being in the position of that gentleman on horseback, whom our artist has depicted. The distance I had to travel was little more than five miles; but it was with the greatest difficulty I managed to reach the end of my journey. The road was open and

exposed, and the thick, blinding, choking drift blew in my face the whole of the way. Every now and then I had to turn the horse round to gain, both for the animal and myself, a little breathing time. But there was almost as much danger in standing still with my back to the drift as in going on. After a minute or two of pause, I found myself going to sleep in the saddle, and the pony retracing his steps, though he knew he was going away from home. It was an exciting ride at first; but when I had accomplished half of my journey, and found myself gasping for breath, and my limbs becoming numbed and powerless, I began to be seriously alarmed. When I got home at last, I had to be lifted from the pony's back and carried into the house. The pain caused by the re-

turning circulation of the blood was dreadful. I don't think I ever suffered any pain so acute. If the journey had been a mile longer, both horse and rider must have been smothered.

What schoolboy has not enjoyed the fun (like that we have sketched on the previous page) of making a snow man, beginning with a mere handful of compressed snow, and rolling it along until, having licked up all the snow in its path, it becomes a gigantic ball, a huge block, of soft marble, ready to be hewn by the chisel (spade) of the juvenile artist into the form of a colossal head, the eyes, nose, and mouth being indicated by daubs of black earth!

But few of the rising generation, I suspect, have ever experienced the rare delight of digging their way out of a snowed-up house. In that country parsonage where I was born and bred, the necessity for this species of excavation occurred almost every winter—in those old days when winter was winter. I have known all the doors and windows on the ground floor to be completely blocked up with snow. When a heavy drift was expected we took the precaution to carry spades into the house the night before; but when we were taken unprepared, we set to work with the fire-shovels. On one notable occasion these instruments were unequal to the work, and the farm labourers came and dug away from the outside. Great was the shout of triumph when the fire-shovels and the spades met, and we could see daylight through the tunnel in the great wall of snow. That year, old Lizzie, who lived in a one-story turf cottage by the side of the turnpike road, was snowed up to the very chimney. We had to dig Lizzie out like a baked body from the ashes of Pompeii. On one occasion, old Peter Smith drove his coach over the rigging of Lizzie's house, and never knew that he was off the road until one of the horses put his foot in the chimney and brought the whole team down.

The community thereabouts had a joint-stock proprietary in a huge machine called a snow-plough; a wooden frame in the shape of the letter V, by which, with the aid of many men and horses, the snow was cleared from the roads. But sometimes the plough and all our horses and men were unequal to the Herculean task, and we had just to stay in-doors, often for weeks, until the thaw came.

Not long ago, I heard that erratic Professor, John Stuart Blackie, lecture on Lycurgus, at the Royal Institution. When he had finished his lecture he said to his audience, 'I don't know what your opinion may be on the subject; but my own is, that I have done the thing very cleverly.' So I, taking a hint, flatter myself, that, in the absence of frost and snow, and in the decline of winter, I have, in regarding winter as something old-fashioned and out of date, hit upon a very good excuse for treating of the subject at all.*

A. H.

* Suppose this number of 'London Society' should happen to be read in snowed-up houses: robin redbreasts tapping at the windows for crumbs; boys clearing the snow for a slide, water frozen in the pipes and so forth! In that case, all I can say is, that the way the clerk of the weather keeps dodging the poor author, trying his best to do some seasonable work and earn a crust, is really shameful.

# FIRESIDE FROLICS.

## UNBENDING THE BOW.

THE ILL-TIMED VISITOR.—Page 11

WE have all heard of the very scientific gentleman who purposely married a quite unscientific lady, in order to repose his intellect during their confidential domestic colloquies. On exactly the same principle, whilst studying the wonders of a foreign capital, say Paris,—after having laboured the whole day long in picture, print, and statue galleries, in Luxembourg and Louvre, after we have been employed for six or eight hours in packing our brain-boxes so full of information that there is no room to squeeze in a single item more—where do we go to, when welcome dinner has put body and mind into a state of luxurious lassitude?

Do we ask where we can hear the discourse of an evening professor who will treat us to a liberal allowance of middle-age casuistry? Do we look out for a lecture on the differential calculus Do we even go, by choice, to the Théâtre Français, to hear a five-act tragedy by the Grand Corneille, however finely it be declaimed? No, no, no! our minds have slaved in harness long enough, and now we want to turn them out to grass, to roll and cut capers on the free green sward, or perhaps to enjoy a doze in a sunny corner. We turn our backs on High Art, High Science, High Everything, and betake ourselves to the Théâtre Lyrique, where Mozart's, Adam's, or Auber's strains are warbled, to the Théâtre du Châtelet, where a fairy-tale, mainly made up of tricks and dances, beguiles us throughout three long acts. Pierrot's absurdities coax us into sufferance of that ill-ventilated den, the Funambules; or perhaps we take a

cab to the Cirque de l'Impératrice, for the pleasure of regarding young ladies and gentlemen dancing on the tight-rope, swinging on the slack-wire, doing Joan of Arc on horseback, or the Brazilian ape on foot, with interludes by English and Irish clowns, who dare what they like with the Parisian public.

And just so, by parity of reason, does it happen that, at (and for a month or so after) the period of computed time when the old year splices his worn-out rope's-end with the fresh bit held out by the new, we have had enough of our learned profession, whether law, physic, or divinity; the 'Ologies have become temporarily covered with a repulsive crust of staleness, it wearies us of having our mental noses constantly held to the grindstone of business, and we hail with joy, open or concealed, the inauguration of a Juvenile Saturnalia. The little lords and ladies of misrule are excused in our eyes by the feeling that we too may have had of late too much class-confinement and schoolroom discipline; and we are not at all sorry when the postman brings an invitation to a merry party, professedly got up for the amusement of 'the young people,' though the elderlies profit by the occasion. In short, our well-drilled souls welcome the word of command to stand at ease.

The season of itself offers various special opportunities by which we do not profit so much as we might. The reconciling of grudges and the wiping off scores of misunderstandings on New Year's Day, by a shake of the hand, a kiss, or a call, is a laudable Continental custom,—though we may hesitate before submitting to the costly tyranny of *etrennes*, or New Year's Gifts, to all our acquaintance Christmas-boxing has become a nuisance and an odious impost, because of the grasping way in which and the greedy persons by whom it is exacted, but it becomes, as we know, a cheerful pleasure, when Emile de Girardin's principle of taxation, namely, Voluntary Assessment, presides over these social institutions It is more blessed to give than to receive. The giver often feels a more vivid thrill of delight than the recipient

During winter evenings, Tales of my Grandmother may be quoted, without rebuke, and therefore I will mention that my own more-or-less-honoured

grandmother,—some of us had a grudge against her, because she presented us with a crusty old grandfather-in-law, who had a shocking bad cough and bunioned feet—my grandmother amused herself and others by insisting on the personal homage of all her grandchildren on Boxing day. All, all, all, little and big, from the new-born babe to the pretty young lady who had left a finishing-school (where she had not enough to eat), were bound to present themselves, under awful penalties—which still remain shrouded in mystery, because no single grandchild, out of all that numerous group, ever had the hardihood to expose him or herself to their infliction. My grandmother has some right to give herself airs in her grave, seeing that she has furnished, in the shape of us, her grandchildren, permanent settlers and inhabitants to England, Scotland, continental Europe, Australia, and New Zealand; while

North and South America are anxiously awaiting the arrival of other members of the clan. Probably the old lady did not suspect the wide-spread destinies of her posterity, when she annually summoned us round her, to state our ages, to tell our names, christian and sur, and to receive her graduated bounty, measured by the ascending scale of a penny a year. Fractions counted for nothing. The six-months old infant went away half-penniless. For cash (supposing one penny to be cash), it was told to wait another year, and was sent home with merely a kiss and an orange to suck or a biscuit to munch, but with no specie grasped in its tiny fist.

'How old are you, my little dear?' she would say. 'And what's your name?

'Why, gran'ma,' the laughing child would answer, 'you know I'm Sam. You called me "Sam" yesterday afternoon. And ma' says I was six-and-a-half last Wednesday week. And I had plum-pudding for dinner besides roast goose'

'Six-and-a half! That's all nonsense. We don't do things by halves, here. You're six, my dear; and there's a bright new sixpence for you. Be a good boy; though you take more after your mother's family than after us. You're a regular Coleman, certainly, with your curly hair, your dark-brown eyes, and the button wart by the side of your nose. Be a good boy, and you may choose which you like—the gingerbread gold watch or Taffy on the goose.'

Of course, little Sam seized the Taffy with his right hand, and was stretching with his left after the glowing yellow watch, when the stern glance of Administrative Justice made him retire with a modest 'Thank you, gran'ma.' And then sailed in good cousin Ann, slim in figure and stately in step, whose delicate features were only the more interesting from a slight dash of small-pox misprints, the result of gran'ma's prejudice in favour of inoculation, [she performed the operation herself, without asking the parents' leave]. We, the little ones, wondered how any grandchild could ever contrive to grow so old as cousin Ann; and we thought she received a handsome dowry, when gran'ma delivered to her, eighteenpence! Would she condescend to look at a cake-watch or a mounted Taffy of gingerbread? I should think not, indeed!—Such was one of my grandmother's contrivances for unbending her bow annually.

'Breaking up, and going away! O, the happy holiday!' is a school-cry and a pupil-shout which has relieved adult and elderly hearts, as well as young ones. People can pull out their buckram and unlace their state habiliments while the little folk are crowding around them. Society is then permitted to take its ease, and to lay aside its very dignified demeanour. He—be he even a Common Councilman—may cease to be formal; and she—be she even the Lady Patroness of a fancy-ball for clothing the under-dressed Hottentots—may cease to be proud—without calling in the aid of Lady Wortley Montagu's famous champagne and chicken. Conversaziones give place to meetings for the propagation of conundrums; learned sources are swept away by the invasion of private theatricals, Christmas-tree reward-distributions, and twelfth-cake lotteries. O, the happy holiday! Intellectual conversation and spiritual remarks are not expected from every human being during the benevolent interregnum of the genius hight Christmas Vacation.

The best way is to take advantage at once of the license of the season, according to the measure of your gifts, and to plunge boldly into nonsense, well or ill, just as you would take your first dip in the sea. Pray, then, why is my smart new overcoat—the one you evidently admired this morning—like the muddy ditch at the bottom of our meadow? Why? Because it is all covered with frogs. What animal is that which has four legs while living and only two when dead?—You don't know? Dear me, how dull you are! Why, a sheep, which, in the butcher's shop, consists of two legs merely and two shoulders. What creature has four hands, under similar circumstances? A monkey? No; we don't eat monkeys here. But every veal has, if not four hands, at least four knuckles. Can you say, 'Beef without mustard,' which some persons find very difficult to pronounce?—Certainly; 'Beef without mustard.'—Pshaw! 'Tisn't that. Say simply 'Beef.'—In a brood of chicken, how do you know the little cocks from the little hens as soon as they are hatched?—You can't tell? Watch as they skip out of the shell one by one! It's a cock, if *he* skips to the right; it's a hen, if *she* skips to the left. You don't quite comprehend? Well, I declare!

But how delightful to pass through the half-open folding-doors into the small inner drawing-room, which is well furnished with toys! some of them new, and others so old and obsolete as to have all the charm of a resuscitation. With the lamp we can

see exceedingly well the symmetrical changes of the kaleidoscope. What a run it had in its early days! It swarmed everywhere, like the frogs in Egypt. And now! I have caught really an elegant pattern, like a rose-window in a Gothic cathedral. Peep. Ah! you jogged my arm; the figure has shaken itself into something else.

It was a good thought to place a toilette-table looking-glass in the room, to observe the vagaries of the phenakistiscope. Our eyes are made the fools of a whirligig, and are certainly not worth all the other senses, in respect to matters of fact. That 'seeing is believing,' may well be doubted. Spin the circular card with its set of objects painted on it. Peep at it in the mirror, looking over its rim. You have a paviour pounding away at the street, on another card, a dog jumps to snatch a piece of bread from his master's hand, on another, firemen hand each other buckets of water A man jumps over a walking-stick; a carpenter vigorously planes a plank of wood; top and bottom sawyers work with alternate strokes; a cook swings her salad-basket backwards and forwards, to drain its contents; people in a crowd run to and fro different ways; all in decided motion by an optical illusion, though when the spinning is stopped they are as stationary as a picture on its canvas. Is it a deception which the stereoscope practises, putting solid for superficial, changing plane surfaces for deep perspectives, and excavating hollows where everything was flat? or is it only a corollary to Bishop Berkeley's theory that all is ideal, and that such a substance as matter does not exist? But I forget that we profess to be unbending our bows. Far better than cudgelling our brains with such abstractions is the putting together of this dissected map of Europe as it is before the further changes. We have thus far rightly combined our sea and land; but it will never do to make France include Switzerland as well as

Savoy, nor to put the Black Sea into the middle of Russia. Welcome also to our old friend, the Chinese Puzzle, who is too easy and varied ever to become tiresome. I have brought a sort of Chinese puzzle in my portemonnaie Take these twenty little paper triangles, and lay them together so as to form a perfect square.

The drawing-room door slowly opens, and in stalks superb John Thomas, the footman. He is not the king of hearts, but the jack of calves. How important he looks! The oracle speaks.

'Please, mem, here's a foreign gentleman as asks permission to look at the pictures.'

'How very strange!' says the astonished hostess, who is not in the secret 'To come at such a time! In the evening, too! Tell him, John Thomas, that it's quite impossible now.'

'So I did, mem,' responds Johnny, delighted with his part; 'but he won't take no refusal, mem.'

'Let him come in, my dear,' says the master of the house, who is in the plot. 'He may be commissioned to purchase hidden treasures of art for the Emperor of Russia. Or, he may be a learned

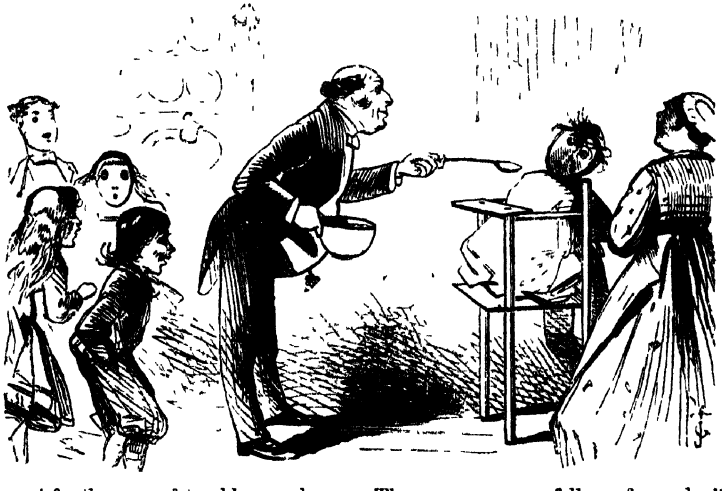
connoisseur, and if we refuse, he may write to the "Times," or put us into his book of travels. John Thomas, ask the stranger in.'

The door opens again, and the visitor enters. He is a very short, thick-set man, with a long cloak reaching down to his heels With extreme ill-breeding, he keeps his hat on, and turns his back on the company present, commencing at once his examination of the pictures nearest to the door. Short as he is, he makes himself still shorter to observe those that are hung near the floor; and then, when he comes to a full-length portrait, he suddenly elevates his stature to seven or eight feet high, meeting the individual delineated face to face. And then he assumes all the intermediate stages of tallness requisite for the close inspection of the pictures before which he passes He must either belong to the invertebrate family of men, or have a backbone as extensible as an earthworm He has soon seen enough, and walks out of the room without once making his bow or showing his face. 'Don't cry and be frightened, my darling Jane. It isn't a monster, nor a fee-fo-fum giant who eats little babies. It is only a clever way of making use of a broom-handle, and I shouldn't wonder if your cousin Tom had something to do with it'

Enter John Thomas again, with the corners of his mouth hypocritically pulled down.

'Please, mem, cook's very sorry, but her nephey, who you let her ask to spend the evening, is a very naughty boy, he won't eat his custard, but cries for currant-jam. Cook says she can't do nothing with him, and she hopes master will come down and exercise his authority.' Happy John, to be safely delivered of your speech!

'The lubberly lout is naughty, is he? I'll soon settle him!' exclaims the head of the house, simulating indignation at such misbehaviour 'I have a



secret for the cure of troublesome boys Come and see'

Mine host forthwith betakes himself to the kitchen, followed by an inquisitive throng of youngsters In one corner, on a high child's chair, sits the refractory offender, with his face all smeared with custard and jam. His head is very large in proportion to his body, and he rolls his eyes and makes extraordinary grimaces. Beside him stands his aunt, the cook, feeding him out of a bowl with a long-handled spoon, and scolding severely.

'Won't he eat his supper?' asks the angry governor. 'Give me the custard. There now, young fellow, if you don't swallow this spoonful quietly, I'll knock your ugly head off, I will indeed.'

You can't make a silken purse out of a sow's ear The ill-bred cub sputters and spits the custard that is offered him. The governor, losing patience, gives him a slap on the face with the spoon, when—horrible to relate!—the head drops off, falling backwards, and nothing but the headless body remains sitting on the chair.

'Oh, Jane, dear; don't take on so! They haven't killed him, or it. Let us go and look. The little boy, supposed to be cook's nephew, is only an effigy

of stuffed clothes; and the head that fell off belongs, I think, to that wicked rogue cousin Tom again; for there he stands laughing in the corner, wiping his face with the kitchen towel But Professor Hoohkus Poohkustonius is come We must return to the drawing-room to witness his tricks, and see whether Tom can find any of them out.

Legerdemain is far from a despicable art, especially when it can be made to serve political uses, as was practised lately by the French. The great Robert Houdin, the celebrated *prestidigitateur*, was sent on a mission to Algeria, where he caused enormous astonishment amongst the natives. Muscular Arabs were thunderstruck to find they could not move, by exerting all their strength, a little box which the wizard lifted with his little finger. The casket assumed a still more diabolical character, when it was found that the master magician could allow them to remove it, or not, at his pleasure, by simply breathing gently upon it. In vain they handed the box from one to the other, inspecting it at top, sides, and bottom, it remained inscrutable, and was the box of Satan. And as to the coffee from the inexhaustible pot—do you think they would taste anything that welled up from an infernal source, however captivating might be its odour?

Oh, no; no fear of that, though their pride would prevent them from manifesting surprise Robert Houdin proved a powerful missionary, and produced an excellent effect on the indigenous population. The grand trick which astonished and alarmed them most, was the juggling away and causing to disappear a full-grown man. His Mussulman spectators were placed in this dilemma,—if they looked no deeper than the surface, they must believe their European conquerors gifted with supernatural powers superior to those pretended to by their own dervishes and marabouts;—if they caught a peep behind the scenes, they must admit their superior intelligence and knowledge.

Another French conjuror, scouring the provinces, turned his art to his own more immediate advantage. Walking through the market-place at Cherbourg, where he was to give a performance in the evening, he asked an old woman the price of her eggs. She told him she sold them twelve sous the dozen. He said that was much too cheap, and that she did not know the value of the eggs in her basket He then took one, broke it before her eyes, and showed her that it contained, besides the yolk and the white, a forty-franc piece—a large gold coin, sometimes called a double Napoleon. He broke more eggs, every one contained, or seemed to contain, a piece of gold. Finally, he offered to buy all her eggs at twenty sous the dozen instead of twelve. She replied that she was not so foolish as to part with precious eggs like those, and that she should keep them herself. So he went away, pretending great disappointment at her refusal.

As soon as his back was turned, the silly old woman began breaking her eggs, one by one, greatly astonished that she could not find one with a

forty-franc piece in it. And so she went on, till not an egg was left. She was sitting disconsolate and eggless in a mess of shells and spoilt custard-meat. She then began to cry and take on. The other market-women crowded around her; but they only laughed at her when she told them of the price offered for her eggs and why she had refused it. The conjuror, however, soon returned, and after having his laugh too, he paid her market-price for the eggs she had broken. The trick served him as a capital advertisement. He had a crowded house, lots of applause, and pockets full of money.

Professor Hoohkus Poohkustonius, like the rest of his class, has the gift of the gab, and prefaces his performances with plenty of boasting.

'Years ago,' he tells us, 'I was sent for to give a representation before a high personage who then resided in the palace of the Tuileries, and I wanted to conclude the spectacle with something entirely new and unexpected. I actually ventured, ladies and gentlemen, to beg for one of the swans which ornament the garden of the Tuileries. Royal good-nature granted my suit, and the beautiful bird was brought to me. I put him into a large basket, where he sat as if he were reposing on his nest. The basket was then covered with a drapery, and I requested his Majesty, Louis Philippe—hush! the most elevated person present—to say into what place, great or small, near or distant, he ordained the swan to be transported.'

'Make him return into his egg!' was the answer, given amidst a burst of laughter.

'You see, ladies and gentlemen, that I was considered worthy to be treated without much consideration, and not to be spared. Bowing to the great man, in sign of my acceptance of his order, I lifted the cloth which covered the basket. The swan was gone, and in its place the basket was filled with smelling-bottles, bouquets, fans, and all sorts of trinkets that had been stolen, without their knowing it, from the ladies who had laughed at me. They crowded round me, in great surprise, less to claim their own than to get a peep at my enchanted basket.

'"And the swan?" they exclaimed. "What has become of it?"

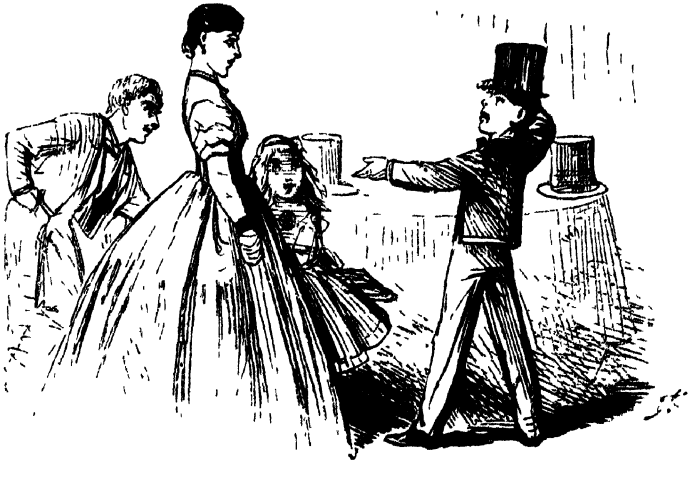
'I could only answer that he had returned into his shell, where he must remain the proper time of incubation, but a hint being given me to hasten the time of hatching, the swan was soon restored to his mate.'

'Clever enough,' observed cousin Tom, 'but not cleverer than the showman who smokes five cigars at once. But I know a better joke than that of the swan. Look here, cousin Jane. You see this macaroon, and you see these three hats which I place in a row on the table. I eat the macaroon. You see it's all gone down Red Lion Lane. Now under which of these three hats shall I put the macaroon which I have just eaten?'

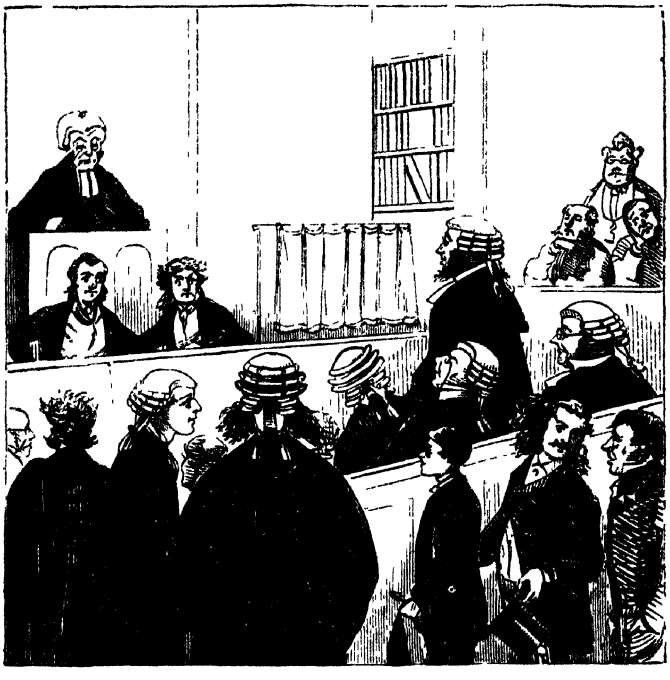
Jane smiles incredulously, and says, 'Under this ugly old hat with the narrow brim.'

Cousin Tom puts the narrow-brimmed hat on his head, and triumphantly exclaims, 'There!'

With which we leave the light-fingered Professor to continue his task of unbending bows.



## SCENES IN COURT.



### CHAPTER I.

I HAVE always had an affection for Westminster Hall. My earliest recollections are bound up with it, and I cannot bring my memory to tell me of a time when it was not to me an object of reverence and love

I think of it as of an old friend, and love it so much that I glory in the knowledge that it is almost certain to survive me. The carved angels who adorn the supports to the roof are all my intimates They have been my *participes curarum* 'even from boyish days.' They knew when I was in trouble with my 'construe,' entangled in Greek roots, or posed in Euclid. They smiled on me when my spirit failed me because of bullies. They were my confidants when I, aged 13, was so deeply enamoured of the pretty daughter, aged 25, of the porter of our school. I used to discuss to them, with a confidence unbounded, the propriety of declaring my affection, and the probabilities of my lady's acceptance of me. They never told me the plain rude things I have been told and have myself told since. My weekly shilling, with its 3*d.* mortgage for eaten tarts, was not pointed at as insufficient for the maintenance of us both. They knew—and why therefore tell them?—that Bessie —— had nothing to bring, save a good appetite, towards our mutual support. I told them I should work all day for her: I should write books, invent engines, paint pictures, make great discoveries in chemistry, and fifty other things which were quite easy to be done. There would be no doubt about a living. They never sneered nor said unkind things, but always smiled and beamed with kindness as I poured forth to them the whole secrets of my heart This begat a close friendship which has not waned by increasing. I still

hold them as fast friends. When I became old enough to understand what they said, they told me long stories of the things they had seen in their time. They interested me with accounts of trials at which they had been witnesses, and filled me with admiration by their descriptions of my historical favourites.

They bore testimony to the correctness of Vandyke's portrait of the unfortunate Earl of Strafford, and brought the favour of the man so vividly to my mind, that I fancied I could see the clear-cut face and dark complexion of him, and hear his ringing, bell-like voice appealing to the peers for mercy on his fault, on account of the innocent 'pledges which a saint, now in heaven, had left him.'

They seemed not to have known of the earl's execution; for they said, the trial broke down, and they concluded the prisoner was acquitted. When I told them of the Bill of Attaindor, and of the king's consent to his friend's death, they wept whole heaps of dust and cobweb, and gave solemn ratification to Strafford's endorsement of the Psalmist's warning about putting one's trust in princes.

This did not prevent them from speaking sorrowfully about the trial of the king, and of his octogenarian archbishop.

They had seen the man who is portrayed in undying colours, in the noble picture now in Middle Temple Hall, enter the place as a prisoner; and they had listened throughout the trial with mingled awe and indignation, almost laughing outright, however, when they heard Lady Fairfax say aloud, in answer to the call for her husband, that he knew better than to be present, since his wife was. They heard the whole thing, including the sentence; and somehow or other they were already acquainted with the fact of the execution.

Then they had stories to tell of the Seven Bishops, and Warren Hastings; they had overheard Burke's *bon mot* about 'the (vo)luminous pages of Gibbon.' They had seen and heard much more than *I* can remember or write down; and they pleased me immensely by the ready confidence they gave me. We passed many happy hours together, and then came an interval of separation, during which I listened to the stories of other roof-supporting cherubim, and gathered scraps of information from many an ancient place. Time, however, brought me back again to my old friends, if it did not to my first love. The latter made an excellent wife to the baker who was patronized by the school; but the former remained as before, unchanged—unless, perhaps, a trifle dirtier. They had often inquired of me what went on inside those doors which faced one half of them on the floor beneath, and when I came back again after the separation before named, it became my business to instruct myself so that I might answer their questions.

On the right of the Great Hall, as you enter it, is a flight of stone steps, on the top of which a vestibule—guarded by a she Cerberus, who has acquired a prescriptive right to war upon the digestion of her Majesty's lieges, by means of strangely-compounded edibles which she sells to them—leads to the two courts where the judges of the Queen's Bench dispense justice. More of both of these presently. Running between the two, or rather at the back of one and by the side of the other, is a darksome passage, dimly lighted, conducting, as a stranger might legitimately think, to the dungeons and torture chambers whither are consigned the delinquents condemned by the Court to purge their offences, but leading, in fact, to chambers destined to far other uses. The genial light of day is excluded from this passage, and the insufficient lamps which are supposed to illumine it, serve but to cast a grim shade upon the assembled clerks and clients who haunt the hard seats along its sides as though they found in them a nature akin to their own. Out of it a side door opens into the great Court of Queen's Bench; and through the door come and go counsellors and senators, gowns, silk and stuff—the *élite* of the law, with the rank and file thereof. There is not any inscription over the door, as there is

over the door in another place, bidding those who enter leave hope behind them;—yet there is something in the ordinary, unprofessional creature's breast which makes him read in the faces of those he finds in this grim abode, a certain indication that hope has small place there But the passage, whither does it lead? To subterranean regions certainly — perhaps to the very cellar in which Guido Fawkes laid the train which was to have carried King James and his Parliament express, to heaven or to hell. But a visit to the first chamber at the end of the stone staircase, on which wigged and robed men ascend and descend, as unlike as possible to the angels whom the Patriarch Jacob saw from his stony pillow, reveals no more formidable a person than Mr ——, the robing-master, and no more suspicious-looking a being than the ancient man who is his servitor. The room, however, in which they live, and move, and get their fees, is more open to cavil than are its tenants. I incline to the opinion that it *is* Guy's original cellar; and so firmly, that I decline to listen to any statement which shall try to convince me to the contrary, by showing that it is many yards away from where the old Parliament House stood. Small, gloomy, with no daylight, really underground, and damp and misty as cellars are wont—the eyes require time to get accustomed to the gloom which the garish gaslights create but are powerless to dispel. Rows of hooks round a stout framework on one side of the room suggest the neighbourhood of Sachenteges, racks, bilboes, and other 'hateful and grim things' to which they must be appurtenant; the framework itself, with many mysterious joints and holes in it, looks in the semi-darkness not unlike some foul instrument of torture; and at first it is difficult to divest one's self of the notion that he has got into a veritable chamber of horrors, of which the prepossessing-looking Mr. —— is perhaps the attendant surgeon, and of which his curiously-featured assistant is the sworn tormentor. Instinctively one looks about for the barrels of gunpowder, the coals which conceal them, and a figure like that the boys drag about on the 5th of November; and I am far from being convinced they are not actually there, though I have not been able to discover them. That small mirror in the wall, surely it must be used for ascertaining whether breath is left in a tortured victim. the wavy character of its surface precludes the idea of its being employed as a means to personal adornment, and the former use would be in keeping with the character of the room. Those ominous-looking boxes of wood and tin, in shape not unlike the human head, and labelled with names—what is their office? Is this the hangman's morgue, and is he allowed to keep the heads of decapitated felons to scare the living from crime, or to allow of phrenologists studying their science on the original busts? Or is this a sort of parliamentary terror akin to that which Domitian contrived for the Roman senators when he showed them into a dimly-lighted funereal chamber, wherein they found their coffins, 'ready for immediate use,'—as the advertisements have it—and inscribed with their own names? Are wordy and hated members brought into this hall of English Vehmgericht and frightened into agreements to vote differently, and to shorten their speeches, by the sight of their own head cases, labelled with their names—and of Greenacreish sort of bags yawning to receive their skulless trunks? I scrutinize the names on the cases, sniffing the while—for I am not without a presentiment that the Calcraft museum theory is the right one,—and I look curiously for the names of certain hon. members who would be sure to be represented if the second supposition were correct. My eyes do not deceive me when I actually read the names of some of these. I saw them alive and well but a few days since,—have all their glories shrunk to this little space, so soon? 'Alas! poor ——!' I exclaim, and turn away from the cases, convinced that the British public cannot be aware of the secrets of these secret places, and resolved

that I will lose no time in making it acquainted with the discoveries I have made. Even judges under Charles I. refused to say that Felton might lawfully be tortured; and shall my Lord Westbury be suffered to tweak the noses of his opponents with red-hot pincers, like another Dunstan, and to consign their 'proud tops' to these infernal preserved meat canisters? No. The 'Advertiser,' the 'Star,' and an 'Independent Press,' shall hear of it, and the decree of the second Lateran Council of Pompeii shall assuredly be quoted against it.

I find I have been wrong. Though the question as to the powder and coal and Guy Fawkes remain an open one, there is, I fear, no ground for the anxiety which I had intended to exhibit through the medium of the press. Further inquiries have satisfied me that Mr. —— is not the chirurgeon I had imagined him, though it required the exhibition on his part of his power as a 'leech,' to bleed me to the extent of 1*l* 5*s*. before I could be convinced. His assistant—a silent and sad man—evidently affected by long acquaintance with the place—is no sworn tormentor. Mr. —— is 'master of the robes,' committed to his care, and the silent man helps him to put them on the backs of counsellors who patronize him. The tin canisters, in shape not unlike the human head, are wig-boxes, labelled with the names of those who own them, the butcher-like hooks, of which mention was made, support the gowns which are fellows with the wigs; and the Greenacreish bags are the vehicles in which the gowns travel when going from one Court to another. The mirror is really meant to help in adorning the person, and the framework alluded to is intended to hold the property of those who frequent the room In point of fact this is no other than a robing-room. The plain deal table is not used for dissecting purposes, but as a place for hats. This knowledge came only with the lapse of time. The first occasion on which I entered the room, I almost held my breath till I had got out of it again, and felt, as I ascended the stone steps to the Court above, something of the feeling which Dante had, when he left the last circle of the Inferno, and came where he could see the stars again.

On this same first occasion I distinctly remember how shame and confusion were made to cover my face in this passage, of which I spoke just now, though the 'glooming,' or 'gloaming' which prevailed within it hid the fact from the sight of all beholders. I had noticed two men whispering together, looking towards me the while, as if they were speaking of me, and a cold shudder ran through me as the thought flashed across my mind that they might be there in the interests of Messrs. C—— and D——, whose forbearance in respect of sundry 'small claims' had been taxed somewhat fully; and the horrible idea occurred to me, that these men had been sent to beard me in the very precincts of the Court, in the hope of driving me to that which was next to impossible—a settlement. I was questioning to myself how far the privilege of counsel attending the Courts of Justice would cover me, and was doubting anxiously whether that privilege was enjoyed only by those who actually had business to transact, or whether it extended over the whole class generally. I was doubting how far it would be wise to allow of this plea, which savoured of adding insult to injury, being debated, and then roused myself at the thought, what an occasion this would be for showing the world the astonishing powers of speech and reasoning which I took it for granted reposed within me, and almost hoped myself right in the surmise which conscience, rather than judgment, had thrown out as to the character of the men, when one of them advanced towards me, holding a brief in his hand, and inquired in a tone which relieved me greatly, notwithstanding my recent wishes for a contest, whether I were not Mr. Jones.

I readily acknowledged that ancient name to be mine, and then bubbled up in my mind the thought that my good genius had been playing me a good turn, and had

sent this man to give me my first Court brief. How kind of D——, my attorney friend, who had promised me so often, while yet I was but a student, how great things he would do for me There could be no doubt I had done D—— much wrong when I had mistrusted the lavish promises he showered upon me. Yes; my name was Jones!

'Consultation at nine to-morrow morning, sir, in the robing-room. Mr. D—— will feel much obliged if you will attend particularly to this case, as Mr. —— (the leader and Q.C) will be very much engaged, and *may* not read his brief'

'Mr. D——! I did not know him. Had never heard his name before. My friend's London agent, no doubt.

'Very well,' I answered, looking at the brief, whereon were inscribed those cabalistic signs which so much gladden the hearts of all counsel, whether leader or junior, and which informed all whom it might concern that Mr Jones was concerned for the plaintiff, in an action against the Great Western Railway, and that Mr. Jones was to have ten guineas for his advocacy therein

Holding the brief in my hand as though it were a marshal's bâton, I entered the Court of Queen's Bench with the idea of making an impression upon my brethren who should see me enter there, though for the first time, with a brief in my hand. Upon L—— and B—— especially I desired to let fall the full weight of my importance, because they had so many times hinted at the absurdity of my ever expecting to hold a brief, unless, as they were pleased to add, it might be one in my own behalf as defendant in an action upon sundry accounts delivered. I walked in and sideway'd to a place in the middle of the second row, where I saw L—— sitting behind his morning paper, his wig pushed back and disclosing a quantity of his brown curly hair, his gown just clinging to his shoulders, and a look of nothing particular to do showing itself upon his face.

'Hullo! Jones, got a brief? Your own, old chap? Deuced glad of it; special jury, of course. Want reporting?' for D—— is reporter-in-chief of cases tried before her Majesty's judges at Westminster and Guildhall, to the 'Law Reformer's Gazette.'

'Good firm, that!' said L——, looking at the name of my clients. 'How did you get taken in tow? I thought your namesake on the Southern Circuit did their junior work. Want new blood, I suppose; but like to keep the old name.'

A cold shudder passed through me as L—— uttered these words, for they conveyed to my mind the idea of there having possibly been a mistake. I strove to cast it off, but could not, the suspicion was enough to unsteady my eyesight as I endeavoured to run cursorily through the brief The interesting nature of the action, and the many points for argument which it opened up, gradually absorbed me so much, that I did not notice the entrance of the attorney's clerk who had given me the brief, and who was now signalling to me by many signs and gestures.

'There's another brief for you, Jones,' said L——, nudging me so as to draw my attention to the man, who, unable to reach me, evidently desired to have speech with me, and who seemed to be in a very excited state of mind.

Sidling out as I had come in, earning the curses which all win who tread on tender feet, I arrived at the spot where the man stood, and then—the horrid truth which L——'s words had caused me to suspect, dawned in its fulness upon my mind, and desolation swept across me.

The man had made a mistake. He had confounded my name—confound him!—with that of my learned friend of the same name on the Southern Circuit, the very man of whom L—— had spoken. Not knowing the gentleman he was told to instruct, he had asked a colleague if each fresh comer from the robing hall bore the style, in which I rejoice, and unluckily for me it happened that I came up before my namesake, and the colleague who made it his business to acquaint

himself with the name and abode of each member of the bar, old or young, had told the wretch that my name was Jones. Acting upon this meagre information, Messrs. D——'s clerk put the brief into my hands—and now, the real Simon Pure having been discovered, it behoved me to surrender my supposed gain—all the apologies of my misleader, humble though they were even to abjectness, not serving to compensate me for the loss of ten guineas, the dignity of the thing, and the prospect which had been before me of seeing my name in the newspapers in connection with one of the most important cases that was tried that term. After such an event I could not go back to the Queen's Bench, but turned a sadder and a poorer man into the adjoining Court of Exchequer

An old judge—I might say a very old judge—was sitting on the bench, looking like the impersonation of law, and of all that was dignified and venerable in man He was one who had been easily chief as a student at college, and no less easily chief as a junior counsel at the bar. His name was associated with many a famous case, of which the memory even of the bills of costs had perished, he had survived the clients of his early days, and while yet a young man, had 'gone lightly o'er low steps' in the road to advancement, now his name was considered to be a synonym for justice, and those who sometimes questioned the manner in which he laid down the law, did not venture to question his law itself, and they readily pardoned the privileges which old age assumed, for sake of the time when these were not needed, and because of the comprehensive grasp of the old man's mind, which enabled him to apprehend a thing in its entirety, without bestowing upon it his whole attention.

A special jury case was on, and the jurymen's names were being called over by the associate of the Court. The name of a most intimate friend, from whom I had parted only that morning, was called out from the box, and though surprised, for he had not told me of his having been summoned, I quite expected to see him step forward and answer. Imagine my dismay when a shabbily-dressed man who had been standing near the 'well' of the Court, made the melancholy announcement that my friend had been dead three months. A momentary regret passed through my midriff as I thought of R——'s amiable wife and three young children, but it was momentary only, for I knew quite well that R—— was alive this very morning, and had left me not two hours ago for his office in Jute Street. There was some mistake, but in the interests of R——, who I knew hated jury summonses, I did not think it incumbent on me to right it. Several names were called to which no answers were given, and there seemed to be but a poor chance of making up the jury. Nine were in the box—three more were wanted, and of two of those who remained to be called over, the shabbily-dressed man announced the same doleful tidings that he had announced about my friend. Who was this that took such an interest in special jurors that he knew to a nicety the dates of their decease, and came there to volunteer the information which he had himself acquired? For he spoke evidently as *amicus curiæ*—he was not an official person, yet because perhaps that his statements were made voluntarily, no one questioned the correctness of his speech. The judge made some remarks about the carelessness of the sheriffs in keeping dead men's names upon the panel, the counsel for the plaintiff prayed a 'tales,' and the jury was completed by common jurors. The case went on, but the shabby man interested me. He was evidently a frequenter of the Courts, and appeared to be known to the ushers and people in attendance; and I thought he was perhaps some retired attorney or barrister who made it is hobby to get up the histories of jurors, and was believed therefore, as a matter of course. It was not until afterwards I learned from R——, to whom I announced his own death, that he paid this man so much a year to kill him when inconvenient summonses came, on which occasions he sent them to the shabbily-dressed

man, who instantly committed such homicide as would be sufficient to excuse the victim from attendance at Westminster.

The case was one for a special jury —compensation case for damages done through negligence of a servant—and a great fight for the verdict was expected. The counsel engaged for the defence were an eminent Queen's Counsel and a 'junior' —*ætatis suæ* 45—who was reckoned one of the best of stuff gownsmen. Their battery was a strong one, and they wore upon their faces an expression of quiet satisfaction which betokened the comfortable assurance they felt of being able to silence whatever artillery might be brought against them.

'Who are for the plaintiffs?' I inquired of the man next me.

'Serjeant —— and P——, a new junior, I believe.'

'P—— of the Home Circuit?'

'Yes.'

'He'll have hard work against little S——,' I remarked, 'unless the serjeant helps him more than he is wont to do. Is the serjeant here?'

'I have not seen him,' answered my friend, 'and some one said just now he would not come.'

'Poor fellow!' I exclaimed, for I knew P—— to be the very quintessence of nervousness 'Surely he is given over into the hands of the Philistines' and so indeed it seemed. P——'s leader was not in Court, P—— could not learn anything about him, and it seemed to be pretty certain that if the case went on, P—— would have to conduct it himself.

Poor P——! there he sat, looking unusually pale and suffering evidently from the suppressed excitement which was born of the strange position in which he found himself. He sat there in his place behind the leader's bench, with books and papers before him, in formidable array: his brief, which he'bound and loosed from its tape bonds at least ten times in as many minutes, was in his left hand, and the fingers of his right hand unconsciously played the devil's tattoo with a quill pen on the red baize desk: his eyes looked wistfully at the side door, as he watched for the coming of him who came not. Little S——, his opponent, whispered words of soothing into his leader's ear. The pair smiled benignly on each other, and looked across at my poor nervous friend, who was unknown to them as well as to fame, with a glance in which pity mingled with some professional scorn.

The jury were sworn, and had settled themselves to their duty with that expression of resigned unwillingness on their faces which jurymen of all sorts are wont to wear. The counsel for the defence untied their briefs and opened them out leisurely on the slope. The Court was all attention, reposing its chin on its hands; there remained nothing to be done but to open the case for the plaintiff.

I looked across at P——, no longer watching the side door, but gazing curiously at the judge, who stared down at him. The nervous, restless look was intensified to the utmost, but to my surprise and relief there was no appearance of confusion. I knew P—— to have a strong will and a stronger sense of duty, and rejoiced as I saw, or fancied I saw, these two coming to his assistance against his own nervous system and the two skilled verdict-getters who now threatened him.

A dead silence for about a minute was broken by the judge uttering with some significance, as he still looked hard at P——, the monosyllables, 'Well, sir!'

P—— rose and said in a voice tremulous as that of him who hears his own notes alone, for the first time in a public place——

'I hope your lordship will forgive me for keeping the Court waiting. My leader is absent in the other Court and will be here directly. I have sent for him.'

'Oh, sir,' said the judge—grinning a grim grin as he said it—'your leader intends to give you an opportunity of distinguishing yourself. You'd better begin.'

The jury laughed, the 'learned friends' on the other side laughed, and all the 'learned men' in Court chuckled at the facetious judge, who

was unable to resist the temptation of saying a smart thing even to a man so evidently nervous as poor P——. I trembled for P——, but he was no way dismayed. On the contrary, the judge's joke stood him in excellent stead; it lent him that slight touch of indignation, gave him that sufficient wounding of his *amour propre* which enabled him to send his adversaries to the right about, and not only so, but to his own and his friends' surprise, to take part in the amusement of which he himself was the occasion.

'Your lordship is aware that there are two ways of distinguishing one's self,' said P——, anxious now to gain time, and glad to use the means the Court had unexpectedly provided for him 'And I cannot but feel that I shall be as distinguished as poor Denmark beside the allies, if I am to be deprived of the assistance of my learned leader.'

'My brother will no doubt be here,' said the leader on the other side, 'meantime you can go on' And then followed some 'chaff,' as mild as that which had gone before, about the absent 'brother' being the learned counsel's big brother (Serjeant —— was a very little one), and the probable consequences to him of pushing on the case in the absence of the same, a disclaimer on the part of the 'other side' against being taken for the representatives of those 'distinguished foreigners,' the allies against Denmark, *cum multis aliis*, which wasted a good ten minutes, allowing Serjeant —— time to come up, and would have lasted ten minutes more had not Mr. Baron —— somewhat testily remarked that Mr. P—— could at all events open the pleadings, which Mr. P—— said 'of course, he could do,' and proceeded to do, with a boldness which was the inspiration of the moment.

It is the duty of the junior counsel to begin under any circumstances, so that there was as yet nothing falling to the share of P—— which would not have fallen had Serjeant —— been there. P—— told 'my lord and the jury' how that John Styles was the plaintiff and John Giles was the defendant, and that the plaintiff sued the defendant 'for that;' and then he read the interesting document known as the declaration, from which it appeared that John Giles was an exceedingly bad man, who hired servants known by him to be incompetent, and also to be very skilful in breaking other folk's legs; that he was habitually negligent as to the way in which he conducted his business, and so far as the matter now before the Court was concerned, had 'so negligently, carelessly, and improperly conducted himself in that behalf,' that by his approvedly unskilful servant he had 'broken, wounded, crushed, bruised, and maimed' the leg of John Styles, who being a carman, earning a pound a week, valued his injured limb at 1,000*l*.

A thousand pounds seemed a moderate sum to ask for injuries which required so many adjectives to describe them; but John Giles said on the pleadings, that he was 'not guilty,' and privately that Mr. Styles might go to a warmer climate for the money he sought to recover. 'Upon this plea,' said P——, 'issue has been joined, and that is the case for trial before you.'

As a matter of fact, I believe the plaintiff was a carter, who had gone with his master's cart to take some marble slabs from defendant's yard. The defendant was fifty miles away at the time, but his foreman and helpers went to load the cart, and the plaintiff, though he did not fetch the slabs out of the yard, nevertheless helped to make them fast in the van, which he was bound to protect. While they were making one of the slabs fast, the foreman jumped out of the van and shook it, a slab fell over and broke the carter's leg. The action was against the master for the negligence of his servant.

The point was a fine one, for if Styles could be made out to have been acting as defendant's servant, or as a voluntary helper, he must be nonsuited. Only if he could be shown to have been independent of defendant's orders, and to have been engaged upon the slabs in the capacity of his own master's servant, had he a cause of action. It was sailing rather close to the wind, as his leader

himself told him in consultation; and indeed, but for P——'s showing him the principal case on which he had relied, and which the learned serjeant, who had not read his brief, had not, therefore, had occasion to look up, that gentleman had declared there was no case.

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You would have thought, to hear the serjeant, that he had been engaged in loading slabs in vans all his life long; that until this particular moment he had never done aught else, and had now come into Court for the sole purpose of telling the jury how his work was done. Then he laboured to show that the defendant had admitted the plaintiff's case, said he should call witnesses to prove it, as well as to depose to the serious nature of the injuries done to the plaintiff, as set forth in such harrowing terms in the declaration. This done, he sat down, and P—— proceeded to call the first witness for the plaintiff—the plaintiff himself.

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'It is our case, my lord,' rejoined P——.

'Well,' observed the judge, 'I do not see how the matter can rest here with a verdict. It must go into the full Court, and possibly to the Court above. Is it not a case for a settlement?'

P—— beamed with satisfaction. He had raked out the case in question, and mainly on the strength of it he had advised the action being brought. He had withstood his own leader with it in consultation, and now it came in the face of the judge's expressed opinion. 'The other side' looked a little disconcerted, but was glad 'his lordship had thrown out this expression of opinion.' Then came a laying of heads together by the counsel engaged, assisted by the attorneys on either side, who leaned over the back of the 'well' in which they were confined, and deferred to the wisdom of those whom they had entrusted with the case. His lordship read the newspaper, the jury stood up and stretched their legs in the jury-box, and Mr. C. D. the eminent (in that he was six feet high) junior counsel, who drew portraits many, though pleadings few, sketched the scene before him, as a whole and in parts, upsetting the gravity which resides under the wig, and moving every one to laughter by the absurdity and justness of his caricature likenesses.

The conference was of no avail. Counsel could not agree. The case must go on; so P—— finished his examination of the plaintiff, and Mr. Q. C. rose to cross-examine.

Little was elicited by this means, beyond the fact that the plaintiff had undoubtedly helped, but whether as a volunteer, or as his own master's servant, was the somewhat fine question which was left for the jury. And now a man, whose personal appearance had already attracted considerable attention, was called. He had been sitting by the side of the solicitor in charge of the case, and was evidently much interested in the issue of the trial. He had been present at an interview between plaintiff and defendant, and was to bear witness to what had passed. He was a fine-looking man, apparently a foreigner, with an animated expression of countenance, and a costume which, the place and occasion considered, was truly wonderful. Whether it was the way in which he found expression for the respect which his nature felt for the tribunals of the kingdom, or whether it was the custom in his country so to appear before the courts, did not come out but this gentleman was attired in full evening dress, with an elaborately worked shirt, diamond studs, and a coat which Mr. Poole's eye might have pronounced faultless. No distinction had been made between him and the other witnesses in the cause, as I cannot help thinking there should have been. It was scarcely right in the usher to allow so magnificently clad a man to herd with the 'seedy' crew who filled as of right that abyss in the halls of justice known as 'the well,' unless, and perhaps he was correct after all, the usher thought of him as Lafeu thought of Parolles, in 'All's Well that Ends Well,' that 'the scarfs and bannerets about him did manifoldly dissuade him from believing him a vessel of too great burden.' Anyhow, there he sat in the 'well' till his name was called out by the usher,

in as indignant a voice as that in which the first witness had been desired to 'stand forth. Then he started to his feet as if the ground under them had suddenly grown red hot, and made his way over blue bags, papers, and the legs of attorneys' clerks, to the witness-box. Serjeant —— introduced him to the judge as Count Dieudon, a Frenchman, while the associate explained, as much by signs as by words, that the gentleman must remove the white kid glove from his right hand, in order to hold the sacred book on which he was to swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but that. There being some difficulty in explaining this, his lordship thought the delay was caused by the witness objecting to take the oath, and thinking further, perhaps, that Count Dieudon, who was as good a Christian as is to be found throughout all Leicester Square, might possibly, from his general appearance, be of the Hebrew faith, rather testily told the associate to ask the witness if he were a Jew. The bare suggestion caused a current of eloquence to flow from the Frenchman, so strong and continuous, that it bid fair to supersede, in the attention of the Court, the case which was actually before it. His lordship at length succeeded in conveying to the speaker an assurance of his want of intention to insult him; M. Dieudon succeeded in getting the white kid glove off his right hand; and the associate succeeded in swearing him in the words of the oath.

'Did I understand you to say that the gentleman was a count?' inquired the judge.

'He is so, my lord,' answered P——.

'Of the Roman Empire or the French?' asked his lordship, with a smile.

'One of the indebitatus counts, I believe, my lord,' said Mr. Q. C., at which remark his lordship smiled again, and Count Dieudon, who did not understand the allusion, and thought they were but settling the exact degree of his rank, smiled also.

Count Dieudon had evidently made the English language his study, and was, moreover, evidently well satisfied with the progress he had made in it. He had also given to the world three large volumes on the Science of Agriculture, which he had with him in the witness-box, in case, I suppose, any question should arise upon that subject in the course of the trial of a complaint for broken limbs. As this was far from likely, it seemed rather unnecessary for him thus to burden himself, but these three volumes were on the ledge before him, and served, at all events, to show the judge how he should spell the witness's and author's name, which was given to him by the learned serjeant as Dowdong, and by the more learned (in French at least) friend on 'the other side,' as Doodone. The name and address of M. Dieudon having been written on the judge's notes, and a further note having been made as the only means of stopping iteration of the fact, that M. Dieudon was author of the great work in question, Serjeant —— got the range, and began to fire into the witness's stock of information.

M. Dieudon gesticulated a good deal, poured forth volumes of Franco-English in copious answer to the questions put to him, and gave to many English words a pronunciation which reminded one of French spoken by Dan Chaucer's prioress; who spoke French 'full fayre and fetisly after the schole of Statford-atte-Bow.' So with M. Dieudon and his English. He spoke 'full fayre and fetisly,' but not after the school of Westminster Hall. He might with propriety have gone home and told his countrymen what the Irishman told his friends of the French, that they were a very stupid people, who did not even understand their own language; for it was undoubtedly true that practice and use were both essential to a right understanding of what M. Dieudon had to say. Serjeant —— came to that part of his examination where it behoved the witness to relate what had passed between plaintiff and defendant during the interview at which he had been present: and as M. Dieudon was both tenacious of being

thought able to speak the counsel's own tongue, and also very voluble in his talk, the serjeant deemed it advisable to beg the witness to relate the conversation, instead of getting at it by means of questions. M. Dieudon readily complied, and with the air of a Julhen and the voice of a Berryer, he told his simple tale; but when he came to the key of the whole conversation—the important part, where it was supposed the defendant had promised, as alleged in a second count, to pay the plaintiff a sum of money—he failed altogether to convey an accurate notion of what had taken place.

'Miszer Steel he come to défendant, an say, "Your man break my leg, and make me evil (me fit mal) You récompense me. I live in hospital four, five month. Get not work; lose my living. What you give me?" Défendant, he say nussing. Miszer Steel he press for answer, but défendant shake his head. He stay a long time to make answer, and zen he say nussing'

This evidence, which, more than all the arguments based upon ethnological grounds, convinced me of the affinity between French and Irish Celts, served also to upset the gravity of the Court, which fairly laughed out, and with every wish to do no uncivil thing, could not refrain from seizing this particular opportunity for mirth. The count was not further interrogated, and with, I fear, but hurt feelings, departed from the box with the great work in three volumes, which was evidently the pride and joy of his soul.

Michael Sullivan, the man who had done the mischief, and upon whom his master had already thrown the blame of the entire action, was next called, and impressed by the duty which lay upon him to observe reticence upon the subject to be investigated, was more evasive in his answers even than his countrymen are wont to be.

'Did you see the accident?'

'I did not, sir.'

'Where you present at the time it occurred?'

'I was, sir.'

'Did you see a slab fall over in the van?'

'I did, sir.'

'Did it fall on plaintiff's leg?'

'I can't say'

'Do you believe it did?'

'I think it did, sir.'

'Then you saw the accident?'

'I did not, sir.'

'But you saw the slab fall, and think it went on to plaintiff's leg?'

'I did, sir.'

'Then you think you may say you saw the accident, may you not?'

'I do not, sir.'

And after much further bandying of words, it was found out that the witness had seen everything except the actual snapping of the bone in the leg. He had seen the slab fall, he had seen the leg after it had been crushed, he was certain the slab fell upon the leg, and yet, for the reason above given, he declined to assert what nevertheless the jury believed, that he had witnessed the accident.

'Now, sir!' said Serjeant ——, twitching his gown, and pushing his wig the least bit back on his head, and looking a little fiercely at Michael, 'did you not jump out of the van before the slabs were secured within it?'

'I did, sir.'

'Did that shake the van?'

'It did, sir.'

'Did not the slab fall over immediately afterwards?'

'It did, sir'

'Did not the slab fall over because you shook the van?'

'I can't say, sir.'

'What was there besides to make the slab fall over?'

'I can't say, sir.'

'Did not you say, referring to the accident, that is a bad piece of work I have done; I was a fool to jump out like that?'

'I was not a fool!' retorted the witness, sharply; 'and I'll thank ye not to say so again'

'Answer my question, sir,' replied the serjeant. 'Did you say so or not?'

'They're vary impertinent qhuestions ye'll be askin',' said Michael.

'Will you be kind enough to answer them?' said the serjeant.

'I don't rhemember.'

'Try and recollect, now. You *must* know if you said so or not.'

'I don't rhemember.'

'Will you swear you did not say so?'

'I will not.'

'Did you say so?'

'I don't rhemember'

'Will you swear that?'

'I will; I'll swear I don't rhemember, and I'll swear if I do rhemember, I forget'

'Very well,' said the serjeant, joining in the laugh, which was general at this utter discomfiture of his hopes. 'Now, try to remember very distinctly this Had you not been drinking this morning before the accident occurred?'

'Ah, no!' said Michael, with the earnestness of a man tented on some point of special pride to himself.

'Are you sure of that?'

'Quite,' said Michael.

'Would you forget, if you did remember this, too?' inquired the serjeant.

'I can't tell,' said Michael.

'Now, do you mean to tell me you had not been drinking on this particular morning?'

'I had some tay,' answered Michael.

'No, no!' retorted the serjeant; 'I do not mean "tay." Had you not been into a public-house that day?'

'I had not.'

'Not to have a friendly glass with any one? You know there is nothing to blame you for if you had done so'

'I had not,' was the answer.

'Then you were not drunk on that morning, you will swear?' asked the serjeant

Michael did not answer directly, but looked somewhat archly into the well of the court, as if to seek inspiration from his master and the attorney, who were sitting there. The instructions in the serjeant's brief were that the man had been drinking, and there was other testimony to show that he was 'all by the head' before he began loading.

'I don't think I was drunk,' answered Michael, after an interval.

'You don't *think* you were drunk,' repeated the questioner, somewhat curiously. 'What do you mean? You told us just now you had not been drinking.'

'I had a sup the night afore,' added Michael, with the air of a man who has absolved his conscience.

'Oh, indeed!' said the serjeant, brightening up, for even he, astute as he was, could not divine how a man could get drunk on any given occasion without imbibing anything stronger than 'tay.' 'Now, do you think you had sufficiently recovered from the effects of the sup the night afore to be able to load the van properly on this particular morning?'

'I think it'd been better if I hadn't taken it,' replied Michael, now fairly unmasked.

'Oh! you were not drunk, but you think it would have been better you had not taken this sup the night afore Very well, I have nothing more to ask you.' And the witness stood down.

Application was now made to the judge that ladies might be requested to leave the Court, it being proposed to call the medical evidence to prove the nature of some injuries which were included in the 'otherwise seriously damaged and hurt' of the declaration. The request was at once acceeded to, and the Court, by the usher, its mouthpiece, proclaimed aloud that all ladies were to leave the Court. A flutter ensued among the petticoats, and many went their way, with an expression mingled of surprise and indignation upon the faces of the wearers of them, as though they resented the notion of raising and then disappointing their curiosity. I say many went their way, but not all; some there were who put a bold—their expelled sisters called it a brazen—face upon the matter, and stuck to their seats like women whose desire for knowledge is greater than their sense of shame. His lordship looked round upon these law-loving dames, and remarked, in a significant tone, that he had directed all ladies to quit the Court. It was at this particular moment that the usher became immortal, not knowing, however, the greatness of the fame which he was laying up for himself. Whether he really did not see the bonnets, whose unshamefaced owners kept

them obstinately in the halls of justice, or whether it was in the profundity of his scorn that he spake it, this deponent showeth not, but in answer to the remark thrown out by the learned judge, came from the usher the pride-killing words, 'All the ladies *have* left the Court, my lord.'

A smile, and then a titter, which waxed speedily till it became a laugh, was observable on the faces of judge, jurors, and counsel. Even a blush flitted across the countenances of the unshamefaced ones, and the usher stood a satirist confessed in the middle of the Court. His lordship adopted the meaning which all hearers attached to the words of the censor, himself as much astonished at his speech as the most amused one there, and, looking towards Serjeant ——, said that he might now proceed, since the modest women had left the Court.

The trial proceeded, the terrible nature of the injuries received by the plaintiff was explained to the jury, and medical testimony was heard in support of the case.

Now his lordship had a way of notifying counsel of his having written down upon his notes the answers of the witnesses, which many of those addressed disliked, almost to resistance point. He did not raise his head and nod, as judges are wont, but kept his face still fixed in the direction of his paper, uttering in a sort of undergrowl, as a sign for counsel to proceed, the monosyllables 'Go on!' It was not so much the use of these two good words that vexed the hearts of the learned, it was the manner of the user. Many had been the complaints made in robing-room and in hall, of the bearish (so they termed it) method which his lordship adopted, and among the complainants was none so bitter as Mr. Q C, who was for the defence in this action. He had fretted and fumed visibly during the whole of the time he was cross-examining, and all who knew him were well aware that ere long an explosion must take place.

His lordship had taken down the evidence which Mr. Q C. elicited from the witness, and, being no respecter of persons, had notified the fact in his usual way to the great man before him. Mr. Q. C. could not endure it longer, he made no fresh attempt to question the witness, but stood stock still as in respectful attention, waiting his lordship's leisure to continue.

'Go on!' repeated his lordship, but silence still reigned, Mr. Q. C.'s head became a little more erect, his eyes dilated a trifle more, and the starch in the large neckerchief which enwound his throat seemed 'to bear him stiffly up,' as Hamlet desired his sinews might bear him

'I said, "Go on!"' observed his lordship, somewhat testily, raising his eyes rather than his head, to look at the counsel.

The moment had arrived for the expected explosion; his lordship himself had fired the train. As men who watch some curious and new experiment, the bar stood at gaze, while Mr. Q. C., with an expression of deep astonishment and concern, stirred himself from his pointer-like attitude of attention, and exclaimed with loud and seemingly contrite voice —'I *beg* your lordship's pardon, I thought you were speaking to the usher.'

Respect for the Bench kept down open mirth, and Mr. Q C, with the tact of a general who knows how to follow up a victory, without crushing the enemy it is his interest to keep in the field, proceeded with his examination as if nothing unusual had happened. His lordship endured in silence, and bided his time for an answer.

P——, to my surprise and delight, did gloriously, not being disconcerted even when the judge, not knowing his name, and wishing to call him by it, desired the intermediates before mentioned as sitting between judge and counsel, to acquire this information for him. The stage whisper in which the inquiries were made one of the other, telling all whom it might concern that P—— was unknown to the frequenters of this Court, did not cover him with confusion, I fancied I detected even a sort of satisfied look upon his face as, in answer to the last inquirer, he showed his name on his brief, whereon was

marked a sum equal to that which potentially had been mine in the case of the Great Western Railway.

When Mr. Q. C. rose to cross-examine, some question as to the admissibility of the evidence he thought to elicit, occurred to that learned gentleman's mind. He wished to remove it; and also, perhaps, by taking his lordship into his confidence, to mollify through an appeal to his *amour-propre*, the evil prejudice which the late rasping had occasioned. It was, therefore, in a peculiarly insinuating way that he announced his intention of adducing the questionable evidence, and in a still more insinuating way, that he asked his lordship whether he thought it would be admissible.

Now it was strangely forgetful, in a man so astute as Mr Q C. undoubtedly was, so to act He might have put forward the evidence and waited for his appeal to the judge until such time as the opposing counsel objected formally; or he might have announced his intention to put it forward, and proceeded to execution without inviting, as he did, the interference of a man he had offended. As it was, he gave himself over into the hands of Samson, and suffered accordingly.

His lordship failed to notice Mr. Q C.'s first inquiry, maintaining the firm demeanour he had worn since the learned gentleman's tongue had lashed his indignation into a desire to find vent, but when Mr. Q. C. once more asked, as eager to be instructed, whether his lordship thought this would be evidence, Baron —— raised his head, looked straight into the lantern above him, and said to the lantern, as though he were delivering himself of an abstract proposition for the special edification of the lantern.—'Her Majesty and the House of Lords are the only persons entitled to ask me any legal questions.' This, uttered in a monotone, without passion, but with entire deliberateness, fell as falls a killing frost upon the tender plant. Not that Mr. Q. C. resembled a tender plant though, for he was among his brethren as the oak in a forest—yet, no less did he feel keenly the chilling blast of his lordship's oracular breath. He feigned not to notice what everybody else noticed; he stammered out something; he looked confused, and at last said he should not press the evidence if his lordship did not think it worth while.

His lordship expressed no opinion whatever, but being wearied with the long day's sitting, and being desirous, perhaps, not to risk losing the vantage ground he had manifestly gained, once more proposed to his brother, Serjeant ——, to consider whether the case was not one for a compromise. Serjeant —— having freely admitted that he thought the justice of the case required some such solution, his lordship announced that he would adjourn the Court to enable counsel to come to some arrangement. His lordship had risen to go, and had stamped his way over half the length of the platform, when a very junior counsel, in a state of terrible trepidation, rose to make a motion to the Court. Blue bags and red bags, books and papers, the owners of these, and the clerks of the owners, were bundling out of the Court, the registrar had already stretched himself a weary stretch in token of the ending of the day's work; the usher, henceforth immortal, had girded up his loins to go—when the faint echo of the very junior counsel's voice resounded through the Court. His lordship stood in half attention for a second, looked hard at the speaker, and then, resuming his walk towards the door curtain, was understood to say 'To-morrow! To-morrow!' and so went out. The very junior counsel could not get a hearing, and before the solicitor who had instructed him had finished the tale of his reproaches, I fled forth into Westminster Hall, and told this tale to my friends, the cherubim in the roof.

'Tell it not, save in St. Bride's Avenue,' said they, as I left them to their darkness and the gloom in which they have thriven so long.

'I will not,' answered I; and I have kept my word.

# CŒLEBS IN SEARCH OF A MULREADY ENVELOPE.

## A Liverpool Romance.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.

## CHAPTER I.

'WE MET—'TWAS IN A CROWD.'

IT was at a party Mrs. Furnival gave a few months ago that I first saw Laura Matilda. Mr. Furnival is chief of the great firm of Furnival and Co., one of the greatest mercantile houses in Liverpool. Everyone knows Furnival and Co., and if they do not, they ought, which makes it much the same thing.

Many a pleasant party has Mrs. Furnival given, but never shall I forget this memorable one at which I first saw Laura Matilda.

Would that my readers could see her as I saw her that night, all gauzy and shiny, a fairy in robes of blue and silver, she was most truly a phantom of delight, and I may also mention that she wore a wreath of roses. When first my eye fell upon her, she was standing by the piano, talking to Helen Furnival, who had been playing, and who is, I may mention here, in case I should forget it afterwards in the absorbing interest of my story, one of the jolliest girls in the world —never makes game of a fellow, and is an out-and-out brick

I had been dancing with a tall girl—a very tall girl, five foot eight in satin boots—and had just yielded her up to a very small man, who pleaded her previous engagement to him, and having nothing to do, leant against the wall, pondering on human rashness, as displayed in the case of the small man who had just walked off with my partner. She was not too much for me, but a perfect extinguisher to one of his size. As I said, I was standing against the wall looking at nothing in particular, when my eye fell on Laura Matilda, as she stood talking to Miss Furnival, and assisting her friend in the buttoning of a glove. In thinking over the matter since, I have never been able to account for the curious thrill which touched my very heart when I first looked at her From head to foot I felt as if I were entirely composed of pulses going at the most tremendous pace, pulses in my hands, pulses in my chest, pulses in my knees, pulses in my elbows, dozens of them in my head, and the biggest of them all coming up my throat and choking me. Nothing can I do but gaze at her, until the beating pulses seemed all to stand still, and then rush up to the roof of my head. Heedless of the dancers passing me, indifferent to the music ringing in my ears, regardless of having my eyes almost brushed out of my head by whirling *pupons* (is not that the proper term?) dashing by, careless of all public opinion, I stood riveted to the spot, gazing at the fair vision. I was in a state of insensibility to all external objects but one, and so absorbed was I, that when the passing waltzers trod many times on my feet, I knew not, until long afterwards, what it was that had wounded my pet corn and my patent-leather boots. In a few words, it was a case of love at first sight; for before I had looked at her many minutes I was hopelessly in love, just as violently as we hear the young Russian prince is with the fair daughter of Denmark.

It was with some difficulty a little while after—I am afraid to say how long, for time passed so rapidly gazing at this peerless creature—I brought down my intellect to the present moment sufficiently to reply to Mrs. Furnival's offer of getting me a partner. I can never be sufficiently thankful for having had presence of mind enough to

make known my wishes to my kind hostess. 'Seize the moments as they fly,' Dr. Watts, or somebody says, and I lost not one in requesting to be introduced to the lady talking to Miss Furnival at the piano. I was almost bewildered at my own good fortune as we crossed the room, and too dizzy to take in more than that the presentation had taken place. 'Mr. Benson—Miss Jones,' so the bewitching creature was called Jones!

I believe I asked her for a quadrille; I know I must, for we stood up together at the side of one just forming, and if I asked her as I felt at the moment, there must have been a world of deep passion in my voice.

*I am sorry now, since the opportunity is past, that I did not look at* the other fellows, to see how they felt at my good fortune, but I am sure they were madly jealous when they saw who my partner was Then I thought of what I had best say to her, but could not invent a single remark good enough to make to such a girl. There was a fellow opposite to me talking like steam to a girl, and I thought if I could only overhear one or two of his sentences, it might give me a start, but Mrs Furnival's room was too wide for that Then I heard the fellow next me say to his partner—

'Hot, isn't it?' and she said, 'Rather.'

So I said to myself, 'Well, that is as good a thing to begin with as any other remark,' and turning to Laura Matilda (I did not then know her Christian name) I said—

'Hot, isn't it?' and like the other girl she said, 'Rather!' and then I was, as the schoolboys say, stumped. Then it was our turn to advance, so I was not obliged to say anything more until the second quadrille had commenced, and in the meantime I turned over every subject I could think of, one after another, but not one idea would come. The more I searched, the less came; and to add to my dilemma, the fellow who first said 'Hot, isn't it?' had gone right on, and was now deep in 'Lady Audley's Secret,' and I had missed hearing how he had managed to reach it. Never was so unhappy a wretch! We were again back in our places, and my time had come again, but I had nothing to say, all I could do, was—and Laura Matilda has since told me I did it to perfection—to look like a fool.

The reader should have been in my place to understand my rapture when my fair partner, as if divining my embarrassment, relieved it by opening the campaign herself, and saying in a sweet, low, hesitating voice,—

'Do you collect foreign postage stamps?'

Now, if there was a modern mania which my soul utterly abhorred, it was this passion for making collections of postage stamps. Never *did I lose an opportunity of inveighing against it in the strongest language.* The idea—the bare idea of filling up great albums with old used stamps! I could see no sense in it, no object in it, nothing to excuse people besetting you everywhere you went for trumpery stamps, entreating you to pledge yourself to collect for them rubbish only fit to be thrown behind the fire

'And what is the use of it?' utilitarians naturally ask; and I never yet met the stamp collector who could give a satisfactory answer to this simple question. Shades of our ancestors! our sober forefathers of the Georges' times! come back and see to what we of this degenerate century have come!

It had come to this point with me, that I would not take life on the terms of being a martyr to this modern insanity. It was too bad that, because one happened to be learning business in a Liverpool counting house, his life was to be made a burthen to him. At this time I was in the habit of receiving on an average three letters per week from country cousins, all imploring, nay, even commanding me to send them by return of post a good many stamps, particularly those mentioned in a list enclosed; while a few kindly granted me a week to light on obsolete ones, all declaring it was absolutely necessary for their peace of mind they should have a large quantity without further delay. I do believe their belief in Liver-

pool and its stamps was as strong as poor Whittington's belief in the golden pavements of London; and that they thought the number of stamps thrown out of the counting-houses daily would require an additional force of able-bodied scavengers to clear away the heaps. There is my Aunt Dorothy, a fair type of the old ladies who plague you for them to be sold for charity, and who carry them down to the country, fleecing all the schoolboys in the neighbourhood in the sale of them, for the benefit of some pet society, at exorbitant prices. Refuse her stern commands if you dare—few do. Then there are all my cousins, from the young ladies who beseech of you, writing in a fine Italian hand, in which all the letters on a level with each other—the m's n's, i's, u's, w's, v's, g's, o's, and a's—look much alike, down through the various stages of text hand to round hand in the largest characters, the cry of all is, postage stamps! foreign postage stamps! and all refuse to be satisfied. Then there are my sisters, and they have schoolfellows—such sweet girls!—who are all collecting postage stamps. The very servants come to you begging for them. And the summing up of all is, that life is not worth having if this mania continues, and one is to spend it in a Liverpool counting-house. Why must the world combine to drive one into Bedlam?

Some days before Mrs Furnival's party, a rumour had gone abroad that the house was going to send one of its young men out to China, and having a strong idea that I should be the one chosen, I had gone over to Birkenhead the evening before, to consult with my uncle there, as to what course I should adopt, supposing the offer were made to me. It was a matter for grave consideration, and much ventilation of private affairs, and believing uncle and I were quite alone in the dining-room, I had spoken very freely, not hesitating to mention names — when — imagine my horror — a small voice came from under the table, a child's voice, and said:—

'I wish you *would* go to China, cousin Harry, and send home lots of stamps.'

It was perfectly insufferable. I know I had no right to object to Charlie falling asleep under the table when he ought to have been in bed, but I seriously objected to him waking up and beginning about his stamps, as if there were nothing else in life of the slightest importance to be attended to but the accumulation of postage stamps.

I wonder Charlie had not more caution than to touch on the subject: it was a sign he was only half awake, and at the mention of any foreign country instinctively broke out into stamps, for I had been so beset and annoyed about these detestable things, that I had solemnly cautioned my most intimate associates, under a threat of immediate and deadly punishment, against naming the things in my presence, and Charlie had more than once been dismissed with a caution.

Little wretch! as his father hastily ejected him from the dining-room, and sent him sleepily staggering upstairs, coming crash, crash against the banisters, the last words I heard issuing from his infant lips were 'postage stamps'

And now, this beautiful Laura Matilda had put to me the question, 'Do you collect foreign postage stamps?'

Never in all my life had I felt so guilty as at that moment. Had I taken the lives of all the sovereigns whose image is on the stamp of their respective countries, I could not have felt more justly condemned than I did when I saw Laura Matilda's soft beseeching eyes raised to mine, awaiting my reply.

In the first moments of despairing, longing at the commencement of the quadrille to find something to say to her, wild ideas, such as one finds in the 'Sorrows of Werther,' or in Miss Braddon's novels, about community of tastes and feelings, had rushed through my mind, and I felt certain that, could I but hit on the right theme, Laura Matilda and I should find ourselves one-souled; but now, how stunned I felt at Laura Matilda actually starting with

my *bête noire*. From that moment—shall I confess it?—a reaction set in in my opinions on the tabooed subject. I no longer hated stamps. Before I had had time to reply in these simple words, 'No, Miss Jones,' the revolution was gaining ground.

Then she said softly, oh! so softly, and so mournfully, 'I am very sorry!'

And so was I, very, very sorry, and though I longed to say so, I could not My lips seemed sealed, and I could only think the matter over pensively, as we advanced in the quadrille and performed our part. And as we set to one another and then stood still 'What could I do towards becoming one in soul with Laura Matilda on this subject?' Then I asked her very respectfully, 'Why are you sorry?'

Judging from the tempest in my own soul, I thought her reply would have been different It chilled me slightly. 'You would be sure to have some duplicates to give away.'

Now, to those readers who are not collectors, be it known that no collector requires more than one postage stamp of each variety, and supposing he have two of one kind, he puts one in his album, and the other, the duplicate of his own, he reserves either to exchange or give away to some friend who has it not. This is what Laura Matilda meant when she spoke of duplicates, people might mistake her meaning

I sighed deeply, and inquired—'Are you fond of stamps?'

Her reply was given with the deepest fervour.

'O yes, I love them!'

Would she but love me and not the stamps, crossed my mind, but of course not my lips, our acquaintance was too new for that, but, having taken a deep resolution, I acted on it at once.

'Shall I try and get you some?'

And she answered promptly and joyfully—'Indeed, I wish you would, but I am quite sure that by to-morrow you will have forgotten all about them, and I shall never see one. What can you get me?'

This was business-like, but I had cast business to the winds, had made her an offer without having the wildest idea of how to set about fulfilling it, and thinking in that case I might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, said—

'What do you most wish for?'

And, in putting this question, I put it fully, determining that if it were even necessary to go abroad myself for those she required, it should be done, rather than that Laura Matilda should be disappointed.

'I want South American, all kinds of South American, particularly Brazilian; I want Honolulu, and all kinds of Pacific Ocean ones, from those out-of-the-way places; I want some French Republics, old Indians, new Capes, obsolete Sydneys, but you need not be bringing me New Zealands, or New Indians, or those dreadful United States ones. That cauliflower head of Lincoln's makes me sick to look at it, and people *will* persist in giving it to me I always throw it in the fire when I get it.'

I lost not a moment in entering on my card the names of the required stamps, in the intervals between this and the next occasions on which we were required to dance, and my card read oddly, supposing that the entries stood for the names of my partners For a valse, I found I had booked an 'old Indian,' and a 'new Cape' had been promised a mazurka, while a 'Russian' had me secured for a coming galop, not to speak of a quadrille marked 'Turkey,' which might be supposed to allude remotely to the coming supper.

Laura Matilda watched with glistening eyes my entry.

'You look almost as if you intended to get them for me,' she said; 'but do not throw the card out of the window as you go home.'

Had swearing been allowable in polite and feminine circles, I should have at once made her believe, through its medium, that I was a man of my word; but that being impossible, I merely affirmed, as the Quakers say, that my future life should be devoted to the pursuit and acquisition of postage stamps. And all for Laura Matilda!

It was my happy fate to take Laura Matilda down to supper, not that I wished for any; but it was a delightful idea to know that for the next half-hour I should have nothing to do but attend to her wants.

There is a kind of young lady, very common in society, that, on being taken down to supper, and asked what she will take, invariably answers, 'Jelly;' or if anything lighter is to be had, she will choose it, say—grapes. Very young ladies act so in general, but I have often found them easily prevailed upon to eat something a little more substantial, apple tart, or even fowl and tongue

Laura Matilda was not one of these delicately-appetised young ladies. I had no occasion to press her beyond the bounds of politeness to eat and be merry.

I had the satisfaction, nay, rather, gratification, of seeing her eat everything I recommended to her, and, when not eating, talk in the most eloquent manner. If I were struck by her charms upstairs, imagine how infatuated I became downstairs. Before we left the supper-room, she had confided to me her feelings on many subjects, and above all she informed me that she was staying at the Furnivals, and would be there for a week longer

'So,' she added, 'I hope, Mr Benson, you will look sharp about the postage stamps.'

I assured her I would do my best, and in the middle of my assurance a horrid creature came up, and claiming her as his partner, bore her off.

I had no further conversation with her until the party broke up, but whenever she passed me she gave me a knowing nod, which said plainer almost than words could speak it, 'Postage stamps.'

## CHAPTER II.

### HOW TO PROCEED?

The next morning I arrived at the office as usual, and sat down at my desk wondering how I shou d set about fulfilling Laura Matilda's wishes. Several of our fellows were mad on the subject, but as they never dared to name it to me, I had no idea how they set about making a collection.

As 'good fortune would have it, one of the first to come in after me was young Griffin, and, considering him too slow a fellow to raise a laugh at my expense, I attacked him first

'I say, old fellow, have you got any stamps to spare?'

'Eh!' said Griffin, scarcely believing the evidence of his own ears

'Got any duplicates to give away?'

'Well, that's good! Have you turned collector?'

'It is not for myself; it is for another'

'By Jove,' said Griffin, 'the world is coming to an end! but you are very welcome to any I have.'

So the good-natured fellow pulled out his pocket-book and emptied the contents on my desk.

'Now, explain them,' I said, 'for I do not know one from another.'

Griffin began, 'That is a United States, Lincoln's head, you see· that is a New Zealand, twopence. That is——'

In a word, Griffin had all the tabooed ones, and not one of those which Laura Matilda desired Then I asked everyone in the office I knew to be a collector; but they all believed, or affected to believe, I was laughing at them, and declined to contribute Then I thought of Charlie, over at Uncle John's; and that very evening I went across to Birkenhead

I found my cousin Mary (who is one of the best girls in the world) sitting in the drawing-room at her work, my aunt was not in the room, and Charlie was seated beside Mary, sorting his stamps

As soon as I had spoken to Mary, I said to Charlie, 'Let me see your stamps, Charlie'

In a moment Charlie had jumped from his seat and put half the length of the room between him and me.

'Thank you,' he said, 'I was not born yesterday, cousin Harry.'

'What is the matter?' I asked.

'Don't I remember? I was never to let you see a stamp again as long as I lived.'

'But I have changed my mind,' I said. 'Come, Charlie, don't be disagreeable.'

To make a long story short, I induced poor Charlie to part with the most valuable of his collection, under specious promises of splendid exchanges, and left a deposit of five shillings with the boy as an earnest of my good faith

The reader may imagine the delight with which I recrossed to Liverpool that night, having secured such prizes as only schoolboys ever have. It is very odd how they come to make such splendid collections.

The next morning I was able to pass calmly at my desk, secure in the possession of Laura Matilda's affection, which I considered I had purchased at a cheap rate, and I waited impatiently until I could leave the office and make a call I had intended on Mrs Furnival.

Hurrying up Church Street to catch an omnibus which was to convey me to the suburb where our chief resided, who should I meet coming down but Helen Furnival and Laura Matilda

Laura looked charming, in the daintiest Mary Stuart bonnet imaginable. She smiled, and blushed, and was so animated, and so glad to see me, and asked so enthusiastically after the stamps It was a moment of intense pride to me when I took out my pocket-book, and showed her an envelope sealed and addressed to herself. She took it, and thanked me, oh, so very sweetly! and I thought I had never seen her look lovelier than at that moment It was no use thinking now of going out to Mrs. Furnival's, so I joined the young ladies, and we all walked towards Bold Street together

'Now,' said Laura Matilda to me, as we walked up the street, 'you have been so very kind about those stamps, Mr. Benson, I think I could not do better than ask you to do something else for me.'

How my heart throbbed! how loud my pulse beat at the sound of her words!

'Oh, pray do!' I stammered out; 'pray ask me to do something else for you, Miss Jones.'

'Well,' she said, 'you must know I am dying for a Mulready envelope, and I want you to try and get me one.'

'You are dying!' I said, in consternation, 'why you really don't look at all like it.'

'Only for an envelope, stupid,' she said, laughing; 'I did not think you were so obtuse. Helen, darling, is he joking?'

Helen did me the justice to think I was quite serious, and said so.

'I really must have a Mulready envelope,' Laura Matilda said, 'and I cannot go home without one What is Liverpool for, if not to provide postage stamps for the provinces? The end of it is, Mr. Benson, you must get me a Mulready envelope'

'And, may I ask,' I said, with much humility, 'what is a Mulready envelope? Is it one of any peculiar shape or make, or is it for any particular purpose?'

'Did you ever!' cried Laura Matilda, 'no, I never heard of any one who did not know what a Mulready envelope was Of course they were not in use in our recollection, Mr. Benson, but have you never seen or heard of them?'

Again I protested utter ignorance.

'They were the first envelopes used when the penny postage came in, or some time thereabouts—I never profess to remember dates, and the order in which things happen,—what is the good? You can always find some one else who will remember them for you; and it must wear one's brains out sadly. But these envelopes had a picture all round them, and sending your letter in one of them postpaid it'

I could not remember ever having seen one; nor did I know any one who had, nor had I the slightest idea of where to look for one. I suppose I looked rueful, for Laura Matilda began to give an animated description of the indispensable envelope.

'First,' she said, 'in the middle is Britannia, with the big, sulky-looking lion at her feet, and she is sending out handfuls of little angels with letters across the sea, to camels and Chinese with pigtails, and elephants,

and Penn and the Indians; and there is the dog, too, with the Indians, that you always see poking his nose at nothing at all, and the usual tropical tree that has no end of prodigious fruit, and a reindeer in the distance, and two girls in the corner at a love-letter (I suppose it is one), and,—oh, Mr Benson, it is a delicious envelope! and I hope you will get me one I should so love—I mean, I should be so much obliged to you, if you would get it,—and, oh! please get it soon, for I am going home in a week, and I should rather have a blue one than a black one,—but the black will do if you cannot get the blue. It is a ravishing envelope, Mr. Benson!'

I felt my breath coming short at this description Was ever such an envelope seen? I had my doubts, and feared Laura Matilda might be indulging in that most detestable of all amusements, quizzing

'If I knew where they were to be had,' I said, in a faint voice, rather deprecatingly

'If I knew myself,' said Laura Matilda, 'I should not have asked you to get it for me Like all great discoverers, you must search for it until you find it,—and, remember, if you do not get me one, I shall never speak to you again So don't expect it!'

With this terrific warning, accompanied by a threatening shake of her parasol, Miss Jones turned away and entered a shop, leaving me standing with Helen Furnival in the street.

'Now,' said Helen, 'it is my turn to speak; I never attempt it when Laura is riding one of her hobbies. You will have to get the envelope. She is dreadfully in earnest about everything she takes in hand. That is, if you really value her good opinion —or, I suppose I should say, her regards,—for it seems to me that is the reward she holds out'

'Value her regards! That indeed I do, above everything I know on earth, and if they are to be won by a Mulready envelope, she shall have it, if I sweep land and sea for it'

This I said in a melodramatic tone, feeling the occasion demanded more than ordinary language. Miss Furnival laughed.

'I am afraid sweeping the sea won't help you; but inquiring among your friends on land may. In the mean time, have you any engagements for to-morrow evening? Mamma sent notes by the carriage down to the office, hoping the servant would find you and some of your friends still there. If you give me a verbal answer, I shall release you from answering mamma's note, and,' she added, laughing, 'you will have more time to devote to the pursuit of the Mulready envelope.'

This was gratifying. Another evening with Laura Matilda! What engagement, made under no matter what circumstances, could stand before this invitation? I assured Miss Furnival I considered myself engaged from that moment; and she then dismissed me, saying they liked to buy Berlin wools without a gentleman, and she advised me to lose no time in my search

As I turned away, I could not but ponder on the lovely enthusiasm displayed by Laura Matilda about the envelope. 'Sweet girl,' I said to myself, 'of such bright material are made the minds of the great of this world. How did our Peabodys and our Brownes rise to wealth and eminence but by energy?' And to have energy one must have enthusiasm Laura Matilda had, indeed, looked the soul of enthusiasm as she demanded of me a promise to leave no stone unturned to procure the desired treasure. Her eyes sparkled, her mouth smiled, showing all her teeth, which, I am sorry to say, were anything but good, and she waved her parasol like the baton of a conductor at a musical performance In a word, Laura Matilda looked even more enchanting under these circumstances than she had done the night of Mrs. Furnival's party. I was ten times more her slave, I was her sworn knight —sworn to procure for my Dulcinea a Mulready envelope. Then from her my thoughts turned in sad comparison to myself. I was not enthusiastic about the envelope, only about Laura Matilda, and I

wondered if my dogged perseverance in this cause would stand me instead of a more brilliant quality.

Before I had half settled this point, I found myself over at Birkenhead, for I had determined on first ascertaining if Charlie had the envelope.

## CHAPTER III.

### HOPE.

I walked up to Hamilton Square, and found Mary at home. Charlie had not returned from school. To her I told my errand, suppressing, however, names and reasons, merely stating my need, my urgent need of a Mulready envelope

'Charlie has not got one,' Mary said, 'nor do I know any one who has that would give it to you. I know it well; the boys bring these things to show them to me, and I have picked up a good deal of stamp jargon'

I said, 'I wished she could instruct me a little,' for I thought it would be so pleasant to be able to talk stamps with Laura Matilda the next evening; but Mary laughed, and said, 'Stamps were a love-lesson, only to be learned by caring for them or for the collector.'

This was a random shot I am sure Mary meant nothing by it, but I felt almost found out.

'Then I suppose you don't care enough for me, Mary, to try and get me the Mulready envelope?'

'I care enough for you,' she said, washing in a sky in a drawing she was doing 'to set the boys inquiring among their schoolfellows It is the best plan I know, and if you wish to enlist Charlie in your service, you had better repay those stamps you borrowed from him. You cannot hit a small boy in a tenderer spot than his stamp-book.'

'In that case I shall go away before he comes in, and take care to bring him some the next time I come.'

'When will that be?' Mary asked.

'I do not know. How soon is there a chance of you having the envelope for me?'

'I never said I would do more than inquire,' Mary said, holding her drawing at a little distance to see the effect; 'but, Harry, if you are in such haste for it, you ought to inquire in every direction for it yourself.'

'I am in great haste,' I said; 'it is dreadfully important, Mary, and I have only a week to look for it in'

'Very well,' said Mary, quietly; 'you look as if you were going to lose your rest about it, cousin Harry.'

As she spoke, she looked up at me for a moment, and then resumed her drawing.

'That is as much as to say you won't lose your rest about it?' I said, annoyed at the calm way she took it

She made no answer, but mixed a little of a cool grey colour, and went on putting it in

'Do you not intend to answer me?' I said, at last, nettled I knew not at what.

'Your last remark? Certainly not'

'Good morning,' I said, getting up. 'You would rather help some of those schoolboys than me, Mary. You used to be different'

She laid down her brush, held out her hand, said 'Good morning,' and I went away.

I am sure I do not know why I fought with Mary, for I never had done so before, but after Laura Matilda's charming enthusiasm, Mary's calmness aggravated me. If she had not been so indifferent, I should have confided all about Laura Matilda to her; I generally did tell her of the girls I admired.

The next morning I had to screw up my courage to run the gauntlet of the office jokes, and go about inquiring seriously for the Mulready. I began with Griffin, but he wanted one for himself, and I went round them all in turn, but without success. Then came the evening of the party. Laura was dressed in pink, and looked, if possible, lovelier than she had done in blue; and she danced so gracefully, far outshining in every respect the other girls in the room. I danced seven times

running with her, and then Mrs. Furnival interfered, and requested we would both choose other partners. Very impertinent of her, I consider, for it was none of her business.

The next morning I began, as usual, inquiring in the office, but no one could give me any hope. Griffin advised me to advertise in the 'Liverpool Mercury,' and get the advertisement inserted in the place where the matrimonial advertisements always are, and Bigger, one of our fellows, drew up a copy for me, but I had not enough of courage yet to go through the jokes that this would entail on me The advertisement, too, ran so obscurely, that the reader was puzzled whether Mulready was the advertiser, or whether he wanted me or I him, or whether the public was cautioned not to trust either of us, or whether some kind of new envelope was to be had for sale at my lodgings; and the dreadful fellow stuck up copies everywhere it was likely to escape the eyes of the principals in whose counting-house we were.

The next morning, as I was sitting at breakfast, a letter came by post for me, signed 'Hannah Cropper, New Brighton,' saying the writer had an envelope for sale, the kind she heard I had been inquiring for, and if I chose to become a purchaser, a personal interview could be had that day, &c., &c.

Here was good news. The wonder was, how she had heard of it so soon; but I felt exceedingly happy at the thoughts of concluding the business quietly down at New Brighton, without any of the fellows knowing anything about it; so I put the letter with Hannah's address in my pocket, and hurried down to the office. Two or three asked me had I got the envelope I wanted, but the majority showed no interest, so at dinner-time I avoided my companions, slipped down to the landing-stage, and took the boat down to New Brighton. It would lengthen my story too much to tell how I sought Hannah Cropper in every direction, and Hannah Cropper's house, but in vain; I returned towards evening, thoroughly tired and annoyed. I went straight to my lodgings, and the first sight met my eye was another letter in Hannah's peculiar caligraphy.

Mrs. Cropper hoped this letter would be in time to stop me going to New Brighton, as it was Wavertree should have been in the note she before sent, but the person *as wrote it* made a mistake.

It was enough to put any one in a passion, but I determined, come what would, to go to Wavertree and find Hannah Cropper, and go I did; but after another day's fruitless searching I returned home, wishing Hannah neck and crop in the Mersey By this time the Mulready envelope had become one of the standing jokes in the office, until I began to dread going in to my work, and it needed all my dreams of Laura Matilda, and the bright vision of her smiles crowning my success at last, to carry me through. I sat down next morning to breakfast with a horrid dread of what the day might bring forth in the shape of office jokes.

The morning paper was on the table, and the reader may imagine, if he or she can, for I cannot describe, my feelings when my eye fell on an advertisement on the first page of the 'Mercury,' just where I had often seen the wants of sighing Cœlebs depicted. Breathlessly I read—

'*To Postage-stamp Collectors.*

'For sale, a Mulready envelope, in good condition. Personal application necessary. Apply at No. — Prince's Park, on this day, between the hours of one and three.'

Now I had already to make my peace with Smith, our head clerk, for absenting myself on two consecutive afternoons, and here I required a third. I may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, I had before said, when embarking in this chase for Laura Matilda; so I said the same again, and started down to the office, feeling unwontedly light-hearted. As I had hoped, I was almost the first in, and had made my peace with Smith, and obtained permission for that day's half-holiday also, before the young men came trouping in. I never saw

Smith so good-natured as he was that day, especially when I assured him that urgent private business would prevent me returning after dinner. I answered the usual number of queries that morning about the envelope, and then we fell to work, and the Mulready was lost sight of by all but me.

At half-past two o'clock I found myself alighting from the 'bus at the gate of Prince's Park, and with the address in my hand I proceeded to find the house by the number given in the advertisement. I paused not to look at the pond, nor the rocks, nor the rock-plants, but turning my back on St. Paul's spire, quickly found the house. Such a fine one, too! 'Well,' I said to myself, 'if I lived here, I should be very sorry to sell my Mulready envelope' And, after all, I was not wrong in my idea. I rang the bell, and a footman in model calves opened the door. I explained my business, he listened, staring.

'Yes,' I said, 'the advertisement said between one and three o'clock'

'I don't hunderstand,' the man said, rather insolently.

'You are dull of comprehension,

then,' I said, using a form of expression I considered suitable to the man's rank of life, and again I repeated my question.

'Young man,' he said, with an air of exceeding patronage, 'you are quite mad. You are too respectable looking, and it is too early in the day for you to be the other thing, otherwise I would call the police, and give you in charge.'

I assured him I was both sober and sane, but he shut the door angrily, saying he gave me five minutes to go off, and assuring me 'mad people never knew when they was mad.'

Slowly and sadly I retraced my steps, and walked into town, if not richer by a Mulready envelope, at least a little wiser than I had been three days before.

It was half-past three when I reached town, and I hurried at once

to the counting-house and took my seat at my desk, trying to attract as little observation as possible, but it was in vain, my tormentors were ready.

'I say, Benson, how is Hannah Cropper?'

'When did you hear from her, Benson? If I were you I would try for her at Rock Ferry, old fellow'

'Splendid hand she writes for an old woman,' another would say.

'Which is the shortest way of coming into town from Prince's Park?' would be another question, and then Smith must come grinning out of his office, and ask how it was I had got that private and particular business over so soon?

I was nearly frantic. When business hours were over I rushed home, divided between a desire to throw myself into the Mersey, or run off to America and enlist with the Federals, and it took hours and a fabulous number of pipes to compose my ruffled spirits. The worst part of it all was, that the day before, when on my way to the Wavertree omnibus I had met Mrs. Furnival, and in the fulness of my anticipations of success I had by her sent a message to Miss Jones that I had heard of an envelope, which I hoped to get, and that she should have it before many days were over. This was the most mortifying part of all It is very hard to forgive oneself for having been a fool.

The next morning I had much the same persecution to undergo that I had had on the previous day even the old porter's grim face relaxed at the sight of my disconsolate one coming in, and with affected solicitude he asked—

'Well, Mr Benson, have you got that 'ere en*vel*ope yet?' while every one of my companions had a new jest at my expense. Again I was glad to take refuge at home; but this time there was an unexpected drop of comfort in store for me. A letter in my cousin's handwriting lay on the table.

'No fear of her,' I said with relief, as I opened it; 'she is too much of a lady to play tricks on a fellow, and too goodhearted to hurt one's feelings.' So I read—

'DEAR HARRY,—If you have not succeeded in getting the envelope you were inquiring for, you will be glad to hear I have great hopes of being able to procure one for you. A friend of mine has had a promise of one, which she expects to receive this week, and not caring particularly about it will give it to me. By next Monday, at farthest, she will be able to send it to me, and you may count on having it by the first post that leaves this after the Mulready comes to me.

'Affectionately,

'MARY.'

'Just like Mary,' I cried out in delight, 'now my troubles are at an end. Once Mary takes up a thing she is sure to carry it through all right Now the fellows may laugh if they like · who cares?'

But I did care, nevertheless, for the jokes at the office were much worse than they had been yet, and I lived in hourly anticipation of some other practical joke being played off upon me My one anchor, however, was my cousin Mary. I knew I could depend on her.

My week which Laura Matilda had given me was almost gone; but with Monday before me, and Mary's word, I felt quite easy in my mind, and on Saturday afternoon I went out to pay the Furnival ladies a visit, bold as a lion, and ready to defend myself if Laura Matilda reproached me for delay.

And reproach me she did, as we walked in the shrubberies, for kind Mrs Furnival insisted on my remaining for the rest of the day, and I was exceedingly glad to do so. As I said, Laura Matilda reproached me severely with my tardiness in fulfilling her wishes; and though I had suffered deeply in her behalf, my sufferings were not of a kind to raise me in her estimation: she might perhaps have joined in the laugh against me I defended myself as I best could, promised the envelope for Tuesday, and told her I loved her to distraction, and had done so from the first moment I laid my eyes upon her, the night of the

party This I thought would move her, and I swore to love her for ever, and die if she did not return my affection, and a great deal more to the same purpose.

Now this was the first time I had made a declaration of love to a young lady, and my knowledge of such matters was chiefly derived from novel reading. In picturing the scene beforehand to myself, I had thought over all my favourite heroines, how they received such a declaration. One would put her hand in yours as a token; another would speak and say something most loving; while a third would perhaps say nothing but look everything; nay, I had even read of one of a more demonstrative nature than most well-trained young ladies of our own day, who flung herself right into her dear one's arms.

None of these things Laura Matilda did. She only pulled some young tender shoots of laurel from the trees as we walked, and chewed them to extract the flavour of bitter almonds from them, an amusement naughty children are very partial to.

Then I implored her to speak, to give me some hope, and tried to take her hand; but both hands were so full of laurel leaves I could not hold them comfortably, and she declined to drop the leaves as I wished. I really could get no reply from her, only at intervals she would say, as she put a fresh leaf in her mouth,

'Get me the Mulready envelope.'

And when I said she should certainly have it early next week, and began again, 'Dearest,' she would cut me short, and say, 'When you get the envelope,' until I began to understand nothing more was to be said until I got the envelope, and with this tacitly agreed upon between us we parted.

Monday came, and Tuesday, and still no envelope from Mary. I who had believed firmly in her that she would not deceive, or disappoint me. (The reader will perceive that I have omitted the description of the state of my mind on Sunday and Monday, for which see any modern sensation novel—I deal merely with facts at this portion of my narrative.)

On Tuesday evening I had determined to go over and see what Mary was about; but when I returned home in the evening I found a note from her on the table.

'DEAR HARRY,—I have been disappointed about the envelope, but hope a few more days will bring it. Is it very urgent?

'MARY.'

To this I replied, 'It *is* very urgent, my dear Mary,' and rushed into a rhapsody that must have astonished my sober cousin.

Wednesday evening I could stand it no longer, and went across to Birkenhead. Mary was out spending the evening, so I left a note in her workbasket and came away. Receiving no answer from her, I went over again on Thursday night, and was so fortunate as to find Mary alone. My aunt and uncle were out dining, only Charlie was with her, and having taken the precaution of buying him some stamps in a stationer's shop during the day, I had the satisfaction of seeing him take his cap and rush out to show his acquisitions to a friend

When I asked Mary why she had not replied to my note, I found she had never received it, not having lifted the lid of her basket that day: so I proceeded to turn out the contents in search of my note, which I had thrust far down. Instead of my own note, I first came upon another, one which had been opened and read.

'There,' Mary said, seeing what I had come upon, 'that is the last note I had from the friend who promised me the Mulready envelope. Read it.'

I opened it and read the following—

'DEAREST MARY,—I have decided on having my bridesmaids in cerise: I hope that will suit you. I am sorry again to disappoint you about the Mulready envelope. The poor idiot who is to get it has positively promised it for Wednesday. He is the greenest goose you ever saw, and it is awful fun. I shall make

Bill die laughing about him when I go down to Leicestershire.

'Yours, darling,

'LAURA MATILDA JONES.'

I stopped half-way down the page and looked at the signature, and then feeling very faint, sat down on the nearest chair. Mary was preparing tea, and did not see me. I was glad she did not see me in my first agony. Then the pulses stood still with a vengeance. I made one tremendous effort at last, 'How did you know Miss Jones?'

'I was at school with her, and made one of those silly compacts green geese, as she would style them, make, to be each other's bridesmaids; I do not wish to be hers, neither does mamma wish it, and she is to arrange it somehow that I need not go. I do not care for that style of girl. Laura takes it for granted I am going. She is in town buying her trousseau.

Then I made a clean breast to Mary, and told her all, and her honest indignation did me good. She was so kind as not to laugh at me, but I could see her amusement in her eyes.

'Such horrid treachery,' she said. 'I shall let her know my mind, Harry, and you may depend upon my needing no cerise trimmings I shall write her a note you shall see it before you go, and if mamma approves of it, it shall go to-morrow morning. Green goose, indeed! I shall show her my opinion of "awful fun."'

It was many weeks before I got over the mortification I suffered it was only by making frequent trips to Birkenhead I could meet with consolation. The fellows in the office had got hold of as much of the story as supplied them with laughing material, and I had a very hard time with office wit. It was an intense relief to be told one morning I was chosen to go to China; I had always been anxious for the appointment, and there was nothing to be done but provide an outfit, and say good-bye. So Mr. Furnival said, but I knew better. I had still to go over to Birkenhead, and discuss my journey with my relatives. When alone with Mary one day, I pressed her hard to come out with me, and only that I knew she was too good and true to make fun of me just then, I might have feared it from her answer, not like any of the heroines I had ever read of in fiction.

'Yes, if you will promise to get me a Mulready——'

I stifled the last word very unceremoniously before it came out of her lips, and to do her justice, she has never once alluded to the unfortunate envelope since that day.

We are not yet married, but I hope by the time the readers of 'London Society' have reached the conclusion of my tale, that we shall be. And if they will only look at the list of passengers that leave England by the overland mail, the first that leaves after reading this, they will most probably see—'For China—Mr. and Mrs. H. Benson,' and I hope they will one and all wish us *bon voyage*. I am sorry I shall have no opportunity of hearing if every one is quite satisfied with the result of my disappointment about Laura Matilda. It takes a great weight off the author's mind, when he knows that the reading world is perfectly satisfied with the matches his heroes and heroines make. I hope they are pleased with mine.

# THE MYSTERY OF THE BLOODY HAND.

## A New Year's Story.

### CHAPTER I.

A MEMORABLE NEW YEAR'S DAY.

*Dorothy to Eleanor.*

DEAREST ELEANOR,

YOU have so often reminded me how rapidly the most startling facts pass from the memory of man, and I have so often thereupon promised to write down a full account of that mysterious affair in which I was providentially called upon to play so prominent a part, that it is with shame I reflect that the warning has been unheeded and the promise unfulfilled. Do not, dear friend, accuse my affection, but my engrossing duties and occupations, for this neglect, and believe that I now take advantage of my first quiet evening for many months to fulfil your wish. Betty has just brought me a cup of tea, and I have told the girl to be within call, for once a heroine is not always a heroine, dear Nell. I am full of childish terrors, and I assure you it is with no small mental effort that I bring myself to recall the terrible events of the year 1813.

Oddly enough, it was on the first day of this year that I made the acquaintance of Mr. George Manners; and I think I can do no better than begin by giving you an extract from the first page of my journal at that time.

'*Jan.* 1, 1813.—It is mid-day, and very fine, but it was no easy matter to be at service this morning after all good Dr. Penn's injunctions, as last night's dancing, and the long drive home, made me sleepy, and Harriet is still in bed.

'Though I am not so handsome as Harriet, and boast of no conquests, and though the gentlemen do not say the wonderfully pretty things to me that they seem to do to her, I have much enjoyed several balls since my introduction into society. But for ever first and foremost on my list of dances must be Lady Lucy Topham's party on New Year's Eve. Let me say New Year's Day, for the latter part of the evening was the happy one to me. During the first part I danced a little and watched the others much. To sit still is mortifying, and yet I almost think the dancing was the greater penance, since I never had much to say to men of whom I know nothing. the dances seem interminable, and I am ever haunted by a vague feeling that my partner is looking out over my head for some one prettier and more lively, which is not inspiring. I must not forget a little incident, as we came up the stairs into the ball-room. With my customary awkwardness I dropped my fan, and was about to stoop for it, when some one who had been following us darted forward and presented it to me. I curtsied low, he bowed lower, our eyes met for a moment, and then he fell behind. It was by his eyes that I recognised him afterwards in the ball-room, for in the momentary glance on the stairs I had not had time to observe his prominent height and fine features. How strangely one's fancy is sometimes seized upon by a foolish wish! My modest desire last night was to dance with this Mr George Manners, the handsomest man and best dancer of the room, to be whose partner even Harriet was proud. Though I had not a word for my second-rate partners, I fancied that I could talk to *him*. Oh, foolish heart! how I chid myself for my folly in watching his tall figure thread the dances, in fancying that I had met his eyes many times that evening, and, above all, for the throb of jealous disappointment that came with every dance when he did not do what I never soberly expected he would—ask me. A little before twelve I was

sitting out among the turbans, when I saw him standing at some distance, and unmistakeably looking at me. A sudden horror seized me that something was wrong—my hair coming down, my dress awry—and I was not comforted by Harriet passing at this moment with—

'"What! sitting out still? You should be more lively, child! Men don't like dancing with dummies."

'When her dress had whisked past me I looked up and saw him again, but at that moment he sharply turned his back on me and walked into the card-room. I was sitting still when he came out again with Mr. Topham. The music had just struck up, the couples were gathering; he was going to dance then. I looked down at my bouquet with tears in my eyes, and was trying hard to subdue my folly and to count the petals of a white camellia, when Mr. Topham's voice close by me said—

'"Miss Dorothy Lascelles, may I introduce Mr. Manners to you?" and in two seconds more my hand was in his arm, and he was saying in a voice as commonplace as if the world had not turned upside down—

'"I think it is Sir Roger."

'It is a minor satisfaction to me to reflect that, for once in my life, I was right. I *did* talk to Mr. George Manners. The first thing I said was—

'"I am very much obliged to you for picking up my fan." To which he replied (if it can be called a reply)—

'"I wish I had known sooner that you were Miss Lascelles' sister"

'I said, "Did you not see her with me on the stairs?" and he answered—

'"I saw no one but you."

'Which, as it is, the nearest approach to a pretty speech that ever was made to me, I confide solemnly to this my fine new diary, which is to be my dearest friend and confidante this year. Why the music went so fast, and the dance was so short on this particular occasion, I never could fathom; both had just ceased, and we were still chatting, when midnight struck, deep-toned or shrill, from all the clocks in the house; and, in the involuntary impressive pause, we could hear through the open window the muffled echo from the village church. Then Mr. Topham ran in with a huge loving-cup, and, drinking all our good healths, it was passed through the company.

When the servant brought it to me, Mr. Manners took it from him, and held it for me himself by both handles, saying—

'"It is too heavy for your hands;" and I drank, he quoting in jest from Hamlet—

> Nymph, in thine orisons be all my sins remembered,'

Then he said, "*I* shall wish in silence," and paused a full minute before putting it to his lips. When the servant had taken it away, he heaved so profound a sigh that (we then being very friendly) I said—

'"What is the matter?"

'"Do you believe in presentiments, Miss Lascelles?" he said.

'"I don't think I ever had a presentiment," I answered.

'"Don't think me a fool," he said, "but I have had the most intense dread of the coming of this year. I have a presentiment (for which there is no reason) that it will bring me a huge, overwhelming misfortune and yet I have just wished for a blessing of which I am vastly unworthy, but which, if it does come, will probably come this year, and which would make it the brightest one that I have ever seen. Be a prophet, Miss Lascelles, and tell me—which will it be?—the joy or the sorrow?"

'He gazed so intently that I had some difficulty in answering with composure—

'"Perhaps both. We are taught to believe that life is chequered."

'"See," he went on. "This is the beginning of the year. We are standing here safe and happy. Miss Lascelles, where shall we be when the year ends?"

'The question seemed to me faithless in a Christian, and puerile in a brave man. I did not say so; but my face may have expressed it, for he changed the subject suddenly, and could not be induced to return

to it. I danced twice with him afterwards; and when we parted I said, emphatically—

'"A happy new year to you, Mr. Manners."

'He forced a smile as he answered, "Amen!"

'Mrs. Dallas (who kindly chaperoned us), slept all the way home; and Miss Dallas and Harriet chatted about their partners. Once only they appealed to me. What first drew my attention was Mr. Manners' name.

'"Poor Mr Manners!" Harriet said; "I am afraid I was very rude to him. He had to console himself with you, eh, Dolly?—on the principle of love me, love my dog, I suppose?"

'Am I so conceited that this had never struck me? And yet—but here comes Harriet, and I must put you away, dear diary. I blush at my voluminousness. If every evening is to take up so many pages, my book will be full at Midsummer! But was not this a red-letter day?'

Well may I blush, dear Nell, to re-read this girlish nonsense. And yet it contains not the least strange part of this strange story—poor Mr. Manners' presentiment of evil. After this he called constantly, and we met him often in society, and, blinded by I know not what delusion, Harriet believed him to be devoted to herself, up to the period, as I fancy, when he asked me to be his wife. I was staying with the Tophams at the time. I believe that they had asked me there on purpose, being his friends. Ah, George! what a happy time that was! How, in the sweet days of the sweetest of summers, I laughed at your 'presentiment!' How you told me that the joy had come, and, reminding me of my own sermon on the chequered nature of life, asked if the sorrow would yet tread it down. Too soon, my love! too soon!

Nelly! forgive me this outburst. I must write more calmly. It is sad to speak ill of a sister; but surely it was cruel, that she, who had so many lovers, should grudge me my happiness; should pursue George with such unreasonable malice; should rouse the senseless but immoveable obstinacy of our poor brother against him. Oh, Eleanor! think of my position! Our father and mother dead; under the care of our only brother, who, as you know, dear Nell, was at one time feared to be a complete idiot, and had, poor boy! only so much sense as to make him sane in the eyes of the law. You know the fatal obstinacy with which he pursued an idea once instilled; the occasional fits of rage that were not less than insanity. Knowing all this, my dear, imagine what I must have suffered when angrily recalled home. I was forbidden to think of Mr. Manners again In vain I asked for reasons. They had none, and yet a thousand to give me When I think of the miserable stories that were raked up against him,—the misconstruction of everything he did, or said, or left undone,—my own impotent indignation, and my poor brother's senseless rage, and the insulting way in which I was watched, and taunted, and tortured, —oh, Nelly! it is agony to write. I did the only thing left to me—I gave him up, and prayed for peace. I do not say that I was right I say that I did the best I could in a state of things that threatened to deprive me of reason.

My submission did not produce an amount of harmony in the house in any way proportionate to the price I paid for it. Harriet was obliged to keep the slanders of my lover constantly in view, to quiet the self-reproach which I think she must sometimes have experienced. As to Edmund, my obedience had somewhat satisfied him, and made way for another subject of interest which was then engrossing his mind.

A man on his estate, renting a farm close to us, who was a Quaker, and very 'strict' in his religious profession, had been for a long time grossly cheating him, relying, no doubt, on my poor brother's deficient intellect. But minds that are intellectually and in reason deficient, are often endowed with a large share of cunning and caution, especially in monetary affairs. Edmund guessed, watched, and discovered; but when the proof was in his hands,

his proceedings were characteristically peculiar. He did not discharge the man, and have done with it; he retained him in his place, but seemed to take a—let me say—insane delight in exposing him to the religious circle in which he had been a star, and from which he was ignominiously expelled; and in heaping every possible annoyance and disgrace upon him that the circumstances admitted. My dear, I think I should have preferred his wrath upon myself, to being the witness of my brother's miserable exultation over the wretched man, Parker. His chief gratification lay in the thought that, exquisite as were the vexations he heaped upon him, the man was obliged to express gratitude for his master's forbearance as regarded the law.

'He said he should never forget my consideration for him till death! Ha! ha!'

'My only puzzle,' I said, 'is, what can induce him to stay with you.'

And then the storm turned upon me, Eleanor.

You will ask me, my dear, how, meanwhile, had Mr. Manners taken my letter of dismissal. I know now, Nell, and so will not revive the mystery that then added weight to my distress He wrote me many letters,—but I never saw one!

* * *

And now, dear friend, let me pause and gather courage to relate the terrible events of that sultry, horrible—that accursed June.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE TERRIBLE JUNE.

It was about the middle of the month. Harriet was spending some hours with a friend, Edmund was out, and I had been left alone all day for the first time since I came home. I remember everything that happened with the utmost distinctness. I spent the day chiefly in the garden, gathering roses for potpourri, being disinclined for any more reasonable occupation, partly by the thundery oppressiveness of the air, partly by a vague, dull feeling of dread that made me restless, and which was yet one of those phases of feeling in which if life depended on an energetic movement, one must trifle. In this mood, when the foreclouded mind instinctively shrinks from its own great troubles, little things assume an extraordinary distinctness. I trode carefully in the patterns of the terrace pavement, counted the roses on the white bush by the dial (there were twenty-six), and seeing a beetle on the path, moved it to a bank at some distance. There it crept into a hole, and such a wild, weary desire seized on me to creep after it and hide from what was coming, that—I thought it wise to go in.

As I sat in the drawing-room there was a rose still whole in my lap. I had begun to pluck off the petals, when the door-bell rang. Though I heard the voice distinctly when the door was opened, I vow to you, dear Nell, that my chief desire was to get the rose pulled to pieces before I was disturbed. I had flung the last petal into my lap, when the door opened and Mr. Manners came into the room.

He did not speak, he opened his arms, and I ran straight into them, roses and all. The petals rained over us and over the floor. He talked very fast, and I did nothing but cling to him, and endure in silence the weight which his presence could not remove from my mind, while he pleaded passionately for our marriage. He said that it was the extreme of all that was unreasonable, that our lives' happiness should be sacrificed to the insane freak of a hardly responsible mind. He complained bitterly (though I could but confess justly!) of the insulting and intolerable treatment that he had received. He had come, he said, in the first place, to assure himself of my constancy—in the second, for a powerful and final remonstrance with my brother—and, if that failed, to remind me that I should be of age next month; and to convey the entreaty of the Tophams that, as a last resource, I would come to them and be married from their house, I made up my mind, and promised; then I implored him to be careful

in his interview with my brother, for my sake — to calm his own natural anger, and to remember Edmund's infirmity. He promised, but I saw that he was slightly piqued by my dwelling so much on Edmund's feelings rather than on his. Ah! Nelly, he had never seen one of the poor boy's rages.

It may have been half-past six when Mr. Manners arrived; it had just struck a quarter to nine when Edmund came in and found us together. He paused for a minute, clicking his tongue in his mouth, in a way he had when excited, and then he turned upon me, and heaped abuse on insult, loading me with accusations and reproaches. George, white with suppressed rage, called incessantly upon me to go; and at last I dared disobey no longer; but as I went I touched his arm and whispered, 'Remember! for my sake.' His intense 'I promise, my darling,' comforted me then—and afterwards, Nelly. I went into a little room that opened into the hall and waited.

In about twenty minutes the drawing-room door opened and they came out. I heard George's voice saying this or something equivalent—(afterwards I could not accurately recall the words)—

'Good night, Mr. Lascelles, I trust our next meeting may be a different one.'

The next sentences on both sides I lost. Edmund seems to have refused to shake hands with Mr. Manners. The last words I heard were George's half-laughing—

'Next time, Lascelles, I shall not ask for your hand—I shall take it'

Then the door shut, and Edmund went into his study. An hour later he also went out, and I was left alone once more. I went back into the drawing-room, the rose leaves were fading on the floor; and on the table lay George Manners's pen-knife. It was a new one, that he had been showing to me, and had left behind him. I kissed it and put it in my pocket: then I knelt down by the chair, Nell, and wept till I prayed; and then prayed till I wept again; and then I got up and tidied the room, and got some sewing; and, like other women, sat down with my trouble, waiting for the storm to break.

It broke at eleven o'clock that night, when two men carried the dead body of my brother into his own kitchen—foully murdered.

But when I knelt by the poor body, lying awfully still upon the table; when I kissed the face, which in death had curiously regained the appearance of reason as well as beauty; when I saw and knew that life had certainly gone till the Resurrection —that was not all. The storm had not fully broken till I turned and saw, standing by the fire, George Manners, with his hands and coat dabbled with blood. I did not speak or scream; but a black horror seemed to settle down like mist upon me Through it came Mr Manners' voice (I had not looked again at him)—

'Miss Dorothy Lascelles, why do you not ask who did it?'

I gave a sharp cry, and one of the labourers who had helped to bring Edmund in, said gravely—

'Eh, Master! the less you say the better. God forgive you this night's work!'

George's hoarse voice spoke again.

'Do you hear him?' and then it faltered a little—'Dorolice, do you think this?'

It was his pet name for me, (he was an Italian scholar), and touched me inexpressibly, and a conviction seized upon me that if he had done it, he would not have dared to appeal to my affection. I tried to clear my mind that I might see the truth, and then I looked up at him. Our eyes met, and we looked at each other for a full minute, and I was content Oh! there are times when the instinctive trust of one's heart is so far more powerful than any proofs or reasons—that faith seems a higher knowledge I would have pledged ten thousand lives, if I had had them, on the honesty of those eyes, that had led me like a will-o'-the-wisp in the ball-room half a year ago! The new-year's dance came back on me as I stood there—my ball dress was in the drawer up stairs—and now! oh dear! was I going mad?

## OUR WIDOWED QUEEN.

In Memoriam, December xiv., m.dccc.lxi.

THEY ask me why I weep
And sorrow as I do;
They say my grief should sleep
And memory slumber too.

Who says they sleep not now?
Doth sleep so death-like seem
That people marvel how
A sleeping grief may dream!

My sorrow long ago
In chastened sadness slept;
And mem'ry's flow'rets grow
Where thorns and brambles crept.

And still the fragrant breath
Of roses dead and gone,
Reveals that after death
Their spirit yet lives on.

In dreams they flower at night,
In thoughts they bloom by day;
They have no dread of blight,
They're proof against decay.

I cannot, if I would,
Those thoughts and dreams destroy;
I would not, if I could,
Forego their phantom joy

That makes my tears to flow,
And sadly to recall
The spot where here below
I've laid dead flowers and all.

I plead with those who've known
The bitter hour of grief;
That finds in every groan
Some earnest of relief;

Who've lived on year by year,
And learnt the bitter truth
That sorrow sometimes here
Lives on in endless youth.

Oh ye who ask me why
I wear so sad a mien,
And say that I should try
To be in grief a queen,

Alas! there is a power
To which e'en mine must bend;
It rules in that dark hour
When earth-born life must end:

For crowns and sceptres yet
  Have never held a sway
Could bid the heart forget,
  Or make true love decay.

And thou, belovèd child,
  Oh! never may thy breast
Be racked by anguish wild,
  That finds no ark of rest:

A written life of years—
  Where, marked on every leaf
Are spots where scalding tears
  Write chronicles of grief.

And you, dear people mine,
  Bear with me still, I pray.
  d let your hearts incline
  To mourn with me this day.

Upon your loyal love
  I fain would trusting lean,
And pray that God above
  Will guide your widowed queen.

F. W. B B.

## CUSTOM AS IT AFFECTS DINNER-TIME.

THERE are many social tyrannies to which people yield most complyingly, without even being aware that they are under a strict domination. They have been brought up in the fear of them, and have been accustomed from their birth to regard them as fixed and immoveable institutions. Through force of habit they bring their minds to regard them with that conservative attachment which makes them subserve their own personal convenience, and the comfort of their friends, to the one great object of maintaining the tyrannies in all their rigour To inquire into the reasonableness of them, to search out their history, and to know their hidden meanings, would be fatal to them To question is to stumble, to doubt is to fall. The institutions themselves are facts, and the origin and signification of them are matters of faith. Whole and indivisible, it behoves one to take them as they stand, to submit to them, uphold them, and be led by them; or else to cast off all allegiance, refusing to be bound by them, and boldly standing forth as their impeacher in the face of all the people.

Of these social tyrannies there are many crying examples in London society Certain forms and customs which are found to be healthful for preventing impertinencies at one particular stage of the society's growth, get firmly engrafted upon the parent stock, and become so much a part of the tree as to overshadow its original branches. In this way they get grotesque, awkward, and unseemly; they outlive the cause which gave them birth, and degenerate from a wholesome and convenient form into a foolish and ungainly restraint upon freedom. Forms which preserve without encroaching upon the spirit which made them, are eminently worthy of respect, and the non-observance of them by those within their reach, stamps the neglectful as unpolished and ill-bred. Thus to give the left hand instead of the right is boorish, by whomsoever it be done, not because the left hand is less honour-

able, *per se*, than the right, but because the right is the sword-hand, the hand of offence, and should be given in knightly token of peace to the giver's friend So the ungloved hand is the unarmed hand, and should be offered for the same reason. To go counter to these customs argues an ignorance of the rules of gentle breeding, and a want of courtliness; and there is a meaning in the forms which makes them respectable. It is the same with other forms of salutation. The military 'present' of arms, both officers' and privates', is a voluntary offer to surrender the weapons. Firing loaded cannon (formerly the guns were shotted) is not a senseless act of burning a certain quantity of powder and making a noise, but an act which places the saluting side at the mercy of the saluted. Again, the conventionality which requires the use of formal prefixes to the names of people with whom one is not well acquainted, is very commendable. It furnishes a shield against intrusiveness and impertinence. It suffers people to be 'familiar, but by no means vulgar,' in their conduct towards those who are, comparatively speaking, strangers to them, and it affords a means, by its relinquishment or the reverse, for the growth of sweetest friendship, or for guarding against undesired intimacy. It is next to impossible for the most persevering 'bore' to thrust himself upon you for long if he is always kept at a distance by the persistent use of a formal address, while there is no surer sign of an acquaintance ripening into friendship, and many times into affection, than the unchecked dropping of these affixes in writing and talking. As soon as the sense of kindliness within becomes too strongly marked to allow of a formal style being any longer a true measure of its degree, the formal style is let slip, and gives place to a mode of address more becoming the altered state of feeling In this way, under the fostering shade of a wholesome custom, are indicated the knittings and bindings together of men who get to be more than brothers, and the building-up of those tenderer relations between man and woman which are said to last into eternity.

The use of forms in transactions between states, and in the management of public bodies, has advantages it would not be possible to do away with. Forms prevent undue crowding and improper familiarity, and are a law to those under them, of which all see the utility.

But while it is likely enough that even in public affairs there is an excess of form which sometimes acts as an incumbrance to business, it is undoubted that in private life there are many customs which are but as the corpse to the spirit which dwelt in it — effete, troublesome contrivances, which serve no good end, but are a nuisance to all brought in contact with them. The meaning is dead — the form only remains; and yet, as I have said, the conservatism of numbers insists upon the retention of these dry bones, and will not let them be buried out of our sight. Reason is not allowed to take up the question at all; the thing which has been it is that which shall be, and there shall be no new thing under the sun This is the spirit in which many look upon customs. Others cling to the observance of them with the tenacity of bulldogs, simply because they have been educated under their rule; while many more decline, on the score of trouble, to resist the tyrannies whose yoke they have got accustomed to, and whose fardels they can, through habit, bear.

Among these social grievances which are to be found in some shape in most communities, I observe the following in London society.—

A custom of separating men from women in some churches. A custom of spending much time in running the length and breadth of town in order to shoot bits of card into people's letter-boxes, or to summon a servant of such people to take the cards in A custom of asking many more folk to squeeze into reception rooms than the rooms were built to hold. A custom of maintaining expensively constructed and expensively worked benevolent societies,

by means which deprive the revenues raised of the title of alms. A custom of publishing lists of subscriptions to charities, and of reading them out at a public dinner, with the names of the donors and the amount given, whereby not only is the donor's left hand accurately informed of what his right hand is doing, but the donor's neighbours are compelled, under pain of social tabooing, to tell their left hands what Mr. ——'s right hand has done, and to propose that, rather than bring down upon themselves the sneers of the charitable, their right hands shall dive into their pockets too, and bring forth a like sum A custom which gives all young ladies an *ex-officio* title to sing at the piano, although they may have no song-notes in them; and, correlative with this, a custom which allows of the agility and muscularity of young children to be shown off to the personal discomfort and inconvenience of visitors at their parents' houses

Several of these have been touched upon at different times, and will doubtless be handled many times more. They are all social grievances, of which it is not unfair to complain, so long as no satisfactory reason can be given why they should be suffered to exist It is no sufficient answer to an indignant Briton who asks the sleek verger why he should not offer his prayers side by side with his wife, to tell him that it was the practice of the church, in such and such a century, to separate the men from the women. Nor is ' any good plea for the law which demands the surrender in person of a printed card to the flunkey of a house where one has been a guest a few days before, to urge that, at a certain epoch, people who had been entertained were wont to make personal inquiry—and mean it too—after the health of their entertainers of a few days before. When that kindly custom sprang up the relation between inviter and invited was vastly different from that which subsists between the crowder and the crowded in a modern 'At Home.' The nature of the hospitality suggested the advisability of after-inquiries, and the heartiness of it made the duty of inquiring pleasant.

It is not my intention, however, just now to dwell upon any one of these grievances, nor, indeed, to make out a case against any real grievance at all. I am merely proposing to speak of a few facts which have come under my notice in connection with custom as it affects dinner, and with the management which has the ordering and arranging of it. These facts, taken in the lump, do not make up a good cause of complaint; first, because they are not of general application, and, second, because they are capable of being easily borne, if they do not admit of correction, and yet they are capable of being worked up into one of the worst kinds of domestic oppression possible. Therefore I set myself to draw attention to them in the hope of securing that prevention which is better than cure.

Now, concerning dinners: it does not appear that, in the olden time, the meal which we call dinner was considered of much account, that is to say, it was considered only as the means of doing away with the cravings of hunger Men who rose several hours earlier than their descendants are wont to do, who were about their work or their sport long before our breakfast-time, felt the warnings of hunger acute within them at a time of day when we think of taking a biscuit and glass of sherry. They had done a great amount of work and needed substantial refreshment; they had taken so much out of their systems that it became matter of necessity to restore them long before the natural hours of labour were gone, and accordingly they ate and drank like hungry men, and were satisfied.

> 'Lever à cinq, dîner à neuf,
> Souper à cinq, coucher à neuf,
> Fait vivre d'ans nonante et neuf'

But with the satisfaction of the animal craving for food their enjoyment of the meal was small. They had more work to do, or, at all events, more of the daylight to get rid of. They could not linger at the dinner-table; they must again be up and doing, though the

infirmity of nature demanded, and the unhurried character of their employments allowed, of a liberal space out of the centre of the day for the office of dining

When the Good Knight Bayard gave a grand tournament and jousting-match, and entertained the lords and ladies of the country round, the day's sports were divided into those before and after dinner, which was eaten at 1 P M., and not stayed over, lest it should interfere with the second part of the programme

And this was not a departure from the general rule, excepting, perhaps, that 1 o'clock was a little late, the custom being to dine at noon, or even earlier Supper was served at 6 or 7, and more answered to our modern dinner than did their midday meal It was a heavy affair, and frequently a riotous one

The hard work of the day being over, men gave themselves to the pleasures of the table without reserve. They ate, they drank, and were merry. They told their stories, quarrelled over them, and got friendly again in the course of the long sitting There was no more tilting to be done, no more game to be hunted, no more business to be looked after. To drive dull care away was all they had to do, and they did it Their dinner was a necessity called out by the circumstances of their lives. It had no pretension to be what a modern dinner is—a mental relaxation as well as a physical refreshment Their suppers were the meals of tired men at the fag end of the day, devoured rather than eaten, and rarely accompanied by that mental pleasure which is one of the chief characteristics of a modern dinner, and which takes it out of the category of mere feeding.

'Thei cry "Fyl the bowles I
Bonus est liquor, hic maneamus!"
For alle Chrystone sowlys,
Dum durant vasa bibanus!'

This was a jolly song, surely never composed for a midday meal It savours of revelry by night, and has a smack of heartiness about it quite refreshing to see. It was written in the time of Richard II., and its burden shows the style of entertainment at which it must have been sung—a sort of entertainment, I take it, far from uncommon, and not an unfair sample of the general run of heavy suppers of the period. It might have been the very song sung by the Lord Abbot of St Nicholas' Monastery, what time 'the daughter of old Plantagenet's line' came to sup with him, when the saint himself, according to Mr Barham's narrative, banged at the gate, and put an end to the convivialities of the evening with his flask of holy water and his sandal'd foot, which latter we are told, and are bound to believe,

'Flew up with a terrible thwack
And caught the foul demon about the spot
Where the tail joins on to the "small" of the back'

But it can scarcely be taken as expressive of the spirit which pervades a dinner party in a modern gentleman's house.

As time rolled on and men got to know more, and to love the attrition of mind with mind, which makes the sparks of wit to fly, dinner became a medium for the interchange of free thought between man and man, the occasion, and in some degree the cause, of the exhibition of whatever was genial in the diners. The body was at rest, and its members were renewed by feeding, there were no calls of the body upon the mind to distract it. The impoverishment of brain which goes on while fasting, was stopped; the case in which the mind is enshrined being fortified, the mind itself could take its ease, and could afford to appear, not only in its pristine strength, but could borrow somewhat from the spirits of its animal mate, in order to deck itself with more than natural brilliancy. Prudence and application may do their work on an empty stomach, and do it better than if they had freely dined; but geniality, generosity, all the impulses, and though it may appear strange, deep thought, cannot make a good show unless backed up by a good physical foundation. Dr. Johnson after eating his leg of mutton and swallowing his seas of tea, was a more natural man than he was before he had taken them.

His strong pangs of hunger must have preyed distressingly on his mind and worried it. He rose from his meal a giant refreshed

As the light of knowledge gradually dawned on the minds of men, dinner became less of a sensual affair and more of an æsthetic institution. It got to be a feast of reason as well as of meats, and a point in the day to which men might look forward without accusing themselves of greed, for the enjoyment of great mental pleasure as well as bodily recreation. And so they put off till the after part of the day, when their work should be done, this great feast They stayed the suggestions of hunger, which came to them in their busy time, by slender but sufficient means, reserving the great act of thorough restoration till such time as their minds could participate in the enjoyment of it. The duration of their daily labour was the standard by which they fixed their dinner hour. The time when, their work being done, they could abandon themselves to the real pleasures of the table, was the time appointed for winding up the machinery of the human frame. And so Sir Joshua Reynolds dined at five, waiting neither for peer nor commoner. His work and that of his guests was by that time laid aside, and he could afford to give the remainder of the day to that delightful intercourse with the men of his set which has been spoken of to us by Mr. Forster, and which makes Leicester Square still respectable in spite of 'entertainment' 'shows,' and 'exhibition' noises, to which Sir Joshua would now turn his deaf ear in vain

And now that the habits of more modern business and life require a longer draw upon the afternoon time of men, dinner hour, ascertained by the standards I have ventured to lay down, is also of necessity deferred to a later time. For one Londoner, who, in Reynolds' time, lived away from his business, there are now five hundred who have to get to a home some miles distant from it, and to consume an amount of time, ranging from three quarters of an hour to an hour and a half, in getting thither. Then as people begin their daily business later than they did, so they leave off later. This, and their residence in suburbs or in distant parts of the city, conspire to render their dinner hour a proportionately late one. It is a wonderful spur to the weary body, required to go at some stiff work towards the end of the day, to remember that at a certain time, known beforehand, its turn will come, and that it will be able to pick up again the loss of power which the extra spurt has caused it to suffer, to awaken to a sense of its own importance, to enjoy the gladsome influence of pleasant companions, and casting off altogether the slough of business, to bandy about the free thoughts of the moment in unshackled words, to offer and to hear the jest which is within the limits of becoming mirth.

Lucky indeed is the man who can do this, and who can shape his daily course for so pleasant a haven. Happy he who has the house to go to, and the means to provide this genial pleasure There are very many such, and it is of them I wish to write At present I am not concerned with those whose round of work is never ending as a wheel,—who toil from early morn till late at night, and who scarcely know what it is not to be 'going about their business.' These can have few delights apart from such as they may find in their work, and can only realize in a faint way, through the medium of suppers, those pleasures of dining whereof I speak. They are to be seen at such times as they can snatch from their occupations, crowding into dining-rooms and eating-houses, steamy with gravy, and redolent of baked meats. They satisfy the cravings of hunger in much the same fashion that a pack of unfed hounds rend the carcass of a beheaded and brushless fox thrown to them by the huntsman. There are bustle, noise, and lack of space, and there are all those disagreeables of time, place, and strange company with which no dinner can be had with real satisfaction to the diner.

The incongruities, too, of the

system, are glaring and repellent. That the man opposite to you, who have reached the cheese-stage of your meal, should be commencing an attack upon a joint from which you have already fed, is of itself a circumstance arguing a want of sympathy between you which precludes the notion of anything like sociability. You, who are satisfied in your stomach, could not possibly re-enter into praises of the food which satisfied you; nor could the undined man share with you the appreciation you may have for any matters beyond that in which he is immediately interested. Conscious of this want of sympathy, you refrain from conversation, you scramble over your meal as over any other business act of the day, and you quit the 'dining-rooms' as soon as may be, with a sense of relief at having made your sacrifice to the mighty god of hunger. You go back to your labour without having enjoyed yourself, and you are dead to the meaning of the little understood expression 'pleasures of the table'

I cannot but think such a system tends to debase manners, which are not exercised to advantage in a selfish rush after food, and that those who are forced to abide under it are cut off from much that tends to lighten the burden of life, that they are apt to become ill-mannered and coarse simply through want of counteracting influences.

But there are many who dine at taverns and in dining-rooms who do so, not out of choice, but out of deference to a custom which assumes the necessity. Many of them have comfortable homes and the means to supply that which I suggest would be good as well as pleasant for them, but they are prevented by causes really within their own control, from availing themselves of either for the purpose of dining. They can get home, their work done, within a reasonable time for dinner, and yet they resort to these feeding places.

They have married wives who, having been accustomed all their lives to dine at two, or some such odd hour, and being ignorant of what dinner really is, refuse obstinately to postpone the capital meal of the day, or they raise so many obstacles in the way of doing so that it amounts to a refusal, rather, to share it with their husbands. The husbands, therefore, resort to these places I speak of, to a club (hateful place the wives call it), to the hall of their inn of court, or some other extra-domestic dining-place They are the losers of so much home influence, and the wives are gainers of little save the reputation of adhesiveness to a life-long custom.

Again, there are some folk who, from the time of their marriage, always conceded this point, at least in theory, and fixed a certain time, say 5 30 P.M., as the hour for a greasy chin And so long as they lived in the street adjoining, or in the same house with, the offices where the husband worked, that time perhaps did well enough. But when they removed to Verandah Lodge, several miles away, and when said husband's work increased in nearly the same ratio as his family, requiring closer and longer attention, that same hour of 5·30 became an inconvenient one—one that the husband could not truly keep for three consecutive days. Yet the wife finds numerous reasons why it should not be changed. They have always dined at that time; the servants grumble at having to clean away and wash up after such an hour, the hour would do very well if Mr. —— would only make a point of getting home in proper time, &c., &c. Mr. —— is not able to get home regularly to his darling wife at that time, and when he does, he is so much fatigued with the effort, and so much unpleased with the cause of it, that it is more than likely he will devour his dinner in a cannibal way, without a spark of amiability, and will set himself down afterwards in dudgeon to his newspaper, or fall asleep like a gorged boa constrictor, in the most unsociable manner possible, to wake up again at tea-time with headache and indigestion. All the amenities of dinner have been sacrificed, and there has been added a

loss of kindliness, which might have been avoided but for the shock which the wife's organ of adhesiveness might have suffered by doing away with a worn-out and inconvenient custom.

The son, in such a household, will probably not be bound by the rule of the house, but will, if he have the means, stay out and lose the benefit of home society, or, not having the means, he will take his own time about coming in, and will probably succeed in getting within reach of a sort of home-influence he would be better without

The hour for commons in the inns of court, 5 P M, was doubtless fixed at a time when more of the commoners resided in their respective inns than do so at present, and it has been continued down to this time partly out of regard to habit, and partly, perhaps, because that hour allows of men quitting the courts, in which they have been engaged, and getting to dinner as soon as the most physically hard work of their day is over. It also allows of them afterwards engaging in the reconsideration of points discussed, or consideration of points to be argued, which belong to the busy lawyer's lot, without driving him too far into the night before his labour shall have ceased In fact, without reference to custom, it is found to be the most convenient hour for those who use the hall And this, after all, is the true canon for dinner hours The domestic happiness is the supreme law in such cases If one time does not suit, another ought to be pitched on, and nothing ought to be done simply because it has been done Such conservatism becomes a curse, and should be scouted by all legitimate means.

It is because I have observed a somewhat fatuous sticking to a practice whereof the principle has been long dead, in connection with one of the most important of domestic institutions, that I have endeavoured to show some of the advantages of the family dinner over the isolated feed, and to urge upon wives of London society the advisability of yielding a point or so in the economy of their households; in order, not only that they may do a substantial benefit to those they are concerned about, but also win for themselves the fame and the pleasure of being truly wise in their generation.

And, ladies, when once you have succeeded in breaking through the habit of solitary feeding; when you have braved the stubborn resistance of that powerful community below stairs, of which you naturally stand so much in awe, when you have found out by experience, that a dinner eaten at 7 P M, need make no further inroad on your housekeeping money than one eaten at 2 P M; when you have once enjoyed the pleasure of habitually dining with those whom daily work necessarily cuts off from sharing with you many of the other amenities of life, when you have once realized the satisfaction derivable by yourselves from the change of system, you will never go back to the old way Your husbands no longer ravening up their food in haste, and with their loins girt like Jews at Passover, are no longer so subject to those horrible fits of dyspepsia, which such feeding is likely to induce; and of the effect of which upon the sweetest tempered of husbands, you, dear ladies, are not perhaps unaware

It was quaintly said by an old divine that a man who had a bad digestion could with difficulty be a good Christian Though one might be inclined to marvel at the statement, and perhaps to except to it in its absolute form, he could not fail to acknowledge that much truth was wrapped up in it It would be unreasonable to look for ecstacy in a man whose liver was perpetually out of order. It could hardly be expected of him that he should be touched by pathos; be susceptible to a lively wit, or exhibit any of the more delicate qualities which an unbilious man might fairly be supposed to possess You are likely to find him hasty of temper, keenly alive to small irritabilities, crabbed of speech, unamiable of manners. With all these qualities he is quite as likely to curse as to bless; and

the idea of abstract devotion is entirely out of the question.

Can you fancy a man endeavouring to lift his mind above the mundane level when he feels between his shoulder-blades a weight heavy enough to bear Hercules himself to the ground, when his breath gets 'caught,' as he tries to expire it, when his head is swimming, and his eyes are dizzy? Can such a man succeed in his attempt? I trow not. I hold the saint A. 1. of the calendar, who lived austerely, rubbing his body daily with the coarsest of rough bricks, wearing uncomfortable under-clothing, never changed or washed, thrashing himself with wire whips to within an inch of his life, and within (let us hope) less than that distance of the lives dependent on him—I hold him to be a mere tool for merits, as compared with the man who continues in a godly frame despite a plaguy liver.

And if what the divine said of things holy be true, as I think it is, surely, ladies, in domestic matters, your ill-livered husbands must give you endless trouble. Your housekeeping books must be rudely spoken of; your powers of management must frequently be disparaged, your moderate indulgence in things necessary to your position must often be deemed as extravagance, you have to bear in many ways, and all unpleasant, the truly lamentable consequences of impaired digestion in your spouses. What an interest you have in trying at reformation! Believe me, these ugly traits are abnormal, they did not belong to him who some years back was wont to be so loth to leave you, so very glad to be with you, who devoted himself, with such utter want of reservation, to the task—not so difficult, perhaps, as he then thought—of winning you for his wife, who has loved you faithfully ever since the happily anxious moment when he told you he would do so. They did not belong to him then, and need not belong to him now. Of course I do not mean to say that all men who dine apart, and from home, must of necessity get indigestion. Am not I fellow to several who could digest as many tenpenny nails as an ostrich? I know them to be strange feeders, foraging here to-day at 2 P.M. and dining there to-morrow at 8. Nothing could resist—no amount of irregularity as to time could lessen, their powers of digestion and assimilation. But they are exceptions to the general run, and who knows what change time may work even in them?

Nor do I mean to say that other causes than snatched meals have not conspired to change the quondam healthiness of your husbands' tempers. Crosses in business, baffled ambition, the too steady increase of charges, the unkindness of those to whom they have been as friends, may have done their little part towards sobering, if not souring, their dispositions. But this scrambling dinner has much to answer for. Hark to Mr de Quincey on the subject. He says in his most witty essay on 'The Casuistry of Roman Meals': 'Were it not for the soft relief of a 6 o'clock dinner, the gentle demeanour succeeding to the boisterous hubbub of the day, the soft glowing lights, the wine, the intellectual conversation,—life in London is now come to such a pass that in two years all nerves would sink before it. But for this periodical reaction, the modern business which draws so cruelly on the brain, and so little on the hands, would overthrow that organ in all but those of coarse organization. Dinner it is—meaning by dinner the whole complexity of attendant circumstances—which saves the modern brain-working man from going mad.'

Mr Erasmus Wilson, in his interesting treatise on a Healthy Skin, has a capital chapter on the influence of diet, and it is highly satisfactory to me, who am advocating late dinners on the score of comfort, to find myself backed by so eminent a man, writing in the interests of health. He shows that by getting breakfast at 8 or 9, a good luncheon at 1 or 2 (with a cup of tea or coffee as an antacid, a couple of hours afterwards), and dinner at 6 or 7, an interval of four hours certain is left between each meal, to allow of the act of digestion and the subsequent rest of the stomach, and that this

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interval is wanted.¶ Digestion claims between two to three hours for itself, and the stomach gets the remaining space for repose—an amount of time scarcely too great, considering what labour 'that patient drudge' has to get through. Mr. Wilson exhorts his readers to refrain from giving the stomach new work while it is yet employed in getting rid of the old; or while it is picking up strength for further efforts. 'Tease it not, fret it not, if you would keep it in good-humour, and without its good-humour alas for yours!'

Elsewhere he says: 'The lunch of fashion is a light and commendable dinner: the dinner of fashion is an early and moderate supper,' a terse and truthful statement of fact which it would be well to bear in mind.

While the dinner hour should be fixed, as I have ventured to submit, in accordance with the standard of convenience, it seems that the habits of most moderns point to 7 P.M. as the properest general hour for the meal. Most people have struck work an hour before that. They have leisure to divest themselves of the thoughts as well as the clothes in which they have trudged about—to doff the 'shop' with the suit they served in, and to don humanity with their 'decent black.' They can afford, unless they be overworked lawyers, or doctors, never out of harness, to give the rest of the day to other than matters of gain.

This matter of the 'decent black' is a great matter. I knew a man who could not (*qui ne savait*) sit down to dinner unless he were in a dress suit. If he had to dine alone, it made no difference. I have surprised him, or rather I have surprised myself, walking unexpected into his house, to find him seated at table, alone, in full evening dress. He was not giving a dinner party to himself, nor—for he was a simple man—was he desirous of paying himself any extravagant compliment. He simply felt that to spend his leisure time, his hours of relaxation, in the same dress in which he had toiled all day, savoured of the incongruous. It was to him as if 42½, Jute Street, where he daily faced his opponents in the battle of life, had invaded the sacred privacy of his home, where none but his friends, his *participes curarum*, might be.

It makes nothing that my friend was an oil merchant, whose work-day boots and clothes reeked of the tuns he bought and sold to such good account, to that extent that for him to remain in them must have banished every one from his presence. The principle on which he acted is of general application. The working clothes identify the wearer, at least to himself, with the set of workers amongst whom he takes rank, the evening dress merges him in mankind generally—takes him out of the *species* and turns him into the *genus*. My friend, whose talk from 9.15 A.M. till 5.30 P.M., was of oils and spices, of cargoes of pimento, of ships full of rice, never once spoke of them when his oil and spice dress was removed for the day. With his evening clothes came thoughts and conversation less confined. Artists and authors, traders and soldiers, lawyers and doctors, met at his table without learning, from their host's talk, whether he lived by this trade, or that profession, or guessing by what means he contrived to pay for the hospitable plenty before them.

Much more could be said, which the limits of space require should be left unsaid, on the subject of dinner time. But sufficient ground has perhaps been shown on the score of comfort, health, and kindliness, of geniality, and family influence, on which to lay an appeal to those who dine at hours when the supports of the family cannot be with them, begging them for their own sakes, and for the sakes of those dear to them, to try the experiment of changing the venue of the meats to 7 P.M.

# WHIST.

By 'Cavendish.'

THE interest and excitement aroused by games may depend entirely on chance, as at rouge et noir or blind hookey; or it may result almost entirely from the exercise of skill, as at chess and billiards; or it may centre in a combination of the two, as at whist and cricket.

There are, then, three classes of games, viz., games of chance, games of skill, and mixed games.

Games of chance, that is, games in which chance is almost the sole exciting element, have a most objectionable feature in this, that they are wanting in interest unless played for money. The amusement they afford is essentially connected with the sum depending on the result. They are, in fact, mere excuses for gambling. For this reason they are very properly tabooed in all respectable clubs. The time when, perhaps, they are least hurtful is when they are employed to keep a mixed party of adults and children amused. For then, without a round game, it is often difficult to make the evening pass off pleasantly. And be it observed, it is just at such meetings that money is not played for. The stakes are probably bon-bons; the less fortunate of the youngsters have their stock of counters gratuitously replenished by the grown-up winners, and the effect is that all the small fry win, and go home with their pockets full of sugar-plums.

Games of skill, or rather games in which skill very much preponderates (for there is no such thing as a game of pure skill), are open to an objection opposite to that which attaches to games of chance. Games of skill are apt to excite too much interest.

To play well at them is too hard work. It is making a toil of a pleasure. We resort to games as a relief, when we have already experienced enough—perhaps more than enough—brain excitement. Under these circumstances, we do not desire severe mental exertion, but rather repose of mind. Repose is not promoted by engaging in a contest of pure skill. Hence the point of the remark by a recent writer on games at cards, that to follow chess, as an amusement, is to jump out of the frying-pan into the fire. Chess, if well played, is certainly no relaxation; and in this sense it ought not to be regarded as a game at all. Indeed, it is not a game among first-rate performers; it is the business of their lives. Chess is their real work, ordinary engagements are their relief.

Since games of chance excite too little, and games of skill too much interest, we must look for the *juste milieu*, in mixed games, in games where skill and chance both freely enter. The entry of chance not only diminishes the labour, but it at the same time increases the interest of games, by varying the faculties of the mind, which the play calls into operation. Thus, a hand at whist presents us at its commencement with a problem of nearly pure chance; towards its close (among good players), with one of nearly pure skill; and intermediately with ever-varying gradations between the two. The composition of the ancient Indian game of chess was very similar to that of whist. It was played by four persons with four suits or sets of men, variously coloured; and the moves were determined by casts with dice, thus rendering it a mixed game.

It is easy to show that whist is free from the objections which appertain to unmixed games. On the one hand, it does not demand severe or unceasing application in order to excel in it; there is no need to devote a life to the acquisition of its openings. Nor, on the other hand, does it require the stimulus of gambling. It has been truly remarked that 'the demon of gambling shrinks abashed before the good genius of whist, and feels his spirit rebuked, as it is said Mark Anthony's was by

Cæsar.' The interest attaching to the game for its own sake is such that the domestic rubber for 'love' or for 'heads' is looked forward to during the long winter evenings as a fertile source of enjoyable recreation.

Our illustration represents such a rubber. The guests, all intimate friends, have assembled for what is called a 'quiet' evening. In various parts of the room we behold groups of visitors engaged in the usual amenities of after-dinner existence, some dancing, some whispering soft nothings, some gay, some serious. We particularly envy the tall officer to the right, who is so fortunate as to be encircled by three of the prettiest girls in the room. Look at the quartette. The young lady, who has tied on her head with a neck-ribbon, in accordance with the prevailing custom, has evidently made some smart repartee, which the other two girls are enjoying immensely, to the momentary discomfiture of young Heavy. In the foreground is another quartette, engaged at whist This hand decides the rubber, and an interesting hand it is, if we may judge from the wrapt countenances of the onlookers. The count (whom we strongly suspect of having betted an extra half-crown on the rubber) has led a puzzler The second hand, an experienced Portlander, who nevertheless condescends in private to indulge in 'silver threepennies,' is in doubt whether to trump or not. The previous play of the hand does not afford him any positive indication of the course he should pursue. The count is perfectly happy. He waits quietly with the tenace in trumps in his hand, and whether our club friend trumps or not, is sure to win the game. The lady, who plays a capital rubber, sees, from the satisfied air of her partner, that all is right, and she therefore points, rather knowingly, to the card on the table. As for old Slow-coach opposite, he has not the slightest idea that the game is in danger. He is not what is called a regular whist player. He only 'took a hand' to make up the table. Whist is torture to him. He frowns and screws up his face, and will be glad when the rubber is over.

When a stake is played for at private parties, the points are invariably fixed so low that the idea of gain, which is the essential feature of gambling, never enters the minds of the combatants. It may be asked, Why, then, play for any stake at all? There is an answer which is obvious as soon as it is stated. The use of a stake is to define the interest felt in the game. The difference between playing for a stake or for none, is just that of taking a walk with or without an object. Be the object ever so trifling, it much increases, by a sort of mental catalysis, the interest afforded by the occupation.

Nevertheless, it is sometimes urged as an objection against whist, that it is a card game Cards, and therefore whist, in the minds of many excellent persons, are associated with all sorts of shady doings, late hours, gambling, swindling, and even suicide. This is an association of ideas, and nothing more. The wickedness charged on cards generally, should properly be confined, as has been explained, to games, whether of cards or not, the exciting element of which is chance. It is not fair to visit the sins of dissolute nephews and cousins, nobody knows how many times removed, upon the virtuous head of the family A recent champion of chess, comparing it to whist, alleges that all the kith and kin of the latter, including of course its very distant relations Patience and Beat-the-knave-out-of-doors, are disreputable. He twits it with want of prestige, and contrasts its antecedents unfavourably with those of chess As Will Wimble was wont to remark, 'There is a great deal to be said on both sides.' Whist certainly cannot boast the lineage of chess. But, among civilized beings, it is admitted that the simple accident of birth should be no bar to social distinction. On the contrary, the plebeian, who has worked his way up from the ranks, is all the more respected on that very account. It is the glory of whist that it has broken through the ties of caste, and that it owes its present position, as the king of card

games, entirely to its intrinsic merits, as will appear on tracing the biography of the game.

Whist is unquestionably of English origin, though as to the time and place of its birth we do not possess any precise evidence. Whist is not mentioned by Shakespeare, nor by any writer of the Elizabethan era, from which we may infer that the game was then scarcely in existence. All that we know about the extreme childhood of whist is, that it was spent in the servants' hall. Its associates there, we are informed on the authority of Dames Barrington, were 'put' and 'all-fours.' The game seems soon to have manifested seductive powers, for as early as 1630 Taylor, the Water Poet, mentions whist as inducing the prodigal to 'fling his money free with carelessnesse.' We cannot deny that at this period the character and friends of whist were decidedly low. Whist even appears in a lock-up in the questionable company of Mr Jonathan Wild. The great Fielding records that when the ingenious Count la Ruse was domiciled with Mr. Geoffrey Snap (who enjoyed office under the sheriffs of London and Middlesex), his countship sought to beguile the tedium of his in-door existence by recourse to the amusements of the day. Mr Snap's two daughters benevolently aided him, and chose Wild to make up their parties. Whisk and swabbers (which is only whist under an alias), was then (1682) greatly in vogue, and the ladies were consequently obliged to look out for a fourth person. In the 'Memoirs of the Lives, Intrigues, and Comical Adventures of the most Famous Gamesters' from the time of Charles II to that of Queen Anne, we come across a sharper named Johnson, whose last adventure was that he was hanged in 1690. Of him it is written that he excelled in the art of 'securing' honours for himself and partner when playing at whist. We next hear of whist frequenting public-houses in the City. 'The Compleat Gamester,' originally published in 1674, does not mention whist at all; but in later editions we are told that whist was a tavern game, and that sharpers generally took care to put about the bottle before business began. For all this, whist never accommodated itself easily to the designs of card legs. It never took to them kindly, but, like Oliver Twist, it was the victim of circumstances and of its own inexperience. Whist was more sinned against than sinning. Accordingly it contrived, after a time, to escape from its tavern acquaintances; and early in the eighteenth century, though not as yet fashionable, it had, at least, become respectable. Its principal friends at this epoch were country squires and country parsons. In the 'Beaux Stratagem,' by Farquhar (1707), Squire Sullen is said to be fond of whist, and Mrs. Sullen, who was a fine lady from London, refers to her husband's predilection in terms which imply that whist was then classed with rural rather than with west-end accomplishments. Pope also, about this time (1715), alludes to whist in conjunction with the squirearchy, and Swift, in his 'Essay on the Fates of Clergymen' (1728), says that the clergy occasionally indulged in the society of whist. This patronage does not seem to have been equal to the task of altogether retrieving whist from the character of vulgarity. Better days, however, were in store for it. About this time 'The Compleat Gamester' became amalgamated with 'The Court Gamester,' and whist was admitted into the first, the courtly division of the work, in company with 'ombre, quadrille, quintille, picquet, and the royal game of chess.' About 1730, a party of gentlemen, of whom the first Lord Folkestone was one, frequented the Crown coffee-house in Bedford Row, and there introduced whist, studied the game, and, it is believed, discovered some of its principles.*

In 1743, whist was adopted by Edmond Hoyle, who is to this day called the father of the game. Under his auspices, whist made the acquaintance of all the rank and fashion of England, and travelled

* They laid down the following rules; lead from the strong suit, study your partner's hand, and attend to the score.

across the Channel during the Anglomania which prevailed in France in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The Baron de V—— says, 'It was even represented at Versailles, but I cannot affirm whether it was by the English ambassador in person.' The remainder of the career of whist is well known. It was welcomed to all the chocolate-houses, clubs, and fashionable assemblies. It became the lion of the day. It was talked about and written about. Once really known, it was esteemed a universal favourite, admired and respected by all; and in spite of a little contretemps with the premier baron of England, some thirty years back, it has retained its ascendency until now.

Edmond Hoyle published his 'Short Treatise on the Game of Whist' anonymously in 1743. It appeared just in the nick of time, when card-playing was the rage, and when whist was rapidly rising into repute. It ran through many editions, and was a lucky hit for both author and publisher. Hoyle, in his most sanguine mood, could scarcely have imagined the success which awaited his modest but invaluable work. He could hardly have expected to be ranked among English classics, and to become indispensable to every well-furnished library. He could never have hoped to be sung by the poets, nor for whist and Hoyle to be coupled with Troy and Homer, yet no less a bard than Byron has declared that—

'Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle.'

Hoyle was an authority, or rather *the* authority, from the moment of his appearance, and his laws remained the authority until the year 1864. That year has given birth to a new club code, which, however, scarcely alters any of Hoyle's laws, but adds the traditional laws that have accumulated since his day.*

Hoyle did much more than give a printed existence to the laws of whist. He applied mathematics to games, and especially to the game of whist, and so raised it to the dignity of a scientific game.

'By his enlightened efforts whist became
A sober, serious, scientific game;
To his unwearied pains, while here below,
The great, th' important privilege we owe,
That random strokes disgrace our play no more,
But skill presides where all was chance before'

Hoyle's forte was in calculating what may be called the rules of chance (for be it known to the non-mathematical reader chance has rules), and in pointing those calculations to various games.

The furore created by Hoyle's treatise was of no small amount, as may be gathered from the frequent allusions made to it by contemporary authors, and from the numerous publications, serious, facetious, friendly, and adverse, which it evoked. Almost immediately after its publication it drew forth a clever skit, called 'The Polite Gamester; or the Humours of Whist, a Dramatic Satire, as acted every day at White's, and other Coffee-houses and Assemblies.' This pamphlet is now scarce. It introduces us to Hoyle under the designation of Professor Whiston, and to a number of card players, more or less reputable. The clever players, who are represented as sharpers, and men who live by their wits, profess to be very much disgusted at the appearance of the treatise.

On the other hand, the gentlemen are in raptures. The drollest character in the satire is a Sir Calculation Puzzle, a passionate admirer of whist, who gets all Hoyle's odds off by heart, imagines himself a good player, yet always loses; another character, Lord Slim, is supposed to be a pupil of the professor's. Hoyle used to give lessons in whist at a guinea a lesson. Sir Calculation and Lord Slim discuss the merits of the book, as follows:—

'*Lord Slim.*—How do you like the last edition of his treatise, with the appendix,* Sir Calcula-

* See 'The Pocket Laws of Whist,' by Cavendish.

* 'The author of this treatise did promise, if it met with approbation, to make an addition to it by way of appendix, which he has done accordingly.'—*Hoyle.*

tion; I mean that signed with his name?*

'*Sir Calculation.*—O, Gad! my lord, there never was so excellent a book printed; I'm quite in raptures with it, I will eat with it, sleep with it, go to court with it, go to parliament with it. I pronounce it the gospel of whist players; and the laws of the game ought to be wrote in golden letters, and hung up in coffee-houses, as much as the ten commandments in parish churches.

'*Sir John Medium.*—Ha! ha! ha! You speak of the book with the zeal of a primitive father.

'*Sir Calculation.*—Not half enough, Sir John, the calculations† are so exact * * * his observations‡ are so masterly, his rules§ so comprehensive, his cautions‖ so judicious. There are such a variety of cases¶ in his treatise, and the principles are so new, I want words to express my admiration of the author.

* * * *

'*Lord Slim.*—I have joined twelve companies in the Mall, and eleven of them were talking of it. It's the subject of all conversations, and has had the honour to be introduced into the cabinet. Why, thou'lt be laughed at intolerably unless you can tell how many hundred and odd it is for or against one that your partner has or has not such a card or such a card.

'*Sir Calculation.*—Right, my lord; a man would now make as odd a figure without understanding whist, as he would in not knowing how to make a bow.'

A few years later another Hoyle-begotten pamphlet made its appearance. It was a moral paper, dissuading from play. It is only interesting on account of its title, which is ingeniously framed so as to obtain admission for the pamphlet into card circles. It was entitled, 'Calculations, Cautions, and Observations relating to various Games played with Cards. By Edmond Hoyle, jun.' The writer, under this pseudonym (which was, of course, adopted to catch the eye), professed to be Hoyle's nephew. About the same time was published 'An Address to Persons of Fashion, relating to Balls, Play-houses, Card-tables, &c.,' which alludes to Hoyle, and contains the following critique on whist-playing:—

'We read in history of a Roman emperor who spent his time in the catching of flies. Surely our modern nobility and gentry may justly claim the privilege of diverting themselves a few hours in an evening in counting black and red spots, and asking, "What's trumps?" "Who shuffled?" and "Who dealt?"'

'Bob Short' was published in 1792 (?), and became almost as famous as Hoyle. Bob Short's fame is built on that of Hoyle. 'Bob Short' only professed to be 'Hoyle Abridged.'* It is said that seven thousand copies were sold in twelve months.

Hoyle has been several times translated. In 1776 a translation was published at Vienna, and, in 1786, Hoyle was admitted into the 'Académie Universelle des Jeux,' published at Amsterdam.

About sixty years after the first appearance of Hoyle, Mathews published his 'Advice to the Young Whist Player, containing most of the Maxims of the Old School, with the Author's Observations on those he thinks erroneous.' His advice was listened to through a number of editions. Indeed, Mathews may be regarded as the next writer of any pretension after Hoyle. Mathews's 'Rules and Maxims' are

* 'No copies of this book are genuine but what are signed by Edmond Hoyle.'—*Advertisement to 'Hoyle's Short Treatise on Whist'*

† 'Calculations for those who will bet the odds on any points of the score,' &c. 'Calculations directing with moral certainty how to play well any hand or game,' &c.—*Hoyle.*

‡ 'Games to be played with certain observations,' &c.—*Hoyle.*

§ 'Some general rules to be observed,' &c. 'Some particular rules to be observed.'—*Hoyle.*

‖ 'A caution not to part with the command of your adversaries' great suit,' &c.—*Hoyle.*

¶ 'With a variety of cases added in the appendix.'—*Hoyle.*

* See 'The Pocket Guide to Whist,' by Cavendish.

terse, pithy, and epigrammatic, commanding attention, and fixing themselves strongly on the memory.

Since Mathews's day another sixty years has elapsed, and many works on whist have issued from the press, but none which bear any marks of true, original genius* All, even including the treatises of Hoyle and Mathews, exhibit two principal defects. In the first place, the rules of play are commonly laid down as so many isolated and arbitrary conventions, the reasons on which the directions are based being seldom stated, or not stated with sufficient fulness In the second place, suitable illustrations, by which alone the principles of play can be brought forcibly home, are almost entirely wanting in books on whist The writer of this paper has endeavoured in his published 'Hands,'† and in his 'Principles of Whist,' to remedy these deficiencies; but, of course, it would not become him to criticise the productions of his own pen.

We have now traced the progress of whist, from its obscure origin to its present brilliant condition. Whether the game is susceptible of yet higher elaboration, or whether its science has by this time reached the zenith, time alone can show. There can, however, be no doubt of this, that, during the last hundred and twenty years, whist has progressed to a pitch of high and refined development. Though chance enters into it largely, the combinations which arise afford such numerous openings for the employment of skill, that the interest of a hand never flags, and the mental powers are kept moderately and pleasantly occupied. The cessation of the play between the hands, like the 'pause' between the beats of the heart, affords just the necessary quantum of refreshment, and so obviates the ill effects of long-sustained effort. Hence, at whist, the amusement, interest, and relaxation of those engaged are, one and all, together promoted to the utmost. The game has the good fortune of combining the means of innocent recreation, of healthy excitement, and of appropriate mental exercise, and, owing to its simplicity of construction, its never-ending variety, and its well-balanced proportions of skill and chance, it fulfils the social requirements of a game better than any other Of whist it may be said that, like the Turk, it 'bears no brother near its throne.'

* Since this was written, J. C.'s 'Treatise on Short Whist' has appeared, which must be excepted from this criticism.

† It can hardly be denied that the most instructive plan for illustrating principles, is to furnish a selection of hands played completely through as at the card-table, and accompanied by explanations A similar plan has long been in use in treatises on chess See 'The Laws and Principles of Whist,' by Cavendish.

# Social Sketches.

By Jack Easel, Esquire.

## No. I.—A FASHIONABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

IN the days of my earliest youth I confess to have entertained some pardonable foibles To some of them, which have unfortunately grown up with me, I will not now refer. They are pretty well known to my friends, and indeed those kind, good Mentors are never likely to let me forget them It is astonishing what disinterested philanthropy one often meets with in this way from people who good-naturedly neglect their own failings in order to devote themselves more zealously to discussing and endeavouring to rectify the faults of others I hope I shall always be deeply grateful for their solicitude, and inasmuch as my later errors thus receive ample attention, I think it advisable to say as little as possible on that score myself But just as a man can talk with the utmost complacence about his recently-extracted molar, which cost him such throes of agony (in addition to Mr Tugwell's little fee) before he could part with it, so we can all allude, without undue remorse or blushing, to the juvenile follies which no longer find place in our composition I had then certain *foiblesses** which I am not ashamed to own I was very weak about appearances.

Educated at the orthodox and eminently-respectable establishment of Eastminster, I began life with an idea that the manners and customs of my sixth-form schoolfellows represented a standard of etiquette from which it was impossible with propriety to depart. I had a great horror of carrying parcels in a public thoroughfare (except, of course, when it fell within the proper and legitimate duties of a fag, who could have no earthly right to object to take my wellingtons to the boot-maker's, or fetch a pottle of strawberries from round the corner). I conceived it beneath my dignity to appear on the outside of an omnibus, and I never felt sincerer chagrin than when espied in that elevated but ignominious position by my friend Dashleigh, who was driving down Pall Mall with young Rakesmere (once of Eastminster, but at that time a cornet in the Blues). There they were seated, side by side, in an elegant cab of the most perfect build and appointments, which the beardless warrior had just purchased, and was piloting, in lemon-coloured gloves, with dainty skill along the street, and (what a contrast!) there was I wedged between a plebeian John and my stout old uncle John, a Devonshire agriculturist, who had come up for the cattle-show, and insisted that I should accompany him to that place of bucolic entertainment I say I looked down upon Rakesmere's faultless equipage with a deep sense of humiliation, I even fancied the young urchin of a tiger, who was quivering behind it in top-boots, seemed to recognize and enjoy my confusion I believe I blushed crimson in trying to avoid Dashleigh's glance

'Why, what's the matter with the lad?' asked my uncle (Fancy calling me, a fifth-form fellow, a *lad*!)

'N—nothing,' said I, 'only——'

'Only what, my boy?' persisted the old gentleman, who, to do him justice, was as great a trump as ever lived.

'Only one of my schoolfellows, who drove by just now in that cab, and——'

'And spied yew on top of an omnibus, hey?' cried the shrewd old squire, who saw at once which way the wind blew. 'Ha, ha, ha! wal, that is a gewd joke! Why I du believe you're half ashamed of your old uncle and his ways. Ha, ha, ha!

* The author of 'The Queen's English' is respectfully solicited to postpone his denunciation of this word until he has finished reading the article.

That was a pooty little mare he was driving though. Law bless the boy! he turned as red as a turkey-cock, I du declare,' continued my excellent but somewhat aggravating relative, in a fit of laughter, which did not entirely subside until we reached Baker Street.

The foregoing anecdote is trifling, but may serve to show the sagacious reader the tendency of my aspirations at sixteen At that interesting epoch, and for a few years afterwards, I had very grand notions of what a gentleman might or might not do; how he should or should not dress, and where he ought or ought not to be seen. I numbered at least three members of our British aristocracy among my school acquaintance, and on the strength of their friendship, assumed prodigious airs. My father's house was but a few miles from the country town of Todbury, where Mr. Probus, surgeon-accoucheur, had a brass plate on his front door, intimating the nature of his profession in bold characters. Young P was at Eastminster in my time, and frequently complained to me, in the holidays, of the coldness with which he was treated by a mutual schoolfellow, Marmaduke, son of the Rev. Minton Tyler, rector of an adjoining parish, and one of the minor canons in Todbury Minster. Master Tyler's papa was also chaplain to the Earl of Toughborough, and by consequence thought his boy could not contract a more useful friendship than that of the earl's son, Lord Stonehouse. To say the truth, the young gentleman did his best to recommend himself in that direction, and I always imagined that the two would become sworn friends; but chancing one afternoon to ride over to Todbury for some cigars, I met Lord Stonehouse in Mr. Cavendish's shop, and as we fell talking of Eastminster fellows, the little viscount alluded to Tyler (of the under fifth form) in terms of anything but respect.

'Hang it, Easel,' said his lordship, 'you may do as you like, of course, and go about with him, and all that, but I can't stand the fellow, he's so horribly familiar.'

Thus you see in this little town of Todbury and its neighbourhood there were three sets or grades of even schoolboy life. There was the doctor's son, who wanted to chum with the parson's son, and the parson's offspring, who wished to be on even terms with an earl's heir; but the earl's heir wouldn't cotton to the parson's son, and the parson's son gave a cold shoulder (as the phrase goes) to the doctor's boy. And a very proper and highly-civilized state of society it was, to be sure, and my only wonder, in looking back at those youthful days, is how on earth I managed to keep on a friendly footing with all three.

Entertaining, as I have said, very lofty notions of men and things in general, I set out in life with the determination of becoming a swell. Residential London was then, to my finite and restricted capabilities of perception, bounded on the north by Oxford Street, on the south by Piccadilly, on the east by Regent Street, and on the west by Park Lane. It was in the desirable locality of Mayfair that I first took up my quarters. I engaged a second-floor suite of rooms in Curzon Street, and congratulated myself that I was living in a fashionable neighbourhood

Beyond the fact that my landlord had once been butler in a distinguished household, and was a first-rate hand at lobster-salad, I am not aware that I derived any immediate advantage from the position. It enabled me, however, to become acquainted with the general out-of-door aspect of life at this end of town, during a period when my professional duties left me ample leisure for observation.

Since that memorable epoch, my habits and opinions, I admit, have undergone a change. The proprieties of life, as exemplified by the address on a man's card or the cut of his trousers, have lost something of their former importance. I no longer endure martyrdom to please my bootmaker, or seek to increase my stature by 'military heels.' I am not above riding on the top of an omnibus; and last week I called on a friend at Pentonville with the utmost affability. But though these changes have occurred, and though

I am fully aware of the fact that for years past the rank and fashion of this capital have been flocking westward, that Belgravian mansions are much in request, and that Tyburnia has an aristocracy of its own, still one feels that there is an air of ancient respectability—a *prestige* *—about Mayfair which raises it above the modern splendour of suburban establishments. You may walk through miles of showy house-fronts north of Oxford Road and south of Piccadilly. Those mansions glitter with paint, with sham Corinthian capitals, with gimcrack imitations of carving in cement. Alack! they are but whited sepulchres: their glory is short-lived. From the moment when Mr. Plasterer has laid aside his trowel and the last scaffold-pole is removed, a work of destruction begins—sure, steady, and inevitable. Before the second year's rent is paid, acanthus-leaves are chipped away; stucco masks are peeling off; the whole façade bears dreary evidence of incipient ruin, and, like the complexions of Madame Rachel's clients, has to be renewed, from time to time, in order to render it 'beautiful for ever.'

Far different with the sturdy brick-faced houses of Mayfair. Conscious of their superiority, they had no cheap and flimsy decoration to assert it. Their walls, perhaps, are less attractive; but they are solid and laid on good foundations; their window-frames are stout and strongly hung. The iron-work about their gates and areas is boldly wrought. These brick extinguishers have put out more than one generation of smoking flambeaux, and survived a whole pedigree of lamplighters. Up those well-worn steps how many sedan chairs, bepatched and furbelowed dames, bewigged and powdered dandies of the last century have passed! As I stroll through the streets surrounding this classic region, the ghost of old-world greatness rises up before me. I see Lord Fellamar strutting along, with his hanger peeping from his gold-laced coat-skirts, and Lady Bellaston borne home by two stout chairmen through Hanover Square, furtively followed by Mr. Thomas Jones. I peep in through the ancient casements, and see Squire Western, in homely russet, surrounded and worried by his town lady-cousins; or imagine Belinda at her toilet on the second-floor, sipping chocolate out of Dresden china, with a French poodle at her feet. I fancy Sir Roger de Coverley stepping from his hackney-coach; and Will Honeycomb, in high-heeled shoes, tripping jauntily down to Garraway's after dining with some of 'the quality.' The stately ladies, the magnificent beaux, who flocked to Court in the early Georgian era, have long since been gathered to their fathers. Their grandchildren have grown up—have eaten, drunk, and died within these walls. A fourth generation has survived to the age of fogeydom; but some of the brave old streets have scarcely changed their aspect since the author of Tristram Shandy hired his lodgings in Bond Street, and Sir Joshua Reynolds set up his easel in Leicester Fields.

Is there a dignity in dulness?—an air of grandeur derivable from London soot? Is it possible that these begrimed and dingy tenements do really represent the London homes of half our aristocracy?—that titles, wealth, pure blood, gentle manners, hold their own within those gloomy portals? Fancy transporting a Venetian nobleman from his stately palace on the Grand Canal, or bringing a Roman *marchese* straight from his mansion in the Corso, and having set either of these worthies down in one of the streets adjoining Berkeley Square, telling him that he was in the midst of the most fashionable quarter of the wealthiest city in the world; that the plain commercial-looking fronts of brick and mortar which he saw around him, were the London residences of the proudest families in haughty England!

'*Ma, che!*' I think I hear the artless alien incredulously exclaim. In his own country the poorest tradesman (no doubt he thinks),

* The Dean of Canterbury is again entreated to be calm for a few pages longer.

could boast a finer home. *Aspetta un momento*—wait an instant, my dear sir, until we have rapped a double—or, let us say, a sextuple knock, at that olive-green door, and have seen the elegant youth in silk stockings, canary-coloured smalls, mulberry cloth coat, and silver buttons, who will answer the summons. His hair has grown prematurely grey, under the combined influence of the flour-dredge and pomatum-pot. Surely he must be the *maggiordomo*, the *chef* of the establishment. *Altro!* my dear, he is only an under-footman. He scrutinizes us with a curious eye, and having inspected our cards, hands them over to an overgrown cherub in a tight-fitting suit, who announces our names to a third gentleman on the landing, who will usher us into the drawing-room. That portly, clerical-looking person with a bald head, whom we passed in the hall, was not his lordship's chaplain, but the butler—guardian, my dear count, of liquid treasures which you wot not of. In his keeping are rich and rare juices of that generous fruit which is grown on the banks of the Douro, and in the sunny gardens of Andalusia, the choicest produce of the fertile plains of Burgundy and Ardennes. Compared with these priceless draughts, the vintage of your own 'Orvieto' sinks into utter insignificance, and even famed 'Montefiascone' is as a thing of nought. In wines that gentleman is a distinguished connoisseur. He could talk to you of Richebourg and Chambertin, Lafitte and Château Margaux. He recognizes and appreciates the Amontillado flavour, and can decant Oporto with the hand of an artist. No delusive cobwebs or fictitious 'beeswing' will take *him* in. He knows to a year the age of every cork. He discriminates nicely between 'full-bodied' and 'dry,' between 'fruity' and 'fine bouquet' samples. He has his particular bin, his favourite brand What will you? It is his profession, and he follows it with fidelity.

But come, let us mount this ample staircase so softly carpeted with triple pile, and fragrant with perfumes from the adjoining conservatory, between walls of scaglio, delicately painted in imitation of serpentine, rouge royal, and Brocatella marbles. Here and there is a niche, occupied by a copy of some antique statue, or one of Canova's nymphs. If any dust still lingers on your feet, shake it off upon the dainty leopard's-skin which lies athwart the ante-chamber door. Then enter, my friend, and feast your eyes upon the vista before you—a suite of rooms, furnished, not indeed in accordance with any strict principles of art, but with what an air of comfort, of luxury, of easy grandeur! Look at the chaste diaper of pale green and gold upon the walls; the tables and chairs inlaid with precious wood and ivory, the grotesquely-carved cabinets filled with Oriental china; the ormolu clock, reflected in a richly-gilded mirror on the mantel-piece, the silken curtains heavy with parti-coloured fringe; the Brussels carpet, glowing with a hundred tints; the soft, plump, downy sofas; the handsome, lazy-looking ottoman; the brilliantly-embroidered fire-screens; the Indian hearth-rug, the embossed leather stool (on which how many dainty feet have rested), the score of idle, useless, pretty knicknacks scattered at random on all sides,—look, I say, on these profuse and multiform insignia of modern London life, and confess they have a charm which none but a cynic will refuse to feel. It is not, we know, in the correctest taste: it is not high art We could not have expected David Roberts or Louis Haghe to sit down and make a picture of the scene: but take it for what it is worth; an evidence of uneducated love of beauty—a type of splendid hospitality, exemplified in the ordinary requirements of an English home,—and tell me, monsieur le Marquis, do you know its equal anywhere across the water?

I know such a drawing-room not a hundred miles from Berkeley Square, where I have wasted many happy hours, at a time when the fit of a kid glove, the colour of a neck tie, the shape of a coat collar really seemed things worthy of serious attention. I suppose most of us,

sooner or later, at some period at least of our existence, pass through this pleasant, thriftless, dandified phase of life. It is not entirely a selfish one, remember. We don't wear white waistcoats and geraniums in our buttonholes to please ourselves alone. There is some slight touch of endurance, some little sacrifice of personal comfort in the tight boots of a *petit maître*. If women *will* set a false value on the tailor's art; if they insist on giving a preference to ball-room partners whose feet are below the average size, is it our fault that we run up bills with Mr. Poole, and limp about in diminutive Balmorals? Psha! I am talking of the last *decennium*, when Lady Anne was still in her teens. Let us dismiss our illustrious foreign friend the count (or marquis, as the case may be) He is, you see, only a mythical personage: let the powdered lacqueys show him down-stairs, and leave me alone with my charmer

Whatever may be urged in favour of the present style of ladies' dress (and that it has merits, I, for one, will not deny), there can be little doubt that the pre-crinolinan age revealed a deal of feminine comeliness in what has been described as 'locomotive' beauty, which of late years has been hidden from us. Few women sit gracefully in a hoop, and, as for walking, if they moved on castors instead of feet, we should hardly perceive the difference under the present system of dress. It was some years after Lady Anne's first season that the dreadful *jupon* was invented. Her earliest appearance on the London world was in the simple unexaggerated dress then in vogue, and which, to my mind, suited her infinitely better than the cumbrous farthingale in which she now appears as a British matron. Would you have me describe it? Alack! the subject is beyond my humble powers of description. What should men know about these things? Turn back to the 'Gazette of Fashion,' or 'Le Follet' for 185—, and no doubt you will find it there correctly detailed. In that bewitching morning robe, whose cambric folds were gathered in snugly by a ribbon girdle round her waist, only to escape again and fall in exquisite confusion round her feet, as she tripped about in the conservatory, with a pair of scissors or a watering-pot in her hand, carefully tending her plants, clipping a withered leaf from some geranium, or pouring gentle showers on mignonette —she looked like a modern Flora—like Sir Joshua's 'Age of Innocence,' just budding into womanhood. On fair spring mornings I have seen the rays of an early sun come dancing through her boudoir window and encircle her golden hair with a nimbus of precious light. Her eyes were of that lovely changeful blue which I ransacked my colour-box in vain to reproduce on canvas. With pretty pouting lips, whose gentle curves equally defied my pencil, she would prattle the most charming follies, the pleasantest nonsense that ever man listened to. Was there not some excuse for loitering and dawdling in such company? Sure, if idleness is the root of all evil, that unlucky bulb comes to wonderful perfection under woman's care.

At the time of which I am writing the eloquent author of 'Modern Painters' had just brought out a charming little hand-book for the use of amateurs. Young ladies who were tired of the stupid old conventional method of learning to draw by copying Julien's heads, *études aux deux crayons*, or pencil landscapes, in which the foliage of trees looked like endless yards of tumbled ribbon—fair students, I say, who, feeling their utter inability to portray the family cat, had come to disbelieve in gradated paper, on which wonderful effects were to be produced by scratching out stars and moonlit waves with a penknife, or executing bold and massive foregrounds with Galpin's famous treble B's, began to see the importance of Mr. Ruskin's advice, and there was a little *furore* for his sound and practical system of instruction. My Lady Anne, who, you must remember, was *du monde*, and always anxious to do whatever her illustrious friends recommended, bought this little grammar of art, and

straightway fell to washing shilling cakes of Prussian blue over sixpenny sheets of Bristol boards, and copying all the plants in her conservatory. Having a considerable, and, I fear I must add, unmerited respect for my powers as a draughtsman (indeed I had scarcely been twelve months in Mr. Mastic's atelier, and my first Dying Gladiator was a lamentable failure), she insisted on my coming to B—— street twice a week for the purpose of inspecting her sketches and helping her by my advice.

I fear, as far as the last was concerned, these visits [redacted] not much help the progress of either master or pupil; but it enabled me to spend many delightful mornings in the company of one who—well, never mind now. young gentlemen whose professional receipts do not amount to more than 300*l.* a year should not be too ambitious. I suppose we might add another o to that sum for the numerical expression of her present husband's income. It was that little cipher which forbade me to *sigh for* my mistress any more, and by this venerable little pun the ingenious reader will perceive that I have long ago awakened from a foolish dream.

The neglect of modern languages in public school education is proverbial, and, in my day, I really believe an Eastminster boy who spoke French tolerably well would have been set down as a muff. When I left school I could just construe my 'Telemachus' with a dictionary, and I leave you to judge that the adventures of that remarkable hero, as described by M. Fénélon, did not much help my powers of conversation when, a few years afterwards, I took up my abode in the Quartier Latin.

Whether Lady Anne, being aware of my deficiency in this point, was pleased to enjoy my confusion or not, I cannot say, but she insisted on rallying me in French whenever we were alone.

'Mademoiselle Lecreux (her governess) me défend absolument de parler autre chose que le français jusqu'à midi,' she remarked one morning, in answer to my remonstrances.

'That's unfortunate for me,' said I, 'for, as you know very well, I can't talk to you in the same tongue. How do you get on with your sketching? I see you have been at work. That is not your study of a hyacinth, is it?'

'Mais oui! dites-moi ce que vous en pensez.'

'I think you are improving wonderfully: you really have a capital eye for colour.' (Here she dropped me such a saucy curtsey that I would have given worlds to sketch the attitude.) 'Do you know, Lady Anne, that I am beginning to draw from the Life now. One of my landlady's daughters sat to me last week as a flower-girl'

'Par exemple!' cries my lady, laughing, 'Aimez vous les fleurs? Laissez-moi donc mettre un bouton de rose à votre habit Là! Vous avez l'air ravissant! Combien votre hôtesse a-t-elle de demoiselles? Elles raffoleront de vous, Monsieur Easel.'

'I don't think they have much chance of captivating me at present,' I answer, gloomily; 'besides, I have little time for such flirtations. Really it is impossible to do much work in the season with so many interruptions. By the way, I have not seen you since Lady Lynkman's soirée. May I compliment you on your dress? it was the prettiest in the room.'

'Bien, Monsieur, vous avez admiré ma robe de bal. J'en suis extrêmement flattée. J'étais loin de me douter que vous l'aviez remarquée D'ailleurs, vous avez fait des yeux doux à Miss Petworth. Mais elle est brunette et je sais que vous adorez les brunettes,' she said, playing with one of her own golden tresses.

At this moment a double knock was heard at the door, and, peeping out of window, whom should I see alighting from his brougham but that insufferable puppy Sir James Greenhorne. What *could* that fellow want here at this hour of the morning? His cab was always trundling into B—— Street. Confound it! why had not I a handle to

my name, or a commission in the Guards, or a gold mine in Peru, or a seat in Parliament, or something to make me *somebody*? I would even have cared if I had been six feet high, but unfortunately my stature stopped short by at least five inches of that recognized standard. Such were my bitter reflections when I rose to take my leave of Lady Anne.

'Good-bye,' she said, taking my hand kindly, and at last, thank goodness, speaking in her own mother tongue, 'papa and I ride this afternoon, will you join us in the Row?'

Of course I said that I should be delighted, and hastily rushing down stairs, where I encountered the youthful baronet, who (deuce take him!) gave me two fingers to shake with an air of great condescension, I made the best of my way to Snaffle and Bateman's livery stables, and ordered my old mount, the grey hack, at a ruinous cost of one-and-twenty shillings, to be ready for me at four o'clock.

A pretty little bill, I promise you, Messrs. S. and B. sent me in at Christmas, which I received along with another missive from Mowbray and Melton (artists in coats), to say nothing of a little memorandum 'to account rendered, with Mr. Jehoshaphat's best thanks and respectful compliments.' This latter was for studs, a signet-ring engraved with the Easel crest (a *chevalet* proper, with a paletto *crased* and a pant-pot *gules*), a scarf-pin or two, and a few sleeve-links. You see I was not particularly extravagant, but felt it incumbent on me to dress with *ton*. I have said that my ambition was to be of the great world, and a young gentleman cannot even step on the borders of that ancient territory without incurring a certain amount of expense. The roads are steep and heavy, and the toll-gates innumerable. I wasted some money, and a great deal of precious time, in that hopeless journey. I thought it my duty (at one-and-twenty) to do everything and go everywhere in the cause of swelldom. I attended drums and conversaziones, where I was bored to death; visited people for whom I did not care; went to concerts which I could not appreciate; I turned into the Park at stated times with unerring punctuality; took in the 'Morning Post,' and thought I felt a genuine interest in 'fashionable intelligence.' Some of my aristocratic companions—you must remember they were beardless—affected a pronunciation which I am sure would have caused our late respected lexicographer, Mr. Walker, the greatest consternation. Perhaps I fell into some such folly myself. What matters? these frailties don't last through life. Some of us catch them at a certain youthful period, just as children get the measles or hooping-cough, and shake off the disorder. It is no doubt very objectionable at the time, but the evil is only transient. There is poor little Georgy in bed, with darkened windows, or Master Tom making the house ring with his cough. One morning in comes the physician to feel Georgy's pulse, or examine the state of Tom's tonsils. Aha! the skilful doctor's medicine has done them a world of good. The patients are better this morning. Pull aside the curtain,—strip off that flannel and hartshorn: the boys are convalescent. So, when Dr. Common Sense raps at our door in later life,—when the light of wisdom streams in upon us, we open our eyes to our foibles, throw away all affectation, and speak in natural accents.

To know the world thoroughly, in all its phases, one must live in and with it. I do not in the least regret my brief and harmless worship of the pretty, little, smirking, fickle deity of Fashion. I have long foresworn the innocent idolatry which has supplied me with many a theme for fun and, I hope, inoffensive satire.

Sometimes it happens that in touching of old times—alluding to this or that peculiarity—a man catches in the voice, or with the pen, a little of the character he is attempting to describe. My readers may remember an account of a certain 'Little Hop in Harley Street,' which appeared in the fourth volume of 'London Society.' It was written by their humble servant, the author

of these lines, who endeavoured to realize in his description the manners and customs of the professedly frivolous characters introduced. A good sprinkling of French epithets was purposely used, to illustrate and ridicule the nature of their conversation.

Well, a few months afterwards, about this merry Christmas time, as I was sitting in my chambers over an honest pipe, who should come in but one of those kind, good creatures to whom I made especial reference in the first page of this article. 'Ah, Easel, my boy,' said this amiable soul, 'I've got something for you. Have you seen Alford's book?' And out he pulled from his pocket one of the neatest little cloth-bound octavo volumes you ever saw. It was, in fact, a celebrated work, called 'The Queen's English,' which is to reform and remodel all the language of our time and country, and this herculean task being first accomplished, the author will have ample leisure to sit down and improve his own.*

Now I am not going to be so presumptuous as to enter the lists against so learned and doughty a champion as the Dean of Canterbury, especially as the comments on my article which his book contains are not from his own pen, but quoted from that of a sprightly critic in the 'Leeds Mercury' But this I will say, that before Mr. Dean endorsed the sentiments of the latter gentleman, it might, perhaps, have been as well for him to read the article to which they referred. If he had d ne so, he would have perceived the error into which his literary friend had fallen.

'We have before us,' says the son of Cœlus, 'an article from the pen of a very clever writer' (my best respects to you, Mr. Critic, for the compliment), 'and as it appears in a magazine which specially professes to represent the "best society," it may be taken as a good specimen of the style.' Then, having inveighed against the lamentable practice of introducing foreign phrases into English literature, he goes on to quote, say a half-dozen French words from the 'Little Hop,' but in so vast a hurry is our mercurial critic to drive his moral home, that he is actually at the trouble to invent, and ascribe to me, perhaps, another half-dozen, which I never used at all, to say nothing of making a couple of mistakes himself, to which the careful dean is ungrateful enough to call attention.

Why my dear, good, light-fingered, wing-footed Hermes, can't you tell when a man is in joke and when he is talking seriously? Did you really think when I said that 'our own language could never adequately express the beauties of a lady's toilette'—did you actually imagine I was in earnest? If so, I forgive you with all my heart; but if not, know, once for all, that I wrote my description of the 'Little Hop' as I have written a dozen other such articles, and hope to write a dozen more, not for very reverend etymologists, nor even for brilliant censors like yourself, but for the thousands of idle, gossiping dandies and London flirts who don't mind seeing in print the sort of converse they hold with each other In that spirit the greatest humourist this century has produced in England—perhaps in any country—dear old Thackeray himself, did not disdain to affect the popular taste. 'Vanity Fair,' 'Pendennis,' 'The Newcomes,'—all his pictures of modern life, are full of this foreign frippery. He *knew* it was frippery, but he went on using it, because he chose to paint the world as he found it rather than as it ought to be If he was wrong, I can only say that I am not ashamed to err in such company.

This has been a rather long digression, and you will therefore be pleased to suppose that in the interval four o'clock has arrived, and my Park hack is waiting at the door. I mount and ride through Curzon Street, that strange old motley thoroughfare of desirable residences and somewhat undesirable shops. Yet even some of the latter have an air of respectability about them. There is the turner's and brush manufacturer's, for in-

* See 'The Dean's English,' by Washington Moon.

stance, over the way, which looks as if it had been established at least half a century. There is the chemist's, in whose window charming jars of calcined magnesia, Russian rhubarb, and Jamaica ginger at once inspire respect and invite the epicure. There is the dairyman's, with its shining milk cans, plaster cow, trophies of fresh-laid eggs, and stuffed birds with gorgeous plumage. There is the cheesemonger's, with a goodly array of ripe Stilton cylinders, and varnished tongues. There is the Sun Court, with its narrow, girder-bridged alley, leading to a labyrinth of other courts. There is the Sun tavern, a venerable establishment, with a jolly portrait of old Sol himself, begirt with gilded rays, and smiling down upon thirsty souls like a benignant star-fish. There is the Curzon Chapel, which suggests the notion of a mechanics' institute on half pay, and finally, up beyond there, are the great gaunt walls of Chesterfield House, the very name of which bears evidence of courtly grandeur.

Well, I ride along by a circuitous route (for a reason best known to myself) towards Berkeley Square, passing through a region inhabited by the most illustrious members of society, the *crème de la crème* (forgive me, Alford!) of the professions —aspiring members of parliament, eminent legal gentlemen, who expect unheard-of fees upon every brief they accept, highly successful physicians, who drive home with their pockets full of guineas; gallant staff officers, decorated with more orders than they can conveniently wear, and titled grandees, whose calling in life is to do nothing, and who have admirably fulfilled that mission;—all these help, by turns, to make up the population of Mayfair.

I amble into Berkeley Square itself, and look up at cheerful-green verandahs supported on slender columns, neat little oriel windows of plate-glass, and lozenge-shaped hatchments, announcing the fact that there is rest in heaven, and various other facts, concerning which the undertaker is supposed to be peculiarly well informed. Who could suppose that those windows, filled with a bashful display of bonbons and barley-sugar drops, constitute the sole insignia which the great, the *magnificent* Gunter cares to exhibit? That quiet-looking house in the corner might be a private mansion, but for the modest inscription which proclaims it to be Thomas's Hotel.

Open barouches roll to and fro; natty little broughams stand patiently at the doors, or under shadow of the trees. Well-groomed nags are waiting for their riders, attended by spruce, white-neck-clothed, belted footmen. I look up at a certain window in B—— Street, and finding SHE is gone, trot briskly onwards to Hyde Park, and canter down the Row to meet her. What! is it possible that—yes, it *must* be Sir James Greenhorne by her side. Oh! this is too——

* * * *

You see I have been using what grammarians call the 'historic' present tense; but the fact is, all that I have recounted is of past time.

I will only add that I no longer live in a fashionable neighbourhood.

JACK EASEL.

## A FAST RUN AND A DOUBLE KILL.

### A Tale of the Field and Drawing-room.

'WHAT a horrid day!' was my first exclamation, one dreary-looking morning in November, as my maid drew aside the window-curtains and let in a dismal landscape of park and garden, enveloped in sheets of mist, which came driving up the valley, and wreathed round the crests of the wooded hills, shutting out completely from my sight the long line of the dear old moor.

'How I do hate weather of this kind!'

'Perhaps it will clear off, Miss,' observed Margaret, in a consolatory tone, as she filled my bath. But I knew too well what the thick grey mist portended, to be beguiled into hoping that we were not in for a wet day. I arose rather dispirited and what is commonly called 'out of sorts.' Not that I am one of those people whose spirits are after the fashion of a barometer, rising and falling with the changes of the weather. And as to caring for rain, why from the time that I was a scrap of eight years old I have been accustomed to brave all weathers in company with my dearly-beloved brother Jack; for having no sisters he had filled the place of all other companionship to me. Little Bob, my other brother, was nine years my junior, the deaths of intervening brothers, many years back, having placed this wide difference between myself and the 'baby of the family.' The constant absence of Jack, who was now in the Guards, gave Bob brevet rank during the holidays, and he and I had consequently a fellowship in many pursuits. Perhaps, presuming on the knowledge that I was sometimes dependent on him, Master Bob was disposed to be immensely patronizing. He appeared at such times to disregard the fact of my being nineteen years old—and 'come out'—and would affect to pooh-pooh my opinions on certain subjects, resorting to the old assumption, 'What can a girl know about such things?' There was one point, however, which was rarely a subject of discussion between my small brother and myself, and that was riding. Bob was as plucky a little fellow as ever counted ten years, or bore home from school the traces of a hundred fights in divers discolorations about his round rosy face. He would have been the first to volunteer in the lead of a forlorn hope into the dangerous preserves of a tempting orchard, although the entrance to that paradise of schoolboys may have been guarded by the most bloodthirsty of mastiffs. Bob was a little hero *sans peur et sans reproche* in all matters save one. He could not and he would not ride. Now riding was the darling passion of my heart, though I had as yet had but a limited scope for its indulgence. My brother Jack was one of the hardest and most daring riders in his regiment. The amount of steeplechases, hurdle races, etc., in which he had distinguished himself, were faithfully recorded in my own especial diary—a charming little volume bound in green velvet, with a real gold key. Bob declined taking this step in our direction. He had a pony, but they were on the most distant terms of friendship and association, and I have known the occasion when Bob has been moved to tears on being forced by my father to follow us over a very small gap in a hedge, where crawling *vice* leaping was the only mode of progression required from the pony. It was in vain that Jack coaxed and bullied him by turns on the subject. Even Aunt Tabitha—of whom both Bob and myself stood in a certain awe—failed to produce any effect, when she would observe, with the shade of a sneer in her voice, that 'it was a pity Eleanor and Bob could not exchange tastes' I came in for my share of the sarcastic rebuke, for my love of the equine race, and a certain leaning to what Aunt Tabitha called 'unfeminine pursuits,' insured to me a long series of sermons preached by my aunt in the course of her annual three months' visit to us.

Aunt Tabitha was a maiden sister of my father; and I sometimes think that the dear old governor himself was not quite exempt from the feeling of restraint which her dignified manner and tall gaunt figure had the power of impressing on those around her. She looked many years older than my father. In fact she was one of those women who could never have been young, and who seem to be sent into the world for the express purpose of checking the natural impulses of youth on reformatory principles. Why is it that those moral brooms never sweep as clean as they are intended to sweep? Jack and I used to say our catechisms to her when we were children; and it is quite shocking to think of the distaste to all religious duties with which Aunt

Tabitha's teaching inspired us at that early period of our lives.

It was not only that her aim seemed to be to convince us that we were two little sinners modelled wholly for the exercise of continual punishment, but that the paths of righteousness were so very steep as to make our attainment of them an impossible feat. So painful was her discipline, that it prompted the wretched Jack to exclaim one weary Sunday afternoon, 'That if Aunt Tabitha was to be his guide into that narrow way, he would rather travel down the broad road by himself' It is scarcely necessary to add that he was forced to atone this heresy in the sackcloth and ashes of solitary confinement. And yet poor Aunt Tabitha was a good woman after all. In my mind there yet lingers a grateful remembrance of her kind nursing and care of me during an attack of measles, which happened when I was staying with her How patient she was with me in those irritable hours of convalescence, when even old nurse exclaimed that 'Miss Nelly was a worritin' little subject when she was bad.'

Aunt Tabitha under her frigid exterior possessed a warm heart, of which my father was the idol, and on the latter point we would always meet without risk of opinions clashing. To my way of thinking, my father is a fine specimen of a thorough English country gentleman —in manner, in character, in heart, and in pursuits. Generous to a fault, kind and courteous to all, he was firm and unflinching in matters of conscience and duty. 'Squire Vavasour,' was a name revered and loved by friends of high and low degree. No wonder Aunt Tabitha was proud of him. He was rather like her in person: the same pure and classical outline of feature, but softened in my father's face by the kindly beaming glance of his dark-blue eyes, of which time had not dimmed the sparkling lustre. He was a keen sportsman, and although turned of sixty, I am proud to say that no younger man could ride straighter to hounds, or fly his fences with greater ease. He possessed also that rare virtue—consideration for his horse—which, in my very limited experience, I have observed is a very rare virtue indeed Many a man can ride hard; but, as Jack says, not so very many spare their horses also—that happy combination being confided to the few. There is another advantage my father possesses over the mass of his kind. He can talk on other topics besides hunting; differing widely in this respect from our neighbour, Sir Ralph Kelly, who has but that one subject on which he can discourse freely. Whenever he comes to dine with us, I amuse myself by watching Aunt Tabitha's face whilst the worthy baronet drones on through every detail of a run,—how he thought his horse Vagabond would clear some tremendous place, and he didn't,—and how the hounds performed some feat, engrossing, no doubt, in reality, but frightfully tedious in description. It was a fortunate thing for his other guests that my father's port was fine and old, as I have heard on the best authority, that the 'blushing fluid' is a wonderful support under such circumstances. The potent spell, however, did not work its charm on poor Aunt Tabitha, and I could have sympathized more fully with her look of weariness and disgust, had I not felt disposed to be wickedly rejoiced that she was undergoing a fitting chastisement for her unpardonable offence towards myself. As ill luck would have it, Aunt Tabitha's visits were always happening during the hunting season Now my chief fault in her eyes was my devotion to riding, which she called 'being fast,' but I put it to any sensible, impartial person, promising to abide by their arbitration, if a woman cannot combine a taste for riding with inclinations of a purely feminine character, and if she shall not be able to appreciate an occasional gallop with the hounds and at the same time prove herself to be, when the occasion occurs, the most womanly and tender of sick nurses. By the way, when poor Jack came home wounded from the Crimea he said I was the best nurse he had ever met with, whatever Aunt Tabitha may say about my masculine

tastes unfitting me for the vocations of my sex. But some women, especially old maids, are frightfully narrow-minded. Aunt Tabitha, however, so far succeeded in working on my dear gentle mother's fears, that I was prohibited doing anything beyond going to the meets and seeing the hounds draw, although I could have cried when I saw them streaming away, whilst I was obliged to turn homewards, venting my grief in bitter complaints to old Isaac, my father's groom, who had taught me to ride when I was only four years old. He sympathized in my distress with all his honest old heart, comforting me sometimes with the encouraging remark, 'Never mind, Miss Nelly! the young Captain will soon be home, and Miss Tabitha will be gone, perhaps, or laid up, please God, with the rheumatics—when the old cat's away the mice 'll play.' Certainly Isaac was frank in his remarks on Aunt Tabitha. I did get one or two capital days when dear old Jack was at home. He mounted me on one of his own horses, better qualified for the occasions than my own quiet little mare, Daisy, which my mother's fears, heightened by Aunt Tabitha's wicked representations, condemned me to ride. However, I solaced myself with the reflections that before the next hunting season, and in the absence of Aunt Tabitha, I should coax my father into the fulfilment of a half promise that he had made of reserving Daisy for himself as a covert hack, and buying something for me that would go.

On this particular morning my spirits were below zero. I had managed to coax the reluctant Bob into a promise of accompanying me to a coursing match at Hurstley, where we were to meet Charlie and Minnie Curzon—the latter my especial friend, and now this tiresome rain had come to spoil my promised pleasure, for Aunt Tabitha would talk all kinds of nonsense to my mother about my increasing my cold. So I was disposed to look despondently at life in general, and to wonder when my tide of good fortune was coming. My maid chirped a series of well-meant but ineffectual consolations, and I descended to the breakfast-room in no very enviable frame of mind—only just in time for prayers.

'Late, my darling!' observed my father, cheerily.

'In my young days I was obliged to be down earlier,' Aunt Tabitha found time to remark, before she assumed a devotional attitude.

I am free to confess that my thoughts wandered sadly that morning during the progress of family prayers. I thought how disagreeable Aunt Tabitha was; and I wondered if Minnie Curzon had some equally aggravating relative always at hand to add fuel to her particular little flame of the moment. Why is it that when one is slightly put out every little circumstance should tend to jar peculiarly on one's nerves, as if directed purposely and offensively towards one's self? As I rose from my knees I felt unaccountably irritated by the slow, measured exit of poor inoffensive Mrs Benson the housekeeper, marshalling her force out of the room, and the creaking of Frampton's boots excited a most unreasonable feeling of annoyance in my mind, very much increased by Bob's remark—

'I say, Nelly, it's no go, you know, to-day,' and my mother's gentle addition—

'No, darling, you cannot possibly go to Hurstley to-day.'

My father looked up from a letter he was reading, 'Never mind, my Nell, here's something that will make up for the loss of the coursing match to-day.'

'I am sorry to think that Eleanor should care for amusements so unsuitable for a woman,' remarked Aunt Tabitha, but the rebuke passed unheeded.

'What is it papa, darling?' I asked breathlessly.

'Lord and Lady Copplestone want me to take you to Burton on Wednesday, as they have a large party staying with them for the ball on Thursday. Treherne's first meet is on that day also, so you are in luck, Nell. Your mother can't go, as your uncle and aunt will be here on Wednesday.'

Even the presence of Aunt Tabitha did not restrain me from throwing my arms round my father's neck in the first impulse of my delight. It will appear, perhaps, inexplicable to many fashionable young ladies of my own age, that anything so very commonplace as an invitation to stay in a country house for a country ball should have called forth such an exuberance of joy on my part. I must therefore explain that since my first appearance as a young lady, come out some few months since, I had only been to one ball. Lord and Lady Copplestone were very old friends of my father and mother, and I had frequently spent many a pleasant week at Burton; but these visits had been always timed when their party was confined to the family circle. It is true that Lady Copplestone had often pressed my mother to allow me to go there when the house had been filled for the shooting season, or for some particular occasion of festivity, but my mother had invariably refused while I was yet in the school-room. Now the case was altered, and the interdict removed. My mother's kind face beamed with pleasure at my evident delight, and even Aunt Tabitha's wore a look of satisfaction, I thought.

'I say, Nelly,' suddenly observed my youthful brother, suspending the absorbing occupation of eating to make the remark, 'what a sell it will be for you if nobody asks you to dance at the ball!'

My father laughed. 'What makes you think Nelly won't be asked, Bob?'

'I don't know,' rejoined Bob; 'but what a pity you are not like Nancy Coles, Nelly.'

Nancy Coles, be it observed, was the daughter of one of the under-gardeners—a good-natured young woman of Dutch build and fashion, whose round red cheeks and merry black eyes had apparently captivated Bob's fancy, for he continued—

'What a great pity you haven't got nice red cheeks like Nancy's. Yours are only pink; and my gracious! your hair isn't half as pretty as hers. She's got beautiful long black ringlets, like corkscrews, and yours is only wavy. You should just see hers all down her back!'

'And pray, Bob, when have you had an opportunity of seeing this splendid crop of hair all down her back?' asked my father, much amused.

'I saw it the other morning, when I would go and look for the apples in her room, and she was doing her hair. Isn't she a stunning, good-natured girl, that's all! She gave me six apples, and promised me six more if I would give her a kiss.'

'You are a precious young gentleman for ten years old, certainly,' said my father. 'So that's your style of beauty, eh, Bob?—red cheeks and corkscrew ringlets!'

Aunt Tabitha, however, did not enter into the joke. She cast a look of withering scorn on the top of Bob's unconscious head, who had returned with unabated vigour to his breakfast.

'Really, my dear John, I wonder how you can encourage Robert (Aunt Tabitha rarely condescended to the more familiar abbreviations of our names) in associating with such low people. They are very respectable, honest persons, the Coles's, no doubt, but, certainly, Nancy is not a fitting companion for Robert. A young woman who keeps apples in her bedroom, too; dirty creature!' added my aunt in a tone of unaffected horror.

'She isn't a dirty creature,' cried Bob, flying valiantly to the defence of his favourite; 'she's a nice, clean girl! And as to keeping apples in her room, why they give a beautiful smell to her things. I like the smell of apples.' At which additional proof of Bob's very unrefined taste, Aunt Tabitha looked mutely disgusted.

'And so Bob thinks you will get no partners at the ball, eh, Nell?' said my father, taking my face in his hands as I passed his chair. 'Well, we shall see. Mind you take your habit with you; old Copplestone means to give you a mount. Here's a particular message for you in the postscript.'

I looked over his shoulder and read, 'Tell my friend Nelly I am

going to give her a mount on Thursday.' My father gave a sly wink in the direction of Aunt Tabitha, which note of observation I did not fail to understand, and flew up-stairs to give orders to Margaret.

'Well, to be sure, miss,' remarked that practical little personage, 'how fortunate that your new ball-dress is just come down from London; and such a love of a dress as it is too! And there's your white silk grenadine with cerise just finished. And, dear me, miss, what a pity there's no time to send for a wreath of York and Lancaster roses to wear with it.'

'Never mind that, Margaret, there's oceans of red and white camelias at Copplestone, and the gardener will give you as many as you like. But let me look at my new habit, I hope *that* is all right. For goodness' sake let me try it on.

'Well, miss, I can't see that your habit matters as much as your dresses,' returned Margaret, contemptuously, who being a mortal coward herself, held a different opinion on this subject.

'A thousand times more, Margaret,' I said, as I anxiously prepared to try on my habit—my father's last and most welcome gift to me. It was an unworthy distrust of the unrivalled powers of that master-genius Poole. A microscope could not have brought to view one superfluous fold or crease, and with a sigh of intense relief and satisfaction I bade Margaret take especial care in packing it.

Wednesday morning came in clear and bright, and at one o'clock punctually the carriage came to convey us to the station. The last thing I saw as we drove away was my poor little darling terrier in the hands of that naughty mischievous Bob, who was teaching him an impossible trick of standing like a clown on his fore paws. The little treasure's look of mournful entreaty haunted me until we reached the station; but there the bustle and the added excitement caused by that foolish Margaret being very nearly left behind on the platform, banished all other recollections from my mind.

I wonder if any one else is tormented by a maid who is never up to time in travelling, and who goes through the successive stages of perplexity and anguish until the luggage under her charge is forcibly wrested from her by a guard, and her own incapable body is thrust into a carriage by another such uncompromising functionary. I have nothing else to say against Margaret; she is a good, clever little soul in every other respect, and certainly she never played me any of the inconvenient tricks which Minnie Curzon's maid occasionally indulges in, such as going to stay in a country house for a *very* particular ball, and leaving her mistress's ball-dress behind, or exchanging one of the most important boxes at a cross station for a travelling bagman's useless kit.

I must say I like travelling by railway. The speed with which you fly by fields, houses, villages, etc., and the roomy luxurious compartments of a first-class railway carriage, engender all kinds of pleasant dreamy reflections. And then the monotony of the journey is agreeably broken by the short stoppages at the various stations, where you are interested in watching the different passengers getting out or coming in.

We had the carriage all to ourselves until we reached Blatchford station, when, just as the bell had sounded for departure, and the train was actually moving off, a stranger rushed frantically up to the door, and was pushed head foremost into the carriage by the guard, apologising for his unceremonious entrance in a nervous, hurried way, and muttering something about his dogs, which he pronounced '*dorgs*.' He was in a very breathless state, and it was some time before he had subsided into a calmer condition. I had leisure to study attentively the person and features of our new fellow-traveller, whilst he was occupied in putting up and putting down the window on his side at least a dozen times. Most remarkable, indeed, was his general appearance. The prevailing colour of red beginning with his complexion and his hair, and terminating in a fright-

fully unbecoming necktie of the same brilliant hue, made me feel as if a ball of fire had suddenly been shot into the carriage. A coat fluctuating between white and grey, with massive gilt buttons, completed his gorgeous and very peculiar attire. A certain independence, and that indefinable something which proclaims the gentleman, proved him to be one, although a *rara avis* of his species. Presently he drew a 'Times' from his pocket, and became apparently absorbed in its perusal. Yet, from time to time, when I turned my head in his direction, I encountered the gaze of his very light blue eyes, which led me to suspect that the 'Times' served only as a cover for a counter observation on his side of his fellow-passengers. He betrayed no further signs of excitement until we had reached the last station before Burton, and then, flinging aside his paper, his rug, and other incumbrances, he called loudly to one of the guards.

'Here, let me out, will you? Now take the dorgs out, will you? Not that way, you confounded fool. Who but an idiot ever seized hold of a dorg by his ears? Here, Brown, you take them, and mind you get 'em home at once, and wash Pluto's eyes with warm water. I don't know what the deuce is the matter with them'

These last directions were addressed to a man looking like a gamekeeper, who touched his hat in reply, and led off the 'dorgs'—valuable animals, no doubt, as they were objects of such intense solicitude to their master, but in *my* humble estimation a miserable looking set.

Lord Copplestone's carriage was waiting at the station for us, and a dog-cart as well, into which I saw our impetuous fellow-traveller mount as we drove off.

'Papa, who can that strange looking man be?' I asked. 'He is going to Burton, I am sure, for that is Lord Copplestone's groom with the dog-cart.'

My father laughed. 'Why that is Thornhill. I have never 'seen him since he was a boy. He has only lately come to live at his place near here, as he has a very large property in Hampshire. I hear he is one of the queerest men in existence, but a good fellow and immensely rich.'

Burton Park is one of the showplaces of the county. It stands in a very fine park, with magnificent timber and cedars innumerable. The house appears to me to be of no very defined architecture, but it is very grand and imposing—an immense pile of building cased in Bath stone. The interior is equally splendid—a long suite of beautiful rooms, with a staircase of pure white marble, of palatial size and beauty; and all belonging to the best and mildest host and hostess in the world.

It was nearly five o'clock when we reached Burton. Lady Copplestone was in the library when we were announced.

'My dear child, how glad I am to see you,' she exclaimed, as she kissed me affectionately, and then introduced me to some other people in the room. After I had answered her numerous inquiries for my mother, Aunt Tabitha, Bob, and all my belongings, she left me to go and talk to my father, and whilst I drank my cup of tea, I scrutinized the other occupants of the room. First, my glance rested on a very pretty woman seated in a low chair opposite to me, and whom Lady Copplestone had called Mrs. Singleton. She was exquisitely fair, with large blue eyes, delicate features, and rippling golden hair, which her dress of dark-blue velvet set off to perfection. She was a very dainty-looking little person, small and mignonne, like a Dresden shepherdess; but as I looked at her, there was a something in the expression of her face which I did not like—a half satirical, faithless look in her blue eyes, that impressed me unpleasantly. She kept those same blue eyes fixed on me, eyeing me from head to foot, and an uncomfortable sensation crept over me during this unflinching scrutiny. A very tall young man was standing, or rather leaning, nonchalantly against the corner of the mantelpiece, near her. He was slightly

and gracefully built, with a face fair as a woman's, and almost as effeminate. A long light moustache, curling hair, and very long, drooping whiskers, formed a kind of framework to his very delicate countenance, the prevailing expression of which was a languid disdain of everything in the world but himself. When Lady Copplestone had introduced him to me as Lord Edward Karr, he had acknowledged the ceremony by slightly raising his eyebrows, and honouring me with a fixed stare from his half-closed eyes. He was evidently a very great swell in his own estimation; and if intense conceit, and an immense share of self-confidence, go to make up the requirements necessary for the manufacture of a swell, he was not far wrong in his calculations.

Presently Mrs. Singleton raised herself from her recumbent attitude, and began a conversation with me, as follows:—

'Are you fond of dancing, Miss Vavasour?'

'Yes, I am very fond of it.'

'Do you ride?'

'Yes, I ride.'

'Have you brought your horse? Perhaps you do not intend going to the meet to-morrow?'

'Yes, I hope to go, as Lord Copplestone is going to give me a mount on one of his horses.'

'Oh, indeed!' (with a shade of superciliousness in her tone which at once aroused a feeling of resentment in my mind.) 'Are you going to ride his grey pony?'

Conquering my shyness: 'No, not his grey pony. I never ride a pony, if I can possibly help it.'

'You are ambitious, I see,' with an aggravating smile. At this juncture Lord Edward Karr roused himself to observe, in a languid tone, addressing Mrs. Singleton, but talking *at* me—

'What a pity it is that the race of young ladies should so misplace their ambition as to allow it to lead them into places where they are only in the way, and where their presence is a great bore. If a woman can ride, as you can, Mrs. Singleton, and as very few do, then by all means let them indulge the bent of their inclinations; but I should like to frame a new law, by which all young ladies should be interdicted from getting in peoples' way in a hunting field, where their absence is more acceptable than their company.'

Mrs. Singleton smiled, but I sat boiling over with indignation at this unprovoked attack. It was fortunate that Lady Copplestone asked me to go upstairs at this moment, or I do not know what I should have said or done.

As we crossed the hall, Lord Copplestone met us. I had always been an especial pet of his. Many a time during the course of my life had he obtained for me immunities from school-room discipline, even in defiance of Aunt Tabitha, and had always stood my friend in need.

'Well, Nelly, my dear, let me look at you,' he exclaimed, in his jovial manner, after having kissed me on both sides of my face, after the fashion of other days. 'Well, upon my word, you are blooming. How many hearts do you intend to break, I should like to know?'

'None that I know of,' I replied, laughing; 'but, Lord Copplestone, I have something to ask you.'

'Oh, if you are going to tell secrets, I shall leave you two to yourselves,' said Lady Copplestone. 'You know your way to the blue-room, in the east gallery, Nelly, so you can go there when you like.' And she left us.

'What is it, you little witch?' asked Lord Copplestone; 'some mischief?'

'What am I to ride to-morrow?' I asked, breathlessly.

'Oh, that's it, is it? Well, there's Skylark for you, Nelly. I know you can ride: you would not be your father's daughter if you could not; and Skylark is not fit for any one who can't ride, I can tell you; but you are not afraid?'

'Oh, no!' I answered, boldly, forgetting all other considerations in my intense desire of proving to those two impertinent people I had left in the library that I could ride, which was a fact they evidently doubted.

'That is all settled then, Nelly,'

said Lord Copplestone, who was always pleased to indulge me on any terms. 'Now you shall give me a kiss for that.'

'I will give you as many as you please,' I replied, laughing. And after submitting to another hearty salute, I ran up the stairs, on my way to the blue-room in the east gallery.

I dare say Margaret wondered what possible cause there could be for my long fit of abstraction during the progress of my toilette, with the most becoming of dresses stretched out before me on the bed, and clusters of bright camelias arranged by her skilful hands for my adornment. The fact was, my state of mind bore a close resemblance to that of a person who had rashly embarked on an enterprise far beyond his qualifications and power of accomplishment. I knew perfectly well what kind of animal was Skylark—a first-class hunter, with a first-class spirit into the bargain. Still fresh in my memory was a certain fierce struggle between him and Lord Copplestone's groom on a memorable occasion when I had gone out on the grey pony to see an otter hunt. It is true that I had only spoken truthfully at the moment when I told Lord Copplestone that I was not afraid, but that it was a daring attempt I could not conceal from myself. My own quiet Daisy at home was not exactly a fitting preparation for a ride across country on Skylark. I had, as I have already observed, been out once or twice with Jack, and he had said that I had taken my fences gallantly, and 'could go;' but then it was an easy country, and Jack had mounted me on his quietest horse, Morning Star, which I had often ridden. I knew enough of hunting to appreciate the difference existing between a long stretch of the open, and enclosures with very stiff impediments, which I had actually undertaken to ride over on a horse beyond my powers of control. I went over all the difficulties to which I had committed myself; but 'Mutare vel timere sperno' is the motto of the Vavasours, and I never once faltered in my purpose. Had I indeed been inclined to do so, Mrs. Singleton's mocking smile, and that impertinent man's rudeness, would have been sufficient incentives to daring anything. My father always said that I had the seat for hunting, square and firm; and Jack has complimented me more than once on my 'light hand.' To these and the good favour of fortune I commended myself.

I cut short Margaret's incessant chatter about the 'quantity of grand folks' staying in the house, by abruptly asking her what horse Mrs. Singleton was going to ride to-morrow, forgetting that I might as well have inquired of the little goose where the hounds were to meet on the following morning.

'Lor, miss! I don't know, I'm sure; but I can tell you her maid showed me such a lot of lovely dresses, and she's going to wear at the ball a——'

'Never mind her dresses, Margaret,' I interrupted, impatiently. 'Tell Isaac I must see him this evening; there will be no one in the billiard-room after dinner, and I must see him, mind, Margaret.'

'There, miss! you do look nice, that's certain,' exclaimed Margaret, triumphantly, as she put the finishing touch to my dress; 'but I don't suppose you care for anything besides hunting and riding.'

Margaret was mistaken, however. I am not at all above those frivolities and vanities which Aunt Tabitha sometimes expatiates on. I maintain that there is no harm in wishing to look as well as you can, and that the fact of being well dressed is an immense advantage. It has, in my opinion, a moral effect also on the person, so to speak. If once you feel confident that your get-up defies criticism, you cease to think about yourself, and are free to enjoy, in an honest and unconcerned way, what is going on around you. But admit the painful consciousness of ill-assorted colours, badly-fitting gloves, or an unbecoming dress, and you are at once a victim to all kinds of torturing imaginations, together with the conviction that your unfortunate appearance serves as an object for the condemnatory remarks of every one in the room.

Yes! the cerise and white dress was a perfect success, and Margaret had placed the camelias in my hair with a taste worthy of fairy fingers. Jack says I have the Irish combination of violet eyes and dark hair. I hope I am not vain, but I confess to a thrill of gratification as I surveyed myself in the pier-glass, and for the moment Mrs. Singleton, Lord Edward Karr, and Skylark were forgotten.

I met my father on the stairs as I went down.

'Well, upon my word, Nelly,' he said, 'I don't know if you won't cut out Nancy Coles.'

'Am I all right, papa?'

'You are certainly not all wrong, Nelly,' he answered, laughing, but in a tone of complete satisfaction

'Papa,' I said, thinking it best to break the subject suddenly to him, 'I am going to ride Skylark to-morrow.'

'The deuce you are, Nelly,' he replied, in rather a startled tone.

'Yes, darling. Now don't you say a word against it, please I am not a bit afraid; you know I can ride; and I have a particular wish to ride Skylark to-morrow.'

It is necessary to observe that a pet weakness of my father is the belief that I can accomplish anything that I wish to do. It is true that he often succumbs to objections raised by Aunt Tabitha, who has the wit to make my dear, gentle mother (whose wishes no one ever dreams of opposing) the mouthpiece of her absurd scruples, but it is not from any shaken conviction on his part that my father gives in. Luckily I now had the field to myself; my father only looked a little grave.

'Papa, that Mrs. Singleton proposed my riding the grey pony—fancy that! and as to Lord Edward Karr, you should have heard how contemptuously he spoke about my going out to-morrow.'

My father laughed, and rubbed his hands.

'Ah, I see it now! So you wish to prove to them that even Skylark is not beyond your deserts. Well, Nelly, recollect I exact one promise, that if you find he is more unmanageable than you think now, you will return.'

'Very well, papa,' I replied, dutifully; and I thought, 'How in the world can I redeem that promise, when I already know he is too much for me?'

Our railway friend, Mr. Thornhill, was standing near the door when we entered the drawing-room, which was full of people. His costume of the morning had struck me as being strange in the extreme, but his appearance now was, if possible, more striking. All light and no shadow will, perhaps, best express my sense of its general effect. The figures of Noah and his three sons in a child's toy ark recurred to my mind as I looked at him. Mr. Thornhill spoke to my father, with whom I supposed he had previously renewed his acquaintance, and then, in spasmodic accents, requested an introduction to myself. He was so very extraordinary that I confess to a recoil from his advances, and gladly availed myself of a vacant seat on the sofa by Lady Copplestone. There were some people staying in the house whom I knew, and many who were strangers to me. There appeared to be only two girls of the party besides myself—the Miss Veres; the eldest a very tall, handsome, fair girl, with rather a forbidding turn of countenance; the youngest a small, sparkling brunette, with large, laughing eyes, and a very pretty face.

Mrs. Singleton certainly knew how to dress. She was looking like a naiad, in a pale green dress, covered with rich, white lace, and water lilies in her soft, golden hair. She had a pretty, childish manner, which was very attractive; especially so, I should say, to the male creation, who, I observe, can be decoyed into the most servile submission to any caprice of the weaker sex, provided only it be seasoned delicately by an implied compliment to their superior powers, or to their superior something. So blindly and happily vain are our lords of creation! Mrs. Singleton was, I believe, a perfect mistress of this art. She rode the devotion of her admirers with a light hand, know-

ing how to use the curb when required. At the present moment she was talking and laughing merrily (making no end of pretty pantomimic gestures with her tiny hands) to a gentleman, who was evidently listening to her with an amused expression on his face, such as the prattle of a lovely child would call up. He was a tall—very tall—man, about thirty, with no remarkable points of beauty in his face; and yet there was a something in the countenance which was ten times more attractive than mere positive personal beauty—an expression of power and frankness which impressed you at once in his favour; and in addition to this was the prevailing look he had of being 'thoroughbred all through.'

I did not hear what he was saying in reply to Mrs. Singleton, but I could see that his manner had that happy blending of gentle courtesy and honest cordiality which must have been appreciated by his fair companion in common with most people. Lord Edward Karr was ensconced in the depths of an easy-chair, studying 'The Times,' and unconscious, I should say, of every passing event. When dinner was announced, he rose indolently, stroked his silky moustache, and looked in the direction of Mrs. Singleton, intending, I imagined, to take her in to dinner; but, if so, his aim was frustrated by his tardy movements, for the little lady glided by him with some one else, and in answer to some remark he made as she passed him, nodded gaily, as if in acquiescence I thought he would have paired off in the first flight; but no, he seemed too lazy to obey any such law of precedence; or, as I afterwards had reason to think, he had some sinister motive for declining to do so. When my turn came, he walked up to me, and said, coolly, 'I believe I must take you in, Miss Vavasour.' I longed to tell him that I should infinitely have preferred being handed in to dinner by the butler; but there are some things you can't say, although the repression of them nearly suffocates you. When we arrived in the dining-room, I saw Lord Edward take a rapid survey of the room, and we finally subsided into chairs flanked on *his* side by Mrs. Singleton, and the meaning of his taking *me* in to dinner was at once explained. To any older or married person he would have been obliged to talk and make himself decently agreeable. He apparently considered that I should not require this form of civility. So far his manœuvre had been successful, and I, of course, was grateful accordingly. To my increased annoyance, who should find his way to the vacant chair on my side but Mr. Thornhill. He came in by himself, so I had the pleasing anticipation of dividing his attention with his dinner, my only consolation being that at all events he would redeem me from the unpleasant position of being left to my own reflections during the long course of a dinner, where every one else was talking or being talked to. Mr. Thornhill settled himself in his chair with the square determination of a man who is going to enjoy himself and his dinner.

'So, you see, here we are again, Miss Vavasour,' he began, with a short laugh, the usual preface to his remarks. 'Knew your pa again directly. Not seen him for years; never since I was a small boy in jackets and frills, odd, isn't it?'

I answered 'very odd;' and I thought what an odious little boy he must have been in jackets and frills.

'Fond of dorgs, Miss Vavasour? Did you happen to remark mine this afternoon? very fine pointers, eh? Happy to give you one of Juno's puppies, if you like.'

I expressed myself much obliged, but I declined the offer of the puppy. My interlocutor sat silent for a few minutes during the discussion of his soup and fish. Happily for me, he was all for one thing at a time. Presently, however, he began again.

'Fond of croquêt, Miss Vavasour? Of course you are; all young ladies play croquêt. I'm not a bad hand at it myself. Not pleasant, though, if you chance to give your foot a crack instead of the ball, particularly when you happen to have you

know what on one side of it.' Of course the wretch meant a corn, and actually had the audacity to add, lowering his tone confidentially, 'But I can tell you such a famous remedy for that. Why, hang it! I've cured half a dozen people. A bad thing to have for croquêt, you know.'

'This is a pleasant position,' I mentally observed, 'being seated between a fop and a fool.' I endeavoured to lead Mr. Thornhill's thoughts in a more congenial direction by remarking the flowers on the table.

'Yes, beautiful roses, ain't they? *Will* you come over and see my gardens at Newton Towers, Miss Vavasour, and the conservatory? I'm very partial to violets. These are very fine ones,' alluding to a very large bunch of double violets he wore in his buttonhole.

'Yes, they are,' I replied; 'I am very fond of those Russian violets.'

'Are you? Oh, then, do have these.' And Mr Thornhill began to tear the flowers out of his coat, into which they were fastened so successfully that his exertions to remove them drew upon me the first languid notice from Lord Edward Karr, who had hitherto been engrossed in his conversation with Mrs. Singleton.

'Pray, Miss Vavasour, don't let that poor fellow tear himself to pieces. It is quite distressing to see him, you young ladies have no compassion.'

I could not help smiling, for, in fact, my energetic neighbour's efforts promised fair to do some grievous damage to himself. Another wrench, however, was successful, and he laid the violets in triumph by my plate. 'There, Miss Vavasour; they're sweet, ain't they? and, upon my word, they are exactly the shade of your eyes.'

'Your friend is poetical in his expressions,' remarked Lord Edward on the other side, to which I vouchsafed no reply.

Mr. Thornhill became again engrossed by his dinner, and Lord Edward resumed his conversation with Mrs. Singleton, affording me no interval of suspense to make a single observation, had I been so inclined, which I was not. It is possible that some compunctions may have visited his languid lordship's mind, for towards the end of the second course he commenced a kind of catechism, to the following effect:—

'I suppose you are looking forward with great pleasure to the ball to-morrow?'

'Yes! Are you?' in a tone of innocent inquiry.

'Me!' in a tone of slight disdain, at the plebeian notion of enjoying a country ball. 'It will be amusing, I dare say. Country balls are always diverting. People seem to make such a business of dancing; and the young ladies go at it with such good will. It is quite astonishing. Country balls are a bore, too, for you are expected to ask people to dance.'

'That must be a bore, certainly; but are you quite sure that such a sacrifice is expected from you?'

'I am afraid it is an objectionable necessity.'

'I think it quite possible that you may be mistaken in your sense of duty on that point, and that the young ladies do not dream of such a condescension on your part I certainly cannot answer for *them*; but judging from my own very limited experience of London men, I should say that country young ladies would rather they should follow the bent of their inclinations than the dictates of their polite scruples.'

'Oh, indeed! May I ask what has led you to a conclusion so unflattering to them?'

'Why the very apparent fact that they—the London men I mean—are too apt to mistake impertinence for wit, and the most absurd conceit for refinement of manners, I suppose.'

'Dear me! Your experience must have been unfortunate, Miss Vavasour.'

'Well, perhaps it has; and certainly it is not quite fair to judge of the many by the solitary exceptions.'

'And pray, then, have you met with this solitary exception?'

'I do not see why I should answer the question; but I have no objec-

tion to gratify your curiosity, if you particularly wish it.'

'Yes, I am anxious to hear.'

'Well, then, in this very house I have met with this exception.'

'Since your arrival to-day?'

'Yes, since my arrival here to-day.'

'How very amusing! Do you know many London men?'

'I only know one in this house, unless my other neighbour is a London man.'

With a look of supreme contempt at the unconscious Mr. Thornhill, 'I should call him a farmer. Who is the other you allude to?'

'I wonder you ask the question.'

'You are certainly most complimentary, Miss Vavasour Now I suppose I ought to be overcome with confusion at your rebuke.'

His coolness almost exasperated me, but I replied carelessly—

'Don't imagine so for a moment. A man who has the audacity to be uncivil to a lady can never have the grace to appear confused.' And with this concluding remark I turned my shoulder upon him, but not before I had seen a look in his face which satisfied me that the last hit had told.

I presumed that Mr. Thornhill had overheard a portion of our conversation, for he said, in a low tone, 'Bravo, Miss Vavasour, you gave it him then in fine style—cut him down. He won't try that on again in a hurry. I do admire pluck.'

I was silent, for I did not at all care to enlighten Mr. Thornhill on the subject; but I felt a certain satisfaction in the belief that Lord Edward Karr would know in future that country young ladies are not so incapable of self-defence as he had imagined them to be.

Before we left the dinner-table he had, however, the effrontery to hazard a second attempt at conversation.

'Do you like dinner-parties, Miss Vavasour? have you enjoyed this one, for instance?'

'Do you mean,' I asked, not appearing to understand him, 'whether I like my turbot, and venison, and champagne? yes, very much indeed. I was very hungry when I sat down to dinner.'

Lord Edward looked at me suspiciously; he was beginning to distrust me; I saw that.

'That was not precisely my meaning, Miss Vavasour.'

'I suppose the enjoyment of a dinner party in another sense depends very much on the people, or rather on the person who takes you in to dinner; of course, therefore, I was not so foolish as to indulge in the vain expectation that mine would be a pleasant one to-night, consequently I am not disappointed.'

The ladies were moving out of the room as I said this deliberately; and as I followed them, I felt that this time I had the best of it.

I know that Isaac would be waiting for me in the billiard-room, so I managed to slip away there unperceived instead of going into the drawing-room. There he was, true to his appointment.

'Did you want me, Miss Nelly?' he asked 'I've been a fearing that some of the quality would be coming in, and a finding me here, so I kept nigh the door, for what should I have telled them, Miss Nelly?'

'That you were waiting for me, Isaac. And now this is what I want you for: I am going out to-morrow with the hounds.'

'And what be you going to ride, Miss Nelly, then? You can't have your pa's hack, for he's gone and hurted his foot, drat him!'

'I don't want papa's hack, Isaac: I am going to ride Lord Copplestone's hunter, Skylark.'

Isaac opened his eyes, speechless with amazement. 'Why what be you a thinking of now, Miss Nelly?' he at last ejaculated.

Isaac, of course, would make objections, I knew that beforehand; but I was prepared to overcome them. 'I am going to ride Skylark, Isaac. Papa knows it, so why do you look so astonished?'

'Why, Miss Nelly, he aint fit for you to ride; not that I've anything to say against the horse—he's a splendid one, that's sure; but you couldn't hold him, and, then you'd get frightened, and there'd be a smasher.'

'Don't talk nonsense, Isaac; I can hold him, and I shall not be

frightened or have a smasher, as you call it, which means, I suppose, a fall. You taught me to ride, recollect, Issac.' This last observation touched Isaac's *amour propre*, as I intended it should do.

'Well, and so I did teach 'you, Miss Nelly; and though I says it who shouldn't, I've been and taught you properly. Maybe you could ride Skylark; you're a good hand, and plenty of pluck—but, mind you, pluck aint everything. And if you should get a banging big fall, what's your pa and me to say when we get home again? My stars! I can see Mrs. Tabitha——'

'I shan't get a fall, Isaac,' I replied, although I secretly felt such a contingency to be the reverse of impossible. 'And, for goodness' sake, don't talk about Aunt Tabitha now. This is what I want you to do: find out all about Skylark from Lord Copplestone's groom. It is just as well to know beforehand if he has any particular ways or tricks, that's all.'

My confident manner reassured old Isaac. There's nothing like putting a good face on a matter. If I had shown the slightest symptoms of doubt, or a trace of my own private misgivings on the subject, Isaac's own apprehensions would have increased tenfold, and his representations might have succeeded in upsetting all remaining confidence in myself. As it was his scruples were vanquished, and he subsequently confided to Margaret:—

'They're a pair on 'em—Miss Nelly and Skylark; I seed that by the devil in her eye. She's set her heart on it; and there warn't no mortal use in a-trying to turn her from it.'

Isaac and I parted with the understanding that he was to gather all necessary information concerning 'the ways' of Skylark; and I hastened back to the drawing-room. That very long half-hour after dinner is always a good opportunity for testing the respective merits and demerits of women, as they stand in relation to each other. A woman may be charming to a man—and repelling to one of her own sex. Some ill-natured people, indeed, say that one is a necessary consequence of the other; but of course I don't agree to that heresy—at any rate there are happy exceptions, who are fascinating alike to men, women, and children. I don't think Mrs. Singleton cared to belong to this class. Certainly in the society of her own sex she seemed to collapse into a graceful muteness—only opening her pretty lips at intervals, to give utterance to some remark the reverse of good-natured. Between her and the tall Miss Vere there was evidently no love lost. The latter was one of those imperial kind of people, who never condescend to any feeling so inferior as spite, but who repay it with interest in a more straightforward manner. Her good-natured pretty little sister laughed away the effects of Miss Vere's uncompromising retorts to the treacherous purrings of Mrs. Singleton, who would say the sharpest things with the most innocent smile on her lovely childish face. I liked the Veres; but there was a charming Mrs. Forbes of the party, to whom I felt even more attached. She was a bright, joyous, loveable-looking woman, with a piquancy in her manner and tone of voice, and a kind frank way of speaking, which were very taking. There was a slight dash of independence and decision in everything she said and did, accompanied by the most perfect tact, and the result of this happy combination was the power of always saying the right thing at the right time—not the prompting of diplomatic motives, but a welling up from the productive sources of a well-bred nature and a kind heart. We soon became better acquainted; and by the time the gentlemen came in from their wine we were rapidly progressing into a declared friendship. She told me the names of the people I did not know. 'That is my husband, my dear,' she said, in reply to my inquiry who a very tall, elderly, distinguished-looking man was. 'I was engaged to him, I believe, when I was ten years old, and he did me the honour to wait for me until I was eighteen. We have been married ten years; and I

have never repented *that* step, although there is a difference of five-and-twenty years between us. I should not have done as the wife of a young man—I'm too fond of having my own way. That man talking to General Forbes is Sir Hugh Stracey. Ah! he is a nice fellow—and I can tell you he passed some very complimentary remarks on a certain young lady sitting opposite to us at dinner. By the way, he said he knew your brother very well;—you have a brother in the Guards, haven't you? Sir Hugh was in them, in the Crimea, but he has left the army now.'

As she spoke, the same man whom I had observed talking to Mrs. Singleton before dinner, came up to us.

'Now I know you are talking scandal, Mrs. Forbes; so I am come to put a stop to it. Perhaps you will kindly introduce me to Miss Vavasour.'

'I was just abusing you, Sir Hugh,' returned Mrs. Forbes, laughing; 'so you must make your complaints to Miss Vavasour, and try to redeem your character. Allow me, my dear, to introduce Sir Hugh Stracey.' And as she went away to talk to someone else, Sir Hugh took possession of her vacant seat.

'I should have known you anywhere, Miss Vavasour,' he said, 'from your likeness to my friend Jack. Has that perfidious fellow never mentioned my name to you?—We are old cronies.'

'Oh yes, often,' I replied. And indeed I was well aware that this same Sir Hugh Stracey had helped Jack out of one or two scrapes, when, had it not been for this friend in need, of whom poor Jack had spoken in warmest terms of gratitude, more serious results might have ensued.

'Jack of course is many years my junior; but that didn't prevent our being fast friends. I have not caught sight of him for the last two years.'

Sir Hugh Stracey was one of those people who have an easy, pleasant way of talking, which smooths away all the usual tiresome preliminaries of making acquaintance; and in a very short time—thanks in a measure to Jack, who had been our starting-point—I found myself conversing as unrestrainedly as if I had known him for years. He seemed to know all about my belongings: even Aunt Tabitha was an old acquaintance, by reputation. That wicked Jack must have let him in to no end of family secrets!

'What was it you and Karr were discussing at dinner, Miss Vavasour?' asked Sir Hugh, presently. 'You looked quite excited about something, and Karr appeared more animated than usual; which is all the more wonderful, as he is said to have made a rule of never talking to young ladies—afraid of them, I believe.'

'It is a pity, then, that he thought fit to trangress his rule to-night,' I replied, growing hot again at the recollection of the dinner.

'Why?' asked Sir Hugh.

'Because the experiment was an unsuccessful one. Don't, please, talk about Lord Edward Karr. In the first place, I don't like him; and, secondly, as I really scarcely know him, I might be unfair.'

'You are very just, Miss Vavasour, at any rate; but I should like to know why you don't like him—do tell me.'

'I think he is very cool, and very conceited.'

'But I thought all women rather liked conceit in a man sometimes.'

'Do they? Well, perhaps I have not mixed enough in the world to acquire that taste.'

'Karr is, they say, very popular in general. At all events you will allow that he is a good-looking fellow—and good looks carry some weight, don't they?'

'Very possibly; but I don't admire Lord Edward's good looks—they are too effeminate.'

'Poor Karr! his effeminacy ends there. I must say that in common justice to him, Miss Vavasour, there was no more daring rider in the charge of Balaklava than Karr——'

'Did he ride at Balaklava?' I asked, struck by an involuntary respect when I heard this.

'Ah! I see you confess to hero-worship like all women,' observed

Sir Hugh, laughing. 'You will like Karr better after that, and forgive him his conceit.'

'No,' I answered resolutely. 'I hate conceit; but I do think better of him in that one respect you mention—for I admire courage and daring; and I am glad to find that Lord Edward Karr can do something better than——'

'Than what? Do go on with what you were going to say,' said Sir Hugh, as I checked myself, not feeling inclined to repeat the conversation which had offended me. 'You won't tell me—ah! I shall find it out then.' Karr must have done something very flagrant, for I am certain you are a very indulgent person, Miss Vavasour'

'Not when I am offended,' I replied, laughing: 'so I warn you not to try.'

'I want you to come and play a round game,' said the pleading voice of Mrs. Singleton, as she glided up to Sir Hugh. 'Come and bank with me.'

'Not for worlds, Mrs Singleton. I hate all round games; and not even the allurmg prospect of banking with you can tempt me; although I feel sure it would lead me on to fortune. You must not ask Miss Vavasour—she never plays cards on principle, and hates them as much as I do.'

The same smile which had before offended me crossed Mrs. Singleton's face. 'I am rejoiced to find that your tastes agree so well,' she retorted, as she moved away.

I passed a very pleasant evening, and as I went to my room, I thought how glad Jack would be to hear that I had met his friend Sir Hugh Stracey.

It was a bright November morning. The light mists were rolling away under the influence of the brilliant sunshine; and when I opened my window the sweet air came into the room sharpened by the slight white frost, which still lingered on the broad surface of the park. I have often heard Jack say that such a morning, with anticipation of 'good scent,' a first-rate horse, and 'a crack pack of hounds,' were sufficient to make a man wish that 'this world would last for ever.' Now all these advantages were mine; but an undercurrent of very mixed feelings debarred me from appreciating them as keenly as Jack would have done.

Not many of the party were assembled when I entered the breakfast-room. Lord Coppleston made me take my old place by him.

'They meet at Harleigh Brake, Nelly,' he said. 'Skylark's in prime condition. What *would* Aunt Tabitha say? Shan't I catch it when I come to you next week?' and the jolly old man rubbed his hands in mischievous delight, at the prospect of 'getting a rise,' as he called it, out of Aunt Tabitha.

Sundry gentlemen in red coats, from the neighbouring country-houses, dropped in ere breakfast was over, on their way to cover. The Miss Veres, and many of the ladies of the party, were going to see as much fun as possible from the carriages, Mrs Singleton and myself being the only two who were going to ride.

'And so you *are* going to ride to the meet?' observed my little tormentor, who sat opposite to me. I looked steadily at her.

'Not only to the meet, I hope, Mrs. Singleton.'

Lord Copplestone smiled with a sly significance.

'Why, to be sure, if Nelly was only going to the meet, there would be no use in her riding Skylark'

'Skylark!' echoed Mrs. Singleton. 'Do you mean to say, Miss Vavasour, that you are venturesome enough to ride that hunter? I hope you have insured your life.'

'No, I have not. I am not nervous—are you?'

Mrs. Singleton coloured angrily at the question

'Certainly not. In my case it would be different; but I should think that it required an experienced hand for the attempt you are rash enough to undertake.'

Her manner was coolly irritating; but I thought it better to drop the subject. I could not conceal from myself that there was in reality a great amount of reason in what she

creature on my back, but give honour where honour is due.' He could not speak, however; and had he been able to have done so, perhaps he would have been too generous an ally to have betrayed me. To my surprise Mr. Thornhill was up at the last. How he got there I could not tell, for I had not seen him in the run; but Sir Hugh Stracey explained the matter.

'Thornhill is a thorough sportsman; he knows the country well, and he rides to points. He knows that his grey has no love for the large fences, so he wisely takes care to spare him. I can't understand myself how he came up to-day, however, for the racing pace at which the hounds kept on, and the straight running of the fox, would have beaten off any but those who got a good start at first, and could stick to them through thick and thin, as you did, Miss Vavasour.'

Mr. Thornhill was enthusiastic in his compliments.

'You've done the little widow, at any rate, Miss Vavasour,' he said; 'and my opinion is she won't like you any the better for it. I found her in difficulties at a brook, and when I offered to help her she snubbed me on the spot; so I left my lady, and I believe she's gone home in a towering passion. She can't stand being distanced in anything, I can tell you.'

'You mustn't tell tales out of school, Thornhill,' observed Sir Hugh Stracey, with a laugh.

On our way home we met Lord Edward Karr with Lord Copplestone. The latter had come to grief, as his horse had cast a shoe in the run. But he was always jolly and good-tempered under every circumstance, and his delight in my prowess far exceeded any discomfiture on his own account.

'Nelly, my dear, I'm proud of you! Why, I don't believe Jack would have taken that nasty place. I've a good mind to make you a present of Skylark, only Aunt Tabitha would scratch my eyes out and say I was snaring you to destruction.'

Lord Edward's bridle hand and the head of his horse were plastered over with mud, the result of that unlucky fall which had lost him the lead and the run. In justice to his lordship I must own that his stolid equanimity was in no wise disturbed.

'You have gone splendidly, Miss Vavasour,' he said, languidly. 'I withdraw all my insinuations which were unfortunate enough to offend you yesterday.'

'I think you may,' I returned, laughing, 'especially when you ran a near chance of requiring that shutter you so kindly offered me this morning.'

'Oh, ah! very good. You nearly broke my head in a savage manner. That comes of riding jealously against a man, as you did.'

'She didn't ride against you, she rode over you,' observed Mr. Thornhill, with a laugh at his own wit.

Lord Edward looked at him in supreme disdain.

'He came an awful cropper at that place, now didn't he?' observed Mr. Thornhill in an undertone to me.

We had a very long ride of some fifteen miles home. Two or three of the horses were rather beat, but Skylark was game to the last, and appeared, indeed, rather unwilling to suit his pace to the quiet jog-trot of his companions.

'You must be rather tired, Miss Vavasour,' said Sir Hugh Stracey, as he assisted me to dismount. 'With the fatigues of a ball before you, I should strongly recommend a cup of tea, a novel, and a long rest.'

'The first and last part of your advice I shall certainly adopt, but I don't care about the novel, to-day, at least.'

'Ah! it is well you put in that amendment. Never tell me you don't care about novels; I should give you up as worse than Die Vernon.'

'Perhaps he also thinks me masculine because I am fond of hunting,' was the thought that flashed across me. I could not refrain from satisfying my curiosity on this point, although I hated myself the next moment for asking the question.

'You think I ought not to ride—to hunt, I mean?'

'No, indeed, I think nothing of the kind,' he answered, more eagerly

than the occasion warranted, I thought. 'As a rule, perhaps, a hunting-field is not the place for women. The risks are too great, and I confess I am not an admirer of the disciples of Die Vernon in general. But there are some people who have the happy power of doing everything well; and what you would object to in another person you only admire in them.'

I met Lady Copplestone in the hall, as I passed through it on my way up-stairs.

'You naughty child!' she exclaimed; 'I have passed such a morning on your account. How wrong of Lord Copplestone to put you on that nasty horse.'

'Oh, Lady Copplestone! don't, please, say a word against Skylark. You cannot think how beautifully he carried me.'

'Yes, I dare say; and pray what would Lord Copplestone have said for himself if you had broken your neck?'

'That better people had met with the same fate, dear Lady Copplestone,' I answered, laughing.

'You are a very naughty child,' she repeated; 'and now I must insist on your not coming down before dinner, or I shall not let you go to the ball to-night.'

Lady Copplestone followed me to my room, where Margaret was awaiting me with a tempting little tea-service laid out, and anxiety depicted on her honest little face.

'Oh, miss!' she exclaimed, as soon as she saw me, 'thank the Lord you've come back safe and sound! That old fool of a Isaac! If I don't pay him out for this—— Oh! my lady, I beg pardon, I didn't see your ladyship; but I've been in such a fright, thinking that perhaps Miss Vavasour might be brought home dead, my lady, all along of that big brute of a horse I saw her ride away on this morning.'

'You are quite right, Margaret,' observed Lady Copplestone; 'but I don't think Isaac was the most to blame in the matter. Now I leave Miss Vavasour under your charge. Nelly, darling, we don't dine before eight o'clock to-night; so you will oblige me by taking a long rest before dressing.'

Dear, kind Lady Copplestone, this was all the scolding I received from her. Aunt Tabitha would not let me off so easily when the news reached her ears.

If men enjoy their cigar as much as we women do that unrivalled cup of tea at five o'clock P.M., all I can say is, that it would be a shame to grudge them the indulgence of that luxury.

In a very cosy arm-chair drawn close to a brightly-blazing fire, with my feet on the fender, and lastly, but not least, attired in a very becoming peignoir, trimmed with rose colour, I drank my hot tea, and thought what a pleasant world I lived in. Gradually my reflections became more vague and undefined, and I dropped into a comfortable slumber, which lasted until Margaret reappeared with the announcement that it was time to dress.

'It's almost a pity you've got to put on your ball-dress before dinner,' she remarked, anxiously. 'I do hope you won't tumble it, miss.'

'Oh Margaret, it is a great blessing on the contrary; having to dress twice would be a bore to-night.'

'Well, miss, you don't look tired, that's one comfort,' said Margaret when I was dressed, standing at a little distance for the purpose of surveying to greater advantage the clouds of white tulle, forming my pretty ball-dress. 'And, to be sure, those white azaleas do look beautiful in your hair, miss, and on your dress; they're as natural as life! What a lucky thing it is that Mrs. Tabitha should have given you that lovely pearl necklace with the diamond clasp! When the old lady is in the mind to do something, she does it handsomely—that's a certain thing. The pearls suit your complexion, miss.'

'Don't make me vain, Margaret,' I said, laughing; but secretly I indulged in a hope that some one else would think my dress becoming.

In the drawing-room I was received with honours. The Veres, who were good-natured girls, told me that every one had been talking of my riding.

'Your friend Mr. Thornhill is almost beside himself with admiration,' said Grace, the youngest.

'Sir Hugh Stracey says you are the most graceful rider he has ever seen,' remarked Laura Vere. What a nice kind girl she is, I thought.

'I had no idea you were so Amazonian in your tastes, Miss Vavasour,' observed Mrs. Singleton, with a tone of ill-concealed spite in her voice. Notwithstanding which, I could not but admire her as she stood there leaning with her round white shoulders against the marble pillar of the mantelpiece in a careless, graceful attitude. The coronet of dark green ivy-leaves, glittering with diamond stars, in her golden hair, made her look like some exquisite fairy queen. Surely lovely women need not be spiteful, although the failing may be less unpardonable in those excluded from the sisterhood of beauty.

'Certainly you were fortunate in your horse,' continued Mrs. Singleton. 'You were better mounted than I was; I shall sell my mare.'

'Then you will be very ungrateful,' said Sir Hugh Stracey, who was standing near us, 'for she's the cleverest little animal of her size I know anywhere.'

'And Miss Vavasour did not owe her success entirely to her horse,' remarked Miss Vere, looking at Mrs. Singleton. 'Lord Copplestone says she rides splendidly, and I have heard many people say so to-day.'

'Oh, of course,' replied Mrs. Singleton, with her scornful little laugh; 'good implements make good workmen.'

'Not always,' retorted Miss Vere; 'it requires good workmen to make use of the good implements.'

Mrs. Singleton maintained an angry silence. I believe in her heart she was afraid of that plain-speaking Miss Vere. Sir Hugh Stracey smiled mischievously. He took me in to dinner. And although I felt convinced, from the curl of Mrs. Singleton's lip, and from her frequent glances directed at me, that she was talking of me to Lord Edward Karr in terms more critical than good-natured, yet the fact did not tend to disconcert me much. Had Lord Edward Karr repeated his question of the preceding evening, I should have answered that sometimes dinner parties were the pleasantest things in the world. At ten o'clock there was an immense amount of cloaking and shawling in the hall, preparatory to the departure for the ball.

'Who goes in the omnibus?' inquired Lord Copplestone. Of course there were endless candidates for this popular and sociable mode of conveyance. 'Are you for the omnibus, Nelly?'

'No,' interfered Lady Copplestone, decidedly, 'Nelly goes with me in the carriage.'

I think I felt a little disappointed at the moment, for Jack always says that an omnibus is the jolliest way of going to a ball; but I recovered very quickly; for as the omnibus was driving off, quite full, I saw Sir Hugh Stracey standing on the steps.

'Don't you patronise the omnibus then, Stracey?' asked Lord Copplestone.

'No thank you; I am going to take care of Lady Copplestone, if she will allow me.'

'All right then. Vavasour, you and I will go afterwards in the brougham.'

I wonder if I shall ever enjoy a ball again as much as I did that one!

All country balls are of course conducted very much on the same principle. It has, I believe, been very commonly observed, that the musicians are of a different species from their brethren in the metropolis. They go to sleep more readily, and possess the valuable faculty of playing equally correctly in a state of slumber. Fat, benevolent-looking old gentlemen in white waistcoats take up their station by the fireplace, and have a great deal of enjoyment in their quiet, undemonstrative way, especially when the moment arrives for them to toddle in to supper, with a comfortable dowager under their protection. Don't they eat, that's all! as Bob would say, and who would grudge them this innocent enjoyment? The young ladies flutter into the ball-room under the wings of their

ample mammas, all more or less in a state of nervous apprehension lest they should not be asked to dance. Pretty, round, rosy faces greet you at every turn, and the amount of floral ornaments on the tops of their devoted little heads, in the shape of gigantic wreaths, would fill a gardener with envy; whilst the London girls who may happen to be there, stand erect and self-possessed, with irreproachable toilettes, and faultless gloves. Amongst the male portion of the society a distinction is likewise observed. The local dandies congregate about the doorway, holding tenaciously to their hats, and glaring defiantly at their future partners over the well-starched barriers of their stiff collars. But the unconcerned London man walks coolly over the course, taking his choice of the freshest and fairest of the country damsels. All the grandees, of course, take up their position at the top of the room. Now and then an aspiring young man, one of the rank and fashion of the little country town, disregarding the cordon of separation, dashes across the room into the charmed circle, and tempts his fate by asking one of its members to dance, which daring proposal is met probably by either a civil rejection, or a frightful snub, as the case may be. I must observe that Bob's alarming prophecy fell short of fulfilment. I had plenty of partners. Lord Edward Karr did me the honour to ask me for a waltz, but I had happened to overhear part of a conversation between him and Mrs. Singleton on the subject a few minutes previously. Mrs. Singleton said something to him which I did not hear; but Lord Edward's slow measured accents were quite audible to me.

'No; I never could commit myself in that way. I have not seen Miss Vavasour waltz yet.'

When he did ask me, I replied—

'Thank you, Lord Edward, but I agree with you. It is dangerous to commit oneself before one has had an opportunity of judging how a person dances. I have not seen *you* waltz yet.'

Lord Edward actually changed colour.

'There must be some mistake—' he began with a decided confusion of manner.

'No, indeed,' I answered, laughing, 'no mistake at all. I overheard what you said to Mrs. Singleton, and I think you are quite right.'

'Do you mean to say that you will not dance with me, Miss Vavasour?'

'Most distinctly so at present: under any circumstances I should have been obliged to decline the honour, as my engagements are full.'

He attempted an apology, but I laughed the matter off; and very late in the evening, after he had asked me three times, I danced with him I think he will allow in future that 'Greek met Greek' that evening.

'Look at Thornhill, Miss Vavasour,' said Sir Hugh Stracey, in the pauses of a galop. 'It needs no prophet to tells us that *that* pace is too good to last. He will be down in a minute for a thousand—ah! I thought so. "The brave may fall but cannot yield."'

As he spoke, Mr. Thornhill, who had been plunging down the room regardless of time and tune and opposing obstacles, finally bumped against a stout young lady in yellow, and came down with a fearful crash, falling over his wretched partner, whom he would not release. Not long after the catastrophe he came up to us in the tea-room.

'Did you see that purl I had?' he asked, with the air of a man who had done something worthy of notice.

'I should rather think we did see it,' said Sir Hugh Stracey, laughing. 'How did you manage it? and what has become of your unfortunate partner? I hope she was not much hurt?'

'No, I don't think she was; at any rate she said she wasn't; but you see we were going the deuce of a pace backwards down the room, and somehow I caught my foot in somebody's crinoline, and it was all up with us. But I never let go,' he added, excitedly. 'Did you remark that I never let go?'

'No, indeed, you didn't,' said Sir Hugh Stracey, laughing heartily. 'It would have been better for your partner if you had let go.'

'Well, just look with what a grip she laid hold of me,' said Mr. Thornhill, looking disconsolately at his elaborate shirt-front, which certainly bore traces of the despairing clench of the young lady's fingers. 'What on earth did she do that for?'

'In self-defence to be sure,' said Sir Hugh Stracey. 'Now my dear fellow I should advise you in future to keep to the rotatory movement. It doesn't answer to send your partner down the room backwards at the killing pace you were going.'

'But I am particularly fond of going backwards. I must say she was a plucky little creature, and I'll ask her to dance again.'

'Won't that be a questionable consolation under the circumstances?' suggested Sir Hugh Stracey.

'I like going round the wrong way, too,' said Mr. Thornhill. 'Miss Vavasour, will you dance the next waltz with me, and we will try that?'

I declined the proposal, however, and compromised the matter by dancing the Lancers instead with him: the intricacies of which so puzzled him, that the poor man was in a white heat before the conclusion.

'I'd rather go into training for a race any day than do this sort of thing often,' he observed, as he sat down in a state of great exhaustion. 'You don't seem to mind it at all, Miss Vavasour.'

'No,' I replied, laughing, 'dancing does not tire me.'

'I heard some people say just now that you were the belle of the ball, Miss Vavasour; and I am sure I agree with them,' presently observed my plain-spoken admirer.

'I am very much obliged to you and to them for your too flattering opinion. I think that Mrs. Singleton is decidedly the prettiest person in the room to-night—she is lovely.'

'Well, that's what I call generous!' exclaimed Mr. Thornhill. 'Why, she hates you, Miss Vavasour. I told you she would.'

'Does she? Why should she hate me, Mr. Thornhill?'

'Jealousy, nothing but jealousy, I tell you. There's nothing so bitter as a jealous woman—Kilkenny cats are a joke to them. Why, do you know, Miss Vavasour, there were two girls in Hampshire last year—and very good-looking ones I can tell you—who both took a fancy to me. Some people said it was to my money, but then the world's always ill-natured, you know. Well! if those two didn't lead me the life of a galley slave: dinner invitations without end; and when I spoke to one, the other actually abused me to my face.'

'And which of them is to be the happy winner of the prize?' I asked, much amused.

'Oh, neither of them! take my word for it. No,' he added, trying to look sentimental, 'the prize is reserved for somebody worthier of it. No, I don't mean that, Miss Vavasour. *I* wish to win a prize worth a hundred of them; that's what I wanted to say.'

It was fortunate that Lady Copplestone asked me at this juncture if I was ready to go; or I might have offended my eccentric friend by a peal of laughter. We had to wait some little time in the cloak-room for the carriage.

'Which have you enjoyed the most, Miss Vavasour, the run or the ball?' asked Sir Hugh Stracey.

'I have enjoyed the ball very much,' I replied.

'That is an evasion,' he said. 'A first-rate rider as you are, should have answered at once—the run.'

'But I am not a first-rate rider.'

'How can you presume to tell me that after this morning's experience?'

There was an unaccountable feeling in my mind which led me to tell him exactly how matters had really stood with regard to Skylark and myself. Sir Hugh was one of those essentially honest people who are so true in themselves that one feels a reluctance to deceive them on the slightest point. So I told him the whole truth, not omitting my annoyance at Mrs. Singleton's and Lord Edward Karr's remarks; wish-

ing, by the way, that he would not look at me so pertinaciously.

'But I saw you put your horse at that fence, Miss Vavasour,' he said, when I had finished.

'Yes, because I thought my only chance of safety was to make the best of my hopeless position. You see I am not a heroine after all.'

He looked at me again, and said quietly—

'I don't know what you call a heroine. I think you something more than a heroine.'

Again I was absurd enough to blush.

'Why did you tell me this? Would you have told any one else?' he asked presently.

'No,' I answered, hesitatingly. It was an awkward question—why, indeed, had I told him?

'Why did you tell me then?' he repeated.

'Goodness!' I thought, 'I wish the carriage would come.' Sir Hugh persisted in the inquiry.

'I don't know I am sure,' I said, 'perhaps because I trust you; or, perhaps,' I added, growing desperate at having made my position more uncomfortable by this admission, 'because I—'

'No,' he interrupted, 'don't, please, withdraw that reason. Let me think it was because you trusted me.'

Fortunately the announcement of the carriage put an end to my perplexity, and we did not revert to the subject. As I put out my candle that night, or rather that morning, I felt a regret that one of the pleasantest days in my life had come to a close.

In the morning Margaret informed me that my health had been drunk in the servants' hall with great applause—Lord Copplestone's groom having proposed it. Since then, Brookes, the old huntsman, has asked for my photograph, which I have given him; and which, Mr. Treherne informs me, the worthy old fellow has placed between the leaves of his hymn book, declaring that I was the only lady he ever cared to see out with their pack. Margaret also informed me that Isaac had been in a state of great delight.

'An old donkey,' she added contemptuously. 'It isn't *his* fault, miss, that you're alive to-day. I took care to let him know that of all the idiots I have ever seen, *he's* about the choicest! Won't he catch it from Mrs. Tabitha if she hears of it!'

Lady Copplestone used her best endeavours to keep me for a few days longer; but my father resisted her entreaties, declaring that he was under a promise to my mother of bringing me back with him.

'We shall meet again next week, Miss Vavasour,' said Sir Hugh Stracey, as he handed me to the carriage. 'Your father has kindly asked me to meet Jack, who is coming to you, I hear.'

'He will be delighted to see you again, Sir Hugh. It will be pleasant for you both to talk over old times!'

'Very pleasant, indeed. But I look forward to something pleasanter still, Miss Vavasour. I hope I have other friends besides dear old Jack at Compton Lacy.'

'Aunt Tabitha?' I inquired, with a smile.

'No, not Aunt Tabitha,' he said laughing, 'happy as I shall of course be to make her acquaintance'

'We shall be glad to see you, Sir Hugh.'

'Will you really?' he asked, holding my hand certainly some seconds longer than he need have done. I made no answer; but as we drove away, I thought by the expression of his face, that he was satisfied without one. I have never hunted since that memorable day. The winter is over, and I take pleasant rides in long spring afternoons through the woods white with wild anemones. My companion is Sir Hugh Stracey, to whom I am to be married in June. This arrangement seems to give perfect satisfaction to all my family, including Aunt Tabitha, who says she hopes that I shall be worthy of him—which, by the way, is not a very complimentary remark. She also says that now I am going to be married, she trusts I shall turn over a new leaf.

# LONDON SOCIETY.

## FEBRUARY, 1865.

### THE VALENTINES FOR NUMBER TWENTY

CUPID PREPARING FOR ST VALENTINE'S DAY

WHEN Shakespeare called life 'a tale told by an idiot,' he may not have intended to be personal, and mean that my life was the tale, and I the idiot who told it, nevertheless, I fear he was right Three hundred years ago he could scarcely have foreseen that I, Gilbert Bennett, a young man, undoubtedly from the country, should come up to London, and there in a certain month make a most outrageous fool of myself. And if, on perusal of this little episode in my history, any of the readers of 'London Society' should think fit to differ with me and Shakespeare (best man foremost), I am sure I shall feel immensely obliged to them. My adventures have no moral, nor was I even dismissed with what the Yankees call 'a caution.'

It is customary to begin an autobiography either with a brace of ancestors, or of horsemen riding down a hill; but these degenerate modes of interesting the reader I utterly abhor; it is a part in books I always skip; but if any one wishes for a further and more minute description of me than is given here, my *carte de visite* can be had at Mayall's; or if it be a lady, and young, who desires it, I have no objection to make an exchange—and believe me, I look well in an album.

Would any one like a list of my luggage? One black box, one leather portmanteau, one hat-box, one carpet-bag.

With these I reached my lodgings in a certain street, in a certain part of London. I refrain from giving the particular address, such as the street, and the number of the house; for after silly people rushing to look for Mrs. Lirriper's, there is no knowing what may happen. All Europe convulsed to its centre might be hurrying to London to see the famous spot; and as giving the true address would settle neither America nor Schleswig Holstein, I modestly refrain from saying more on the subject.

For the ease of mind of any tender-hearted females who may be uneasy about me when I come to speak of illness, I may mention, that before I was allowed to leave home, my good mother had seen to it that I had had the measles, the whooping-cough, been vaccinated, and, finally, had a try at the mumps, so that I was well qualified to begin life on my own account. Having also been confirmed, I pass by my godmother and godfathers in silence, not unmingled with disgust; for if interrogated as the Church Catechism enjoins,—'What did your godfathers and godmothers then for you?' I must make answer—'Nothing but give me two church services, and a fork and spoon.' And though it is a good thing to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth, who wants to come to be baptized with two church services?

They were charming sponsors.

I had not got my town head when I reached London; and heaven help the poor country lad's brains when he comes into the din for the first time after making a long train journey! How over all the noise I seemed to hear the screaming of fifty locomotives, the ringing of a thousand bells, the rattle of a million carriages, and a dull roar like a thousand muffled drums beating at a hundred funerals—all at once. And how I crept away after I deposited my luggage at the address given me, and wandered for an hour in gloomy back streets far away from the bewildering roar—streets that seemed to lead to no place, and never have any one coming in or going out of them. I mention this to show I really was young and very, very green at that date of my life.

I came up from Hempton-in-the-Marshes to enter on what my stepfather called 'the brilliant path of commerce,' which, definitely speaking, was to occupy a clerk's stool in the counting-house of Hemp and Hall; great names cityward, as everyone knows. 'A great opening,' this path of commerce was called by many people; but I cannot say I ever agreed with them. I took possession of the lodgings Smithers, the head clerk, had taken for me, and of my stool in the office next morning, and thus began my London life. At first I liked the novelty of having rooms of my own; it was dignified to be able to ring the bell and find as much fault with the pudding as one chose, without being sternly commanded to eat and be thankful. Also the preserves and other good things, which my dear mother had packed in the black box I mentioned, were my own, and I confess I spared no exertions to empty the box as fast as possible. No stepfather to cry 'hold!' no stepfather's mother to prophesy I was certainly not born to be drowned!

Censorious people may blame the preserves; but I know it was the close confinement and sedentary life, after the country freedom of my previous life, which made me ill. And ill I was, with a vengeance! Ill in the beginning of December,

and ill for many, many a day. Smithers sent me a doctor, and occasionally dropped in of an evening; but with this exception, I spent day after day alone.

How dull it was! Mariana in the moated grange was gay compared to me! My only amusement was a circulating library—and even that was bad, for as I never knew what books to send for, I left the selection to the boy who gave them out; and I must say, I soon learned to think of that cub as one of my natural enemies, so bad and stupid were the volumes he sent me. I tried various plans, such as taking the catalogue alphabetically; one day the first book in A, second day the first one in B, next day in C, and so on; but even that plan, as well as many others of a like kind I tried, failed. Consequently, to while away the tedious hours of the day, I was driven to staring out of the window—for I was not always confined to bed, but principally on a sofa in my sitting-room, which, I ought here to mention, was on the second floor of the house.

The view was certainly limited, but such as it was, I made the most of it; and, as will be seen, I found for myself sermons in stones, and good in everything.

Few houses in a street cover much area; the time had gone by for the street in which I lived to spare ground for houses with rooms on both sides of the hall door; once country villas may have stood on the site, or cottages with sweet-briar hedges, and beds of marigolds; but that was long ago, when Pepys wrote his diary, and the second Charles uttered wise saws and did foolish deeds.

Now it was a long, dull, narrow street, where the tall houses made heaven, as the child said, 'a long way off,' and one could look almost into their opposite neighbours' faces. In such a street a view is commanded in general of three houses —a good view—while a side glance of some half-dozen others can be obtained by the genteel practice of flattening your nose and one whisker against the window pane.

Of the three houses directly opposite me, kind Providence centred my interest on the middle one. For an infirm old lady, who never went out, occupied the one to the right, and a tiresome old bachelor, who was always out, the one to the left; so what could I do all day but stare at the middle one?

I soon found out how many occupants this house had, and that was a step gained. I knew the hours of their going out, and the hours of their coming in; and if I did not guess accurately what they had for dinner, at least I knew the hour at which they ate it. I asked the servant what the name of the family was, and she stared at me as if I were 'a hinfant phenomoner,' with a plurality of heads. The acute reader will here call to mind the remark I made at a very early stage, that I was undoubtedly 'from the country.' Blessed be country towns, if one cares to know all about their opposite neighbours, and every one else's opposite neighbours: such knowledge is chronic; but, alas! London yields no such ceaseless mine of conversation. The servant asked 'missus,' but missus looked at me as if I were slightly delirious, and answered me soothingly as an invalid, who ought not to be crossed, and went down stairs. Then I sent the willing slavey across the street, and she returned with the exciting news that No. 20 was on the hall door. But this helped me little; for on procuring last year's 'Directory,' I found No. 20 marked 'vacant;' so my interesting inquiries were suddenly checked.

Then I thought of giving them a fancy name, and searched through a great many novels for a suitable one, but found none that fully satisfied me. All the names seemed indissolubly connected with certain characters, not at all resembling my ideal of the folks in No. 20.

There were four people living in this house, besides the servants—father, mother, and two girls I concluded to be the daughters. Their drawing-room was a double room, just on a level with mine, but not so exactly opposite, that I could not see the fireplace, near which, it

being December, the ladies were generally grouped. When the folding-doors stood open I had an excellent view, owing to the thorough light, and could see various pieces of furniture plainly. A piano, a couch, a workframe, and flowers in the far-off drawing-room. I could see into the parlour, too; yea, even to the corner of 'The Times,' which Paterfamilias read every morning, and I could see the young lady who poured out tea and coffee.

It was all very well to allow the family to go without a surname, but I soon found it absolutely necessary to give the young ladies Christian names. Easy as the task may appear, I had some difficulty in selecting suitable ones. To find two names for individuals of the opposite sexes might be easy enough; Abelard and Heloise, Romeo and Juliet, and many others; or of our own sex, Damon and Pythias, for instance; but the two young ladies fairly puzzled me. To give them common fancy names went against my grain, as the saying is; I must have something with character connected with it, some names, in fact, that carried a story with them. It may be that the loves of young ladies for each other are few in number, or not lasting, for there are not many on record. Even the friendship of the two whose names I finally selected, are placed on record only on the occasion of a serious misunderstanding. I thought of Rachel and Leah; but then mutual jealousies, and the deception practised on poor Jacob at the end of his first seven years, made me reject these names, and look out for something more suitable. Martha and Mary were rejected on the ground that neither young lady seemed to take exclusively to the *rôle* of Martha, both seeming to spend an equal amount of time over their plants, their piano, their books, and their embroidery. I thought also of Minna and Brenda, but my two gentle creatures seemed to have nothing in common with Magnus Troil's hardy children. At last, in a moment of inspiration—I could scarcely call it anything else—I bethought me of the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and its two heroines, and I at once decided my two friends should be Helena and Hermia. That was a grand idea. The taller, and I concluded the elder, should be Helena, and the pretty little creature should be Hermia. I had always looked on Hermia as a small woman.

I found it much more comfortable for myself when their names were allotted. Thus, when they came down to the drawing-room before dinner, and, as they often did, sat on low seats and read by the firelight, it was so much pleasanter to say, 'Helena has on her blue dress,' or, 'Oh, dear me! Hermia has finished her third volume already,' instead of 'the tall one,' or 'the short one.' Every day they went out to walk unless it were very wet; and I used to be in a fever of impatience until they came in again; and if rain came on while they were out, I was quite miserable until they came home, for fear of their being wet.

Thus days passed on until a few were only left before Christmas. I was not able to go home, and no one there seemed to care particularly whether I did or not. My mother wrote to me that my stepfather supposed I should soon be able to return to business, and going down to Hempton would only unsettle me, and that decided the thing. I remained in doors on my sofa, as I had been doing for two or three weeks.

My opposite neighbours were very busy all the week before Christmas. At first I wondered what the girls were about when for two mornings they never made their appearance in the drawing-room; and it was with a feeling of great joy I saw the gleam of their light dresses before dinner, and the books and seats by the fire as usual, until the father's knock and entrance brought dinner and a descent to the dining-room. It was very stupid of me not to remember that Christmas housekeeping had to be attended to, for I made myself most unutterably miserable with the fear that Helena and Hermia might be going away to spend Christmas, and that the

mornings might be taken up packing in their own rooms.

At last I saw Hermia one morning in the drawing-room. She came in with a white apron on, and going to the secretaire, took out some sheets of letter paper which she proceeded to cut into various fancy patterns.

'It is for ornament,' I cried, joyfully; 'then they are going to spend this week at home, for what would be the use of making ornamental pastry if they were going away?'

Miss Hermia spoiled two or three sheets of paper before she succeeded to her mind; but I admired the judicious way in which she burned her failures, and only went down stairs with her successes in her hand. At that very moment I had paper in my desk which would, I am sure, have been the very thing for her; and a hundred times at least during that day I wished I might have dared to offer it to her. Fancy the exquisite felicity of seeing her cut *my* paper! Even if it were to be chopped as small as mincemeat and cast into a burning fiery furnace afterwards, what matter? Gladly would I have followed the fragments, could I but have been satisfied that Hermia and her sister would have dropped a few tears just to extinguish the remains of my smouldering ashes; nay, one tear each, which would make only a pair between them, would have perfectly satisfied me. As it was, I could only pull over my desk and look at the paper, and handle it, and finally doze off in the midst of a brilliant *château en espagne*, in which everything I had in the world (no great possessions, certainly) was being used by the young ladies in No. 20, without any compunction or hesitation.

As I had nothing to look at in the evenings, the shutters across the way being then closed, I generally went very early to bed, and found the benefit of this arrangement in more ways than one. Indeed I, at that time of my life, slept such an amount of what old-fashioned folk are apt to term 'beauty sleep,' being the sleep had before twelve o'clock P.M.—that the wonder is I did not become a perfect Adonis. I did not, however, and set down that theory from thenceforth in my list of 'popular delusions.'

But the principal advantage I derived from getting through a good deal of sleep early in the evening was, that I felt no desire to enjoy more in the morning, and was generally up and at my post of observation early, at least as soon as the family opposite were down for breakfast. So it fell out that on the morning of Christmas Eve I was at my window early. The servant had just retired after depositing my coffee-pot and toast upon the table, when a cab drove up to No. 20, and a visitor with some luggage arrived. Never shall I forget my feelings as I looked at that man. With a gasp I recognized him as my rival. In what? will naturally be asked, and as natural will be the answer, 'I am sure I do not know.' But sufficient it was that he was gaining access to that enchanted floor, and about to have social intercourse with those fair women who were but a dream to me. Shall I describe him? Even now—and some years have passed since then—his figure rises before me as he was that Christmas Eve, when I saw him for the first time, and hated him too.

He was tall (I am no great height myself), and slight, and dark—dark, yes, to the very moustache, which was, like himself, thin. Then his dress, which I at once pronounced 'snobby,' was in keeping with his figure and style, and if he wore one thing worse than another it was leather gaiters. I hate leather gaiters! I have no patience with leather gaiters! I had rather an indifference to them before, now I hated them cordially. Hating the stranger as a whole, I think I cannot better describe him than by saying he was exactly the picture of the villain one sees on the stage. Of course he had a bass voice. I was sure I had heard such a voice a hundred times in melodramas. The real villain, the ruffian of deepest dye, never threatens his victim in a tenor voice—never, for the simple reason, 'it would not take.' Imagine

being requested to deliver your watch in counter-tenor! Just as it is the proper thing for peasants who come out in picturesque costume to walk, crossing their legs, as they did in 'Leah' the other night when I went to see Miss Bateman. I felt certain, from the moment I knew peasants were inevitable, that they would come out crossing their legs as they walked, and that they did, I leave to the unbiassed judgment of all who went in '64 to see the transatlantic charmer.

It took away all my appetite for breakfast—and mine was pretty cool when I turned to it—to see how they received that man. Every one came out to welcome him, father, mother, and daughters. The father clapping him on the back and wringing his hand, the mother kissing him, and the two maid-servants quarrelling for the honour of carrying his portmanteau. And, what was worse than all, I am afraid I saw him kiss the girls [illegible] as the hall door was being shut. What I could see of the breakfast tactics only made me worse. Helena made tea, and Hermia enced attendance on him. Through one window I could see her stoop over the fender, bringing away successive hot plates, while through the other I could see their destination was to be heaped up with choice viands for the diabolical stranger.

Was it to be wondered at that my appetite was destroyed by contemplating this scene? How could a fellow crack his egg with proper discretion under such circumstances? I did not crack mine, for I reduced both it and the egg-cup to small fragments at one blow; for inasmuch as on this villain's arrival I had hated him from the crown of his horrid wide-awake to the buttons of his detestable leather gaiters, I now hated him cordially to the heels (military) of his boots.

Then he must go out to walk with them! nothing less would do, and bring them home in a cab (which was heaped up with holly) just before it grew dark. I saw a sheet spread on the drawing-room floor, and the dark shiny branches piled upon it, and then the girls, with the villain's aid, began to decorate the lamps and picture-frames.

What a blessing I was awake when this little play began, and what a happy hour they chose for it! The girls had on their white dresses, and floated about from mirror to picture, from picture to lamp, like the Peris in the illustrated Lalla Rookh. Then it was I learned a secret which toned down my burning hatred, and left only a strong dislike in its place.

Helena stood on a chair and dressed the lamp; probably she took this duty on account of her superior height; perhaps the villain recommended it, for he stood beside her, and, breaking the holly and pelletrie into small pieces, handed them up to her. Hermia flitted about the room doing such work as came within the reach of her short arms when standing on a chair. I could see the gleam of her dress as, after putting up her sprays, she would jump down, and, moving back, look at the effect from a little distance, and then dart forward and push some refractory stems out of sight. Then I saw her take an armful of the evergreens and descend to the dining-room to continue her work there. I was so engaged in watching her, and the strong fire lighted up the room so gloriously—I could see the very flowers in her hair—that I forgot to give any attention to the progress of the drawing-room decorations, but when I did look I saw more than was meant for the eye of the public.

Honour bright! with the golden rule in my memory, I am not going to betray a confidence so unwittingly given. If the villain never committed a crime of greater magnitude than to stand steadying Miss Helena by encircling her waist with his arms, all forgiveness to his memory! It is not for me to cast the first stone. I have done worse things myself in my day. Nor was it exactly extortion, the villain exacting toll for lifting the young lady down from her high position and replacing her in it.

Once Hermia caught them in the act of balancing their debtor and creditor account in this fashion.

She may have laughed, but I could not hear it, only I saw the gesture of amazement, the uplifted hands, and could fancy some lively sally at the lovers' expense, when she ran from the room closely followed by the indignant villain, who seemed to demand instant vengeance. That she had made good her escape I doubted not, for the next moment I saw her opening the hall door to her father, when his familiar knock wakened up the quiet street. Then with what interest I watched them all assemble for dinner round the drawing-room fire. Helena and her villain stood far apart at different sides of the group, but I could follow Hermia's face as it turned from one culprit to the other, as if threatening them, and more than once Helena shook her head and finger at her when it could be done without observation. Of course the rest of the evening could only be imagined, as the curtains were drawn, but I pictured it to myself, and out of it I took a desperate resolve.

I would go to church next day. Not to any church at all, but to the one to which my dear friends went, and the idea possessed me so entirely I could scarcely sleep. The doctor only came every other day, and he had been with me on Christmas Eve, so there was no fear of his finding me out, unless I told him; and the next morning I was up and dressed betimes. I sent for a cab, and had it at the door ready to start when the ladies opposite came out, and then getting in, I desired the driver to keep them in sight, and take me to the church to which he would see them go.

I followed them closely in, and was so fortunate as to get a seat quite near enough to watch them all. Never did alchemist watch a crucible with more feverish eagerness than I watched them all through the service, and still with such discretion as to prevent them observing it. I wanted to see if their faces were like what I had pictured in my imagination; but I am bound in all honesty to say they were far more attractive, Hermia's especially. The father was some seats off, as there was not room for him in the pew with the others; but for weeks after I could not help wondering if Hermia saw what I saw, viz., that during the sermon there were three hands in Helena's muff which had decidedly been only made for two. I paid dearly for going to church that day, and I was so much worse the next that the doctor found out what I had done, and very nearly gave me up. I was confined to bed for several weeks, and though once or twice, with the help of the furniture, I crawled to the window, I could see nothing of my friends in No. 20.

The second week in February, I was back on my sofa again; but whether I was stupid, or whether the habits of the family had undergone a change in the mean time, I saw little of them; and was sure to be asleep, or away from the window, whenever they went in or out, so I seldom saw them.

It was the twelfth of February, and I had finished the reading of the paper, even to the last of the advertisements, and found myself pondering over it in a most unaccountable way. It treated of valentines, and described, in glowing terms, how cheap, and brilliant, and loving, and original they could be had at a certain shop not a hundred miles distant from where I then sat.

'Cheap!' I said, indignantly; 'the man who would buy a nasty, gaudy, filigree Cupid to send to a girl deserves to be sent to Coventry. If I were a girl I would despise a fellow who could not speak for himself, I would,' I said, vehemently, bringing down my clenched fist with a bang on the table at my elbow. 'It is penny-a-line love, and he might keep it for me. Give me a real, original set of verses, to the point, and written solely for myself, that would touch my feelings!' Then I pictured some silly fellow sending a bought valentine to Hermia, and my indignation at the picture I had myself conjured up all but took away my breath. To Hermia! I writhed at the thought. Just such a thing as the villain would do! I said, and my old hatred to him woke up fiercely at the bare suppo-

sition. As I thus tortured myself with possibilities, scarcely even probabilities, of others worshipping at the same shrine I did, an idea suddenly burst upon me. I sprang up from the couch. 'By Jove, I shall send her one myself! I shall send them each one, and no one can accuse me of undue partiality!' (the acute reader will have detected long before this the state of my young affections). 'But,' I said, 'I shall make sure of Hermia's first; I might fall asleep, or have a fit, or something that would prevent me writing a second; and that my lack of confidence in my own muse was justified by its rapid exhaustion, the reader will soon see. To choose a metre, to choose a subject, to fit my rhymes—why need I dwell on these threadbare anxieties of the youthful aspirant to poetic fame? At last, having been guided in the first, by my choice of the second, an Irish legend I had read years before, I indited the following verses to Hermia, and I hope I shall receive a pardon on the score of my youth when I freely confess that I thought them very fine indeed, and far, very far beyond the average.

'My little neighbour, lend a pretty ear,
And I will tell a little tale romantic,
In far-off seas I found it long ago,
Amid the surges of the wild Atlantic

'Two islets lie there gleaming side by side,
But severed by a channel full of danger;
So fair and white that the tongue of far-off times
Called them "The Joyless Maidens of the Stranger"

'For there beneath the waters calm and fair
That gird the sisters round with azure zones,
Lie rotting ribs of many a goodly ship,
And many a sturdy seaman's whitening bones

'And now a beacon stands on either rock
To guide the wanderer on the treacherous sea;
In each, when first I knew them long ago,
A solitary keeper used to be.

'Yet not alone; for each one had a child,
A boy that burrowed like a rabbit in the sand,
A girl that trimmed the lamp, and kept the house,
And gathered "John o' Groats," and escallops on the strand.

'Of course you seize my story by the end,
The 'how it came about,' you can't, I hope.
Pray grant me patience in my maundering tale.
Don't laugh—I'll tell you—'twas a telescope!

'FOR THE BOY GROWING UNTO MAN'S ESTATE,
SPENT MANY AN HOUR GAZING THROUGH A GLASS,
WATCHING A LITTLE NOOK UPON THE SHORE,
WHERE DAILY WAS THE MAIDEN WONT TO PASS.

'And presently he launched a little skiff,
Made from some seadrift cast upon the shore,
And spread abroad his tiny cloud of sail,
And sailed away to sunny Huilin-Mŏr

'But I must reach my moral, so shall skip
The tender meeting on the yellow strand,
And tell you how it fell upon a day,
The lovers wandered seaward hand in hand

'And still she cried, "Say, Owen, am I fair?"
And as he answered his rough voice grew soft,
And gravely said, "Yes, dearest; fair to me,"
As he had answered many a time and oft.

'Then suddenly she plucked her hand away,
And flung at him a pretty puckered frown:
"Am I not fair in other eyes?" she cried,
"Fair as the maidens in the far-off town?"

'And as he gravely smiled, he took her hand,
And answer made—"Nay, 'tis a thing of taste,
I loved you ere I touched this plump round arm,
Or laid a finger on your dainty waist

'"LOVED ERE I KNEW A FEATURE OF YOUR FACE,
WAS BLIND BEFORE I SAW THE DIMPLE THERE
WHAT IF MY LOVE'S A GHOUL TO ALL BESIDE!
SO, DEAREST, YOU ARE STILL MY FAIREST FAIR."'

Then I transcribed the verses with great care, writing the seventh verse and the last in huge capitals, that they might point the moral I felt a delicacy in drawing more openly, and I considered this as a decidedly telling hit.

By this time my poor Muse was pumped dry. Yet still undaunted, I cried, 'Now for Helena's! Doubtless the villain will write her half a dozen, at least, so I shall confine myself to a *réchauffé*; some good standard verses will be very respectful and respectable.' So I cast about in my mind what poet should be honoured by selecting from. Of right, I ought to have told her 'her eyes were lodestars, and her tongue's sweet air, &c;' but I had never heard her tongue, and what swayed me most of all was that the rest of the passage was exceedingly unmanageable.

I took down Tommy Moore, but the Hibernian bard was so hackneyed, and I got so tired of his everlasting howl about liberty and wine, that I dropped him over the back of my sofa; and leaving him on the floor, fell to work on Byron He was endless, enough to confuse one's brain to search in him, so I hurled him after his dear Tommy, and tried Shelley. 'I arise from

dreams of thee,' is good, but worn out, and, besides, too strong for a Bravo's Bride, as I had now accustomed myself to consider Helena to be; I read the last lines, thought of Christmas Eve, and that 'she was another's,' and sent Shelley after his friend Byron.

At this period of my life I was much given to poetry, and had cheap copies of all the popular poems of the day. Yet I found it very hard to select one. The good verses were too common; the bad too bad. Then in my search I crossed the Atlantic, and in a happy hour took down the works of Edgar Allan Poe, a cheap copy, now, alas! out of print, in fancy (very) boards, with a good deal of scarlet and yellow on the covers.

Here I found the nicest, tiniest set of verses, and so near the end of the book, that I flattered myself it was not every fellow who had read so far. These are the lines I wrote out for Helena, drawing a fine capital letter at the beginning of each verse, in what I then considered a very high style of art.

Some apology is due to the well-educated reader for the insertion of verses I have since discovered are exceedingly common; but it may just chance that some greenhorn, in the same state of blessed ignorance that I then was, may be among my readers; so for him I transcribe, and to him dedicate my verses.

'Helen! thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently o'er a perfumed sea
The weary wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore

'On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth air, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome

'See in yon brilliant window niche
How statuelike I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand.
Ah! Psyche, from the regions which
Are holy land.'

My brains had been so much taxed in producing Hermia's original valentine, that I felt very happy indeed to be able to produce Helena's at such a cheap rate; and really, when these verses were all fairly written out in an ornamental style, I felt quite as proud of them as if they were indeed my very own composition; nay, at times, I began to imagine they were little airy trifles I had thrown off in moments stolen from severer studies, and not Edgar Allan Poe's at all.

I put each valentine into an envelope, and the two envelopes into one larger one, sealing it with a very large seal that had been my grandfather's in days when old gentlemen wore their watches with a bunch of seals attached to them by a broad black ribbon.

To address a letter to people whose names I did not know, may to some people appear a difficulty; but I soon got over that.

'To the young ladies at
'No. 20, ——— Street,
'(One each,)'

seemed a simple solution of the difficulty; and to bed at last I went, very tired, but but very proud of my night's work.

The next day, the 13th, I determined they should be posted; and, after keeping the letter back until it was impossible it could be delivered before the next morning, I sent the servant to drop it into the nearest pillar-post.

Up to this time, not a doubt of the propriety of thus intruding my muse on people I did not know had ever crossed my mind. To be impertinent was my last thought; and the whole business was so much an effusion of feeling, that I overlooked the possible appearance of the matter to a cool matter-of-fact Paterfamilias of the nineteenth century. Suffice it to say that, besides my feelings being strongly enlisted in my own behalf, I had sufficient self-conceit to pass the rest of the evening in a state of tranquillity and egotistical meditation which a king might envy, or a prime minister, on the eve of a dissolution, covet.

It was about twelve o'clock the next day, when, a new batch of novels having arrived from my foe at the circulating library, I had curled myself up on the sofa to make an inspection of the parcel, and decide which volume should be honoured by the first perusal, when

the door opened, and my landlady's 'slavey' announced 'a gentleman.'

Now, a visitor, especially at this hour, was an unprecedented occurrence. Occasionally, of an evening, some of my fellow-clerks would drop in; but a caller at noon was a world's wonder. But, fancy my astonishment when I recognized Helena and Hermia's father. I got white and red by turns; jumped up off the sofa, staggered, almost fell, and gasped out an invitation to my visitor to be seated. He took the chair I pointed to; and I took one despairing look at his face. One glance was enough. In it I read how my impertinence was about to be punished; figuratively speaking, I saw he had on the black cap. For the first time I saw my conduct in its true light. Yes, before one word had been spoken on either side.

'Your name, I believe, is Bennett?' the Herrpapa said first.

'Yes,' I said, pumping up my courage, and, though feeling dreadfully guilty, determined to face the matter like a man. 'Yes, Gilbert Bennett.'

There was a long pause. Either of us must break it, and I said in my heart, 'No. 20, let it be you.'

'Mr. Bennett,' at last he said, 'I am going to ask you a question as a gentleman, and I expect you to answer me as such.'

I bowed my head in an ashamed silence.

He took a letter from his pocket, and, unfolding the contents—two sheets—laid envelope and all before me on the table.

'Did you write those?'

With a great effort, swallowing my feelings at a gulp, I said, 'Yes, sir.'

'And what have you to say in defence of yourself, Mr. Bennett?'

'Say!' I cried; 'I have nothing to say, sir, except that I did not mean it as impertinence.'

'It seems,' he said, with a half-sneer, 'that you succeeded in that without much effort.'

'Sir,' I said, interrupting him, 'I have been half mad with illness and loneliness; I have had no other pleasure, for three months, but seeing them go in and out: that is the only plea I have to offer.'

'Yes,' he said, 'you must have been half mad, indeed, to have presumed so far.'

'Until you came into the room, it never occurred to me I had done what was wrong; believe me, I would not offend them for worlds. as I told you before, they are the only pleasure I have had in life all these months'

'By "them" may I understand you mean my daughters?'

'Yes,' I said; 'and the days I do not 'see them I am unutterably miserable, and at night I cannot sleep.'

This was putting it strong; but I thought I saw signs of his wrath being appeased, and tried the despairing penitent dodge.

'Then, when you sent these verses, you did it in all sincerity?'

'On my honour as a gentleman, I did.'

'I cannot understand it at all.' No. 20 said, looking at me as if I were a dangerous lunatic who might at any moment become outrageous and unmanageable.

'I should like to put a few questions to you, Mr. Bennett What do you know of my daughters? Where did you first see them?'

'I began at the beginning, and told him—not everything I had seen, but everything I had felt, since I had first observed my opposite neighbours; showed him my post of observation; and wound up with an abject apology, bringing all manner of special pleading to bear on my own case.

'And now,' I said, 'will you have the apology in writing?' And as I spoke I drew my desk over to me and opened it.

'No,' he said; 'for two reasons I shall dispense with that. First, because you answered me like a gentleman, without evasion or subterfuge, and secondly, because you are young. and, I do believe, have done this thoughtlessly, without intent to offend, and are very unlikely to do such a thing again. But, I tell you candidly, I must take some means to prevent such a system of espionage being successful in future.

The privacy of domestic life must not be invaded by one's opposite neighbours. I am going down to a furnishing-house to-day, to order blinds which shall effectually check your prying in future.'

'As you put it, I agree with you,' I said, mournfully; 'and no punishment could be too great; but still——'

'Still what?' he asked, as I hesitated.

'If you would only trust me,' I said, 'I give you my word of honour that, cost what it may, the blinds shall be on my window, and not on yours. I shall cease to watch your house from this day; and, if you are still doubtful of me, I shall change my lodgings. You do not know what such a promise costs me; probably you set a light value on it.'

He pondered for a few minutes, and then, as if he had not heard me, asked me—

'Where do you come from?'

From Hempton-in-the-Marshes. My father is dead, and my mother has married again. My father was rector of Hempton; and I only wish my stepfather was more like him. I should never have been here,' I cried, angrily; 'but he persuaded my mother against letting me go to college.'

'What was your father's college?' No. 20 said, more courteously than he had yet spoken.

'St. John's, Oxford,' I said, proudly, 'and he distinguished himself there, too.'

'I remember him,' said my visitor, 'I am a St. John's man myself; and there could scarcely have been two Gilbert Bennetts. Yes, I knew him well.'

'Then,' I said, vehemently, rising to my feet, 'I am ten times more sorry for having insulted your family; if anything had been wanting to bring me to a sense of my unworthiness, you have done it by speaking of my father. I wish you would tell me how I could make reparation, sir. I am ready to do anything in my power.'

'Well, boy,' he said, 'you do appear sorry; and I am bound to believe your father's son. I accept your promise about the windows; but remember, it is to be carried out in the spirit as well as the letter.'

I groaned an assent.

'And now,' he continued, 'half forgiveness is unjust; I shall tell you further what I expect; that when you are well enough to go out, you will come across and dine with us, and make the acquaintance of your divinities behind the blinds. They are very good girls; but the best cure for you is to know them closely, and I venture to say you will not find them half so charming as your imagination has pictured.'

For a moment I was speechless.

'You do not mean it!' I cried, joyfully.

'I generally mean what I say. When will you be able to come?'

'How good of you, sir! I can come any day. I am quite well enough for that.'

'Very well, let it be to-day. Sharp six. You know the house,' he added, laughing.

'But, sir,' I said, almost beside myself, 'your name? May I ask your name?'

'My name is Walton. Good morning, Mr. Bennett.' And my visitor took his leave.

Here was a wind-up to the affair. When the hall door shut, I got up on the table and gave three cheers. I was just about to rush to the window, to see whether he went straight home, or, as usual, into the City, when I remembered my promise, and slunk into my bedroom, as much depressed as was possible, considering I had such a delightful prospect before me for the evening.

My first act was to take out my evening suit of clothes, which had not seen the light since I left the maternal home. My next was to brush them thoroughly, a piece of labour which can only be appreciated by a person in the weak state of health in which I then was. But was I not going to dine at No. 20?

Never, not even on my wedding morning (a few months ago), did I bestow such care on my toilet as on that memorable occasion. I sent out and purchased six new white ties, but after trying them all, one after another, and being dissatisfied

with the result, was obliged to go in an ordinary black one.

Grief the First.

Then my collar was unsatisfactory. How is it that laundresses will not turn over a fellow's collars close up to the band, both corners alike? I profanely wished my washerwoman certain punishments nameless to ears polite

Collars were Grief the Second.

Then my neckstud rolled away, and find it I could not though I searched every corner.

Grief the Third.

But grief of griefs, worst of all, when I got into my coat, I found I had grown so much since my illness, that the cuff of the coat came barely to where the cuff of my shirt began.

Grief the Fourth

In a word, I was in a fever of despair long before my toilet was completed, and barely able to drag my weary limbs across the street about five minutes before six o'clock.

Had I been stronger and heartier, I might have detected a smirk, slightly subdued, on the face of the maid who showed me upstairs, for I believe my history had even reached the basement story of No. 20; but I was too exhausted by such unwonted exertion to be conscious of anything but that an introduction was before me to Helena and Hermia.

I advanced into the drawing-room, saw four people, had my hand shaken by Mr. Walton, and in one great effort to make three bows to three ladies, staggered and fell fainting against some one, Paterfamilias, I believe. When I recovered consciousness, I was on the sofa, and Mr. Walton standing by me, Mrs. Walton was giving me a glass of wine, and Hermia stood at a little distance with the decanter in her hand.

I blurted out some apology, and Mr. Walton said in a good-humoured, kindly way—

'Well, you are a pretty fellow! This is what you call being quite able to go out to dinner! I have a good mind to tell your doctor!'

But I declared I was perfectly well, and only a little giddy with being unaccustomed to the open air, and was very indignant at not being believed. I was not allowed to go down to dinner; but the parlour maid (now minus the smirk) brought me up some soup, of which no praises could be too great; after my landlady's watery decoctions, this was indeed nectar. Other things equally good followed, and I fell asleep at last, not without a slight dread that I might have been asleep all the time, and would awake presently in my own lodgings.

I did not, however, but awoke in No. 20, to see Helena and Hermia reading by the firelight, as I had seen them dozens of times before. I was afraid to stir, lest it should break the spell that was over me, but lay watching them, and wishing every minute would be an hour long.

Then the parents came up, and we had lights, and a little music of the pleasantest soothing kind. I never hear Mozart's masses without remembering that evening; and when the 'Agnus Dei' from the First Mass is played by any one, even now, I feel that inexpressible peace steal over my soul that fell upon it that night, when I heard Helena Walton touch it for the first time so tenderly, with a deep feeling of its wondrous beauty shining out of every sentence.

I went home at last. Mr. Walton saw me into my own room, and charged me to go at once to bed, and though I obeyed him, sleep was out of the question.

Not so charming as I imagined! Yes, a hundred times more charming! No wonder I could not sleep. Again and again came the picture of the drawing-room I had left. Mr. Walton lying in an armchair by the fire, telling me I need not talk unless I felt quite able and inclined, Hermia and her mother at their work, with Hermia's head bent over hers just within my view, and Helena at the piano, heightening the beauty and enjoyment of the scene.

Next day I was too tired to rise; but in the evening Mr. and Mrs. Walton kindly came over to see me; I was in the drawing-room, then, and Mrs. Walton honoured me by

pouring out tea for us, though I own to feeling for the first time that the cups were coarse and common, and that the bread in a cheap japanned breadbasket was not what she was accustomed to.

After this, I spent many an evening at No. 20, and the girls and I became fast friends, even to laughing over the two valentines, which, at their urgent entreaty, I returned to them, for Mr Walton had left them with me the day he called. I was soon established on that confidential footing in the family, which acknowledges, as an undoubted fact, that the visitor was to have the privilege of mending the pens, glueing the work-boxes, splicing the fans, and going the messages, and, ah! happy fate! last Christmas, I went with them to Covent Garden for the holly, and entered into violent competition with the villain (who properly was called Smith) and Helena in the matter of decorating—they persisting in declaring Hermia and I were a pair of bunglers.

These were not their real names, however, though I have loved to call them so throughout my story. She whom I called Helena was properly Joan, and the fairy Hermia had been baptized Agnes, and I lay down my pen to laugh at the recollection of the evening when my thus naming them came to be known.

I had come one evening uninvited, saying, as an excuse to Mrs. Walton, that I had brought Miss Helena some crests and monograms, and Miss Hermia some Honolulu postage stamps.

'Miss Helena and Miss Hermia?' Mamma Walton said, inquiringly.

I stammered out, 'Your daughters,' which satisfied her, not being of an inquisitive disposition, but I told the girls afterwards, amusing them no little.

I said, 'You know when I am here I address you as Miss Agnes; but when I am at home I still think of you as Hermia.'

And this anecdote was soon added to the lists of jests we had in common; and if I brought two bouquets, as I often did when I knew a party was approaching, I ticketed them, 'Helena's' and 'Hermia's.'

In due course of time Joan became Mrs. Smith, and went off northwards with the villain, and about the same time I became, how it matters not, a man of independent means.

St. Valentine's Day was drawing near again, only a few weeks off, and I was sitting in the dining-room, after dinner, with Mr. and Mrs Walton and Hermia.

'You will only have one valentine to send this year, Gilbert,' Mr. Walton said, with a sigh. 'It used to be "one each," eh? Ah! we shall miss Joan!'

'By Jove!' I said to myself, 'here is an opening not to be despised.'

'No, sir,' I said, 'I am going to ask you for a valentine for myself. I am sure you know as well as I do I want Hermia—I mean Agnes. You and Mrs. Walton know me so well now I have nothing to say, but that I shall try every day to be more worthy of her.'

I was too husky to say more, and Agnes having slipped from the room, I had lost a good deal of courage.

There was a little silence, and Mr. Walton shook my hand silently.

'It is what we fathers come to,' he said.

I rose and went round to where Mrs. Walton sat by the fire in an armchair. There were tears on her face.

'And you?' I asked tremblingly.

'Agnes must decide,' she said; and though I knew how that would be, I was glad of the permission to make my escape, and going up stairs, found her sitting by the drawing-room fire.

She had not expected me up so soon, but there was no need to ask her then, for I knew it long before, that I had found my real valentine.

I got her altogether into my care on the next St. Valentine's Day, and we were then, and are now, as happy as the summer day is long.

My wife signs herself Agnes Bennett: it is legally her name; but when we sit together by our own fireside, her hand in mine, or, better still, she sits upon my knee, I call her by the name by which I knew her first—and loved her—Hermia.

# THE LADY IN MUSLIN.

## CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH RICHARD GAUNT DECLARES HIMSELF UNROMANTIC.

WE were sitting comfortably in Dick's room, smoking our after-dinner cigars, and enjoying as much of fresh early summer air as is permitted to make its way through the open windows of London 'first floors,' talking, the while in that easy fashion which is the result of intimacy, philosophical quietude of mind, a good dinner, and an excellent cigar.

If I recollect rightly, the leading subject of our conversation—though of course relieved by pleasant digressions, suggested by our employment—was, the spirit of the age.

'Practical, no doubt,' I replied to a lengthy remark of Gaunt's on the unpoetical, unromantic leaning of the civilization of the nineteenth century. 'Yet, after all, one can't be surprised at it. The time preceding the realization of desire is the time of imagination—of high-coloured expectations. The realization must needs be practical. I regard the present pitch of civilization as the realism necessarily resulting from the idealism of the chivalric ages. Perhaps to make another step we shall have to go through another poetic or ideal period higher in degree than the last, and so on.'

Dick smoked on—he was not imaginatively inclined, so I was neither surprised nor discouraged at the composed silence with which he received an idea that, I flatter myself, *was* a little novel.

'You don't know much of Tennyson, Gaunt, do you?' I said, putting down my cigar, and taking a lately published volume of the poet from my pocket.

'No, can't understand him,' was Dick's curt reply. 'Never could understand any of your mysticisms. At college, I always made a horrid hash of metaphysics, and all that kind of stuff.'

'Yes,' I replied, gently. I remembered my excellent friend had made a considerable hash of not only all such 'stuff,' but other practical kinds of knowledge too, without, however, falling much in his own estimation.

'The only poet I ever read is Byron, and I skip him where he grows, too—you know—up in the clouds,' continued Dick, grinning pleasantly, and letting the fragrant smoke lazily get out of his mouth as it could 'As you said before, I belong to the age, and as a respectable inhabitant of the world in the nineteenth century, I concern myself with only the practical and the get-at-able; I never did a romantic or sentimental thing in my life.'

I could quite believe it. As I looked in my friend's brown, rather stolid, countenance, I had not the least doubt of it.

He was a strongly-built, tall, powerful-looking fellow, with a large head, covered by thick, curly, brown hair—reddy-brown whiskers and moustaches hiding at least a third part of a face that was certainly not intellectual, either in outline or expression; but then there was something so hearty and honest in the dark full eyes, that, in looking in Richard Gaunt's face, the last thing you troubled yourself about was his intellect.

I am—well—I won't call myself an intellectual person; all I say is, that I am an admirer, and I believe understander, of Tennyson. I have a fondness for German literature, besides which, I dabble in reviews, and magazines; and I flatter myself, the satire and sharp-edged wit, which you, my dear reader, appreciate so well, are not the only weapons I could bring to defend myself, were my right to the title of a 'literary man' disputed.

I only make this allusion to myself to throw a stronger light on the virtues of Mr. Gaunt. A man, I say, of my stamp, in looking at Richard's face, forgot to notice his want of intellect; and in those pleasant, kind eyes of his, found something which made him forget his favourite synonym for a human being, 'mind,' and feel glad to call their possessor 'friend.'

We were silent after that candid declaration of Dick's, I pursuing a train of ideas that our conversation had suggested, Gaunt lazily employed in sipping his wine, puffing out his smoke, and watching his opposite neighbour, a young lady of artistic talents, who, seated at her

piano, was giving us, or I suppose him, the benefit of some dreadfully high-pitched songs, gratis.

'She didn't sing badly last night, at Sadler's Wells,' remarked Gaunt, breaking in on my reflections. 'I think I shall go with Philipps, and sup with her next Friday. She's not bad-looking either, is she, Mark?'

'Not at all,' I answered drily; 'and I've no doubt, in a theatre, where full scope is given to her rather powerful voice, she is a charming singer; as a neighbour, I confess I should find her inconvenient.'

Dick grinned again, in a little quizzical way, that was his nearest approach to the satiric.

'I understand you, my boy. Well, you know, it's one of the peculiarities of the age of "Realism."'

What 'it' meant, I didn't inquire.

I am a stern moralist, but I don't like discussing such cases of 'it' with my friend Gaunt.

I took another glass of claret, and lighted another weed; Dick did the same, and drew his chair a little nearer the open window, for which he was evidently rewarded by some sign from over the way, for he certainly smiled, and suddenly waved his cigar in a manner that was otherwise both objectless and absurd.

I made no remark. 'Chacun à son goût' is my motto, with a mental shrug of the shoulder; but I drew back into the shade of the window curtain, and began sketching an article I meant for the next month's 'London Society,' which should contain all the pith of the sentiments my friend's conduct awoke in me, regarding not only himself, but society in general.

I was disturbed by the postman's knock.

Mrs. Briggs herself—Dick was a favourite of hers—brought up the letters, and as my worthy friend happened at the moment to have his head stretched out of the window and his eyes quite engrossed by 'over the way,' she gave them into my hand, with a few pleasant remarks on my own healthful looks, &c.

Mrs. B. knew I was Gaunt's dear friend, so, like a skilful diplomatist, she cultivated my acquaintance with smiles and care, although, as I once overheard her say to some one who was making inquiries concerning me, she didn't know as if I was a 'real gent, for I wore boots as had been mended, only three shirts a week, and was a noospaper writer.'

A man who takes letters in his hand, naturally examines them, and without any very prying curiosity I turned over the two envelopes and examined the writing and postmarks.

Both were from Blackheath; and to my surprise, instead of the manly handwriting of Dick's usual correspondents, one bore most unmistakeably the direction of a lady's hand, and the other, to my still greater astonishment, the unsteady round characters of a child's!

Now I knew Richard Gaunt's history and genealogy pretty well, and was thoroughly aware that he had neither sister, aunt, nor cousin of any degree, in the feminine gender. The Gaunts were a singularly unprolific race, consisting most unbrokenly of a line of only sons. Indeed, I doubt if such a person as a *Miss* Gaunt had ever existed, in their family at least.

I turned over the letters meditatively, then I looked at my friend, who was in the act of pressing the tips of his fingers to his moustache in a very unmistakeable fashion. 'Richard,' I exclaimed sternly, a rather unkind idea concerning Mr. Gaunt's character suddenly dashing through my mind.

Dick popped his head back as if electrified.

'What the deuce is up?' he exclaimed sharply. 'Can't you let a fellow alone, Mark, to do what he chooses?'

'Here are two letters,' I answered serenely.

'Well! and what of that? Do you think that the arrival of a letter is such a rare and important event that you must disturb a man just—just—ah!—she's gone!' added Dick, ruefully looking again towards over the way. 'Confound you, Mark!'

I was quite accustomed to compliments of this kind from my bosom friend, and I received his remarks with a philosophical silence, merely throwing him the letters.

Dick took them crossly, but no sooner did he glance at the lady's handwriting, than his eye lighted up with sudden interest. He hastily broke the seal, and turned eagerly to catch the few gleams of daylight that remained.

I felt puzzled. I had no idea that there was any secret in Dick Gaunt's life that was hidden from me. He was not a man for mysteries, and all his romance—if, indeed, his love-making could be termed as such—was most frankly exposed to the gaze of all who chose to look.

I roused myself from the kind of affectionate carelessness with which I generally regarded Dick's doings, and watched him curiously.

The first letter read, he carefully re-folded it, and then took up the other, which he examined with a smiling wonder, as if pleased yet

considerably puzzled by it. He stroked and curled his moustache excitedly, screwed up his eyes, turned about the paper, and evidently did his best to possess himself of its contents. I could not help thinking that Dick's young correspondent must have some strong hold on his affections to induce him to give himself such evident exertion to make him or her out.

I looked very seriously at my friend, as, apparently despairing of success, he merely glanced at the fourth page, and then folding up the little blotty letter, slipped it with the other into his pocket. I waited a moment or two expecting some remark, but Dick neither returned my look nor spoke a word.

'I had no idea you had juvenile correspondents, Richard,' I said, breaking the silence, and in a pleasant confidence-inviting tone. With a cool, daring opponent like myself, I knew that he was a bad fencer, so I was quite prepared to see him start a little, look uncomfortable, and exclaim, 'Eh!—oh! didn't you?' and then awkwardly attempt to act the natural and unembarrassed, by striking fusees and applying them to the wrong end of his cigar.

'I thought you had no female relations, Dick,' I continued; 'no bothering womankind, you once told me.'

'But I didn't tell you I had no female friends, I suppose,' Dick answered gruffly.

'*Friends!* Oh no, certainly. Don't you choose your friends rather young though?'

Gaunt did not look up or reply, but even in the growing twilight I saw the phenomenon of Mr Richard Gaunt *blushing*, whether with conscious guilt, shame, or anger I know not.

We smoked silently for at least half an hour after that, I feeling not exactly at my ease, Gaunt with a grimness that was his imitation of sulkiness.

Actually sulky he was not, for he answered civilly enough any question I put to him, passing me the tobacco canister with his usual alacrity directly he saw that my pipe was empty, and suggesting brandy and water, as he always did as soon as a certain time had elapsed from our finishing our claret; but he was not conversationally inclined; he smoked lazily and almost musingly; and I particularly remarked that it was in vain our opposite neighbour seated herself at the open window in the full light of the lamp in her most becoming attitude. There sat Dick in his arm-chair silent and grave, apparently quite oblivious of ever having felt the slightest interest in over the way, at any rate quite unconscious of her presence.

How long this unsociable state of affairs might have continued, and whether my delicate silence might at length have melted Gaunt's grimness into friendly confidence I cannot say, for we were suddenly disturbed by noisy boots and noisy voices on the stairs, and in came Phillips, Brown, and Smith, all smoking and all jovial, from a very late dinner, to make us join their expedition to — well — no matter where.

A philosophical mind seeks knowledge everywhere, and what knowledge is preferable to that of human nature? 'Know thyself!' said the Delphic oracle.

'Now the study of human nature,' as I once remarked to Dick, 'in the streets, in a ball-room, or at the Opera, is perhaps not so stern or decorous as among the folios of the British Museum, but it is none the less the study of human nature. A well-disciplined mind pursues philosophical speculation everywhere and anywhere.'

To which Dick replied—

'Of course it does. And it's much pleasanter to study here in this fashion, than in those musty old libraries.'

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## CHAPTER II.

### DICK'S JUVENILE CORRESPONDENT.

The long vacation came at length, and as London grew emptier and emptier, and hotter and hotter, I began to shut up my books, nod over my writing, and think yearningly of country air and fishing-rods, or, in my more energetic moods,

of excursion trains and steam-packets, &c.

The last summer Gaunt and I had taken ourselves to St. Petersburg, and had found each other such good company and so conveniently paired —I being able to make people understand our various wants, and he to pay for them—that on our return we had engaged each other to repeat the attempt the following summer, and in our tour take in the capitals of Norway and Sweden.

During the last two or three weeks, however, Dick had been visibly less eager in planning our voyage; once or twice he had even vaguely hinted that perhaps he would not be able to go—still, he never told me out plainly that he wished to give up the journey, neither did he mention having formed any other plan for spending the long vacation. I was rather annoyed, therefore, to receive one morning a hurried scrawl from him to say that he was obliged to give up his cruise north, as business was taking him off that same day to Norfolk. He was extremely sorry, he added, and hoped I should find some more agreeable manner of passing the vacation.

Dick was a very goodhearted fellow, and not generally careless of others' convenience; and it was quite inconsistent with his character to thus coolly break his engagement and leave me to shift for myself.

'Such is the world!' I exclaimed to myself with a contemptuous smile, as I sat that melting morning over my eggs and coffee, 'all miserable selfishness! *His* business indeed! and I should like to know what I am to do with myself.'

Meteorological extremes are trying even to the most philosophically disposed. (I wonder if the philosopher would have stood absorbed in thought during twenty-four hours, with the temperature 10° below zero, or under the noonday sun of tropical India?) and when the affliction of a small unairy London apartment on a hot August morning is added to the disappointment of an agreeable journey gratis, a tired mind and a light purse feel considerably aggrieved. Mine did. I crumpled up Dick's note and tossed it into the grate, calling it 'heartless' and himself 'hollow,' and for the future I vowed to forswear friendship.

After breakfast I set myself to the irritating task of arranging my pecuniary affairs.

Should I have to accept Brown's invitation to pass a fortnight with him in the Isle of Wight, the only one of the numerous invitations, that, counting on my expedition north, I had not refused? or could I manage a continental trip on my own account? I had been lavish of expenditure lately, not expecting to have to provide for my holiday; so I thought drearily of Brown and the Isle of Wright, or, still more drearily, of a visit home to that very retired village in the fens where my infant eyes first saw the light.

Such meditation did not tend to relieve my angry feelings towards Dick, nor to restore that composure of mind which Epictetus so strongly recommends concerning matters over which we have no control, indeed, so irritating was the combined effects of that letter and the high temperature, that, as I sat pondering over a heavy article I was forced to finish that morning for the '—— Magazine,' and for which I had to refer to that respectable philosopher, instead of reading admiringly his remarks, I could not help distorting my features and calling him an 'old fool!'

* * * *

Alas! for the duplicity of man's nature! From his youth upwards had I known Richard Gaunt and believed him to be the sincerest of mortals—the most openhearted of friends!

* * * *

That evening, having nothing particular to do, after the posting of a letter to Brown, accepting his invitation, I took a hansom and drove down to Dick's lodgings to fetch some books that I had left there. Perhaps I had also just a faint intention of gathering from Mrs. Briggs any information she might have as to the cause of Mr. Gaunt's sudden departure. Of course I had no idea of prying into

his affairs by underhand means. I never dreamt of questioning Mrs. Briggs. Still, if she should drop any hint that to my wise head would be sufficient, why, there would be no harm—none whatever.

The blinds were all drawn and the windows of Dick's rooms were all closed. 'He's off, at any rate,' I muttered as I jumped from the cab and ran up the steps.

My knock was quickly answered by some faint efforts within, at turning a key or jingling a chain, and after a moment or two the door was pushed slowly open, and, to my surprise, a little girl in a white muslin frock and pink sash danced through the aperture and caught hold of me. I was taken a little aback, particularly when the small young lady clasped her hands, exclaiming 'Oh!' in a frightened tone, and then added, 'I thought it was godpapa Dick.'

I was not used to children, and I didn't quite know what to say or do. To take off my hat to that small white frock and pink sash would have been ridiculous, but to stoop down and caress the dignified little head that turned up its abashed face as blushingly as any girl of eighteen, would have been impertinent. 'No,' I said after a moment's hesitation, 'I am not godpapa Dick. Who may he be? Is it Mr. Gaunt?'

The child turned immediately into the house. 'Yes,' she said in a quiet tone; 'but don't ask me questions, please.'

I followed her into the hall, and was about to ascend the stairs when she turned, and, barring the way with her little flounced-out figure, said gravely, 'I don't think you had better come up stairs. I don't think godpapa Gaunt wants me to see anyone.'

I could not help smiling at the very simple manner in which Dick's evident confidante was exposing his secrets.

'Don't you,' I answered laughing, 'and do you think I should see you better upstairs than here at the present moment?'

What the young lady would have replied was lost to me, for at that moment Mrs. Briggs came panting up from her domains below.

'La, miss! run up stairs now, do! there's a dear,' she exclaimed soothingly. 'It's Mr. Gaunt's niece, sir,' she added, turning to me. 'Her and his sister came quite unexpected-like this morning.'

'Oh, indeed!' I answered, looking towards the child, who stood perched on the stairs, listening with a strange earnestness to what Mrs. Briggs said.

'And so you are Dick's little niece,' I added, smiling, and remembering that Mr. Gaunt had neither brother, sister, or cousin within the sixth degree.

The little girl hung her head and replied by an inquiring look from her dark eyes.

'Mr. Gaunt's gone out with his sister, sir. He told me to say he was out to everybody, and not to let any gent into his room on account of Miss being there,' Mrs. B. said, looking rather puzzled as she was me begin to mount the stairs.

'But for me, Mrs. Briggs,' I said gently; '*I* am different, you know. I think I may go up.'

'Well, sir, I know you're Mr. Gaunt's perticklerest friend; but them's my orders: p'raps you'll mention to Mr. Gaunt as I told you.'

'Oh, yes! all right,' I replied; 'you won't be afraid of my sitting in the room with you, will you?' I asked in my kindest, most winning tones of the child.

'I shouldn't be *afraid* of you,' she replied gravely; 'but you mustn't talk to me, because I promised godpapa not to answer anyone's questions.'

'Very good: I will be most discreetly silent,' was my answer; and with that understanding the little flounced figure bounded up stairs leaving me the path clear.

'Dick's niece!' thought I, as I threw myself into his arm-chair and gazed at the face, bending studiously over a number of 'Punch,' but looking up every now and then to cast a quick, sly glance at me.

Large, dark, creole eyes—unchildlike in the sadness of their expression—small, regular features, and curls of that blue-blackness that speaks of foreign lands.

Dick's niece! Dick's god-daughter!

There are strange things in this world—inexplicable, moral, and physical phenomena, and perhaps the uncleship of Mr. Gaunt to this little nine-year-old lady was one of them. At any rate, as I sat there pondering over it, I mentally muttered the words with which I commenced this episode.

Richard Gaunt, the man who in his every word, every act, every sentiment seemed to breathe openness and truth, whose very roughness and simplicity seemed to make a romantic mystery impossible!—to find him thus suddenly surrounded in inexplicable relationships, shook my faith in the whole human race.

I waited for half an hour, keeping most sacredly my agreement with my fair little friend; but my reflections grew gloomy, and I began to grow impatient at Gaunt's absence,

when suddenly the child exclaimed gravely—

'Why don't you smoke a cigar? we never used to mind smoke.'

'We!' thought I, wondering if the young lady used the first person plural in a literal sense, or with a child's irreverence for grammar.

'Don't you? Why, what a sensible mamma you must have got, to have taught you that,' I replied, proceeding to act upon her suggestion.

'Mamma didn't teach me,' she answered simply. 'Godpapa Dick is a long time coming, isn't he?' she added, sighing heavily; and pushing back her tiny hand through her curls, she leant her head upon it, and looked as sad and sentimental as any young woman far advanced in her teens.

'You're fond of your uncle, arn't you?' I said, rather amused; and she answered, 'Yes, very,' with an energy which shot sudden fire into her large eyes.

'Do you often see him?' I asked

gently, my curiosity getting the better of my promise.

'Not very. Since I came here—I mean to England—I've seen him oftener; but before, I don't remember very well. It seems a long time ago, you see,—a very long time. It was not then—no,' she added dreamily. 'I think I used to see mamma oftenest.'

'And your papa, usen't you to see him?' I asked cautiously.

'No,' answered the child, 'never. I never saw him; I used to pray for him; I always used, because mamma told me to. She used to say, "Cecile, if you don't pray God to bless your papa, God won't love you, or bless you." So of course I did.'

'Quite right,' I said approvingly. 'And where is your mamma now; is she out with Mr. Gaunt?'

Cecile raised her head, and glanced up at me, the dreamy look quite disappearing from her eyes; and clasping her small creamy-looking hands together on her lap: 'Don't ask questions, please,' she said in her childish, half-frightened manner. 'You promised you wouldn't ask questions.'

There was something wonderfully taking in the half-simple, half-theatrical manner of this child; and I should have felt myself to be quite a brute if I had not responded to her entreaty, and desisted from questioning her

I tried to make her acquaintance in some other manner. I showed her my favourite pipe; and she condescended to draw near, and took no small delight in tucking the weed into it, with her taper tiny fingers. After that we became more intimate and confidential, and I began to flatter myself that I must have some peculiar talent for winning infantine friendship; for unaccustomed as I was to children, I suited so well to little Cecile's taste, that in another half-hour she was sitting on a stool, just in front of me, chatting most happily, and wasting my tobacco, endeavouring to make cigarettes, and quite making love to me, after her own fashion.

The door opened suddenly upon us whilst we were in that position, and in walked Richard Gaunt!

He started back; little Cecile jumped up. I never moved, but I looked up with, I fancy, a very satirical smile.

'I have been making friends with your juvenile correspondent,' was my first exclamation; 'your charming little niece and godchild, my dear Dick.'

Dick's eyes for an instant lost that pleasant, kind look which I have mentioned to you as being his chief attraction. He looked absolutely angry.

'I don't understand this,' he said in a low growling voice.

'Nor do I,' I answered.

'There are some cases——' Dick began, still in the same disagreeable tone.

'There are,' I interrupted. 'You seem annoyed at my presence, Gaunt. Good evening! Let me assure you, however, that this visit is purely one of chance. Good night!'

I took up my hat, and was striding towards the door, when little Cecile came springing after me.

'No,' she exclaimed, 'don't go—wait a moment. You see, I told you godpapa Gaunt didn't want any one to see me. It was my fault, godpapa, not his,' she added, turning to Gaunt, and stretching out her hands with dignified gesticulations, and growing quite flushed with the energy with which she spoke: 'quite my fault; and he hasn't asked me any questions.'

There was something so ridiculous in this mediation of the little white-frocked, gesticulating figure standing between us two, angry, bearded men—in the protection she extended to the one, while unwittingly she increased the embarrassment of the other—something so very out of the way, and uncommon to either of our experiences, that we both paused; —I smiled, Dick smiled.

'That's right!' Cecile exclaimed approvingly. 'That's right, godpapa, don't be angry.'

'You needn't be in such a hurry, Mark,' Dick said gruffly, and turning away.

And I went back to my seat. I should have been sorry to quarrel with Richard Gaunt.

## CHAPTER III.

### CIGAR CONFIDENCES.

I went back to my seat, and resumed my cigar. Dick stood leaning against the mantelshelf, stroking his moustache meditatively. Cecile sat herself on the footstool, which, however, she took care to draw to a distance from my fauteuil, and contemplated us both gravely. This tableau lasted at least twenty minutes.

* * * *

'Mark,' exclaimed Dick suddenly, after Cecile had been confided to Mrs. Briggs's maternal care for the night, and we two sat by the open window, puffing away in our usual luxurious, silent, and easy fashion, at our cigars; 'Mark, I should like to know your opinion, as a man of principle and education, as to whether one's word of honour, once engaged, may still be regarded as subject to the contingencies of after circumstances?'

I was a little startled by this sudden question. Richard Gaunt and casuistry, was an association of ideas that had never entered my mind, and I was quite unprepared to receive it.

'My opinion, on such a matter,' I began, however, after a moment or two's hesitation, 'is that undoubtedly, or at least'——I paused—knocked the ashes from my cigar. 'Such a question, my dear Dick, I can scarcely answer as a generality. Cases of conscience must be argued according to their individual character. To answer that a promise once given must be kept at all hazards, accords little with the liberal morality of the age; but on the other hand, to declare that the keeping of a solemn engagement depends on circumstances, or chances of the future, proclaims a very lax moral indeed.'

My friend smiled. He evidently triumphed in the idea that he had puzzled me.

'Contingent circumstances,' I continued loftily, with a slight sneer in return for Mr. Gaunt's smile, 'according to some, might read "convenience," you know.'

'Exactly,' Dick answered quickly, and sitting bolt upright. 'That's the deuce, Mark!' he added emphatically.

Had I been of an energetic disposition, I believe during the unusual excitement of the few minutes that followed, I might have made Dick's little secret my own. I could see it *was seething and frothing up in* him, like a small Vesuvian eruption, and nothing would have eased him more, than to let out the lava streams in a good gush. But there I sat, lazily watching the evening light fade from the patch of sky visible above the opposite houses; listening to the distant hum of the busy world, which lay beyond our quiet street, and which came up, not disagreeably, through the heavy evening air; and in the quietude of my enjoyment, I felt a little secret superiority, that led me to criticise my friend's emotion with the eye of a philosopher, rather than sympathise with it, with the feeling of a friend.

As Dick sat there, biting now his nails, and then his pipe; now pulling his moustache, and sighing like a furnace, I regarded him with that serene satisfaction with which a cat looks at a mouse, which she considers so safely within her power, as merely to require her to lift her paw, and give it a tap to make all secure.

I played with my mouse too long.

Mrs. Briggs suddenly popped her head into the room and said that she couldn't persuade Miss any ways to go to sleep, or even to undress, till she had spoken again to her uncle; so would Mr. Gaunt be kind enough to step up stairs for a minute?

Dick went reluctantly.

When he returned, three minutes after, his excitement was over, he resumed his chair and employment gravely.

'Mark,' he exclaimed, after a short silence, 'suppose a man binds himself by a promise to keep a secret for a certain period; suppose that through after-events the divulgence of that secret to a third party, while it could do no possible wrong to any one concerned, would greatly relieve and free from an em-

barrassing position the man so engaging himself, would he be very dishonourable to break his promise?'

'It depends on the nature of the embarrassment,' I replied. 'Should it be merely a matter of personal consequence, strict morality would demand the keeping of such a promise.'

Gaunt was silent.

'Suppose,' he began again, 'that the promise had been given more to ease the weak fears of a dying mind than being of itself important or necessary?'

'A promise is a promise,' I answered, shortly.

Gaunt leant back in his chair, and for more than half an hour the only sound that broke the stillness of the room was his vigorous puffing at his meerschaum.

As the silence continued, and I saw Richard's face grow more and more frowning and determined-looking, I almost repented my severe morality.

'After all,' thought I, as curiosity again resumed her sway, 'there are some cases which bear milder and more liberal treatment.'

'I suppose, Gaunt,' I said, quietly, 'your question had more or less connection with your relationship to little Cecile?'

'Of course,' he answered, shortly; 'but we've settled the point; don't let's bring it up again.'

Dick, like many unintellectual people, is extremely obstinate, and by that tenaciousness of his, seldom fails to carry the day, so I dropped the subject. The solution of the mystery, I felt, was at present distant.

* * * *

Two days after, when I called at —— Street, Mr. Richard Gaunt had left town, and Mrs. Briggs did not know his address.

A week after I was leading a truly rural life with my friend Brown, in the Isle of Wight.

The site of Brown's lodge, as my friend termed his place, must have been chosen with a regard to the strictest seclusion. It was distant from even a village, not to mention any of those gay bustling towns where it is possible to pass at least one's morning hours without dying of ennui. It fronted the sea, and the nearest approach to anything lively that occupied the long hours of daylight, was watching the ships that appeared in the offing through a large telescope fixed on the lawn of Brown's lodge.

My friend was a botanist and naturalist, and in the pursuit of his pet sciences he found the time pass gaily enough. He would spend whole hours delightedly in diving in shady damp dells and ditches after weeds and flowers. With patient gladness he would watch the ebbing of the tide, and then, with his nether garments tucked up above his knees, his feet bare, he would dabble in the wet sand among the rocks, poep about in crevices and holes, and come back to me with horrid jelly-looking things in his hands, quite radiant with scientific delight.

Of course I had no objection to his finding pleasure in such trifles, but at the same time I did think that, as a companion, he was a bore, and, as a host, frightfully deficient.

Even his library partook of his nature: it was all about flowers and animals; the very magazines he took in were on these subjects. I remember asking him, one wretchedly wet evening, in the fulness of my despair, if he had not got some of the new light literature. He brought me, with the highest eulogiums, 'Life in Normandy.'

'An excellent work,' I said, dolefully, laying it aside, however; 'my friend reviewed it in the S—— R——.'

'Ay, yes, a capital review, wasn't it?' answered Brown.

'He called it simple, homely, and unaffected,' I answered languidly; adding, 'that though books on cookery, angling, and natural history are apt to be wearisome to persons who don't care about zoology or angling, this was an exception to the rule. I recollect the article well. —— must have been very kindly disposed when he wrote it. Thank you, my dear Brown. I've no doubt that —— was right, and that, though I am not an amateur

in cookery, &c., I shall find "Life in Normandy" highly interesting.'

I pushed the book gently from me, settled myself comfortably on the sofa, and went to sleep.

The next morning the rain was still falling. I rose languidly from my bed, and looked out of the window.

Nothing was to be seen but a dirty, discontented-looking sea, damp sands (for the tide was out), and desolate-looking rocks. Not a vestige of a human being, except where a large drab umbrella, bobbing about like an excited mushroom, indicated that Mr. John Brown was again in pursuit of science.

To my satisfaction, on the breakfast table I found a heap of letters, amongst which I eagerly seized one bearing Dick Gaunt's splashy writing. It had travelled about a little, evidently, by the different directions and post marks; and on opening it, I found the date to be four days back.

It was a short scrawl, telling me that he had met with an accident which kept him to the sofa; that he was awfully disgusted with his solitary life; and that if I was not too agreeably engaged, he wished I would pay him a visit.

'You may fancy things look queerly still,' he added in a postscript, 'but fortunately your disposition is not over-fraught with curiosity; besides, I can endure this no longer.'

These sentences were perfectly intelligible to me; I translated them—'The secret, recollect, must remain a secret, and I invite you to respect it. I have endeavoured to keep it and myself from all eyes; but I am dying of ennui, and I prefer your curiosity to enduring such longer.'

At breakfast, I told Brown that Gaunt was very seriously indisposed, and that I must hasten to him without delay. The naturalist looked a little aghast at being left so suddenly to solitude; but 'friendship's demands,' I remarked to him, 'were inexorable.' And so I packed my portmanteau in an hour, and in the afternoon was safely landed at Portsmouth.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE LADY AT THE RAILWAY STATION.

Dick had not been truthful in telling me he was going to Norfolk.

The little village B——, from which his letter was dated, lies just on the borders of Berkshire, and his choosing such a secluded, and I may say unreasonable place, considering his age, to pass the pleasant August days, passed my comprehension, and was to be set beside the other little eccentricities that had suddenly shown themselves in his conduct.

Pleasantly we steamed through green fields, and golden wheat, in the afternoon sunshine. The country looked fresh and summery after the rain, and as I lay back in my soft seat (I always travel first class in the vacation time) I looked out of either window with a benign satisfaction on all created things.

I descended from the carriage at B—— in this state of mind; so benign, indeed, that though my portmanteau was nowhere to be found, and it was hinted that possibly it still remained on the Portsmouth platform, I used no bad language, and merely mildly suggested telegraphing at once to town, that it might be forwarded by the next train.

While all the guards and officials were fussing about, I strolled into the waiting-room, which—as the station was intended much more for the use of passengers to ——, a town lying a little out of the line of rail, than for the village from which it took his name—was large and well fitted. A few persons were collected there, awaiting the next train, and I soon became an object of attention, from my constant interviews with not only common guards, but the station-master himself, concerning the lost luggage.

Such notoriety was in no wise distressing to my vanity, and I felt rather pleased and soothed by the evident sympathy my situation attracted from a mamma and her three fair daughters. Indeed, I ventured to address a few remarks, under the circumstances, to the old lady; and then one of the fair girls joined in her observations with such naive

grace, that I was on the point of falling into Dick's weakness, when a tall lady, in a profusion of soft muslin drapery, whether mantle, shawl, dress, or petticoats I don't pretend to say, came and stood on the threshold, and prevented the catastrophe. She stood as if she came merely to have a look at us all, and her eyes travelled round the room from one to another, not in the least dismayed by the glances, male and female, that met hers in return.

Hers was not a face to be easily forgotten if once remarked; still it was not one among a crowd to draw attention. The expression struck me much more than the colour of the eyes, or shape of the features. There

was a look of impatient suffering on it, a look as if she were labouring under some trouble which galled her perpetually, and which she defied. This expression took away from the youth of the face: it cast a harshness over otherwise soft features; and it seemed to harmonize with the careless, but not daring boldness with which she stood half-poised on the ledge of the threshold looking round on us all. Still, judging by the dark eyes, and fair, but 'marte' skin, I should have

supposed her an English brunette. I was gazing like everybody else, when some one asked me 'to be good enough to step this way.' Now, to step this way, necessitated my dislodging the fair spectator from her doorway. I approached, politely bowed, muttered a smiling 'Allow me:' my pleasantness was all lost on the lady. She neither smiled, bowed, nor even looked at me, merely crushing her soft muslin garments back, so as to afford me about a foot's space to get through she maintained her position, and never even turned her head. There was nothing absolutely unpleasant in being forced into such close contact with a charming, pretty woman, who seemed to exhale a soft sweet fragrance, as naturally as a rose or a violet; but at the same time, I felt annoyed at her rudeness; and it was with anything but grief I heard a slight crunch, as I passed, and feeling an impediment, discovered that the travelling bag I wore slung under my arm, had caught in the muslin, and was carrying off a yard or so of it.

The lady turned.

'A thousand pardons,' I exclaimed, lifting my hat, 'but really——'

'It was my own fault; I should have got out of the way,' she answered quietly; and gathering up the torn dress carelessly on her arm, she did condescend to return my bow, but so unsmilingly and unconcernedly, that in haughty displeasure I hurried off, and probably would never have seen her again, when to my surprise a voice called 'Mr. Owen,' and Cecile came bounding along, her black curls flying in the wind, her hat in her hand instead of on her head, while Brunlo, Dick's favourite retriever, followed barking at her heels.

Such an arrival naturally drew attention. Cecile dashed through the waiting-room, and, before any one could stop her, had followed me to the other side of the railway.

On my return, I held my small companion by the hand, and I was amused to observe the disappointed looks of the three fair daughters. I heard one whisper with a slight elevation of her delicate aquiline, 'Married.'

'Well, Cecile,' I said, in a distinct tone, 'and how is godpapa Gaunt to-day? Can he get up?'

I saw people were listening, and I grew paternal. We had quite a romp in the middle of the station, Cecile, Brunlo, and I. It lasted till the station-master came to me, for the last time, to give me certain assurance that, in an hour's time, my portmanteau should be safely delivered at the White Horse Inn, where Gaunt was staying.

Then I prepared to go, and then I noticed the lady in the doorway had entered the room and was gazing intently at Cecile, then at me, and listening to all we said Directly she perceived that she had attracted my attention, she moved carelessly away, and returned to the door.

She did not stand in the way of my egress this time, however, and, as I passed her with Cecile at my side, she returned my courteous salutation with one equally courteous, while her dark full eyes glanced up at me with a look too eager to be coquettish, though too free and unembarrassed to be exactly pleasing.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE COTTAGE, THAT WOULDN'T LET, LET AT LAST.

I found Gaunt in a state bordering on melancholy madness.

He had been at H—— ever since his departure from London, with Cecile and Brunlo as his only companions, and nearly the whole of that time he had been confined to the sofa by a badly tended sprained ancle. I was not surprised, therefore, knowing my friend's active, unliterary disposition, to find him, under such circumstances, very irritable and raspy in temper, and most heartily warm in his reception of me.

The place, he informed me, was secluded and picturesque, and, he obstinately maintained, highly enjoyable, with both legs in a go-able condition: he told me the angling was excellent, the great attraction,

indeed, of the place, and the cause of his choosing it for his holiday retreat, it being a favourite amusement of his.

I soothingly acquiesced in all his remarks, though I knew they were about as true as his journey to Norfolk; and though still Cecile played in and out of the room all the evening, and insisted upon serving us with coffee with her small busy hands, I accepted her presence as the most natural occurrence in the world, and never even hinted to Dick that he need not load his soul with untruths, for it was impossible to hide from me that Cecile and seclusion were the only attractions that H—— possessed in his eyes.

I made my own survey of the place the next day, and the only agreeable feature in it that I could discover, with the exception of its picturesqueness, was its proximity to ——. If driven to extremities, I comforted myself, it would be possible occasionally to seek amusement there from something more lively than trees and streams.

Time did not fly at H——; there was a good deal of sameness in its mornings, noons, and nights; but it was not an unpleasant sameness.

It was not unpleasant to come down day after day to the old-fashioned, oak-panelled room, with its deep windows opening on to a very rustic wooden verandah, up which came roses and jessamine, to breathe their country fragrance over the breakfast-table.

It was not disagreeable either to see the marks of Cecile's childish but still female fingers in the fantastic arrangement of flowers and leaves thereon. And, in spite of the embarrassment and restraint her presence occasionally caused to young men of our age, it was not unpleasant to see her slight figure come bounding in from the garden, as happy as a bird, and almost as swift, and take her place at the head of the breakfast-table, with the grace of an experienced tea-maker.

In the hot noon, the old garden and orchard were shady places to read or lounge, and after one or two attempts, I found it quite possible to pass three or four hours, fishing-rod in hand, wandering along the banks of the river.

Dick was still very much on the sofa. his sprain had been so badly tended from the commencement, that it required great care, and our invalid gave Cecile and myself abundance of in-door work. Poor Gaunt was very much like a chafed, chained giant: his strength was a burden to him. Even as he rested on the sofa, I hourly expected one of his impatient moves of the healthy leg to bring the machine to pieces

In his misery, he had called two of the most celebrated surgeons from London, but even they could only prescribe 'Rest.' In vain I read to him, talked to him, reasoned with, and lectured him; he went to sleep over my readings, and railed at my philosophy.

I was on the point of suggesting to his medical attendant the advisability of bleeding him, as the only means of rendering him manageable, when an event occurred which made all our lives more endurable.

As an attempted boundary to the garden of the inn, ran a low, very dilapidated paling, which, however, soon gave up its duty of separation to a deep, swift, but narrow rivulet, that came rushing along, with almost the force of a mountain stream, from under the dark, thick bushes and trees of a neighbouring wood. Where this tiny river took its source had often puzzled me, and more than one idle hour I had given to attempts at finding it out. All I knew positively was, that in various parts of the rather extensive and thick wood around, I had caught sight of its shining, foaming water, now deep down almost lost to view in the ferns, yellow brooms, and dark shrubs that grew so thickly overhanging its narrow bed, now dashing boldly and sparkling in the open sunshine. The wood was too thick and entangled to allow me to trace its course, till it came rushing out, at the end of our orchard, as I said before, to assist the palings to form a boundary, and separate it from the neglected, weedy garden that belonged to the cottage, that wouldn't let, on the other side.

The châlet that wouldn't let, as the neighbouring villa was invariably called, was a small cottage-kind of building, evidently the whim of some person of taste, who, finding afterwards, probably, that to introduce foreign styles of habitation with comfort, it is necessary to introduce foreign climates also, had left the pretty-looking wooden summer-house in disgust.

To my mind, there was nothing very extraordinary in the difficulty of finding a tenant for it: the thin walls, uncarpeted floors, and strictly foreign style of furniture, seemed, even in the August days, so unsuitable to the English scene all around, the English air, and English sunshine, that our landlady's mysterious story of the late tenant dying there quite sudden, and unexplicable like, 'and is said to walk, sir,' seemed to me utterly superfluous, to account for its neglected condition.

From our verandah we saw distinctly all over the garden on the other side of the stream, and even into the cottage itself; and with true English unsociability and shyness, we used to congratulate ourselves that such a near neighbour wouldn't let, and that we had no prying eyes to watch our doings.

I was considerably surprised, therefore, one morning, as I was wandering along the banks of the stream, to see the shutters of the cottage all open, and a female figure standing in the verandah, apparently directing the operations of a dark-coloured man, clad in an Indian fashion, wearing a turban on his head, who kept going in and out of the house, with as much bustle as an Eastern can manage to put into his grave, dignified movements.

I stood watching them, with considerable interest; for there was something in the careless, but graceful carriage of the lady, that seemed not utterly strange to me; and I waited to catch a glimpse of her face, to assure myself that she was the same person who, at the railway station, had attracted my attention by her peculiar behaviour.

I waited in vain, however; she stood for a few moments leaning against the verandah, and then suddenly with a swift movement entered the house, and I saw her no more. I lingered about the boundary stream all the morning, in hopes of making some further observations, but I was not successful. For about an hour I observed the Indian and an old woman hurry about the place, evidently arranging matters; but the lady was nowhere to be seen; and as the noonday approached, blinds and awnings were drawn down, in true Eastern fashion, bustle and servants disappeared, and perfect quiet reigned in the cottage.

I returned to the house, and in my usual occupations forgot all about our new neighbour, till just before dinner, I happened to go on the verandah, and my morning's curiosity was again recalled, by seeing all the windows and blinds of the cottage thrown wide open, while under the shade of an acacia sat the lady, in a pretty lounging chair with a cushion at her feet, her white muslin dress falling in cool folds down on the freshly-mown lawn, a small table beside her, bearing a coffee cup and a newspaper—the very picture of cool elegance and ease.

The careless, nonchalant attitude —for my lady had extended her limbs in a fashion that suggested much more the idea of luxurious ease than drawing-room decorum—and the soft muslin garments again vividly recalled my railway acquaintance, but in spite of the most studied attention during the whole quarter of an hour I stood on the verandah, I failed in once catching sight of her face. So singularly unsuccessful was I, that I almost fancied she purposely avoided looking my way.

She sat there till the sun set, at least I conclude so; for on my wheeling Gaunt to the verandah after dinner, as usual, I found her still there, in exactly the same attitude; and there she stayed, apparently quite unconscious of our presence overlooking her, till the dusk began to fall. Then, very much after the fashion of a cat rousing itself from slumber, she began to move, to stretch a little, and finally she arose

and began sauntering about the lawn and garden, plucking flowers in an idle manner, and after examining them throwing them heedlessly down. As the twilight grew duskier, and we could only distinguish her movements by the glimmer of her white dress, we noticed she came wandering down in our direction, even to the very brink of the boundary stream, and there for some instants she stood. She probably could hear our voices well, possibly distinguish the words we said.

After maintaining her position for about five minutes, she returned slowly up the garden, entered the well-lighted drawing-room, and soon after we heard a soft but rich voice singing in a style that made us quickly reduce the romance of our new neighbour's ways and doings, to the eccentricity of some Italian Opera star.

Day after day, all this was repeated for more than a week. Apparently utterly careless of our overlookings and watchings, our neighbour pursued the even tenor of her life, only showing her regard of our presence by never once giving us the opportunity of seeing her face, or approaching our precincts till protected by the dusk of evening.

All endeavours at acquaintance, which Gaunt amused himself in making after his usual manner, were not only unsuccessful, but apparently unnoticed.

The rose, that one evening Gaunt threw at her feet, as she stood in the twilight just opposite us, remained where it fell; and in the morning he had the satisfaction of seeing it faded and dead, only marking the spot where she had stood.

In vain we sent Cecile wandering and watching, closer than we dared go, in hopes her childish beauty might attract the lady's friendship. Cecile always came back pouting.

In vain we endeavoured to enter into conversation with the Indian, who occasionally came to purchase provisions at the inn; he replied in the brokenest of English, and in the most unencouraging of tones, to our politest questions. Then Gaunt's stratagem of commencing an acquaintance by one evening, in the midst of the singing, sending the chambermaid, with the gentlemen at the White Horse Inn's compliments, and they would be extremely obliged if the lady would give them the name of the last song she had sung,—was frustrated by her returning a message to the effect, that she sang from memory, and could not oblige us.

The lady, whoever she was, seemed quite determined not to make our acquaintance. Of course this piqued us; and just as much as she drew back, we became more anxious and decided in our advances.

I believe most men, after they have once got over the effervescence of their teens, and early ties, require a little pricking to stimulate them to the exertion of love-making.

A little judicious mystery, just enough to stir without fatiguing the curiosity, or a little repulsion, obstinate enough to pique, but not wound the vanity, are weapons, of which, in the delicate handling of a pretty woman, she herself scarcely knows the force.

The child of nature, pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw, is decidedly the father of the civilized man.

I don't know whether our rather eccentric neighbour had studied human nature. As I consider now, at some distance of time, how events unfolded themselves, I more than think she had; and I can now fancy how that peculiar face of hers must have wreathed itself in triumphant smiles, as, behind the venetian blind, she, in her turn, watched our constant watchings, how that impatient nature of hers must have wrestled with the cool reason that forced her to wait, and bide her time.

That solitary life behind closed shutters; that wearying romance of her twilight walks; how she must have chafed under it!

Had I had my usual occupations, most probably I should have troubled myself very little with my neighbour, or her doings. Even had Gaunt been in his usual health, it

would have been different; we should have contrived to find some amusement for our long idle summer days; but as it was, not liking to leave the very impatient sufferer by himself, I was forced to remain lingering about the house and garden; and naturally the doings of our only neighbour assumed an additional piquancy.

When I was out on an occasional expedition, I used to leave Gaunt in the verandah, and naturally he watched and reported to me, on my return, anything that might have occurred. If I went lounging about, fishing in the boundary stream, I, in my turn, played spy; Cecile, too, assisted us. Indeed we vied with each other in collecting information; and it was quite a race between Dick and I, as to who should first catch sight of that carefully turned-away face.

## THE BLACK SHEPHERD.

### A St. Valentine Extravaganza.

IN Fairy land, where happy love is voted quite the thing,
And joyous spirits frisk and whisk and whistle in a ring,
King Oberon flew home one night, not needing a latch-key,
And found Titania sitting up, and sucking a split-pea.

With sundry little swaggering flights, and tiny, saucy skips,
He pounced upon her like a bee, and settled on her lips.
'O darling pet!' Titania cried—a kiss with every breath—
'These dreadful Brownies of the Hill, I vow they'll be my death!'

'Last April—when in Taurus, sweet! the sun was making signs,
When every bird looked like a goose,—that bird that *never* shines—
They seized a gay court page,—his coat of bachelor's-buttons full,—
They pinched his side and made him ride upon an Irish bull.

'My wings! a sorry jest was *that*. But, oh, my sweetest flower!
What *do* you think they've been and done this very, *very* hour?
They've caught a poor black shepherd, pet! as woolly as a bear,
And with a red cock's currycomb they want to comb his hair!

On each sheep's pretty trotter, pop! they want to tie a clog!
They even say the shepherd's dog is *not* a shepherd's dog!
But when the lambs in frolic mood go scouring down the vale
Sits looking in his master's face, and only wags his tail!

'They say the shepherd black *will* sing, when sheep he ought to chase,
They call his hair a bag of soot left in a sooty place.
*I* saw him with these own, *own* eyes, lit by a glow-worm spark
His wool *was* wool, but then his face was not so *very* dark.

'The white lambs, young and innocent, about him frisked and played,
The black sheep came and licked his hand, and did *not* seem afraid.
As for that naughty puggy-pop! that scurries at his heels,
True, he sometimes barks at cripples—but we know not what he *feels*.

'I wish those eyes could see the shepherd dumbling of *their* choice.
Poor lambs! for him they'd never know love ever *had* a voice.
A lump of salt to smack their lips he carries in a bag,
With a crusty cur to snarl and drive, with not a tail to wag!

'Now, what say you, my darling Obe?—For me, *I* think, myself,
Such goings on this time of year enough to stun an elf!—
Will rivers fill with stocks and stones,—will this green earth grow gray,
Because a man goes pastoring in a beneficial way?

'Dear goodness gracious, Oberon! my little *snug* goodman,
*Do* help your cosy fairy wife as only fairy can:
Don't linger here, sweet! kissing me, but out to meet the sun;
We'll drive the mice, and in a trice we'll see what can be done.

'In spite of Browny's stupid "poohs," and "tushes," "pshaws," and "pishes,"
Just now, you know, love, when the sun goes waltzing with the fishes,
The dear black saint *shall* sing all day to tunes the old sheep bellow—
But here comes Puck, my love of loves, my darling, sweet good-fellow!'

The last kiss scarce had left her lips when up rode plucky Puck,
His wings in senna-bladders cased, and mounted on a duck;
The maddest, merriest urchin wag, the queerest, *queerest* sprite
That ever froze with puckered nose upon a wild March night.

His rein a filmy gossamer, an up-curved leaf his saddle;
A wispy reed-whip in his hand, his punchy legs astraddle.
His eyes were brimmed with fun, his heart was laughing at the core
Such a whibby whobby hobby-horse he never rode before!

'You sweet fat chick!' Titania cried, 'you prince of little swells!
How ever *do* you tuck your toes among the bobbing bells?
Quick! tell me, Puck, what mischief's ripe, and where the Brownies go,
With beetle brows and hearts of stone, like nutmegs in a row?'

'Dressed in *such* frights of garments, Tit, such suits of precious drab
As tint an old toad's mottled stool, or vein a mushroom slab;
Each with a cone-cap on his head, and looking like a fool—
Each with a burry teasel tall to tease the shepherd's wool.

'I roared at them, I whipped at them, I rode at them a-tilt,
Till out of all their firry caps the dainty dew was spilt;
Into their midst in furious rage my duck of ponies flew,
And dashed at all their teasel-stalks, and snapped them each in two

'Away they skirled! of martial Puck the warlike measures rueing;
And when I found the shepherd black, what think you he was doing?
Lest laughter wild should split your sides, your mouth with rose-leaves fill—
He was scrawling on a *sheepskin*, Tit, and writing with a—*quill!*

'Chanting, and shedding round such tears as laughing mortals weep,
He felt the brush of fairy wings, and, tickled, fell asleep.
From off his knees, like some sharp breeze, I whiffed this saucy scroll,
This scrilly-scrawl, signed "*Valentine*," this precious rigmarole!

'Such *lines* were never quilled before, such *words I* never *seed*
Since from a dry papyrus skin old Sap taught *me* to read.
So, father Obe and mother Tit, your ears and patience lend;
With fingers on your lips, cry "*mum*," and hear me to the end.

## The Scroll.

'"I was once a selfish bachelor, shaved in a lonely cell:
They came and made me bishop—why, the saints alone can tell!
I drank too much of Malmsey wine—it is the old, old story,
And fell upon a pumpkin pie in the re-fec-tory-ory.

'"The sly lay-brothers winked their eyes, aghast the abbots stood,
To find so much of mischief lurk beneath a grave monk's-hood.
They took my pie—and ate it! ay, and drained my flowing bowl;
They said they found me wanting, and then hiccoughed—'a lost soul!'

'"The saintesses on every groin sat grinning their alarms,
And all the little cherub-faces they were up in arms.
They fla-ge-la-ted me enough to make a sinner weep;
The Pope, too, came—forgot my name—and called me a *black-sheep!*

'"Now only think what frightful things live, real popes can do!
No sooner had he touched my poll, and looked me through and through,
Than all my red blood turned to black—black as a midnight pool,
Where'er I looked I cast sheep's eyes,—and all my hair was wool!

"'Now all you moody anchorites take warning, *do*, by me,
And barter not the wine of youth for a butt of old Malmsey,
Lest all life's promised honeycombs should prove but empty *cells*,
And maids forlorn prim-roses turn, or noisy deep blue-bells.

'"And *you*—you little shuttlecocks! that from *our* hearts rebound
With hearts as light as cork, and with fine feathers stuck all round,
Such pufferies to puff-balls leave, and never, never more
Go fighting 'gainst the wind, nor make our breasts your battledore!

'"I long to see you wave and float as fairies still are seen,
Whose only circle round them is the circle on the green;
Not roll,—as if kind Nature's hand had sent a cask of wine
To sport and dance on wooden shoes along a railway line!

'"*They* never pinch their shepherd's-purse, while whispering 'pet' and 'dear;'
*They* never ask—*they* never *want*—ten thousand pounds a year.
And now"—dear Titty, you may laugh, but I *will* read it through—
"I wish you all such loving lords,—such *ducks* of children too!"'

ELEANORA L. HERVEY.

# POLITENESS, INSULAR AND CONTINENTAL.

## Dinnering.

'One thing is certain, namely, that a dinner-party is the main institution of society in this country, and one which every class and every denomination recognizes and permits. Many people denounce balls as wicked, and consider evening parties frivolous; but none see any harm in being well fed and made to drink a certain or uncertain quantity of wine.' *The Habits of Good Society*, p. 301.

THAT tocsin of the soul, the dinner-bell, gives the signal for a multitude of observances, of which I will select a few variations as the best way of illustrating rules. Our readers may fairly be supposed acquainted with the subject, even if they have not read the book, which affords a motto for the present paper.

Everywhere the preliminaries of dining differ but slightly from our own.

Except on state or official occasions, or with slight acquaintances and superiors, dinner invitations are often given, abroad as well as at home, by word of mouth, at a friendly call or a casual meeting. 'Will you favour me with the pleasure of your company to dinner on such a day?' Your friend's dinner hour is probably known to you. There is the same ill-breeding in coming late, the same want of tact and inconvenience in arriving too early. You are bound to answer every written invitation immediately; any delay in doing so causes your acceptance to be implied. It is bad taste to require pressing to accept a verbal invitation to dinner. Sensible people either accept at once frankly, or regret that they cannot, stating the reason why.

Owing, perhaps, to military habits, foreign dinners are, I think, more punctual than English ones; and the higher the grade of society, the greater the punctuality. Many first-rate continental *tables d'hôte* are punctual to a minute. Instantly after the last stroke of the church clock, the dinner-bell rings. The cook makes his arrangements accordingly. In general, it is better that you should have to wait ten minutes for the dinner than that the dinner should wait five for you. Want of punctuality at a rendez-vous-dinner, at a pic-nic, hotel, or restaurant, is nowhere other than culpability which merits repression by reprimand.

When the servant announces that dinner is served, the lady of the house takes the arm of the gentleman of highest rank or position, often designating certain ladies to be conducted by certain gentlemen, and all proceed to the dining-room, where places are taken 'with a difference.' In France, instead of our hostess at top and our host at bottom, the lady takes the middle of the table, while her husband sits opposite. On *her* right is placed first gentleman, on her left, second gentleman; on *his* right, first lady, on his left, second lady. The places of the respective guests are often indicated by cards. Several German courts dine at round tables, which are extremely sociable when the party is not large, and are paternal and familiar when there is any considerable interval of rank between the persons who dine together. An oval table has its advantages.

I have seen, and do not like to see, the soup plates standing ready filled when you enter the dining-room. The object is to enable everyone to start fair, and begin dinner at the same moment. If the guests were famishing, it would be a benevolent precaution; but for people not actually dying of hunger, it too strongly suggests a dinner doled out to paupers or prisoners. Moreover, it deprives the hostess of the opportunity of serving soup herself to each guest, in the order of their rank or age, by way of welcome. At dinners where the carving is done at side-tables, and the viands sent round, the lord or lady should distribute at least some one dish with their own hands (Talleyrand's constant practice), as a graceful proof of their hospitable intentions,

and to save their dinner from bearing too great a resemblance to a *table d'hôte*.

It used to be high caste in England to eat with a spoon everything that could be so eaten, except fish, which was not made spoon-meat. Peas, pudding, curry, custard, were all conveyed to the mouth with a spoon. The same of serving. A lady, whose social position was dubious, caused opinion to pronounce that she *was* a lady by helping lemon-pudding with a spoon. Now-a-days, whether fork or spoon, or fork and spoon, you may do as you like, provided you do it without affectation. Nowhere may you eat anything with a knife.

It is not polite to express surprise, repugnance, or ridicule at the introduction and consumption of any eatable which may be new or unusual to your own experience. The world is wide, and you have not yet seen the whole of it. If invited to experimental repasts, such as the Prince Napoleon's Chinese dinners, or the recent French and German horseflesh banquets, you know what you have to expect beforehand, and can accept or decline accordingly. But if fortune unexpectedly bring you into contact with strange messes which others enjoy, good manners require you to *look* as if you could enjoy them if you pleased. I have seen people almost shout, in Germany, at beholding stewed prunes and fish come on in the middle of dinner. In a foreign seaport I have had a circle of rustics, raw from the interior, gather round me, to watch the wonderful feat of oyster-eating; but I soon put the savages to flight by insisting on their tasting them. I have been at tables where dog-fish (such as in England is used only for manure, unless to make cod-liver oil) was served, and relished, being *said* to be preferable to skate. I have sat next ladies who feasted on snails, and who would have been justly offended had my manner shown the little sympathy I felt for their taste. One man's poison is another man's meat. There is scarcely a nation which does not eat something which another nation reputiates as food; witness our consumption of beef, veal, and pork, not to mention eels. During the famine, the Irish would as soon starve as eat Indian corn, while Cobbett, had he been still surviving, would have treated potatoes with similar repugnance.

'Is it quack-quack-quack?' an Englishman, who was enjoying what he took for hashed duck, asked of his neighbour, a Chinaman.

'No, no; it is much better. It is bow-wow-wow,' replied the yellow Oriental.

At a *table d'hôte* at a Pyreneean 'waters,' a mess of rice-milk was offered. It was nicely served in a raised dish, and its surface slightly browned with a salamander. It was a proper dish to present to a party, a certain portion of whom were invalids restricted to a simple diet. A young Frenchman, in robust health, took rice-milk; but instead of eating, he smeared his plate with it, playing with his spoon, and showing other outward tokens of dislike. His lady mother, by his side, laughed heartily at her son's grimaces, and at his adolescent contempt for what had been the sustenance of his childhood.

'Tchut! tchut!' said the head waiter across the table, with a look which showed his sense of their indecorous conduct. Madame and young monsieur were instantly quiet, reserving their mirth for their private moments.

To stare hard at people while eating (or at any other time) is not polite. The French remedy for staring in the streets is good. If you regard a gentleman longer or more closely than politeness warrants, he takes off his hat to you. An Englishman would roughly remark, 'I hope, sir, you'll know me again!'

It could not have been pleasant for the court of France to eat their public breakfasts, in which poor Louis XVI.'s dexterity in knocking off the top of his egg was a standing point of admiration for the crowd in the gallery. In Algeria, it is the height of rudeness to watch or remark on people while eating, and would give rise to sharp rebuffs.

'To see how you tear and swallow that mutton,' said an Arab, 'one would suppose that the sheep, during his lifetime, had butted your stomach with his horns.'

'To see how slowly and lazily *you* chew it, one would say that his mother had been your wet-nurse,' was the angry reply.

During Lord Macartney's embassy to China, the mandarins and their followers took a fancy to enter the dinner-hall and remain standing there all dinner-time, to observe how Europeans ate. Occasionally their curiosity got the better of their courtesy. One day a Chinaman, in his anxiety to see the whole operation, peered open-mouthed over the shoulder of a member of the embassy, and looked down into his plate. The Englishman could stand it no longer. Indiscreetly taking up a morsel with his fork, he thrust it into the Chinaman's mouth. The high-bred celestials took it as an affront. Every Mantchoo-Tartar instantly left the room, and never more returned to see the barbarians feed. This incident was *not* the cause of the embassy's failure, but it certainly could do no good.

It is not polite, in a private house, to breathe in your glass and polish it with your napkin, or to wipe your plate, knife, fork, or spoon, or, in short, to do anything which can imply a suspicion of the neatness and cleanliness of the service. In hotels and restaurants only you have the right, by [illegible] for it, to take those precautions.

General Grosdos, who retained many of his army habits, was dining at a minister's house in Paris. When a livery servant came to fill his glass with wine, he anticipated the movement by wiping it with all his might and main. The hostess, fearing that some little accident had occurred, signed to the valet behind her to change the glass. The wiping process was recommenced, and the glass immediately changed, up to a third, and a fourth, until the general, losing temper, whispered to his neighbour, a senator's wife, 'Does M. le Ministre mean to make game of me, by asking me to dinner to wipe his glasses?'

The lady, with some difficulty, got him to understand that what might be necessary in a camp canteen was quite unnecessary in a Parisian dining-room.

Touching napkins, Ayayos says, 'It is a matter of regret that table-napkins are not considered indispensable in England; for, with all our boasted refinement, they are far from being general. The comfort of napkins at dinner is too obvious to require comment, whilst the *expense* can hardly be urged as an objection. If there be not any napkins, a man has no alternative but to use the table-cloth, unless (*as many do*) he prefer his pocket-handkerchief—an usage sufficiently disagreeable.'

In France, in the most modest establishment, a table laid without a napkin for each person would be considered as incomplete as a bed without sheets. It ought to be so in England. 'The Habits' very properly takes napkins as things for granted, about whose presence there is no question. The mode only of presenting them is open to discussion. 'The napkins may be folded according to fancy. Sometimes they are placed on the plate with a roll of bread inside, and sometimes arranged in a fan-shape in the champagne-glasses. For my own part, I prefer to think that no hands have been soiling mine before I use it, and perhaps the most elegant way is to lay them on the table or plate just as they come from the washerwoman's.

Napkins have their etiquette. They are to be laid open on the knees, and *not* fastened to the waistcoat or button-hole. At the close of a meal, at home, you may fold your napkin and slip it into its ring, to serve for another occasion. Out, you must leave your napkin, wisped up or exactly as you have finished with it, on the table. To fold it, would look as if you considered yourself one of the family, or at least on a staying visit.

A guest, at the close of a breakfast to which he had been invited, carefully folded his napkin and laid it beside his plate.

By way of rebuke his hostess re-

marked, 'I am delighted to have had your company to breakfast; but I don't remember, sir, having asked you to dinner.'

The lady was wrong, I venture to think—unkindly and unjustly sharp to her visitor. Neatness and order are minor virtues, even when applied to soiled linen. If I like to see even things sent to the wash neatly folded, there is no harm in it, but the contrary; seeing that, so, they are more easily counted and occupy less space.

In morals, we are told that one man may steal a horse whilst another may not look over a hedge. It is the same in manners. Not only to one person are permitted eccentricities which would cause the exclusion of another, but in some societies habits are 'the thing' which elsewhere would cause a start of horror. Amongst the Arabs (so severe and exacting on many points of etiquette) it is not unpolite, but rather a compliment to your entertainer, at the close of a dinner to indulge in an action which may be written but may scarcely be pronounced; for although Shakespeare has a Sir Toby Belch, we are nicer now than in Shakespeare's days. I remember a pork-butcher who made a great reputation by his 'anti-eructative sausages.' An Arab, if he ate sausages, which he does not, would ask for the eructative sort. The same mode of relief was formerly allowable in old Spanish society, who doubtless derived the fashion from their Moorish masters.

Even more serious accidents are considered by the Arabs merely as marks of prosperity and proofs of a sharp appetite copiously satisfied. The culprit coolly says, 'I thank Allah—:' complete the ellipsis with, 'for having given me wherewithal to fill my stomach.' To which his neighbours reply with equal coolness, 'May Allah preserve your health!'

At dessert, a coloured finger-glass to each guest, purple, green, pink, or blue—by alternating colours you get a pleasing effect on the white cloth—is a good old custom. There is nothing indelicate in its proper use; and it is really useful. However neatly a person may eat, sugary sweets and juicy fruits will leave a trace on the finger-tips, not to mention asparagus if handled when eaten, which is permitted, if not pretty. Shrimps and shell-fish, which also are allowed to come in contact with the finger and thumb, betray the presence of saline elements. Now, it is uncomfortable, to say the least, for a young lady to draw on white gloves, or sit down to the piano, with clammy fingers. A finger-glass remedies the inconvenience. The hand may be dipped, the napkin slightly wetted and applied to the lips, and that is all, according to *my* code.

A refinement is to supply the finger-glasses with warm water mixed with eau de Cologne. The legend of the invention is this. Two friends strove, for a wager, which should give the more elegant dinner. The elegance of the dinners was so equal that the judges, puzzled, were near pronouncing for a drawn bet, when eau de Cologne in the finger-glasses, at the second dinner, decidedly turned the scale in its favour.

In France, water of mint is sometimes substituted for water of Cologne; which is no improvement, since it is not everybody who likes the scent. There is also another addition which I must specify, to condemn it. In the midst of the finger-glass stands a smaller glass, containing water to rinse the mouth. You *may* do it, because other people do it; only don't if you ask me to dine. That you should not do it, may be proved syllogistically, thus:

In company, nobody ought to do anything which can offend any member of that company. But to many people mouth-rinsing is an offensive operation. Ergo, mouth-rinsing is not an operation to be performed in company.

And yet people socially rinse their mouths who open their eyes, and are shocked, if you touch fish with a knife, cool your coffee in a saucer, eat your soup at the side of your spoon (French), or divide your bread otherwise than with your fingers! Amongst the Arabs, however, *not* to rinse the mouth is a

mark of ill-breeding. The rustic custom of pressing guests to eat more than they want, is almost an equal breach of refinement, which is not confined to any one country.

'Have some more, John. Now do,' said hospitable Bill.

'I can't, Bill. I've eaten till I'm fit to *bust*.'

'Na, na, na; you'll niver *bust* with that. I wish I'd something to *bust* you with!'

Alphonse Karr, novelist and gardener by trade, in his 'Le Chemin le plus court,' describes a feast of the kind given by a country dame, Madame Leloup (The Wolf), who is a satirical portrait of his own dear mother-in-law. It is an excellent lesson on what to avoid.

'She bought up every eatable in the town, borrowed servants and plate, invited none but the most *comme il faut* people, and quarrelled with all her friends whom she did not invite. This dinner, which she called *sans cérémonie*, obliged her to sell a piece of pasture-land. Her dress was a droll assemblage of all the colours of the prism and several others besides. Her ten fingers were adorned with five-and-thirty rings. She never ceased begging her guests to excuse the plainness of her poor repast; but with friends there was no need to put oneself out. Sixty pounds of meat were set before ten people. She addressed only her titled guests, affecting for the others a disdain which she believed excessively *distingué*. She was pitiless in urging those *dear friends* to eat, loading their plates in spite of all resistance, till at last they feared she intended making them swallow the whole of the horrible quantity of food which she had heaped together. She burnt perfumes, whose odour mixed with the smell of the sauces. She called, rebuked, and scolded the servants. She panted and perspired. Her skin, completely scarlet, could scarcely contain her. She looked like an apoplectic cockchafer.'

To improve which text, I here insist on the rule never to apologise for what you set before your friends. If it is bad taste for a host to praise the dinner on his table, it is still more inconsistent and ridiculous for him to make excuses for it. It is taken for granted, as a matter of course, that you give the very best at your command and within your means.

When a long-besieged general invites his staff to dinner, he makes no excuse for entertaining them with roast horse, rat pie, and cat ragout; nor does he apologise for the poverty of his dessert and the paucity of his stock of claret. He and his guests take what there is, and are thankful, without remark. If it were a meal of bread and water, good sense and good manners would require them to do the same.

At most, you may *explain* the reason of any omission or short coming, as, 'I know you like fish, but there was none to be had. The weather has been so rough that the boats could not go out.' If you replace the missing fish with something equivalent, you have done your duty as a host. To say that *you are sorry* that you have no fruit, is tantamount to saying either that you are sorry that it is early spring, or that you are sorry that grapes are a guinea a pound, and that you are sorry that you do not choose to give that price. All which are silinesses best left unsaid. And which of the two is the stupider practice?—for persons of limited means to apologise for not giving expensive dainties (the first-come salmon, forced fruit and vegetables, far-fetched game), or to show their improvidence by giving them? Whatever you give, one item is indispensable, and will be the most highly relished of all. Treat every one of your guests to a *plat de bonne mine*—to looks of welcome. If you have admitted a bricklayer to your table, you are bound to treat him exactly like your other guests, except giving him the place of honour.

While taking care to have sufficient, let there be abundance without profusion. Never put too much upon the table. The error is much easier to avoid now than it was thirty years ago. The merit of moderation, then, was a distinguished mark of good taste and discernment.

English dinners are passing through a revolutionary phase, which is not even yet quite complete. The leader of the movement, probably, was Walker, in his 'Original,' which every one who likes sensible dining ought to read and ruminate. In olden time (see the cookery books with dinners for every month, and even every day of the year) a table, at each course, had to be covered with a set number of dishes, as precisely fixed and as numerous as the pieces on a chess-board. They served for ornament rather than for use, as it was impossible to taste one-third of them hot; and the leavings of a dinner-party were awfully hard work for a family to get through with. It was as bad as killing a calf in the house. The modern fashions of substituting the white table-cloth for the brown mahogany at dessert, of decorating the table with that dessert and with flowers from the beginning, and of carving joints at side tables and handing the dishes round, relieve the dinner-giver of all temptation to make ostentatious displays of masses of meat.

Again, as excess in quantity of the united meal is coarse and vulgar, so scantiness in the supply of any one particular dish is not mean (for it is sometimes unavoidable), but simply absurd. A dish should never have *le goût de trop peu*, the taste of too little. If you cannot produce enough green peas, asparagus, or early strawberries for each person who sees them to have a fair portion, suppress them altogether. Remember Thackeray's sketch in Punch: 'Will you take a little game, my dear?' A lady and gentleman are entertaining. A servant lifts an immense silver cover from a vast silver dish, on which reposes —a roasted lark!

Apropos of plate. A *plated* dinner service has the double advantage of not breaking and of not exciting envy and covetousness, like the golden dishes of royalty. Once, when Louis XIV. was giving a state dinner to the royal family, the courtiers crowded round the table to witness the grace with which his Majesty picked the leg of a pheasant. Amongst them Arlequin Dominique, the famous actor, could not take his eyes off a brace of partridges which lay upon a golden dish. The King observing it, said, 'Give that dish to Dominique.' 'Really, sire! and the partridges too?' replied the ready Arlequin. His Majesty, stupefied, hesitated an instant, and then, laughing at the fellow's impudence, added, 'Yes, and the partridges too.'

Everybody wishes to give good dinners. Large dinners puzzle the givers, because they have not considered the theory of dining, which theory our dining-room reforms enable us to put in practice. The old system was as if a party of twenty were an individual ogre possessing a more than twenty-man appetite. But a dinner-party is not an individual; it is an assembly of individuals, a combination of units. Take, therefore, a good dinner for one, multiply it by twenty, and you have a good dinner for twenty. One man cannot partake of fifty dishes, neither, therefore, can twenty men partake of fifty dishes. Only, in providing for a party, you may have a few more dishes than in providing for one person, to allow for the difference of tastes. If the tastes of the guests were alike and accordant, not a single extra dish would be required.

What, then, is a good dinner for one? Let us take the standard universally acknowledged as sufficient in Paris. You may test it any day at such convenient places as the Diner de Paris, Passage Jouffroy, nearly opposite to the Théâtre des Variétés, or at the Hôtel de France et d'Angleterre, Rue des Filles St. Thomas, leading out of the Place de la Bourse.

Each person is supposed to require a plate of soup; a *hors d'œuvre* or two (*i. e.*, a bit of butter, an anchovy, or a radish, a plaything, in short, to pass the time and fill up crevices); three dishes,—but, in Paris, fish counts as a dish, and vegetables (cauliflowers, peas, or asparagus, for instance) are a dish; an ice, a *beignet* (fritter), an omelette soufflée, or other kickshaw; a trifle of dessert; and a glass of liqueur.

Wine, at discretion, is of course taken with the meal.

Now to apply these principles to a dinner party. First, every guest will have a bill of fare beside his plate, that he may make his selection. There may be two or three kinds of soup, suited to the season, to choose from, as julienne or tapioca in summer, ox-tail, mock or real turtle in cold weather. The *hors d'œuvres* will be disposed up and down the table, adding to its ornamentation, and inviting a trial. Two or three kinds of fish, with their appropriate sauces, will suffice, respecting which 'The Habits' sensibly remarks: 'If there were no other advantage in the Russian system, as it is called, it would be worth adopting only because it enables the dinner-giver to offer more variety instead of forcing him to sacrifice taste to the appearance of his dishes. Thus turbot and cod were once standing dishes at all English dinners, and small fish were banished because they did not put on a majestic appearance. There are many ways of dressing fish which may not be so agreeable to the eye as to the palate. How exquisite is the flavour of some fresh-water fish, and of several kinds of shell-fish, which we so seldom see at great dinners! How much better the variety of trout, perch, fried gudgeons, even eels, mussels, and lampreys, than that perpetual turbot!' It is the height of orthodoxy in France to commence a déjeuner or a dinner with oysters, which are eaten *before* the soup.

Remembering that a private entertainment may be more liberally supplied than a fixed-price restaurant dinner can be, there may be four or five kinds of flesh dishes, quite moderate-sized joints, whether of beef, veal, mutton, lamb, poultry, or game, each with a fitting accompaniment of vegetable (as we eat vegetables with our meat), and some served white and some brown. Then a choice of two or three sweets, intended for the ladies rather than the gentlemen; and then, the standing and fixed dessert. Of course, a servant is ready with salad, for those who choose to eat it with the roast. Celery will be a *hors d'œuvre* to go with the cheese; which may be taken either English fashion, between dinner and dessert, or, under bell-glasses, may form part of the dessert itself, as is the custom in France. The wines depend on mine host's generosity and judicious selection.

No one can call such a dinner either extravagant or a bad one, if well cooked and well served. It may be varied greatly, without increasing either its cost or its cumbrousness. Its scale is enough, and not too much, and its remains will not tax the family digestive powers. Good waiting is of the utmost necessity.

A writer in 'The Times' would introduce a similar principle of simplification to those magnificent messes, the Lord Mayor's dinners, which, he says, are really very bad, not creditable to the wealth of the City, and not gratifying to the majority of the visitors who eat them. He once had to dine off green peas only, although tempted with a long list of things which it was impossible to obtain. The Lord Mayor's guests would be in the same predicament as Napoleon I.'s—obliged to eat a hearty dinner before going out to dine, through want of victuals in one case, as through want of time in the other; for the Emperor, on state occasions, remained at table thirty minutes, neither more nor less; at ordinary dinners, fifteen minutes only.

The correspondent of 'The Times' advised the City Committee for Lord Mayor's day to imitate the public dinners given at the Hôtel de Ville of Paris. Let them provide a complete dinner for a party of eight; namely, the turtle and another soup, the turbot and another fish, two *entrées*, the venison and roast beef, the sweets and the ices. Let them avoid the riot and uncertainty of a hundred other dishes named in a *menu*, and stick to these, and then multiply the fixed dishes by the parties of eight invited. Instead of placing before every one a bottle of burning sherry and handing round only disturbing champagne, let them select a glass of appropriate

wine to go with each dish. Let them insist that each set of waiters attend only to their own party of eight, and not wander off to distant common councilmen with the prime cuts of turbot and venison. By following this simple method, they may inaugurate an epoch of reform in civic dinners, which is extremely needed.

As to the number of diners required to make a pleasant private dinner, there is a golden rule that they should not be more in number than the Muses, nor fewer than the Graces. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances, a *tête-à-tête* dinner may be exceedingly pleasant; as two brothers, cousins, or intimate friends, after a long separation; a young couple in their honeymoon; and other cases needless to specify. But such is hardly social dining. In many people's opinion, the most agreeable dinners are those composed of six or eight well-assorted persons. But that limit cannot always be observed. There are sundry strong reasons which compel it frequently to be exceeded.

If, however, you are obliged at any time to go beyond twelve in making your invitations, let me urge you to raise your figure to twenty at once, or, better, to a couple of dozen. With from fourteen to sixteen expected guests, you are never sure of not being left in the lurch at the last moment, and being reduced to an ominous thirteen. The superstition is not insular, but common to Christendom. There is, if possible, a stronger objection, abroad, to sitting down thirteen to table, than there is even at home. Alphonse Karr has constructed one of his ingenious stories, 'Pour ne pas être Treize,' 'To avoid being Thirteen,' on the accident of a lad and a girl having to dine together at a separate little table in a corner (and on the consequences of the attachment which thence ensued), in order to leave their elders eleven.

The Reverend George Green, Chaplain to the British Embassy in the city of Weissnichtwo, was seated at dinner with his lady opposite. It was the first anniversary of their wedding day. Baby, exactly two months old, was sleeping upstairs in the nursery. The soup was removed. Although fish is rare at that inland spot, a piece of lake trout had graced the table, and disappeared. A saddle of mountain mutton had followed it, and a smoking slice lay on each of the happy spouse's plates, when a ring at the door, singularly impatient for that quietest of capitals, startled them. Thirty seconds afterwards, the servant announced 'Sir John Trecastle.'

'Excuse this interruption, my dear madam; but business of the greatest importance brings me here. Does your servant understand English?'

'Perfectly. Ludwig, go and tell the cook to keep the rest of the dinner hot till we ring for it. Take a chair, Sir John, and do as we do, or at least accept a glass of wine. It will do you good; for you seem fatigued.'

'And well I may! I am half distracted. I have no time to drink wine or anything else. But don't eat that mutton, Green; there's a good fellow. It's a capital saddle, but I have a haunch of venison at home.'

Green and his wife exchanged glances, inquiring, 'Has our sedate representative got a bee in his bonnet?'

'I am quite at your mercy,' the intruder continued. 'There is no opportunity for diplomacy *here*. I am driven into a corner; on my last legs. I *must* have what I require. If you, my dear madam, refuse the favour I am about to ask, I must submit to the disgrace of a complete break down.'

'What can *I* do to serve you, Sir John?' asked the lady, beginning to fear that something serious had occurred. 'What is it that you require so urgently?'

'Your husband, dear madam, and that instantly, this very minute. Listen, while I explain the mystery. You may have heard that we are now giving our first series, this season, of diplomatic dinners?'

Mrs. Green bowed a grave assent.

'Your names are down for the second series. What a pity we did not invite you for the first,—for to-

day! It would have been more just to your birth [Mrs. G. was of very good family], as well as to your husband's official position; and we should not have been in our present difficulty.'

The lady could not help wickedly smiling.

'To-day's dinner is mainly in honour of the Comte de C——. You know, my dear fellow, the immense importance of a good understanding in that quarter. Our relations have hitherto been most smooth and cordial; and now comes this untoward event to put everything at sixes and sevens!'

'Is there any sudden rupture between the courts?'

'Not at all. You know the Comte. With his immense abilities he is both superstitious and a fatalist. He has faith in Desbarolles, the chiromantist, who has told him some extraordinary things, and promised extraordinary fortune, dependent on certain contingencies. He believes in omens and presentiments, and in lucky and unlucky days and numbers. I shall soon believe in them myself; for this will be an unlucky day for me—unless you, my dear Mrs. Green, vouchsafe to rescue me.'

'Explain more clearly, if you please, Sir John.'

'The matter is this. We invited twelve, which, with Lady Trecastle and myself, makes fourteen. The Comte accepted in flattering terms. All went right until this unfortunate morning, when Madame la Comtesse regrets that a sudden hoarseness confines her to the house; but M. le Comte comes all the same—which made us thirteen. Now for no inducement on earth would the Comte dine making one of thirteen. We instantly filled the vacancy with our new young doctor, Hippocrates Browne, who expressed his gratitude for the introduction. Two hours afterwards, Sir Vincent Viator had his leg broken by the fall of a particularly sure-footed mule up in the hills, and the doctor had to set off to set it. Thirteen again! This second hiatus was speedily effaced by the acceptance of Charles Easy, our first *attaché*, who, I think, is rather a favourite with the Comte. But at a quarter to six this evening, when already dressed, Charley receives a telegram stating that his father has had an apopletic fit, and that he must start immediately to have any chance of seeing him alive. Once more thirteen, and my guests arriving! Lady Trecastle says, "You have only one chance now. Beg Mrs. Green to have the immense good-nature and charity to spare us her husband for two or three hours. Say how obliged *I* shall feel, if——"

'I consent,' said Mrs. Green, with commiserative sympathy. 'Go, George, for Lady Trecastle's sake, although it is our wedding day.'

'Singular! It is also ours; but we have had so many that we forget to count them now.'

'But my dress?' interposed the unwilling victim.

'Quite sufficient. You are dressed for your own dinner, and therefore for mine. White cravat, black coat, and the rest of it, perfect. Step into my carriage at once.'

'But, Sir John,' said Mrs. Green musingly, 'supposing your ill luck should follow you, and that, on arriving at your house, you find some other guest in default—you will be thirteen again, for the third time to-day.'

'I may as well remain here, then,' said Mr. Green.

'No,' said his wife. 'I will go with you; and, should another vacancy occur, will throw myself into the gulf and take my place at table.'

'You are an angel of goodness, Mrs. Green.'

'Perhaps I had better just put on a few diamonds instead of these jet ornaments.'

'No, no, no! You are charming as you are. Allow me to offer you my arm to the carriage. There is not a single minute to lose.'

In Weissnichtwo the distances are short. As soon as the carriage stopped, the house door was opened by the anxious butler.

'How many?' inquired Sir John, with feverish haste.

'Exactly twelve, Sir John, in the drawing room, including my lady.'

'Good! We are fourteen then, at last. Serve dinner instantly. Mrs. Green, you deserve our eternal gratitude. Join our party, now you are here; there is nothing ill-omened in fifteen, that I know of. No? You will not? You are thinking of baby. But don't eat your mutton, now it is cold. Wait for something better, even if it come late. *Au revoir*, dear madam! Thanks again.'

The host, on sitting down to dinner, although relieved of a heavy load, was nevertheless slightly absent. Scarcely was the soup removed, and the regulation glass of wine taken, when he whispered instructions to the butler. The man's face betrayed the slightest possible astonishment; but, in Sir John's house, to hear was to obey. That done, the master of the house was himself again, and played his part perfectly in every respect but one; —he scarcely tasted his own viands. The worry of the day seemed to have spoiled his appetite.

'Don't eat, Green,' he took an opportunity of saying in an undertone to the kidnapped visitor, who was seated near him. 'That is, don't eat much. Make only half a dinner. *I* mean to sup.'

'Strange advice for the giver of a feast!' thought Green to himself. 'I am to lunch three times to-day, and not dine at all!' Curiosity to see how it would end, led him to obey the injunction.

Meanwhile, the dinner went off admirably. The Comte, the lion of the party, was pleased with himself, and therefore with everything and everybody else.

At Weissnichtwo, diplomatic dinners are brief, and are rarely followed by evening parties. Often, all is over by half-past nine or a quarter to ten. After a sober allowance of dessert and wine, the lady of the house bows blandly to her lady visitor of highest rank. They rise; everyone does the same, and the entire company proceed to the *salon*. Coffee is served; and coffee, like iron, should be dealt with hot. The gentlemen dispose of theirs standing. After a few minutes' conversation, some one makes his bow and retires, and all the rest speedily follow.

The Comte, on this occasion, was the first to leave. He was too good a tactician to weaken, by prolonging, the brilliant impression he was conscious of having made. Mr. Green remained till the last—a well-bred way of showing that he was in no *very* particular hurry to desert the post he had been forced to occupy. When he did make the move to leave, Sir John said, 'Stop; we are going with you. Lady Trecastle has a mind to taste cold mutton; and, thank heaven, we shall not be thirteen.'

So they drove altogether to Green's house, which he found, to his astonishment, lighted up (internally). Mrs. Green, not taken by surprise, received them with smiles. After an hour's cheerful chat in their little drawing-room, on Sir John Trecastle's complaining of hunger, Mrs. Green opened a folding-door and disclosed a bright supper, consisting of wine and delicacies sent from the embassy, squeezed out of and subtracted from the diplomatic dinner. It was one in the morning before the slumberers of Weissnichtwo were disturbed by Sir John's carriage wheels rumbling homewards.

It was of course impossible, in a place like Weissnichtwo, to suppress the fact of the Trecastles, after their diplomatic dinner, spending the evening with the Greens. But the gossips never knew the real motive. They merely remarked that Lady Trecastle was a stanch Protestant (as it was her place to be), who took great interest in the religious societies belonging to the Church; and that, with their great interest and family connections, it might be a good thing for Green, by-and-by.

# THE COLONEL'S VALENTINE, AND ITS FATE.

## CHAPTER I.

### UP IN THE CLOUDS.

'I NEVER was guilty of such a thing in my life,' said the Colonel, calmly.

'Never sent a valentine?'

'Never.'

'Nor received one?'

'No.'

'Benighted ignorance! Here is a man to whom the most pleasing emotions are unknown; whose heart has never been wrung by the sight of its fac-simile pierced with a barbed shaft, or softened with a delicious couplet wrapped in roses! I'll tell my cousin Mary. Miss Arundel, here is a full-grown man who never sent or received a valentine.'

Now, if any one had been attentively observing him, they might have detected a slight change in the indolent composure of the Colonel's handsome features. His negligent posture became the least bit more upright, and a glance from under his sleepy eyelids towards the lady addressed as Miss Arundel, might have aroused in that same attentive observer some little of the interest of speculation. That is, if the attentive observer had been at hand; which he wasn't.

Colonel Hugh Carton had been leaning carelessly over the back of a couch on which lounged his friend and inquisitor, Francis Graham, the boyish son of the Colonel's present host. And if Colonel Carton had been asked some ten days ago what he thought about country visits in general, he would probably have answered with a shrug, 'Bores!' His opinion had undergone modification by this time, however. Perhaps the Grahams were singularly felicitous in the party of guests they contrived to draw together; perhaps ten days of such glorious weather as rarely falls to the lot of February's infancy had something to do with the complacent state of his mind. At any rate, when young Graham appealed to Miss Arundel, there was in Colonel Carton's momentary emotion a small stir of regret that this was the last evening of his stay.

The young lady was occupied with one of those never-ending resources, the photographic albums, and she did not look up to answer her cousin's speech. It could not possibly matter to her about Colonel Carton and his valentines.

'What a noise you are making, Frank!' she said. 'You drown the music.'

'Music!' echoed Frank. 'A dissipated entreaty to "Take this cup of sparkling wine." You know I ought not to listen to that, Mary. And it makes my flesh creep, and turns you all into water-nymphs and gnomes. No. Whose caricature have you got there?'

'I have got Titiens as Margaret,' replied Miss Arundel, quietly, faithful to her book.

'Somebody dressed up to resemble her, you mean?' said Mr. Frank.

He made one or two more efforts to draw his cousin into what he called conversation, failed, gave it up, hid a yawn with some difficulty, and sauntered away. Those two were hopelessly stupid; the one as bad as the other. And suddenly something seemed to flash upon Mr. Frank, and he exclaimed, 'By George!' and looked back; but the relative positions were just as he had left them.

It might have been supposed that the Colonel, thus left free, would naturally join the young lady in her examination of Titiens as Margaret; but he did not. He only altered his position by leaning against a dark background of curtain, so as to be able to take in the whole room, with all its arrangements, at a glance. Certainly his hostess was a woman of tact. The general fault in these country-house assemblages was, he considered, that the guests were too much *en masse*; too gregarious.

Now, here and there, in Mrs. Graham's drawing-room, small tables were dotted about, admirably placed, and admitting of games for two only, apart from the rest, without being positively isolated: tables at which delightful little flirtations could and did go on with the most comfortable freedom from disturbance. Some one or two of these caught the Colonel's eye in its glance round the room, and he smiled to himself slightly. It is to be feared that he had a disposition to be cynical about them. He never flirted himself; it was an amusement that had no charm for him; but he thought this a very clever plan for parcelling off sundry pairs out of the mass of guests, and making them amuse themselves—and others who chose to look on. Then his eyes came back to Miss Arundel over her book. They rested there with a strange expression for a moment, and then dropped. Other people, perhaps, would have seen little beauty in the face, except the beauty inseparable—in a degree at least—from youth. But Colonel Carton did not see as other people did. He was up in the clouds about Mary Arundel; up in the clouds for the first time in his life. All that was most exalted; all that he would have been sceptical about a fortnight ago, tinted his thoughts of her. He threw the light of stars about her till it dazzled him. He fancied—see how visionary the practical man grows when he is touched—he fancied that, little as he sought her, they were yet together in perpetual, half-conscious thought of each other, and reference to each other's judgment. But his visit was over, and could not be prolonged. He did not yet know whether he meant to go away, having kept silence, or not.

Perhaps this uncertainty was a charm in itself; he could not tell. By-and-by, when the music began again, he left his leaning posture and approached Mary's table.

'It is a pity that pleasant things should come to an end,' said the Colonel, out of his cloud.

From any one else such a commencement as this, by an abstract proposition, might have made her laugh; but somehow the Colonel had got into a habit of speaking to her out of his half-finished reveries, and she was used to it.

'I don't know,' responded Mary. 'They say that pleasure itself would cease to be pleasant, if it had no end.'

The Colonel meditated.

'That applies to the present only; I mean to this life,' he said.

Mary did not answer. There was such an odd mixture of grave thoughts with lighter ones in this man's talk, that he perplexed her. Just now, however, he seemed to rouse himself all at once. If he meant to speak out, there was no time for wandering off into foreign discussion.

'I never thought to close a visit such as this with so much regret,' he said. 'I am obliged to leave here to-morrow. You go also, I think?'

'Yes, I must be at home for my sister's wedding. It is fixed for the fourteenth.'

The Colonel grew a shade paler, as he looked down upon the face that was never raised to his.

'If I thought—' he began slowly.

He never finished. The voice of his restless friend broke in upon him, and he stopped. He never did anything in a hurry.

'Valentine's Day,' said Frank, catching his cousin's speech, and innocently unconscious that he could have been spared. 'A very proper day, too. Now, Mary, confess; haven't you a weakness for valentines?'

'No, Frank.'

'Carton,' said Frank solemnly, 'she is afraid of you and won't own it. Valentine's Day has never passed yet without bringing her a cargo of what she affects to despise.'

Mary laughed.

'And very amusing it is; especially when I get an original lyric from Francis Graham. You know, Frank—'

'Ch—ut! Don't add libel to your other crimes. Carton, when we wore pinafores, Mary promised to be faithful to me for ever. I would have kept my pact and waited for

her—I mean, allowed her to wait for me,' said Frank, twinkling his eye; 'but you see how it is. A wiser man than I am condemns valentines, and my poor annual offering is rejected.'

Mary answered quickly, a little displeased:

'Frank, you carry your nonsense too far. Of course, I am very fond of valentines, and you can send me as many as you like. Real ones,' she added, trying to speak lightly; 'all done up in a beautiful lace envelope, with "To my Valentine" illuminated outside.'

Mary stopped. There was a movement in the room which she understood, and she rose, not altogether sorry to get away.

'I shall remember,' said the Colonel, turning to her. And then he added: 'I'm afraid I shall not see you to-morrow; I start early. Good night, and good bye.'

He might have held her hand a little longer than was usual or necessary; perhaps he did.

But Mary went through the other 'Good nights' with perfect calmness, and no one was sufficiently interested in her to notice that her eyes were very bright and her cheeks had more pink in them than usual. And the Colonel changed his dress and went to the smoking-room, after his habit; but he did not stay there long, and he was very silent. In the early morning, Frank Graham volunteered to accompany his friend for a mile or two. I dare say the Colonel could have dispensed with the courtesy; but he did not say so, acquiescing simply.

As he rode away, Colonel Carton turned his head, and looked slowly up along the range of windows which still had their white blinds down. It is just possible that this wistful backward look was seen, but that is Mary's business, not ours.

## CHAPTER II.

### HAUNTED.

Colonel Carton was in town; a lonely, meditative man. He had spent a whole dull month in town. He had sauntered through club-rooms, comparatively empty; he had acquired secret, and probably lying information, respecting the operas for the forthcoming season; he had read political articles till he was choked with politics, and found himself holding an inquest on poor dead Poland in his broken sleep. He had gone about from place to place aimlessly, with a weight on his mind, and a vague belief that there was a flaw somewhere in the government of the universe, but where it was he could not tell. For when Colonel Carton rode away from the Graham's 'place in the country,' I don't think he ever contemplated the possibility that this thing which had happened to him would happen. The Colonel had never sent a valentine in his life before; he sent one then. It was not a string of mild rhymes of his own putting together; nor a purchased and printed piece of inane sweetness. It is true that he, who did nothing by halves, bethought him of the lace envelope which Mary had spoken of. She was jesting, of course; but she should have one. I don't know how many respectable dealers in such fancy goods hated the Colonel for his hardness to please; and I should be afraid to chronicle the price at which he finally secured a single envelope of the most delicate elaboration of design and finish. And on the outside of this he wrote gravely 'To my Valentine.' There might have been a comical sort of dismay in his face as he looked at the sentence; but he was not ashamed of it: he was too much in earnest. Whatever it looked like to others, it meant for him, 'To my wife—if she will have me.'

He could not have borne, of course, that indifferent eyes should see that dainty envelope and know it for his. But no one was to see it,—that is, no one but Mary. And then he had written his letter, and the light of stars got into it and filled it. He came down out of his cloud to write; solemnly in earnest. The tender words which made their escape, somehow, from his unaccustomed pen, gave him so odd a sensation when he saw them, that he

was fain to lay his hand over the page and hide them from his own eyes as he went on.

What a fool he was!

This he would have said now; for this valentine, which had grown under his hands into an almost sacred thing, never was answered.

Colonel Carton was not a conceited man; but he had a certain proper amount of pride. What had this girl seen in him that she should not only mock him first with an affectation of interest, but absolutely receive his proposal with an insulting silence?

He might not be worthy of her, perhaps; but he was her equal in society's eyes; and, at any rate, an honest man's offer of his heart and home and faithful devotion is at least worth a reply. The Colonel's pale face used to flush a little at those times when he was turning this over in his mind; indeed it might be difficult to say when he was not turning it over in some indirect fashion. He would not have told the episode to his dearest friend—by the way, I doubt whether he had a dearest friend; if he had, that same friend kept strangely aloof from him now. The Colonel had few likings; his heart would have been all his wife's, if—

Well, it was of no use to think any more about it. And, having come to that conclusion, the Colonel would deliberately begin again, and go over all the details of that visit which had been so precious to him.

By-and-by, however, the Queen's speech having gone the round of the papers, and become a thing of the past, people began to come up to town, and the season came in.

Colonel Carton went to the Opera a good deal, for the sake of the music; which was very simple and childish of him; but he didn't care for that. He rode also, as other men did; in fact he lived outwardly as though nothing strange had befallen him; but he was not content. He began to have fits of moralizing about life and its purposes; he began to feel terribly weary and oppressed with all the tramp and bustle of Carlyle's worn-out world; —above all, and at all times, he was haunted.

Once, as he stood staring absently at the carriages, closely packed together in the grand drive, something came flapping at the Colonel's heart and awakened him. It was only a face; a young face in a bonnet, looking out towards him from one of those carriages, but with no recognition in it. He had a momentary doubt, indeed, whether it was anything more real than the spectre which always haunted him; but the doubt was only momentary. Some one said near him that the Queen was coming; but Colonel Carton did not wait to see her Majesty: he turned and went away heavily. He took himself to task for his folly, and tried to fling upon it a bit of his old cynicism. He was very angry with himself indeed. For several days he tried a faster life than was usual with him: it disgusted his fastidious taste, and he gave it up. Once again he was destined to come into indirect contact with the woman who had injured him. He was in the strangers' gallery of the 'House,' and some one tapped him on the shoulder, greeting him with effusion. It was young Francis Graham.

'How are you, old fellow? Jolly slow, isn't it?'

And then he made a gesture in the direction of the curious-looking cradle which is called the ladies' gallery.

'Mary Arundel is there, with Lady Temple—her sister, you know. Married Temple, the Member, last February.'

The Colonel made no movement at all, but kept on looking straight before him. A little fit of impatience seized him. Was he never to get rid of her? Never to be able to hear her name, or think of her, without this strange tumult of agitation? It would be better to leave England at once, he thought. And then he began to wonder, in a desultory fashion, what she thought of it all? Was she merry, like she used to be? Did she enjoy all the gaieties of a town season, with her conscience untroubled?

Perhaps it would have given him

a dreary sort of satisfaction if he could have known that Mary was not particularly merry or gay; that it was all dull work, stale and unprofitable; that the chatter of her companions, when they retired to that little sanctum where the rattle of teacups sounds so inviting, fell on her ear like the buzzing of insects, intolerably monotonous. But the Colonel could not know this; and if he had, he would not have understood why it was so. He waved off Frank's invitation to the place in the country for the autumn; he didn't think he cared about shooting, much. In fact, his plans were undecided; probably he should go to Switzerland, or to Rome; perhaps on to Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER III.

### LADY TEMPLE'S DESK.

'Let me come in a bit, Carton. What an awful time it is since you were here!'

'Just two years,' replied the Colonel, thoughtfully. 'I hadn't this room, then.'

Frank Graham laughed, and made a grimace at the superfluity of looking-glass which surrounded him.

'No, you may get a view of yourself in any position you like. I don't know why you were put here; one of the mysteries of domestic polity, I suppose.'

The Colonel shivered slightly, as a blast of wind sounded round the house and finished up with a dismal moan at the window.

'The fire is comfortable,' he said. 'If I recollect rightly, it's different weather from that we had this time two years. Many people here, Frank?'

'Well—yes; pretty fair. You know most of them. The Temples are here; the governor wanted Sir John to quarrel with about some bill or another. And Mary Arundel is with them. Carton, don't be angry with a fellow; but, do you know, I used to fancy—'

'There's just fifteen minutes to dress in,' said the Colonel, rising with his usual deliberation; 'and I don't know that I can do it, so—'

'In polite language, I'm to "take and hook it," eh? Well, I'll not hinder such a get-up as yours. Bye-bye.'

Colonel Carton gave exactly five out of the fifteen minutes remaining to meditation; which did him very little service. So he would have to meet her again. How? He tried to settle this question, and failed. After all, it did not depend entirely upon himself; it was as well, perhaps, to leave it to chance.

He was down in excellent time, notwithstanding the wasted five minutes; and it fell to his lot to take Miss Arundel in to dinner.

I don't suppose that a more taciturn couple ever descended a staircase together. The Colonel had renewed his acquaintance with Miss Arundel indeed, but with the most inimitable distance and gravity. No one, seeing them meet, would have suspected the existence of those past passages in their lives which once drew them so closely together. And the Colonel did not think it necessary to make conversation either. Beyond the barest civilities, he said nothing, and seemed quite content that Mary's attention should be wholly engrossed by her other neighbour.

That night the Colonel played chess with Lady Temple at one of the convenient little tables before mentioned. It was rather a silent game, so that they could not have made much progress towards intimacy by means of words; neither can I tell how it was that before he checkmated her the Colonel caught himself speaking to Lady Temple with his old peculiar mixture of frankness and reserve accorded only to his friends, while she listened to him, and answered him too, as though they had known each other from childhood instead of having met for the first time an hour or two ago. The psychologist might resolve it into a simple question of natural affinities; at any rate, whatever the cause, the result is certain, that these two sought each other out from the first night of their meeting as old friends might have done.

'My sister is going to sing,' said

Lady Temple, one evening, as the pieces were placed. 'I'm afraid this will be a poor game, for I always listen to Mary. You have heard her?'

'No;' the Colonel was not aware that Miss Arundel sang at all.

'Yet you must have met here once before, I think?'

'Yes.'

'That is strange. Perhaps it was—ah, yes, I remember; singing was forbidden to her just then; she is never very strong. Do you play first?'

Colonel Carton propelled the king's pawn into its accustomed square, and appeared to watch his adversary's move with interest.

'Miss Arundel is much quieter than she was two years ago. I remember that she was the life of all pleasure arrangements. If she is in delicate health, that explains it.'

'Ask her,' said Lady Temple, laughing. 'She will tell you it's old age.—Mary is odd.'

The Colonel looked at her ladyship's blonde face and fair hair speculatively. She must be at least five years younger than Mary, he thought. And then, with a finger on the piece he was about to move, he stopped. As a rule, he did not care for amateur singing; people in the constant habit of hearing first-rate professionals seldom do. But this was another thing, altogether different from the amateur singing of his experience. He kept his eyes on the board steadily, but Lady Temple saw that he was not thinking about the game.

'Suppose we give it up for a time?' said her ladyship.

He looked up quickly, with a slight smile.

'I beg your pardon, Lady Temple; not unless you wish it; I move the bishop.'

Foolish play, as Lady Temple knew, and utterly foreign to his usual tactics; but she said nothing, and the Colonel lost the game in a few moves.

'For the first time!' said her ladyship, triumphantly; 'we will not begin again to-night.'

Colonel Carton acquiesced. Mary was still at the piano, and likely to remain there. When such assemblies as these get hold of a fine voice, there is very little mercy shown to its owner. By-and-by the Colonel got restless, and went up again to Lady Temple.

'You said your sister was not strong. Won't she be tired?'

'Yes,' said her ladyship; 'I shall put a stop to it.'

Perhaps she expected him to accompany her to the piano, but he did not; neither did he join the group of enthusiasts who loaded the singer with thanks and flattery. Mary and he were seldom near each other; when they were, it was as though they had both touched an iceberg, and never again could thaw into any degree of kindliness or warmth. Yet still the Colonel stayed on. He had only come down for a day or two, but a week was gone already. He did not know how closely those keen eyes of young Graham's watched him, nor how perplexed the young man was with his behaviour.

'They make love like crowned heads,' said Frank; 'that is, if it isn't all a sell; *I* never saw such stately politeness between lovers.'

But there was no love-making in the case; nothing at all like it.

And one evening Colonel Carton determined with himself that he had stayed too long already, and would positively take his departure the next morning. He was standing indolently in the doorway of the back drawing-room when he made this decision; and round the fire, in that cosiest of retreats, he saw Lady Temple and her sister, two or three other young ladies, and Frank Graham, all in some animated discussion—all, that is, except Mary. Her face was turned towards the fire, and the profile, which was all he saw, struck him with its expression of weary listlessness. Suddenly Mary turned and looked at him—a strange look, averted hastily in a moment, for she had not known that he was there. But the Colonel saw the quick rush of colour over her face—saw her put up one hand to hide it, and felt desperately that he must go away, or once again he should be a fool.

'Carton!' cried Frank, darting up, and drawing him towards the group. 'The very man I wanted. He never sent one in his life. I heard him boast about it in that very room. Isn't it a true bill, Carton? I've adopted your opinions. Bear witness with me that valentines are silly, childish, nonsensical, everything that's bad.'

The Colonel, with a bitterness that the occasion did not seem to demand, replied—

'As mediums for inflicting pain and unwarrantable insult, I think them admirable, Frank.'

Everyone looked up at the Colonel as he said this. Even Frank began rashly, 'Hallo, old fellow, I didn't think——' and then stopped, not knowing what to say. Lady Temple was the first to break the uneasy silence, which she did with an assumed indifference.

'Colonel Carton judges them harshly. I have had many a laugh over mine before I was married. I don't get any now. I remember that the last I had was on my wedding morning, and I never opened it.'

'Never opened it!' repeated Frank. 'What a shame!'

'No. It wasn't likely I could attend to such matters then. When I took off the outside cover, and saw what it was, I threw it with a lot of old letters into my travelling desk, and there it is now for anything I know to the contrary. It's odd I never had the curiosity to look for it; suppose we have a search now? Frank, you may fetch the desk, if it isn't too heavy for you.'

No one spoke while Lady Temple unlocked the travelling-desk, which looked too ponderous for a lady's use, and had papers in it suggestive of Sir John's big caligraphy. No one noticed the tall figure behind her chair; no one saw the lips compressed and white, the head bending lower and lower, and the long fingers pressing into each other as Lady Temple dived into the secret recesses of the desk. He saw it all now; all his blind stupidity, and what it had caused, flashed across him as Lady Temple held up the long-hidden envelope. Half a dozen small hands were stretched out eagerly for it; one, larger than these, suddenly pressed somewhat heavily on her ladyship's shoulder.

'Lady Temple, may I entreat of your goodness to restore to me that letter?'

'Colonel Carton—to you?'

'To me. *I* sent that valentine; the only one I ever did or ever shall send. Lady Temple, on my honour it contains nothing that could offend you in any way. Another time I will explain fully; now, to my regret and remorse concerning it, grant my request.'

Lady Temple did not hesitate a moment. Something in this man's agitated manner appealed to her too strongly, and once again the Colonel held in his hand the luckless envelope of elaborate design and finish, and looked down upon the address in his own writing, 'To my Valentine.'

'It strikes me that we are being selfish,' said Lady Temple, shutting up the desk briskly. 'Take it back, Frank, and, young ladies, follow me, if you please, into the drawing-room, where everybody is wondering why there is no music.'

The Colonel stepped forward out of his corner. Did Mary know? Did she understand all, and forgive him?

'Not you,' said the Colonel, when she rose to go with the rest; 'not you, quite yet. Surely my punishment has lasted long enough!'

They stood together on the hearth, and the Colonel held out the unhappy valentine above a tiny jet of flame.

'You know that it is your property,' he said. 'I never thought of your sister at all; never thought of any other Miss Arundel than you. How was I to know you were not the eldest?'

'If it is mine, give it to me, Colonel Carton.'

'Presently. I asked you in it to be my wife, Mary; as you had a right to expect I should do. What could I think when I got no answer? Perhaps we have both misjudged each other?'

'Perhaps.'

'Through this error? We have been dreadfully polite these last few days,' said the Colonel, with a comical ruefulness. 'I couldn't have stood it any longer; I meant to go away to-morrow.'

The Colonel paused. The light of stars began to shine about her again as he held out his hand.

'Mary, I would be very true and loving to you. Will you be my wife?'

Perhaps Mary was a little bit afraid of a scene just then, knowing that at any moment she might be summoned to the piano; and she was not strong. Her answer, when she did answer in words, was another question:—

'Will you give me my valentine at last, and let me go?'

I think the Colonel was satisfied with it.

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## TU QUOQUE.

I.

I THOUGHT that we twain together
In one might have blent our days;
If under no light of passion,
Yet in safer, shadier ways:
Or never, be sure, that evening,
Yourself had I dared to claim;
So I thought:—some day, proud maiden,
You may wish you had thought the same.

II.

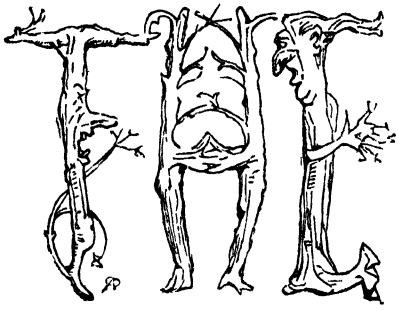
'Tis true, I am grave and silent,
You, light as a bird on wing;
But there's strength in the latter summer,
And only a promise in spring;
And I thought that our differing natures
Would have linkt in the wedded name;
So I thought:—some day, proud maiden,
You may wish you had thought the same

III.

There are gales that change in an instant
Still seas to foaming snow;
And I thought I would be your pilot
If ever those gales should blow;
I'd have guarded you, oh! so safely,
Against all ill that came;
So I thought:—some day, proud maiden,
You may wish you had thought the same.

W. J. L.

## THE CONVENTIONALITIES OF LIFE.



OTHER day I passed by a house, the upper windows of which were half obscured by a large lozenge-shaped tablet of wood, painted about with various colours and devices, of whose nature and signification I am profoundly ignorant. I believe it was erected in memory of the late Mr. Jones by his widow (Mrs. J.), and is called an 'achievement' (which you will have the goodness to pronounce as *hatchment*); but whether the arms which it included were *party per pale* or the reverse; whether the dexter division should be described as a *cross patonce or:* between five dickey-birds *proper* (or *im*proper, as the case may be), and the sinister division as quarterly (or monthly), with its alternate divisions filled by *fleurs de lis*, resembling attenuated aces of clubs, and griffins *passant*, *guardant*, or *rampant*, which of the fields was *gules*, and which *azure*, is more than I can tell you. The only emblem in it which was at all suggestive of the deceased was the crest, which certainly bore some resemblance to a sugar-loaf, and may have been aptly introduced by the disconsolate widow in pious memory of Mr. J—'s original calling, of which I will only now say that it embraced more refinement than could be detected in his manners.

Oh, *risum teneatis?* Which of us who has heard of poor Jones's first entry into the house of Baker & Sweeting as a humble clerk on fifty pounds a year (his papa was a pork-butcher in the Borough Road), who will not smile, I say, at the silly ostentation of this sham heraldry? '*In cælo quies*,' so ran the motto of that strange device. Is it not wonderful that the attainment of our final rest should be announced with such a fuss and flourish here below? Four sable-plumed and velvet-trapped horses to drag one man to his grave! Eight black-coated gentlemen to walk beside the hearse, grim ushers of the black rod (that instrument being tipped with gold at each end), wearing black kid gloves, and—as if their hats were not black enough for all funereal purposes—enshrouding them with blacker hatbands! As for the two speechless janitors who stood on either side of the front door when the mournful pageant proceeded on its way, what shall I say of them, with their crape scarves and muffled broomsticks, their shabby boots and red noses, except that, if there be but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous, that step was the very flagstone on which they took up their position?

Oh, Custom! oh, second Nature! what consummations of folly do we tolerate for thy sake! Strip civilized life of its conventionalities, and what would become of society? We are ushered into the world by them. They hang about us when we leave it. Say you were born, good sir, 'about three of the clock in the afternoon, with a white head, and—' &c., as Falstaff hath it; was not the street-door knocker enveloped some four-and-twenty hours previously with a white kid glove? A *brown* one would not have done, you see. Papa would not have liked it. Nurse would have cried Fie. Nay, I doubt whether Mr. Jeames would have tied up a coloured gauntlet there at all. Can any one tell me why it is *de rigueur* to employ blanched leather under these circumstances? Of course not. No one knows why. No one can afford the slightest explanation. You may throw down *that* glove a dozen times, and no one will accept the challenge.

Let us pass over the bassinet (called, in my nursery days, a cradle), the WELCOME BABY pincushion, the traditional basket lined with pink silk, the

monthly nurse, clutching her stout umbrella and bottle of—of eau de Cologne, we will say. These are everlasting types of babydom. They turn up at the first appearance of little ladies and gentlemen with the regularity of a recurring decimal in life's numeration. Imagine such an event happening without these concomitants; but of course it couldn't, at least in any 'genteel' family. See, the doctor is just taking leave, after his last visit, having bowed to mamma quite pleasantly, and gently touched the sleeping infant's cheek with his right-hand little finger (the one with the carbuncle ring). Papa follows him to the door, and shakes hands, slipping something into his palm at the same moment. What does the doctor do on his part? Does he seem surprised? No. Does he look at his fee? No. Does he acknowledge it in any way? No. He only laughs, and puts it in his pocket with an abstracted air, as if it had been a snuff-box. He makes no remark but 'Good morning,' and continues to laugh in a sort of subdued, gentlemanlike chuckle until he steps into his brougham, when his countenance instantly reassumes an appearance of intense gravity. Perhaps, as the carriage drives off, he condescends to examine the contents of that little paper parcel. What does it contain? Let me see. So many round shiny sovereigns, so many round less shiny shillings. Now if the shillings (or their equivalent and aggregate value) were not there, Mr. Doctor would look upon himself as an injured man. The sovereign is the largest gold coin of the realm, but greedy Mr. Doctor wants a larger one. Why?

'Because the smallest fee I can take is a guinea,' methinks I hear him answering, somewhat angrily. Pardon me, my dear sir, there is no such coin. You shall have twenty-one shillings, or twenty-two, if you like, but don't pretend that guineas are issued for you more than for Mr. Strapwell, the bootmaker, or the artist who designed your coat. Once upon a time such specie really was current, but it has long become extinct, and to pretend to believe in its present existence is a monstrous affectation.

Among other peculiarities of the medical profession, may be noticed the habit which its practitioners have of avoiding the possessive pronoun in addressing invalids. 'Let me see *the* tongue,' or 'Let me feel *the* pulse,' is a usual form adopted instead of the ordinary phrase. It will be observed, too, that all physicians hold their heads slightly on one side in the presence of their patients. Besides being indicative of attention, it has the effect of suggesting a kind and conciliating disposition, which is sure to please. How the famous Dr. Abernethy, with his uncouth manners and vulgar repartee, managed to become so extensively employed is a marvel; but it is certain that few would tolerate his rudeness now. Perhaps in former days the distinctive character of the doctor's dress had an influence of its own. The gold-headed cane, the elaborate shirt-ruffle, the massive snuff-box, tapped so pompously in consultation, may all have exercised a spell with which the present generation is unacquainted. But though these conventionalities have passed away, others obtain, which we involuntarily respect. No medical man who values his position as a practitioner will wear even a neckerchief or gloves but of the most sombre colour; while a surgeon with moustachios (unless he happens to be in the army) is still regarded with suspicion. The absurdity of associating a certain distribution of hair over the face with the qualifications or attributes of a learned profession can only be realized by example. A clergyman, a barrister, or a physician may cultivate his whiskers unrebuked; but let the faintest down appear on his upper lip, and it is immediately considered unprofessional. The opponents of the moustache movement no doubt imagined that they were resisting an effort of coxcombry. Yet we may doubt whether future generations will not regard their unshaven ancestors of 1865 as wiser and less dandified than our own grandfathers, who tortured them-

selves every morning for the sake of a smooth face.

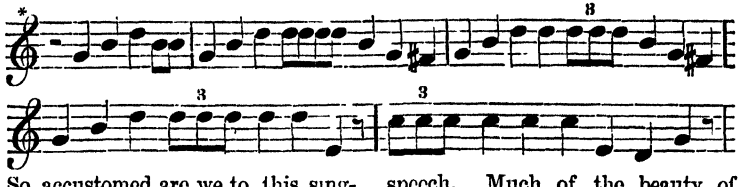
Among professional conventionalities, none are more apparent than those which belong to the parson and lawyer. With the former, a distinctive character of dress is a necessary peculiarity; but it is a peculiarity not more marked than that which may be often noticed in the manner and even voice of the wearer. Nothing can be more stereotyped and monotonous than the ordinary 'delivery' which we are accustomed to hear from English pulpits. How it originated, when it was first adopted, and why educated gentlemen will persist in perpetuating such an absurdity, I have never been able to ascertain. Possibly it was introduced by the Puritans, to whom posterity is also indebted for that singular delight in black trousers which was once a Sunday characteristic of the British shopman. But certain it is that nine-tenths of the clergy fall instinctively into a method of utterance which is unknown outside the walls of a church. It is equally removed from the principles of elocution and the parlance of everyday life. One familiar expression will, indeed, indicate its actual value to the hearer. When we wish to describe a bad actor or an elocution-ising hero whose oratory is beneath contempt, we say that he 'preaches.' But good preaching should be at least good talking, and we are therefore reduced to the conclusion that the ordinary pulpit voice is a poor one.

It is difficult to convey on paper any adequate illustration of vocal sound not being musical, and the more so because this clerical enunciation varies with the length of the sentence spoken. I recently heard a sermon in which the metre was eminently *trochaic*. It scanned, was pronounced, and might have been punctuated in the following manner:

'Ōh mў, Chrīstĭăn, brō-thăr!
Ŏh mў, Chrīstĭăn, sīs-tăr!' &c.

Any one who analyses the style of pulpit oratory will find it usually consisting of an alternate rise and depression of the voice, with a marked emphasis on two consecutive words at short intervals. Let us take a passage from Macaulay by way of illustration:—'There are no errors which are so likely to be drawn into precedent, and therefore none which it is so necessary to expose, as the errors of persons who have a just title to the gratitude and admiration of posterity.' The proper inflection of the voice in reading this sentence is sufficiently obvious. But there is a section of young Oxford men who would thus render it.

'There are *no errors* which are so *lucky* to be *drawn* into precedent, and therefore *none* which it is so *necessary* to *expose*, as the errors of persons who have a *just title* to the gratitude and *admiration* of *posterity*.

The sentence, divided into syllables, might thus be expressed by musical notes:—

So accustomed are we to this singsong intonation of pulpit delivery, that the occasional substitute of a clergyman's natural voice actually takes us by surprise, and almost sounds irreverent in some ears which involuntarily associate a dismal twanging with propriety of speech. Much of the beauty of our English Liturgy is lost in the universal adoption of emphasis on certain words, often wrongly marked, but still continued by a species of tradition. Some curious instances of this mistake occur in the recital of the Exhortation and

* I hope my musical readers will not be mystified by this confessedly unmusical passage.

the prayer of St. Chrysostom; and it is remarkable that, even in the Lord's Prayer, the fourth word is almost always wrongly emphasized. While on this subject, I hope I shall be excused for calling attention to the extraordinary custom which exists among a few members of almost every congregation, of saying their prayers in their hats, on first entering a church. It is a practice which is at once indecorous and absurd. Hassocks are meant to kneel upon; and as kneeling is a recognized act of devotion in our Church, there can be no excuse for a man's standing erect with his head half thrust into the ugliest covering that was ever devised for it, when he desires to say his prayers.

The conventionalities of legal rhetoric and its pronunciation, are not less strongly marked than those of clerical language.

Those to whom the ordinary conduct and procedure of a court of justice are familiar, might easily determine, by the sound of his voice alone, whether the counsel for the plaintiff is examining his own witness, or whether he is cross-examining one for the defence. The easy, conciliating manner adopted in the former case, presents a remarkable contrast to the stern, matter-of-fact tone by which the latter may be recognized.

Who has not heard such questions as—

'Now, Mr. Edward Jones, I believe you are connected with the business of a soap boiler?'

*Witness.*—'Yes, I am.'

*Counsel.*—'Have you been so connected for any length of time?' (*goes through the form of inclining his head, as if to listen with attention for answer*).

*Witness.*—'Yes; for many years.'

*Counsel* (*approvingly, with a musical cadence of voice, repeats*), 'For *many years*;' (*aloud*). 'Business been a very prosperous one, I think?'

*Witness.*—'Well, sir, I think I may say so; middling.

*Counsel* (*with an exceedingly pleasant smile responds in a cheerful dactyl*)—'Vĕ-ry wĕll! Now, Mr. Jones, will you have the goodness to tell the Court what you know about,' &c., &c. (*Here the learned gentleman will probably pull his gown further on his shoulders, and look round the court as if to recruit for listeners*).

We may describe the above as what old Italian grammarians called the 'stile amichevole.' But let us hear the same gentleman a little later in the day.

*Counsel* (*as witness is leaving the box*)—'*Stop* a minute, Mr. John Tomkins! I think you said just now that you had been acquainted with the plaintiff for twelve months?' (*knowingly*).

*Witness.*—'Yes. There or thereabouts.'

*Counsel.*—'Oh! (*Ironically.*) Oh! *there or thereabouts*, EH?'

*Witness.*—'Yes. I can't say exactly to the day.'

*Counsel.*—'Oh! you can't speak exactly to the day?' (*triumphantly*). 'Well, never mind the *day*, Mr. Tomkins, but have the goodness to tell us how often, in the course of *that twelve months*, you met the plaintiff' (*arms a-kimbo, and head on one side*).

*Witness.*—'Well, sir, when first I came to Portsmouth——'

*Counsel* (*interrupting*).—'Have the goodness, sir, to confine yourself to the question; we don't want to hear anything about Portsmouth,' (*contemptuously*).

*Witness.*—'Well, a good many times, off and on.'

*Counsel.*—Oh! a good many times *off* and *on*; and pray how many was *that*? Half a dozen?' (*derisively*).

*Witness.*—'Yes, more than that. In fact——' (*hesitating*).

*Counsel.*—'Now, sir, ON YOUR OATH was it twenty times?'

*Witness.*—'Well—really—I——'

*Counsel.*—'Come, *come*, sir, recollect yourself. Will you swear it was *ten* times?'

*Witness.*—'Yes, it might be.'

*Counsel.*—'We don't want to hear what it *might* be; (*rapping the table in front*). Look up, sir, if you please, to the Court, and answer the question; was it at least ten times?'

*Witness.*—'Yes.'

*Counsel.*—'Oh, it *was*, was it?

Now, Mr. Tomkins, I ASK, YOU, did, you, ever, on, any, of, those, ten, occasions, tell, the, plaintiff, that—' &c. &c.

Who has ever listened to such dialogue as this without being wearied at the endless repetition of this stale chicanery? The same old vapid innuendoes, the same affectation of surprise or misapprehension, the same feeble efforts of irony, the same vulgar suggestions of doubt, which could not be expressed to men of spirit elsewhere with impunity—even the knuckle rapping, and the twitch of the gown, are all reproduced year after year by certain members of the bar, who seem to look on these peculiarities as the Shibboleth of their profession. Where, out of a law court, does a man ever preface his question to the person to whom he addresses by 'I ASK YOU,' and what would be thought of a witness who should reply in such a form as, 'I ANSWER YOU?' What is the use of reminding a witness over and over again that he is on his oath, when he has been sworn in due form five minutes before?

A physician's prescription is written in Latin for many obvious reasons, but among others, I believe, to prevent the patient from understanding it. Could we assign a better plea for the dense obscurity in which legal English is wrapped? Can any one but a lawyer unravel those curiously involved sentences in which the nominative case is separated so far from its verb, that we begin to think it has no right to one at all—in which synonyms abound to such a wonderful extent, and in which there is as great a choice of prepositions as Mr. Lindley Murray himself could have suggested?

We will suppose that a certain mythical personage had insulted another imaginary gentleman: we should have it set down,

'That, *Whereas* he the said John Doe, of Number Onety-one, Caret Street, Asterisk Square, in the Parish of St. Somebody, County Diddlesex, gentleman, did on the blank day of Dash, one thousand eight hundred and something more before, and in the presence of the aforesaid Richard Roe, of No Hall, Nowhere, Captain in Her Majesty's most Honourable Company of Horse-marines, then and there intimate, hint, suggest, insinuate, propose, and imply in, with, from, by and through certain gestures of a derisive kind and sort already set forth, and hereinafter to be more particularly described, and furthermore did actually and of his own free will and pleasure in manner aforesaid, videlicet, that is to say, maliciously, malevolently, malignantly, spitefully, with evil purpose and unjustifiable intent, utter, proclaim, declare, tell, announce, advertise, publish, enunciate, and say that the said Richard Roe was an ass; and *Whereas*,' &c., &c.

These are the traditional conventionalities which Dame Justice delights in retaining, together with horse-hair wigs and pigskin, red tape and robes of bombazin, and 'all that *un*desirable messuage' of absurdities for which we have to pay such a heavy ground-rent.

What shall we say of the stage, and of the long, stern sway which Custom has exercised over histrionic representations? The whole history of Dramatic Art, from its earliest development down to our own time, is replete with conventionalities. In the Greek theatres, there was one species of scene for Tragedy, another for Comedy, a third for Satiric Plays. The tragic scene represented the front of a two-storied palace, with three separate entrances. A royal door in the centre with two inferior portals on either side. Out of the former stalked Agamemnon, king of men, Corinthian Creon, or Œdipus the Tyrant (I mean, of course, the gentlemen who sustained those illustrious characters). But those who filled the minor parts of the *rôles*, the 'deuteragonistes' and 'tritagonistes,' sidled off the stage modestly, right and left, as became their humble rank.

Have you ever seen Don Giovanni disappearing with the Prince of Darkness through a trap-door, or Mephistopheles hurrying Dr. Faustus to his deplorable fate in the midst of blue fire, and not felt a sensation of awe at that horrible, but supremely ridiculous performance?

Stage managers, 2000 years ago, employed similar means to gratify a sensation-loving audience. There were 'Charonian steps,' which led from the Greek proscenium below to Hades, and up and down which the shades of departed heroes were continually passing. If Queen Katherine was carried by angels to the 'skies' of the Princess's Theatre, the '*Deus ex machinâ*' floated with equal facility into the Athenian heaven. Nay, the very thunder of cloud-compelling Jove himself was imitated, and no doubt became as important to Hecuba in the days of Euripides, as it seems to Mr. Boucicault in *The Colleen Bawn*.

The poetical comparison between Life and Life's portraiture has been so often drawn—the parallel has grown so hackneyed, since Shakespeare's time, that people have almost come to accept it as a literal truth—and to apply a realistic standard to the efforts of their buskin'd brethren. But ask any eminent tragedian to lay his hand upon his padded bosom and declare what proportion of praise he could expect from such a criticism.

When the immortal bard made Hamlet tell the players that the purpose of their art was 'to hold the mirror up to nature,' he knew full well that mirror must distort sometimes to suit our moral optics. The truth is, that between the action of every-day life and the by-play of the comedian, there is a *hiatus*—a great gulf, wider and deeper than that recess in which the fiddlers sit, and which we are content should never be bridged over. If we could see ourselves reflected as we really are, across the orchestra, who would care for the representation? We should be *ennuyé*, bored with realities; our social aspect would seem as grim and ghastly as a natural complexion behind the footlights. Accordingly, we accept conventionalism in dramatic language, action, manners, 'situations,' and sentiment. Playgoers are accustomed to it from their youth up; and an old fogey will sit gravely in the boxes and wag his head in approbation at a scene which, if he was beholding there for the first time in his life, would only excite his ridicule.

I once took a young friend, who had never entered a theatre before, to see a popular opera. She was delighted with the overture, the scenery, the costumes. But in the middle of the second act, the *primo tenore* began to make love to the heroine of the piece and sang divinely. Everybody's attention was fixed upon him, and being considerably touched myself, I turned round to see how it had affected my companion. To my surprise, she was in a fit of suppressed laughter.

'Don't you admire that song?' I asked, somewhat astonished.

'Yes,' she said, with tears in her eyes, 'but why *will* he spread out both his hands upon his waistcoat in that extraordinary way?'

It was too true. The unfortunate young man had adopted this means of expressing his emotion. Such gestures are by no means uncommon in operatic 'passages,' but their extreme absurdity could only be recognized by a novice.

The stage walk is frequently little better than a strut, the stage laugh a guffaw, the soliloquy a declamation, the aside speech generally louder than the dialogue, the stage *gentleman*—ah! what shall we say of those wondrous exquisites in mauve-coloured trousers, blue coats, yellow gloves, and crimson neckties, who enter their friends' houses in such exuberant spirits, with such remarkable rapidity?—who pull off their bran-new hats so ingeniously that the white leather lining shall be conspicuous to the audience—who are attended by such witty, dapper, and delightfully impertinent little grooms—and who invariably bring their portmanteaus with them into the drawing-room when they come off a journey? Have you ever noticed these heroes, after dinner, *en grande toilette*?—how they stand on alternate legs and bend the other (like the Nymphs and Graces on Etty's canvas)?—how incessantly they use their white pocket-handkerchiefs?—how affable they are to each other?—how polite to the ladies? What brilliant things they do and utter! What neatly-rounded

sentences fall from their magenta lips! How charmingly their clothes are cut! What magnificent jewelry sparkles on their delicate white hands! I have heard of titled ladies who, sitting in a private box, have been known to *raffoler* on such attractions — who have fallen straightway in love with these charming swains; and I am not surprised. Their manners belong to an age of gallantry and deportment which has passed away from English homes—which is unknown in Belgravia and the 'Corinthian' West, but which cannot, under certain conditions, fail to gratify the female heart. Seen from across the footlights, these gentlemen are as fine gentlemen as you could wish to meet. It is only Miss Plantagenet who detects the nature of their complexions in the green-room, and who hears them abandon in their prattle that troublesome initial consonant, which they have retained so bravely on 'the boards.'

The voice of the stage lady is an essentially artificial voice. There are rich deep tones for the matron, and there is a genteel *falsetto* for the heroine. Pantomime fairies, and princesses in an extravaganza, pitch their accents in a key so shrill, that they seem to be screaming their parts instead of saying them. The recital of blank verse is accompanied by one invariable intonation. They run up and down upon the octave A with unerring precision, and you may point out in the libretto the very word in each line which marks the cadence of their voice.

There was a time when stage conventionalities were more numerous and remarkable than they are at present—a time when Cleopatra appeared bepatched, in a farthingale, and Alexander wore his helmet over a full-bottomed wig. There was a time when, by a venerable dramatic tradition, Hamlet was compelled to kick over a chair when the ghost appeared in his mother's presence. A few of these queer old usages have been handed down to the present time, and excite the wonder of the uninitiated. Such ejaculations as 'Egad, sir!' 'Odds life, man!' and 'Psha!' such elegant pronunciation as *Syewsan* and *kyind* are unknown in private life; but in the minor theatres these peculiarities of speech may still be heard. To this day when a letter is to be read upon the stage, the gentleman who performs that duty generally holds it in one hand and slaps it open with the other. This may have been a necessary fiction when the dust of the pounce-box had to be brushed away, but it is ridiculous to allow it to survive the invention of blotting-paper.

There are, indeed, some stage stratagems which, however absurd in themselves, are indispensable both to the actor's convenience and the enlightenment of his audience. A movement of the hand or arm in an operatic duet frequently serves as a private signal between the tenor and soprano, besides affording a cue to the conductor as to the due relation of his accompaniment. The systematic change of position which we notice among the characters of a play during a conversation not only relieves the eye of the spectator, but often materially assists the action of the piece. Letters are read aloud for an obvious reason; and when we find two gentlemen sitting down on two chairs in the middle of the stage, and recounting to each other incidents of their respective lives with which they must be mutually familiar, we forgive the formality of the proceeding, because we know it is the only means by which we can learn the basis of the plot.

The proprieties of the drama are, in short, analagous, to some extent, with certain conditions of pictorial art. There are occasions when we can dispense with neither; but an undue exaggeration of their importance to the exclusion of nature will be equally fatal to both.

Let us turn from theatrical methodism back to the modes and fashions of private life, and consider how much and how strangely we are influenced in this generation by the idea that what everybody does must be right. I suppose, for instance, there never was a time when gentlemen aimed less at the distinction of individual dress than the present. Twenty years ago the

cut of a man's coat was part of his character, and helped us to understand each other's weak points better than all the skill of the physiognomist. There were the dashing 'cutaway' of precocious youth, and the frock or hideous 'swallow-tail' of sober life. The 'gent' was recognized by his enormous neckerchief or slangy 'Newmarket touch,' with buttons nearly the size of cheese-plates. There were 'sporting' shirts adorned with Reynard's head and brush, with emblems of cricket and field sports, with ballet-girls or bulldogs' heads, *au choix*. There were 'fancy' waistcoats embroidered with elaborate skill, and which proclaimed a dignity unknown among us now. We have abandoned those conspicuous articles of attire, but, in doing so, we have adopted a conventionalism in dress which has placed us all on one comon level. There is one type for the morning coat, another for evening wear, each of which is universally accepted. Our trousers are all cut in the same style. Our hats, with the exception of those worn by right reverend gentlemen, are precisely alike. One characteristic alone distinguishes Paterfamilias from Young England, and that is the shape of his collar. Even this bids fair to be effaced, and schoolboys and their grandsires will soon cut the same figure as far as tailors are concerned.

Who can explain the philosophy of 'full dress?' It is replete with anomalies, with contradictions, with inconsistencies, and is yet guarded by a stern law of custom, which no one dares resist. In the first place we have two distinct kinds of costume which we associate with festivity, one to be worn in the presence of our Sovereign, the other in the society of our friends. Instead of selecting the latest fashion for the former, we are obliged to adopt that which was in vogue a hundred years ago, and which, though far superior to more recent inventions, we could not wear on any other occasion without exposing ourselves to ridicule.

But while we go to court attired like our great-grandfathers, our wives appear there in modern dress, made inconveniently long for an occasion when every inch of standing room is of value. The ordinary evening dress for men is one which might be worn with equal propriety at a funeral or by an hotel waiter. Black cloth suits, shaped in the meanest and most formal manner, and only partially relieved by an evidence of white linen, are conventionally supposed to be the most fitting garments for the ball-room or the dinner-table. Ugly and unserviceable in its design; gloomy in its colour; adorned with buttons and button-holes which are never intended to meet; fitted with pockets which no one dares to use; utterly devoid of any fold or accident of form whereby the arms may be rested or gracefully employed, the modern dress-coat is perhaps the most unsatisfactory that has ever been devised since British flesh was stained with woad. Nor are trousers a whit less ugly. They neither display a good leg nor conceal a bad one, but reduce the appearance of our limbs to one dull and uninteresting uniformity. The full-draped leggings of the Turk have a picturesqueness of their own. The bare-kneed highland laddie may rival an Apollo from his kilt downwards. Even honest Gaffer Jones, with his grey breeches and worsted stockings, is, artistically speaking, 'a more dignified object than we present in our straight uncomfortable leg-cases.

Country gentlemen, engaged in active rural pursuits, have, indeed, long felt the absurdity of adhering rigidly to the prevailing fashion; and it is to their good sense on this point, as well as to the exigencies of real service, that we owe the retention of 'cords' and 'tops' for hunting, and the long jack-boots which distinguish the angler's costume.

When 'knickerbockers' were first adopted for modern wear by volunteers and sportsmen, it was hoped that they would gradually supersede trousers in the city as well as in the field. It was even whispered that a certain royal personage would set an example by introducing their use, as well as making some other

important alterations in our dress. It is to be hoped that the idea will not be lost sight of. All attempted reformations of the kind are hopeless, unless they have an origin in those quarters where fashions usually take their rise. Whatever may have been the merits or demerits of the Bloomer costume, no lady would have cared to imitate a taste which, in England, was first flaunted at the casinos and behind the counter of a gin-shop.

But gentlemen need not be ashamed to wear that which the First Gentleman in England may choose to wear, especially if the selection be a good one, as in the present case it promised to be. Mr. Punch thought fit to make merry with the notion; but the ridicule was ill-timed, and, may-be, did injury to a good cause in which more artistic interest is involved than the public is perhaps aware of.

It is precisely because our present dress is so ugly, and so utterly unmanageable in a painter's or sculptor's hands, that a great number of foolish conventionalisms have become identified with modern art. Portrait busts of men, for instance, rarely represent the costume of the day. They are almost invariably draped round with a series of heavy folds, which are more suggestive of a wet blanket than anything else. It would be impossible to say who first adopted this ridiculous expedient (infinitely more ridiculous than that which it purposes to avoid); but, once accepted, it continues to be accepted as legitimate work, and nothing short of an art-revolution will probably alter the fashion.

Pictorial methodisms are, as a rule, of too technical a nature to be understood by the general public. Yet most of us can appreciate the absurd standards of taste which characterised the work of the Georgian age, and are sufficiently familiar with the real beauties of landscape to be able to laugh at Constable and his 'brown tree.' There was a time when gentlemen thought they could improve upon nature in their own inventions; when Alpine scenes were 'composed,' as the phrase was, within the four walls of a London studio, and green grass was toned down to a genteel drab colour, to suit the requirements of High Art. Poor Haydon conceived that it was beneath his dignity to paint figures less than life-size, and endeavoured to derive a classic inspiration by puzzling over his Homer with a Lexicon. Is there a more lamentable episode in the history of British Art, than that ardent, clever, vain, unfortunate egotist raving about the Grand School; taking heaven by storm with his prayers; stumbling over mutilated fragments of the antique, and leaving behind him, after a terrible death, works whose fame has scarce survived his own generation?

The pedantry of that day is fast passing into disrepute; but a few old veterans of the brush and chisel still cling fondly to its ancient traditions.

The deities of Olympus—the Nymphs and Graces of a bygone age—still linger here and there on exhibition walls; still find some rich old fogey of a Macænas to appreciate their naked charms. A venerable sculptor, who shall be nameless, but who rose to eminence in an age when Dr. Lemprière's famous dictionary was the artist's favourite text-book, and every limner was supposed to be familiar with the romantic details of the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey,'—this brave old sculptor, I say, modelled not long ago a charming group of a mother and child, in an attitude which, to do him justice, he had borrowed from the realities of peasant life. A friend who had seen and admired the design at an early stage, was surprised, on a second visit, to find the Contadina arrayed in a Greek chiton, and the infant decorated with a pair of wings.

'How is this?' he asked. 'Was it not to be a group of mother and child?'

'I modelled them from nature,' answered the old sculptor—'but I could not leave them so.'

'And why not?'

'Well, you see, the mother and child were very well in their way; but they wouldn't have been a work

of art. So I draped the woman as a nymph, after the antique, and turned the boy into a Cupid. *That makes it a work of art.* Eros and Euphrosyne, I call it now.'

The introduction of this pseudo-classic element was not confined to marble or to canvas in the last century. It characterised the poet's work as well. A man could not write a set of verses on the most ordinary subject without beginning by an invocation to the Muses. He was always bidding his lyre to 'awake,' or calling upon some imaginary goddess to 'inspire his lays.' Of what sort the inspiration was, those who are familiar with the heroic couplets of that period can best determine. The very language employed is full of sickly sentiment and hackneyed similes—of allusions to Greek pastoral, and Roman theology, as if there was no scenery out of Arcadia, and no poetry in religion since the death of Tiberius. Every shepherd is called a 'swain.' Every milkmaid becomes a 'nymph.' Ploughman Hodge takes 'Corydon' as his *nom de guerre*. Master Chawbacon is rechristened 'Alexis.' And as these 'am'rous youths' must necessarily be provided with sweethearts, a host of fine ladies await their wooing in 'flowery meads' and 'mossy bowers,' as if love-making were one of the most serious duties of a shepherd's life. Daphne, Chloe, Belinda, Clarissa, Celia, Delia—heroines of a golden age—for whom so many gallant youth contended; who were in the habit of transfixing lovers with a glance, or ruthlessly leaving your rivals to fill the evening air with 'fruitless plaints,'—where are ye now? Who is Sylvia? Was there ever a time when she was declared incomparably superior to any other of her sex upon the dull earth dwelling? Is any gentleman prepared to aver that Phyllis is his only joy, for no better reason than because she is faithless as the winds or seas? These are figurative expressions which held good in the romantic days of the Renaissance, but sound queerly in our dull, prosaic ear.

When the author of 'The Seasons' wishes to describe a sunset, he tells us that Apollo's weary chariot seeks the bowers of Amphitrite. By-and-by, 'Evening yields the world to night; not in her winter robe *of Stygian woof*, but loose arrayed,' &c. Gray alludes to adversity, not as the work of a spirit of evil, but as a personage whom he calls the daughter of Jove.

It was the way with all these bards to don the toga of a sham Augustan age; to deck their venerable night-capped heads with imaginary chaplets, to raise ideal altars to Apollo; to pour out libations to Bacchus in theory, while they were actually boozing themselves. It was the remnant of an ancient superstition, which no one believed in but which everybody affected. With Dryden and Pope it was pedantry: with their later imitators it became nonsense. It was William Cowper who first abandoned the silly fashion of the day, and taught English poets to look to their own age and country for inspiration. Instead of composing odes to Venus, or eclogues for Cordelia and Smilinda, the honest rhymer sets his mother's portrait before him, and celebrates it in sweet and simple verse, which will long be remembered when the stilted distichs of his predecessors are forgotten. Instead of hobbling over the pasteboard Parnassus which they had raised, he sat down by the banks of the Ouse, and found that retreat not only more to his taste, but infinitely more suggestive of romance than the likeness of any mountain Phocis.

Crabbe followed up the good cause, and boldly put the 'poetic fallacy' in its true light. It must have startled some of the old poet-asters of his day to read such lines as these.—

'Fled are those times when in harmonious strains
The rustic poet praised his native plains
No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty or their nymph's rehearse
Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
And shepherds' boys their amorous pains reveal—
The only pains, alas! they never feel.
On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,
If Tityrus found the golden age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where fancy, leads the way?'

Truth and nature were not long neglected after this. The tide of public taste began to change, and soon set in an opposite direction. Men began to feel that it was one thing for a poet to summon the aid of Clio, but another to receive her inspiration. The modern Pegasus had proved to be no better than a hobby-horse. Instead of soaring to the celestial regions, it had been ridden to death on earth, not before all were tired of its dull and measured trot. A new race of poets arose, whose muse was earthly indeed in her form, but infinitely more spiritual in her nature than the shadowy nine whom it had been the fashion to invoke. Scott, Wordsworth, Byron, Moore, struck off, link by link, the chains which fettered the old school. But it remained for Alfred Tennyson to brush away the last remnants of quasi-classic conventionalism, and to exchange for manly English verse the mock-heroic language and metre of the eighteenth century.

It seems difficult at first to distinguish between customs and proprieties—the mode and the manner of the day, but, in reality, these are far from identical. Fashion may be, and often is, regulated to some extent by taste, but conventionalism does not enter the field of æsthetics at all. It is simply the doing what everybody does for no better reason than because every one does it. For instance, we have two distinct sorts of dress; one rigid, formal, and uncomfortable, for town wear, the other easy, serviceable, and comparatively picturesque, for rural life. Both are recognized by society at large; both are worn on certain occasions and in certain places with confessed propriety. But a coat or hat which is considered perfectly orthodox a few miles out of London, would become, in the opinion of Mrs. Grundy, eccentric, and even plebeian, in Regent Street; and, in short, as the world goes, a man may step into a train as a gentleman, and get out of it, at the end of an hour's ride, like a snob. It is hardly possible to over-estimate the loss which a man of any standing would sustain in the eyes of his friends by being seen at the West End with anything but a 'chimney-pot' on his head. In the year 1851, when everyone hoped and believed that that abominable invention would be discarded, I remember having a long discussion with a hatter on the probabilities of its becoming extinct. He differed from the then prevailing opinion, which I shared, and he has proved a true prophet. He admitted that it was ugly, uncomfortable, useless, and so forth. We had exhausted every epithet in its abuse, when he suddenly stopped, and said—

'But, after all, sir, *nothing looks so gentlemanlike.*'

In that short argument lie the *fons et origo* of half the conventionalities of life. Everybody is afraid of differing from his neighbour, and his neighbour holds that what everybody does must be right.

It is curious to notice how long some social traditions have survived the cause of their original observance. In letter-writing, for instance, the expressions of affection used at the beginning and end of an epistle had a meaning when travelling was rare, and the correspondents were separated by long and tedious journeys from each other. But now, when a few hours' notice will bring together friends from any part of England, and the penny post may insure a letter every morning, we still continue to use the initiatory endearment and end by expressing our regard for people whom we are in the daily habit of seeing. Some of these phrases are curious in themselves. A man will write 'my dearest' to each of his sisters in turn, and will even apply that epithet to his mother, which, considered in a grammatical sense, is absurd. No one would think of beginning a letter with 'my *very dear* mother;' yet that is literally the only form in which the superlative can be correctly used for such an address. The higher we go in the scale of epistolary respect, the less tender we become. 'Dear sir' is more respectful than 'my dear sir,' but 'sir' is the most deferential form of the three. By a curious paradox, too, the humblest tone which we can adopt in a letter is

conventionally accepted as the most severe. 'Yours obediently' is an ordinary business-like mode of signature. 'Your obedient servant' would be considered distant. But when Mr. Jones enters upon an angry correspondence with his neighbour, Brown, and wishes to express the contempt which he has for that gentleman's conduct, he actually implies that he esteems it an 'honour' to be Mr. Brown's 'most obedient and humble servant.'

Notes in the third person were probably first written by secretaries, in the name of those who employed them, and who were thus saved the trouble of an autographic communication. Now-a-days, your laundress adopts the *style signorile* in her correspondence with as grand an air as if a real amanuensis was writing from her dictation on the other side of the wash-tub.

'Mrs. Mangles present her respex to Mr. Blank, and begs to Say that Mr. B's complaint about his Linning shall be attend to without fail lower Goffering place friday 3d febuary 186—.'

Have we not all, in the course of bachelorhood, received some such little missive as the above, and laughed over the contents? Bating the orthography, and, *cæteris paribus*, it is hardly more absurd than the formal invitations which the ladies of Belgravia or Mayfair send to each other. Why this austerity of language should be used towards our friends precisely when we offer them hospitality, rather than on other occasions, is a little puzzling. Some say it is to save time, but

'DEAR MRS. JONES,

Will you and your husband give us the pleasure of your company at dinner on the 23rd inst., at 7,'

takes no longer to write than

'Mr. and Mrs. Brown request the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Jones's company at dinner on Thursday, the 23rd inst., at 7 o'clock.'

And so there is not much in *that* argument. The truth is, it is a custom which has crept in—no one knows how—but having taken root, has become an article in our social creed which no one ventures to doubt.

The conventionalities of life are nowhere more striking than in the intercourse of what are called the middle ranks of society. That portion of the community (and women especially) would seem to be haunted by a perpetual dread of individuality. Accordingly, a host of venerable absurdities are perpetuated at dinner-parties and those exotically-titled entertainments known as soirées and conversaziones, which we all agree in condemning, but which are, nevertheless, observed with great punctilio. From the moment when the footman (or disguised greengrocer, as the case may be) opens the hall door, to the period when the last wax candle is extinguished, what a host of little useless rites, of unmeaning proprieties, of idle posturing, one has to encounter! The very smile with which our hostess greets us, the vapid, anti-prandial remarks about the weather, &c., the solemn manner in which we pair off to the dining-room, are stereotyped incidents of a ceremony as precise, as imposing, and as ludicrous in the abstract as those of a Sybarite banquet, or a war-feast in Feejee. The dinner itself is a wonderfully methodical institution. I suppose no gastronomist of any repute would think of asking why soup should come before fish, or fish precede the entrées (albeit that particular succession did not always obtain in merry England, nor does it now in many parts of Europe); but what ingenious epicure first decreed that we should eat sweet jelly with roast mutton, and sour capers with boiled? oysters with cod-fish, and cucumber with salmon? What would be thought of a rash youth who should venture to ask for a second helping of mulligatawny, or send back his plate for a relay of whitebait? In the last century claret was considered an admirable accompaniment to salmon, puddings came on in the middle of dinner, and the fashionable hour for that repast was three o'clock,

'Tempora dispensant usus, et tempora cultus.'

It is Time which has modified that ancient *régime*, which has refined our tastes in matters culinary, restrained our midday appetites, and taught us to dine when our ancestors would have supped. They say that Custom is a second Nature, and assuredly we soon accommodate ourselves to its influence. As the world jogs on, new theories arise on the question of manners, of social comfort, of what we should eat, drink, or avoid. We flatter ourselves that these domestic by-laws are enduring—that they resemble those of the Medes and Persians, which altered not. The fact is that they are continually altering—now for better, now for worse: sometimes becoming over stringent, at others erring on the side of laxity. Our notions of what is and what is not good breeding are but relative. The lapse of half a century makes all the difference in ideal character, as far as superficial qualifications, at least, are concerned. A gentleman of the seventeenth century becomes a fogey in the eighteenth, and would be positively unbearable in our present homes. Those starched and staid old ladies in Jacobean dress, whose demure appearance commands our respect on the painter's canvas, indulged in conversation and cracked jokes among their families, which would shock the ears of modern belles. What was harmless pleasantry in that age becomes coarse ribaldry in this; and it is difficult to say whether, fifty years hence, polite language may include much of what is now called slang, or reject as vulgar the 'sensation' English of our own day. No doubt it was with the intention of avoiding the commonplaces of ordinary parlance that many hyperbolical expressions in present use were first adopted; but even these are so soon caught up and circulated, that they become hacknied in their turn, and are replaced by others of a still more exaggerated form. Thus, in the early part of this century, the word 'vastly' was used as an intensive adverb, in place of 'very:' 'vastly fine, vastly well, vastly amusing,' were common phrases of the day. This was succeeded by 'monstrous;' and it was not at all an uncommon thing to hear a man spoken of as monstrous clever, a book as monstrous amusing, and so forth. Indeed, dandies of the period, utterly regardless of the absurdity of such an epithet, would call the reigning belle a 'mons'ous pretty girl.' In like manner, the rising generation employ some very remarkable adjectives to express their approbation. A good-natured man is described as a 'stunning brick;' a pleasant ball becomes an 'awfully jolly hop;' (fancy an entertainment being jolly and *awful* at the same time!) an evening party is facetiously known as a 'tea-fight' or 'muffin-struggle.' 'Busting,' 'fizzing,' 'screaming,' and 'scrumptious,' are epithets which, if not universally popular, are well known to public-school and University men. I have even heard a young lady (with a brother at college) go so far as to allude to dinner under the bold but significant synonym of a 'blow out;' but this, I admit, is an exceptional case. Indeed, the use of this idiomatic language is regulated by certain conventionalities which it seems impossible to explain, but which are, nevertheless, observed with due regard for time and place. The vocabulary of slang is a republic, and not an anarchy; yet no one knows on what principle it is governed. Some words quickly fall into disuse, or are voted snobbish; others, of equally humble origin, presently become popular and last for years. A single instance of public caprice on this point will suffice. The expressions of 'muff' and 'chap' have both existed about a quarter of a century. Their etymology is doubtful, and, as far as propriety of speech is concerned, they are about on a par. Yet, while the first still continues to be adopted by gentlemen, the latter is abandoned to footmen and shop-boys. Every one who has been brought up at a public school knows what is meant by a 'muff;' but woe betide the wretched freshman who talks of a 'rum chap' at Eton or Westminster!

What shall we say of the conventionalities of pronunciation, and the

mysterious caprice which regulates the value of our British vowels and consonants? In the primers and horn-books of infant life, D, O, G, has spelt dog from time immemorial. But the dandies of the Restoration called that intelligent little quadruped a '*dag*,' and the dandies of our own time call it a '*dawg*.' Much commiseration has been felt for the 'poor letter H,' and the neglect with which it has been treated in cockney dialect. But the letter R is worse off, for its use is being gradually abandoned in those quarters where the purity of the Queen's English is supposed to be most scrupulously preserved. As an initial, it was once the fashion to pronounce it as a W; and indeed it was only the other day, that I heard a man speaking of some widiculous ewwor which had ewept into a celebwated dwama, and wemained there long after it had been witten, wead, wepeated, and wehearsed. This was an affectation which came in with Lytton Bulwer and departed with Thackeray. There are few, even of our youngest exquisites, who venture to speak in such accents now. But the R is, nevertheless, slurred over and even omitted by many, who would scout the idea of imitating a natural defect of speech. What has become, for instance, of the final consonant in the word 'father?' In west country dialect it is still preserved, but in polite circles it is pronounced *fatha*; never, *nevah*, and so forth. Half a century ago, the letter A was similarly misused. Old gentlemen still exist who speak of St. Jeames's Street and the Peletinete. E and I changed their places. 'Arithmetic' was called '*arethmetic*,' and 'messenger' became '*missinger*.' To this day Lord Russell declares that he is *obleeged*, and it is a curious proof how extremes meet, that the same expression is adopted by the humblest labourer in Devonshire. The truth is, that when the word was originally borrowed from the French, every one called it 'obleeged;' and this provincialism, like many others of the same class, is nothing more than the old-fashioned talk of our forefathers.

That our pronunciation, not only of English, but of foreign languages, has materially altered with this generation, there can be little doubt. The other day I met with an old book of French phrases, in which the ingenious author had endeavoured to convey a sort of phonetic equivalent of their sound to British ears. Thus we were told that 'embonpoint' should be pronounced '*ang-bong-pwang*,' 'chef-d'œuvre,' as '*she-doover*,' 'tout ensemble,' as '*tú-tang-sam'ble*,' &c. Fancy our adhering to such a system now, and the surprise with which Frenchmen would hear such a sentence as, 'Beeang, je reveeangdray demang mattang!'

People of education are scrupulous in calling Berkeley Square Barkley Square, the Derby Day the Darby, and so forth. In the main they are right, for these words are proper names, and should be, of course, pronounced as their owners pronounce them. But it must be remembered that the corruption of names is only due to a fleeting fashion, which another generation may ignore. Thus, while 'Majoribanks' remains 'Marchbanks,' and Cholmondeley Chumley, Cavendish, which was once called Candish, has returned to its original length.

*Apropos*—What was the original length of this article, as at first designed? I imagined that I had but a few words to say on my subject, and, lo! they have already filled a dozen pages, before the theme is half exhausted! I should like to have drawn attention to some literary conventionalities, and to the venerable traditions observed by modern journalists in their narration of incident or in the field of criticism. I might have dilated on the horrors of shopping, and selected a few examples of trade slang and counter-etiquette, for the amusement of my readers. But there is a conventional limit even to the description of Conventionalism; and having now reached the average amount of 'copy' permitted for articles in this journal, I draw my pen modestly through what remains.

JACK EASEL.

# SCENES IN COURT.

## CHAPTER II.

AND yet he semed besier than he was,' wrote Dan Chaucer five centuries ago, when describing the Man of Laws in the 'Canterbury Tales;' and such was the reflection which crossed my mind as I saw P——, of whom we know somewhat already, rush in great haste from his lodgings in the High Street to the court-house, at Brisk, one fine summer morning, a few circuits back. He was armed for the fight—a fight more in the fashion of Ulysses than of Ajax—and bore, besides the brief with which he had been trusted, two massy books of authority to back up his intended statements. He passed on, and I finished my pipe; for, though the advice of the great Q.C. who had instructed me many times in the way wherein I should walk, had been that, business or no business, it behoved me to show in court regularly at nine o'clock every morning, when the Court sat—and this advice was, be-

yond question, wholesome—yet had I found it to be, like many other wholesome things, very unpalatable. I gave the 'no business' side of the advice a fair trial, and small was the apparent advantage derived from it; the 'business' side would have met with equal justice, had it thought fit ever to present itself. Six circuits were enough for the proof of half the advice, and as, at the tail of the seventh, 'business' did not surrender to take its trial, I thought it small harm to do as I liked in the matter; hence it was that, on this particular morning, I stayed to finish my pipe instead of rushing eagerly, as P—— was doing, to the dispensary for justice. I took my own time about bringing into subjection to the brush the hair which stood out after my morning's dip in the river 'like quills upon the fretful porcupine;' I donned my robes and wig at my own pace; and, as I thought of P—— with his brief, and his books, and his haste (on my honour there was no hint of envy, though P—— was but on his second circuit), the words of old Chaucer occurred to me as apposite, and—for I liked P—— greatly—by the time my toilette was over, I had got as far as heartily to wish that Chaucer's preceding line might be equally applicable,

'No wher so besy a man as he there n'as.'

And then I, too, walked over to the court-house, down the narrow street and down the hill.

A heap of folk were about the doorway—attorneys' clerks, barristers' clerks, witnesses, and lookers-on. I passed through; and, all the world being my way, it made no difference whether I went into the Crown Court or the Civil Court, so I turned into the former, and made my way to a place.

The dock was rather thickly tenanted; and, as I entered the court, a miserable-looking lad was standing in front of this pen, awaiting the beginning of the prosecution, which charged him with 'feloniously and unlawfully stealing,' &c. He had, in truth, been guilty of neglect rather than crime; but had, unfortunately, been brought before some stern moralists of magistrates, who took the uglier view of his case and sent him for trial; he was undefended by counsel, and was called upon to say if he was guilty or not guilty to the charges made against him.

'Not guilty!' said the boy in a low voice; and the counsel for the prosecution began.

In cases where the prisoner is undefended, it is not usual for the prosecution to make any speech, properly so called. The case is stated to the jury; the witnesses are called and examined from the depositions, and then the whole is summed up and laid before the jury, the prisoner being allowed to make his own defence after the case for the prosecution is closed. But on this occasion the counsel for the prosecution was about as new to his work as the prisoner was to crime; and, without intending to injure the poor lad against whom he appeared, but in pure ignorance of what was right, he commenced an oration which was evidently not the inspiration of the moment, but a studied speech, which had had more than one rehearsal.

'The magnitude of the crime with which the prisoner stands charged is such as to demand the promptest attention, and the most summary repression. Our homes, our property—I might add, our lives—are——'

'Really, sir, this course is very unusual,' said the judge, interrupting the flow of the advocate's words.

The prosecutor did not see in what way the course was unusual, and, in complete innocence, harked back upon the initial words of the speech—'The magnitude of the crime——'

'Really, sir, I *must* interrupt you,' said his lordship; 'you would do better to proceed with a simple statement of facts.' And, with much show of unwillingness—for the learned counsel, who was from 'the green isle,' was, like most of his countrymen, a really 'good fist' at a speech, and disliked missing an opportunity of making one—the

prosecutor continued on his way, stating the facts simply and calling the witness.

The first witness was a labourer, who had seen the prisoner with the 'feloniously stolen' article in his possession (the lad had been told to take a spade to A——, but had carried it only to his own father's house, where he had mislaid and forgotten it).

'Were you on the road leading to A—— on the morning of the 3rd July?'

'Yes.'

'Did you meet anyone?'

'Yes; the prisoner.'

'Had he anything with him?'

'A spade.'

'Was it this spade?' (producing one).

'It was.'

'Did you know whose spade it was?'

'I knew it belonged to Master Turner, up to Wurnley.'

'Did you say anything to the prisoner about the spade?'

'I said, "You young rascal, you've stolen that spade!"'

'What made you say that?'

'I *knew* he *must* ha' stolen it.'

'No other reason?'

'No.'

'Then if you *knew* he *must* ha' stolen it, why did you not tell a policeman?'

'Don't know.'

'Did you not see any policeman?'

'Yes'

'Why did you not tell him?'

'Don't know.'

But the counsel pressed the witness on this point, and at length succeeded in getting an answer.

'Why did you not tell him, sir? Answer the question.'

'Well,' said the man, 'I certainly *did* see a policeman, but he was only a b—— big fool of an Irishman, and I knew it was no use to tell *him*.'

Poor J—— looked a little discomfited at this reply; and, in answer to his lordship's inquiry, said he had no further questions to put to the witness, who stood down, and the case went on to an acquittal of the prisoner.

Then came the trial of a man for forgery, a conviction, and the sentence. The man was an old offender in the same direction; and his lordship thought fit to pass upon him 'a substantial sentence,' as he called it, out of regard to the peculiar hatefulness of the crime, and to the fact that the prisoner had been tried before. I mention this case not merely because it followed that of which I have just written, but because of the peculiarly sad effect which the sentence had upon one quite other than the prisoner.

A nervous movement of the hands, and a slight twitching of the mouth, alone had betrayed the keen interest the prisoner took in the proceedings which so intimately concerned him. When the clerk of arraigns asked the jury if they were agreed upon their verdict, a wistful look, which seemed to indicate a desire to anticipate the sentence, was turned upon them; and when the clerk further asked them if they found the prisoner 'guilty' or 'not guilty,' a painful anxiety showed in the forger's face, and communicated itself to the bystanders and when the word 'Guilty' dropped from the foreman's lips, a sense of relief came upon all who heard it.

His lordship—than whom was no judge more ready to make allowance for the infirmities of poor human nature—considered of the sentence he should pronounce, and felt it his duty to give, as he said, a substantial one. Addressing a few remarks to the better feelings of the prisoner, he told him how grieved he was to see him continue in his former evil way; that as he had, however, chosen to do so, it behoved the law to protect people from his knavery; and the sentence of the Court was that he be kept in penal servitude for four years.

As soon as the words 'penal servitude for four years' closed the sentence which the judge pronounced, a shriek was uttered in the far-end of the court, which pierced the ears of everyone. A woman had fainted; some poor creature to whom even the wretched man in the dock was dear, and upon whom the sentence, double-edged, fell with the sharper

side upon her. The man was removed by the 'dungeon villains' (two eminently mild and kindly-looking men, by the way), and the friends of the poor soul, whose sobs seemed to strain her very heart-strings, gathered her up and bore her out.

Now, it may be womanish, but bother me if 'a scene in court like this is at all to my liking. I hate to be agitated whether I like it or not; to feel the apple in my throat swell and get inconvenient, as though it were the '*prime*' apple which caused our first mother to err; to feel warm and glowing about the eyes, and, will I nill I, to be obliged to smother my emotion by blowing tunefully on my nose. And these things had to be endured on this occasion, in spite of the philosophy of a youthful attorney who stood by, and said, with desire to be overheard, 'that such things must happen, and the police ought to see that these *women* were kept out of court.' To be sure I knew nothing of the people, and, for aught I *did* know, they might be the wickedest and least deserving of sympathy in the whole world. So far as the trial itself went, there was nothing particular to set the feelings in play. had the mere facts of the crime been proved as stated, the prisoner found guilty, and sentenced in the ordinary way, I do not suppose for an instant that anyone would have been unusually struck by the sentence. But the little something not usual—the extraordinary addition of a woman's cry of sorrow; that woman having nothing visibly to connect her with the case before the Court; and the sign which that cry gave of links and sympathies outraged, of which the Court could take no cognizance, —these were the springs of an emotion which none but the assize-hardened do not feel—'the one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin.'

Professing the stoic philosophy, I dislike occasions which make me show my feelings as a man. The 'one touch of nature' I admire in the abstract, and in Shakespeare, from whom the expression is stolen, but do not desire to be the subject of it in my own person. Lest nature should touch me again, I left the Crown Court, and walked over to the Civil side, where Justice —— was trying the special jury cases, and where, amidst the lookers-on, I saw my landlord, with eyes in which pity mingled with contempt as he looked on me, robed, but sans brief. A moment's reflection told me that he would charge me no less for the numerous 'extras' which were certain to appear in my bill, pitiful though his glance might now be; so I placed my eyeglass (not that I am shortsighted, you know, reader) firmly into my eye-socket, assumed a haughty air, which was intended to hurl back the landlord's pity with scorn, and addressed myself to attending to the speeches that were being made.

It was evident from the experience just narrated, that, though I might have the bad digestion, I did not possess 'the hard heart' which is said to be as necessary for a good lawyer, as a gold latch-key has been held to be to an officer in the Horse Guards. I may improve, however, as time goes on.

P——, of whom mention was made just now, was about to open the pleadings in a case that had been called on, when O——, breathless and anxious, rushed in from the Crown Court, where he was engaged in a case requiring fullest attention, having heard that this cause, in which he was also retained for the defendant, had been called. His object was to get the case postponed till he could attend to it; and had he been other than he was, or had he not placed temptation right in his lordship's way, he might have got what he wanted. But he was who he was, a great drawer of the longbow; one known to all the profession for the entirety in which he adopted M. Talleyrand's saying, that speech was given to man to conceal his thoughts. he was this; and, being this, he tempted the Court beyond its power to bear.

Hurrying up to the counsel's table, he motioned to P—— to refrain from opening, and begged his lordship to put off the case,

'for,' said he, 'I am *this* moment speaking in the Crown Court.'

His lordship's eye twinkled; the bar noticed the mess poor O—— was in; and O—— himself was aware of his mistake as soon as he had made it. Time was not given him to amend, for his lordship repeating the words, 'this moment speaking in the Crown Court,' added with an arch smile, which was well understood by all who saw it, 'No, no, Mr. O——, I can't believe *that*.'

O—— knew what fame was his, and the bar knew, and the judge knew; and if the public who looked on knew not, I take this opportunity of hinting at it, for the express purpose of showing them that if their vulgar and calumnious riddle about lawyers being such restless people, because they first lie on this side and then on that, and lie even in their graves—a riddle feloniously stolen, by the way, from a *bon mot* of Sir Christopher Hatton's, when he was Lord Chancellor—be founded on fact, the professional brethren of these restless men take good care they shall not forget their characteristics. For the riddle I ever thought the properest answer was, that lawyers are restless because they never lie at all; but even if I could make my meaning clear upon this head, as an able writer in a magazine some time ago did his, in an article called 'The Morality of Advocacy,' there would be no end of people to join issue with me; so I give up the attempt to alter the riddle and its answer, deeming the game not worth the candle.

O——'s application was granted, as P—— and his learned friends did not object, and O—— went back in peace to his defence of 'bigamus.' The next cause was called, and at the name of it, a young man of temperament the most nervous in the world, a quality which made the bar an almost insuperable bar to him, rose to his feet, and announced that he appeared for the defendant. Counsel for the plaintiff opened, called his witnesses, and closed his case, which seemed to be a winning one. Counsel for the defendant rose, blushed to the very roots—I had almost written tops—of his wig, looked like the incarnation of confusion, and thus delivered:—

'My lord, and gentlemen of the jury; my client in this case—my client, gentlemen—my client, my lord—my client;' and at this stage the poor man seemed perfectly overcome by the natural enemy with which he was combating. His mouth was as if paralysis had stricken it, his lips were parched, his glance wandered about the court, his tongue stammered, and then wagged no more. The Court waited; some men pitied the poor creature stuck in the slough of words, unable to get free; others enjoyed the joke and grinned unkindly grins. The occasion was too much also for his lordship, who leaned forward a little, and said, in a tone of voice which with other words might have been taken for encouraging, 'Pray, sir, proceed; thus far the Court is with you.'

The nervous man was stung to the quick, and like a stag pursued to a corner, turned round and stood fiercely at bay. He floundered on in spite of himself, and was getting fairly under way, to the relief of everyone who heard him, when in an unfortunate moment he allowed his eloquence to hurry him into a false quantity, and then he was in the toils again. There is a writ called of 'quare impĕdit' the e whereof in 'impedit,' is short. By pure misfortune—for the nervous man 'was a scholar, and a ripe and good one'—by pure misfortune, and the hurry he was in, he gave this word as though the e were long, and called the writ one of 'quare impēdit.'

The sharp ear of the judge detected the false concord, and before the speaker could correct for himself, was down upon him like a Nasmyth's hammer. 'Pray shorten your speech, sir. Remember we have a good deal to get through.' The blow was a fair one, though it fell heavily upon Mr. T——, who continued to speak like one grown desperate, reminding one of the bull in a Spanish arena when the red flags and the darts have been plied some time. He plunged on here and there through the case,

butting, but not bellowing at his antagonist, who did for him the service of a matador, and gave him the *coup de grâce*, to the poor fellow's utter discomfiture.

The said antagonist rose to reply, and as a boa constrictor licks and fondles his prey before he devours it, so the antagonist bespattered Mr. T—— with praise, and complimented him upon 'his thrilling and powerful appeal.' 'The Lord hath delivered him into my hands,' was the profane aside, however, with which the advocate forecast to those nearest him, the issue of the fight. The speaker went on and proceeded to dissect the speech of his opponent, and, metaphorically speaking, the speech maker himself. He exposed the fallacies, turned the facts so as to show the reverse side of them, and drew a deduction from his learned friend's own premises, so diametrically opposite to that which had been drawn by him, that Mr. T——, though he did not interrupt by speaking, could not refrain from showing his dissent by violent shaking of the head.

'My learned friend on the other side shakes his head,' said the speaker, raising his voice, and emphasizing the word 'head.' 'I don't know that there's much in *that*;' and at this neither pity nor decorum could keep the bystanders within bounds; a laugh, general and hearty, was raised at the expense of poor Mr. T——, who, painfully alive to the wound which had been inflicted, gesticulated in vain endeavour to get a hearing for something which *might* have hurled his enemy to the ground; but the possibility got thrown away; Mr. T—— remained crushed, though exceedingly angry.

Now it happens that the court-house at the assize town of Brisk is inconveniently near to the market, which is the resort of farmers for miles round. Thither come cattle, sheep, and beasts of burden; and thither are taken grain, and hay, and all kinds of agricultural produce. The place is so near to the courts of law, that the sounds of marketing, the grunts of pigs, and the noise of blatant beasts, have many times been known to pierce the sanctum of justice, and to interfere with the delivery of grave human utterances. On this occasion, when Mr. T—— came so grievously to grief, high market was going on in the street and place outside. Animals of various kinds had given audible proof of their presence, and just as the vanquisher of Mr. T—— resumed his speech, a jackass, desirous of showing his sense of the learned gentleman's sharp wit, set up a bray sufficiently loud to be heard right through the court.

It was his lordship's turn now, and he, thinking perhaps that so keen a tonguesman as he who was speaking could look well enough to himself, to be able to bear a rub down, said, with a good-humoured smile, which was the salve to his blow, 'One at a time, brother; one at a time.'

The serjeant reddened slightly, and merely nodded assent to his lordship's proposition. The laugh was against the serjeant, but 'nothing he reck'd,' or seemed to do, and went on to the close of his speech.

His lordship began to sum up the case to the jury, sifting the facts, and laying down the law. He had not proceeded very far, when the animal aforesaid, instigated, no doubt, by a feeling of kindness for the serjeant, took advantage of a slight pause in the summing up, to testify once more to its appreciation of English jurisprudence. The loud hee-haw! resounded through the court, attracting the attention, if not the fears of the judge. Respect for the bench precluded any such notice by the bar, as the bench had taken of the former bray; but his lordship had flung down his glove to the serjeant, and the serjeant was not the man to refuse the gage. He followed his own plan in taking it up. When the judge continued his address to the jury, the impression created by the jackass being yet fresh upon the audience, Serjeant —— turned him around to the leader who sat next him, and said in a stage whisper, heard distinctly by every one, 'I never noticed till

now the remarkable echo in this court.'

'Not even with your long ears,' said a junior in a whisper as audible as the last remark, whereby the laugh which began to rise at his lordship's expense, was shifted back again to the serjeant, who strove between his dignity—which would not let him notice the junior so immeasurably beneath him—and his anger, which made his fingers itch to punch the junior's head. The serjeant was a wrathful man, and had the reputation of even 'swearing his prayers.' Forth from his mouth flowed a string of muttered curses, like lava from a volcano that cannot burst in open fury, and to judge from appearances a breach of the peace seemed not unlikely to occur at a later hour in the day; though, as far as I know, none actually took place, the serjeant, a thoroughly good fellow, having been observed to select his youthful adversary for special attention at the mess on that very same day; and ever after speaking highly of him as a foeman worthy of his own steel. He recognized an equal, as Lord Thurlow did when the usher of the court gave back his lordship's '— damn you,' after enduring meekly and in patience for the space of five minutes a long string of invectives, hurled at him because the Lord Chancellor's inkstand was not filled.

P——'s case came on in due course, and P—— fleshed his maiden sword right valiantly. He bore up against the excessive respect of his own witness, who insisted on calling him 'my lord,' drawing upon him a flood of congratulations from his brethren, and a remark from his lordship that 'the witness was only anticipating.' O—— strove and did mightily; and the jury gave right between them—at least I trust so, for I cannot speak out of my own knowledge. The heat of the weather and the stuffiness of the court, combined, with the want of special interest in any one of the causes, to make the assize court of Brisk, in the county of ——, intolerable by four o'clock in the afternoon. The only piece of paper I had touched for the day in the way of business, was the messman's dinner-list, whereon I had inscribed my name. It was useless to wait, I thought, so nudging R——, my fellow in lodgings, and mine own peculiar friend, I left the court for more refreshing haunts. I strode away, and in company with R——, who 'rowed in the same boat' with myself, sought upon the waters of the Cray an appetite for the dinner we were to eat at half-past six.

# THE MYSTERY OF THE BLOODY HAND.

## CHAPTER III.—THE TIME OF TRIAL.

MEANWHILE he was waiting for my answer. I stepped forward, intending to take his hand, but the stains drove me back again. Where so much depends upon a right—or a misunderstanding, the only way is to speak the fair truth. I did so; by a sort of forced calm holding back the seething of my brain.

'George, I should like to touch you, but—I cannot! I beg you to forgive the selfishness of my grief—my mind is confused—I shall be better soon. God has sent us a great sorrow, in which I know you are as innocent as I am. I am very sorry—I think that is all.' And I put my hand to my head, where a sharp pain was beginning to throb. Mr. Manners spoke emphatically—

'God bless you, Doralice! You know I promised. Thank you, for ever!'

'If you fancy you have any reason to thank me,' I said, 'do me this favour. Whatever happens, believe that I believe!'

I could bear no more, so I went out of the kitchen. As I went I heard a murmur of pity run through the room, and I knew that they were pitying—not the dead man, but me; and me—not for my dead brother, but for his murderer. When I got into the passage, the mist that had still been dark before my eyes suddenly became darker, and I remember no more.

When my senses returned, Harriet had come home. From the first she would never hear George's name, except to accuse him with frantic bitterness of poor Edmund's death; and as nothing would induce me to credit his guilt, the subject was as much as possible avoided. I cannot dwell on those terrible days. I was very ill for some time, and after I had come down stairs, one day I found a newspaper containing the following paragraph, which I copy here, as it is the shortest and least painful way of telling you the facts of poor Edmund's death.

'THE MURDER AT CROSSDALE HALL.

'Universal horror has been excited in the neighbourhood by the murder of Edmund Lascelles, Esq., of Crossdale Hall. Mr. Lascelles was last seen alive a little after ten o'clock on Friday night, at which time he left the house alone, and was not seen again living. At the inquest on Saturday, James Crosby, a farm labourer, gave the following evidence:—

'"I had been sent into the village for some medicine for a sick beast, and was returning to the farm by the park a little before eleven, when near the low gate I saw a man standing with his back to me. The moon was shining, and I recognized him at once for Mr. George Manners, of Beckfield. When Mr. Manners saw me he seemed much excited, and called out, 'Quick! help! Mr. Lascelles has been murdered.' I said, 'Good God! who did it?' He said, 'I don't know; I found him in the ditch; help me to carry him in.' By this time I had come up and saw Mr. Lascelles on the ground, lying on his side. I said, 'How do you know he's dead?' He said, 'I fear there's very little hope; he has bled so profusely. I am covered with blood.' I was examining the body, and as I turned it over I found that the right hand was gone. It had been cut off at the wrist. I said, 'Look here! Did you know this?' He spoke very low, and only said, 'How horrible!' I said, 'Let us look for the hand; it may be in the ditch.' He said, 'No, no! we are wasting time. Bring him in, and let us send for the doctor.' I ran to the ditch, however, but could see nothing but a pool of blood. Coming back, I found on the ground a thick hedge-stake covered with blood. The grass by the ditch was very much stamped and trodden. I said, 'There has been a desperate struggle.' He said, 'Mr. Lascelles was a very strong man.' I said, 'Yes; as strong as you, Mr. Manners.'

He said, 'Not quite; very nearly though.' He said nothing more till we got to the hall; then he said, 'Who can break it to his sister?' I said, 'They will have to know. It's them that killed him has brought this misery upon them.' The low gate is a quarter of a mile, or more, from the hall."

'Death seems to have been inflicted by two instruments—a wounding and a cutting one. As yet, no other weapon but the stake has been discovered, and a strict search for the missing hand has also proved fruitless. No motive for this wanton outrage suggests itself, except that the unhappy gentleman was in the habit of wearing on his right hand a sapphire ring of great value. (An heir-loom; it is on my finger as I write, dear Nell. Oh! my poor boy) 'All curiosity is astir to discover the perpetrator of this horrible deed; and it is with the deepest regret that we are obliged to state that every fresh link in the chain of evidence points with fatal accuracy to one, whose position, character, and universal popularity would seem to place him above suspicion. We would not willingly intrude upon the privacy of domestic interests, but the following facts will too soon be matters of public notoriety.

'A younger sister of the deceased appears to have formed a matrimonial engagement with George Manners, Esq., of Beckfield. It was strongly opposed by Mr. Lascelles, and the objection (which at the time appeared unreasonable) may have been founded on a more intimate knowledge of the suitor's character than was then possessed by others. The match was broken off, and all intercourse was suspended till the night of the murder, when Mr. Manners gained admittance to the hall in the absence of Mr. Lascelles, and was for some hours alone in the young lady's company. They were found together a little before nine o'clock by Mr. Lascelles, and a violent scene ensued, in the course of which the young lady left the apartment. (Miss Lascelles has been ill ever since the unhappy event, and is so still. Her deposition was taken in writing at the hall.) From the young lady's evidence it appears, 1st, that the passions of both were strongly excited, and she admits having felt sufficient apprehension to induce her to twice warn Mr. Manners to self-control. 2ndly, that Mr. Manners avowed himself prepared to defy Mr. Lascelles' authority in the matter of the marriage; and 3rdly, the two sentences of their final conversation that she overheard, (both Mr. Manners') were, what can hardly be interpreted otherwise than as a threat, that "their next meeting should be a different one," and that then "*he would not ask for Mr. Lascelles' hand, but take it.*" The diabolical character of determined and premeditated vindictiveness thus given to an otherwise unaccountable outrage upon his victim, goes far to take away the feeling of pity which we should otherwise have felt for the murderer, regarding him as under the maddening influences of disappointed love and temporary passion. Perhaps, however, the most fatally conclusive evidence against Mr. Manners lies in the time that elapsed between his leaving the hall, and being found in the park by the murdered body. He left the house at a quarter past nine—he was found by the body of the deceased a little before eleven; so that either it must have taken him more than an hour and a half to walk a quarter of a mile—which is obviously absurd—or he must have been waiting for nearly two hours in the grounds. Why did he not return at once to the house of Mr. Topham? (where it appears that he was staying). For what—or for whom—was he waiting? If he were in the park at the time of the murder, how came it that he heard no cries, gave the unhappy gentleman no assistance, and offers no suggestion or clue to the mystery beyond the obstinate denial of his own guilt, though he confesses to having been in the grounds during the whole time of the deadly struggle, and though he was found alone with scratched hands and blood-stained clothes beside the corpse of his avowed enemy? We leave these

questions to the consideration of our readers, as they will be for that of a conscientious and impartial jury, not, we trust, blinded by the wealth and position of the criminal to the hideous nature of the crime.

'The funeral is to take place to-morrow; George Manners is fully committed to take his trial for wilful murder at the ensuing assizes.'

The above condemning extract only too well represented the state of public feeling. All Middlesex—nay, all England—was roused to indignation, and poor Edmund's youth and infirmities made the crime appear the more cowardly and detestable.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DRIFTING TO THE END.

My misery between the time of the murder and the trial was terrible from many causes: my brother's death; George's position; the knowledge of his sufferings, and my inability to see or soothe them—and, worst of all, the firm conviction of his guilt in everyone's mind, and Harriet's ceaseless reproaches. I do not think that I should have lived through it, but for Dr. Penn. That excellent and revered man's kindness, will, I trust, ever be remembered by me with due gratitude. He went up to town constantly, at his own expense, and visited my dear George in Newgate, administering all the consolations of his high office and long experience, and being the bearer of our messages to each other. From him also I gleaned all the news of which otherwise I should have been kept in ignorance; how George's many friends were making every possible exertion on his behalf, and how an excellent counsel was retained for him. But far beyond all his great kindness, was to me the simple fact that he shared my belief in George's innocence; for there were times when the universal persuasion of his guilt almost shook, not my faith, but my reason.

There were early prayers in our little church in the morning; too early, Harriet said, for her to attend much, especially of late, when Dr. Penn's championship of George Manners had led her to discover more formalism in his piety, and northern broadness in his accent than before. But these quiet services were my daily comfort in those troublous days; and in the sweet fresh walk home across the park, my more than father and I hatched endless conspiracies on George's behalf between the church porch and the rectory gate. Our chief difficulty, I confess, lay in the question that the world had by this time so terribly answered—who did it? If George were innocent, who was guilty? My poor brother had not been popular, and I do not say that one's mind could not have fixed on a man more likely to commit the crime than George, under not less provocation. But it was an awful deed, Nelly, to lay to any man's charge, even in thought; and no particle of evidence arose to fix the guilt on any one else, or even to suggest an accomplice. As the time wore on, suspense became sickening.

'Sir,' I said to him one day, 'I am breaking down. I have brought some plants to set in your garden. I wish you would give me something to do for you. Your shirts to make, your stockings to darn. If I were a poor woman I should work down my trouble. As it is—'

'Hush!' said the doctor; 'you are what God has made you. My dear madam, Janet tells me, what my poor eyes have hardly observed, that my ruffles are more worn than beseems a doctor in divinity. Now for myself——'

'Hush!' said I, mimicking him. 'My dear sir, you have taught me to plot and conspire, and this very afternoon I shall hold a secret interview with Mistress Janet. But say something about my trouble. What will happen?—How will it end?—What shall we do?'

'My love,' he said, 'keep heart. I fully believe in his innocence. There is heavy evidence against him, but there are also some strong points in his favour; and you must believe that the jury have no object to do anything but justice, or believe anything but the truth, and

that they will find accordingly. And God defend the right!'

Eleanor! — They found him GUILTY.

* * * *

I have asked Dr. Penn to permit me to make an extract from his journal in this place. It is less harrowing to copy than to recall I omit the pious observations and reflections which grace the original. Comforting as they are to me, it seems a profanity to make them public; besides, it is his wish that I should withhold them, which is sufficient.

From the diary of the Rev. Arthur Penn, D.D., Rector of Crossdale, Middlesex.

'When he came into the dock he looked (so it seemed to me) altered since I had last seen him; more anxious and worn, that is, but yet composed and dignified. Doubtless I am but a prejudiced witness; but his face to me lacks both the confusion and the effrontery of guilt. He looks like one pressed by a heavy affliction, but enduring it with fortitude. I think his appearance affected and astonished many in the court. Those who were prepared to see a hardened ruffian, or, at best, a cowering criminal, must have been startled by the intellectual and noble style of his beauty, the grace and dignity of his carriage, and the modest simplicity of his behaviour. I am but a doting old man; for I think on no evidence could I convict him in the face of those good eyes of his, to which sorrow has given a wistful look that at times is terrible; as if now and then the agony within showed its face at the windows of the soul. Once only every trace of composure vanished—it was when sweet Mistress Dorothy was called; then he looked simply mad. I wonder—but no! no!—he did not commit this great crime,—not even in a fit of insanity.

'Mr. A—— is a very able advocate, and, in his cross-examination of the man Crosby and of Mistress Dorothy, did his best to atone for the cruel law which keeps the prisoner's counsel at such disadvantage. The counsel for the prosecution had pressed hard on my dear lady, especially in reference to those farewell words overheard by her, which seem to give the only (though that, I say, an incredible) clue, to what remains the standing mystery of the event—the missing hand. Then Mr. A—— rose to cross-examine. He said:—

'"During that part of the quarrel when you were present, did the prisoner use any threats or suggestions of personal violence?"

'"No."

'"In the fragment of conversation that you overheard at the last, did you at the time understand the prisoner to be conveying taunts or threats?"

'"No."

'"How did you interpret the unaccountable anxiety on the prisoner's part to shake hands with a man by whom he believed himself to be injured, and with whom he was quarrelling?"

'"Mr. Manners' tone was such as one uses to a spoilt child. I believed that he was determined to avoid a quarrel at any price, in deference to my brother's infirmity and his own promise to me. He was very angry before Edmund came in, but I believe that afterwards he was shocked and sobered at the obviously irresponsible condition of my poor brother when enraged. He had never seen him so before."

'"Is it true that Mr. Manners' pocket-knife was in your possession at the time of the murder?"

'"It is."

'"Does your window look upon the 'Honeysuckle Walk,' where the prisoner says that he spent the time between leaving your house and the finding of the body?"

'"Yes."

'"Was the prisoner likely to have any attractive associations connected with it, in reference to yourself?"

'"We had often been there together before we were engaged. It was a favourite walk of mine."

'"Do you suppose that anyone in this walk could hear cries proceeding from the low gate?"

'"Certainly not."

'The cross-examination of Crosby was as follows:—

MR. A.—'"Were the prisoner's clothes much disordered, as if he had been struggling?"

'"No; he looked much as usual; but he was covered with blood."

'"So we have heard you say. Do you think that a man, in perfectly clean clothes, could have lifted the body out of the ditch without being covered with blood?"

'"No: perhaps not."

'"Was there any means by which so much blood could have been accumulated in the ditch, unless the body had been thrown there?"

'"I think not. The pool were too big."

'"I have two more questions to ask, and I beg the special attention of the jury to the answers. Is the ditch, or is it not, very thickly overgrown with brambles and brushwood?"

'"Yes; there be a many brambles."

'"Do you think that any single man could drag a heavy body from the bottom of the ditch on to the bank, without severely scratching his hands?"

'"No; I don't suppose he could."

'"That is all I wish to ask."

'Not being permitted to address the jury, it was all that he could do. Then the Recorder summed up. God forgive him the fatal accuracy with which he placed every link in a chain of evidence so condemning that I confess poor George seemed almost to have been taken *in flagrante delicto*. The jury withdrew; and my sweet Mistress Dorothy, who had remained in court against my wish, suddenly dropped like an apple-blossom, and I carried her out in my arms. When I had placed her in safety, I came back, and pressed through the crowd to hear the verdict.

'As I got in, the Recorder's voice fell on my ear, every word like a funeral knell,—"*May the Lord have mercy on your soul!*"

'I think for a few minutes I lost my senses. I have a confused remembrance of swaying hither and thither in a crowd; of execration, and pity, and gaping curiosity; and then I got out, and some one passed me, whose arm I grasped. It was Mr. A.

'"Tell me," I said, "is there no hope? No recommendation to mercy? Nothing?"

'He dragged me into a room, and, seizing me by the button, exclaimed—

'"We don't want mercy; we want justice! I say, sir, curse the present condition of the law! It *must* be altered, and I shall live to see it. If I might have addressed the jury—there were a dozen points—we should have carried him through. Besides," he added, in a tone that seemed to apologise for such a secondary consideration, "I may say to you that I fully believe that he is innocent, and am as sorry on his account as on my own that we have lost the case."

'And so the day is ended. *Fiat voluntas Domini!*'

* * * *

Yes, Eleanor! Dr. Penn was right. The day did end—and the next—and the next; and drop by drop the cup of sorrow was drained. And when the draught is done, should we be the better, Nelly, if it had been nectar?

I had neither died nor gone mad when the day came—the last complete day that George was to see on earth. It was Sunday; and, after a sleepless night, I saw the red sun break through the grey morning. I always sleep with my window open; and, as I lay and watched the sunrise, I thought—

'He will see this sunrise, and to-morrow's sunrise; but no other! No, no!—never more!"

But then a stronger thought seemed to rise involuntarily against that one—

'Peace, fool! If this be the sorrow, it is one that must come to all men.'

And then, Nelly (it is strange, but it was so), there broke out in the stone pine by my window, a chorus of little birds whom the sunbeams had awakened; and they sang so sweet and so loud (like the white bird that sang to the monk Felix), that earthly cares seemed to fade away, and I fell asleep, and slept the

first sound, dreamless sleep that had blessed me since our great trouble came.

## CHAPTER V.

### BETWEEN TWO WORLDS.

Dr. Penn was with George this day, and was to be with him to the last. His duty was taken by a curate.

I will not attempt to describe my feelings at this terrible time, but merely narrate circumstantially the wonderful events (or illusions, call them which you will) of the evening.

We sat upstairs in the blue room, and Harriet fell asleep on the sofa.

It was about half-past ten o'clock when she awoke with a scream, and in such terror that I had much difficulty in soothing her. She seemed very unwilling to tell me the cause of her distress; but at last confessed that on the two preceding nights she had had a vivid and alarming dream, on each night the same. Poor Edmund's hand (she recognized it by the sapphire ring) seemed to float in the air before her; and even after she awoke, she still seemed to see it floating towards the door, and then coming back again, till it vanished altogether. She had seen it again now in her sleep. I sat silent, struggling with a feeling of indignation. Why had she not spoken of it before? I do not know how long it might have been before I should have broken the silence, but that my eyes turned to the partially open window and the dark night that lay beyond. Then I shrieked, louder than she had done—

'Harriet! *There it is!*'

There it was—to my eyes—the detached hand, round which played a pale light—the splendid sapphire gleaming unearthlily, like the flame of a candle that is burning blue. But Harriet could see nothing. She said that I frightened her, and shook her nerves, and took pleasure in doing so; that I was the author of all our trouble, and she wished I would drop the dreadful subject. She would have said much more, but that I startled her by the vehemence of my interruption. I said that the day was past when I would sacrifice my peace or my duty to her whims; and she ventured no remonstrance when I announced that I intended to follow the hand so long as it moved, and discover the meaning of the apparition. I then flew down stairs and out into the garden, where it still gleamed, and commenced a slow movement towards the gate. But my flight had been observed, Nelly, by Robert, our old butler. I had always been his favourite in the family, and, since my grief, his humble sympathy had only been second to that of Dr. Penn. I had noticed the anxious watch he had kept over me since the trial, with a sort of sad amusement. I afterwards learnt that all his fears had culminated to a point when he saw me rush wildly from the house that night. He had thought I was going to drown myself. He concealed his fears at the time, however, and only said—

'What be the matter, Miss Dorothy?'

'Is that you, Robert?' I said. 'Come here. Look! Do you see?'

'See what?' he said.

'Don't you see anything?' I said. 'No light? Nothing?'

'Nothin' whatever,' said Robert, decidedly; 'it be as dark as pitch.'

I stood silent, gazing at the apparition, which, having reached the gate, was slowly readvancing. If it were fancy, why did it not vanish? I rubbed my eyes, but it was there still. Robert interrupted me, solemnly.

'Miss Dorothy, do *you* see anything?'

'Robert,' I said, 'you are a faithful friend. Listen! I see before me the lost hand of your dead master. I know it by the sapphire ring. It is surrounded by a pale light, and moves slowly. My sister has seen it three times in her sleep; and I see it now with my waking eyes. You may laugh, Robert; but it is too true.'

I was not prepared for the indignant reply:

'Laugh, Miss Dorothy! The Lord forbid! If so be you do see anything, and it should be the Lord's will to reveal anything about poor dear Master Edmund to you as

loved him, and is his sister, who am I that I should laugh? My mother had a cousin (many a time has she told me the story) as married a sailor (he was mate on board a vessel bound for the West Indies), and one night, about three weeks after her husband had——'

'Robert!' I said, 'you shall tell me that story another day with pleasure; but no time is to be lost now. I mean to follow the hand: will you come with me and take care of me?'

'Go in, ma'am,' he said; 'wrap up warm, and put on thick shoes, and come quietly down to this door. I'll just slip in and quiet the servants, and meet you.'

'And bring a lantern,' I said; 'this light does not light you.'

In five minutes we were there again; and the hand was vivid as ever.

'Do you see it now?' whispered the butler, anxiously.

'Yes,' I said; 'it is moving.'

'Go on,' he said; 'I will keep close behind you'

It was pitch dark, and, except for the gleaming hand, and the erratic circles of light cast by the lantern, we could see nothing. The hand gradually moved faster, increasing to a good walking pace, passing over the garden-gate and leading us on till I completely lost knowledge of our position; but still we went steadily forward. At last we got into a road, and went along by a wall; and, aft r a few steps, the hand, which was before me, moved sharply aside.

'Robert,' I said, 'it has gone over a gate—we must go too! Where are we?'

He answered, in a tone of the deepest horror—

'Miss Dorothy! for the Lord's sake, think what you are doing, and let us turn back while we can! You've had sore affliction; but it's an awful thing to bring an innocent man to trouble.'

'The innocent man *is* in trouble!' I said, passionately. 'Is it nothing that he should die, if truth could save him? You may go back if you like; but I shall go on. Tell me, whose place is this?'

'Never mind, my dear young lady,' he said, soothingly. 'Go on, and the Lord be with you! But be careful. You're sure you see it now?'

'Certain,' I said. 'It is moving. Come on.'

We went forward, and I heard a click behind me.

'What is that?' I said.

'Hush!' he whispered; 'make no noise! It was my pistol. Go gently, my dear young lady. It is a farmyard, and you may stumble.'

'It has stopped over a building!' I whispered.

'Not the house!' he returned, hoarsely.

'I am going on,' I said. 'Here we are. What is it? Whose is it?'

He came close to me, and whispered solemnly—

'Miss Dorothy! be brave, and make no noise! We are in farmer Parker's yard, and this is a barn.'

Then the terror came over me.

'Let us turn back,' I said. 'You are right. One may bear one's own troubles, but not drag in other people. Take me home!'

But Robert would not take me home; and my courage came back, and I held the lantern whilst he unfastened the door. Then the ghastly hand passed into the barn, and we followed it.

'It has stopped in the far corner,' I said. 'There seems to be wood or something.'

'It's bundles of wood,' he whispered. 'I know the place. Sit down, and tell me if it moves.'

I sat down, and waited long and wearily, while he moved heavy bundles of firewood, pausing now and then to ask, 'Is it here still?' At last he asked no more; and in a quarter of an hour he only spoke once · then it was to say—

'This plank has been moved.'

After a while he came away to look for a spade. He found one, and went back again. At last a smothered sound made me spring up and rush to him; but he met me, driving me back.

'I beg of you, dear Miss Dorothy, keep away. Have you a handkerchief with you?'

I had one, and gave it to him.

His hands were covered with earth. He had only just gone back again when I gave a cry—

'Robert! *It has gone!*'

He came up to me, keeping one hand behind him.

'Miss Dorothy, if ever you were good and brave, hold out now!'

I beat my hands together—'It has gone! It has gone!'

'It has not gone!' he said. 'Master Edmund's hand is in this handkerchief. It has been buried under a plank of the flooring!'

I gasped, 'Let me see it!'

But he would not. 'No, no! my dear lady, you must not—cannot. I only knew it by the ring!'

Then he made me sit down again, whilst he replaced the firewood; and then, with the utmost quietness, we set out to return, I holding the lantern in one hand, and with the other clinging to his arm (for the apparition that had been my guide before was gone), and he carrying the awful relic in his other hand. Once, as we were leaving the yard, he whispered—

'Look!'

'I see nothing,' said I.

'Hold up your lantern,' he whispered.

'There is nothing but the dog-kennel,' I said.

'Miss Dorothy,' he said, '*the dog has not barked to-night!*'

By the time we reached home, my mind had fully realized the importance of our discovery, and the terribly short time left us in which to profit by it, supposing, as I fully believed, that it was the first step to the vindication of George's innocence. As we turned into the gate, Robert, who had been silent for some time, broke out—

'Miss Dorothy! Mr. George Manners is as innocent as I am; and God forgive us all for doubting him! What shall we do?'

'I am going up to town,' I said, 'and you are going with me. We will go to Dr. Penn. He has a lodging close by the prison: I have the address. At eight o'clock tomorrow the king himself could not undo this injustice. We have, let me see, how many hours?'

Robert pulled out his old silver watch and brought it to the lantern.

'It is twenty minutes to twelve.'

'Rather more than eight hours. Heaven help us! You will get something to eat, Robert, and put the horses at once into the chariot. I will be ready.

I went straight upstairs, and met Harriet at the door. I pushed her back into the room and took her hands.

'Harriet! Robert has found poor Edmund's hand, *with the ring*, buried under some wood in Thomas Parker's barn. I am going up to town with him at once, to put the matter into Dr. Penn's hands, and save George Manners' life, if it be not too late.'

She wrenched her hands away, and flung herself at my feet. I never saw such a change come over any face. She had had time in the (what must have been) anxious interval of our absence, for some painful enough reflection, and my announcement had broken through the blindness of a selfish mind, and found its way where she seldom let anything come—to her feelings.

'Oh, Dolly! Dolly! will you ever forgive me? Why did I not tell you before? But I thought it was only a dream. And indeed, indeed I thought Mr. Manners had done it. But that man Parker! If it had not been for Mr. Manners being found there, I should have sworn that Parker had done it. Dolly! I saw him that night. He came in and helped. And once I saw him look at Mr. Manners with such a strange expression, and he seemed so anxious to make him say that it was a quarrel, and that he had done it in self-defence. But you know I thought it must be Mr. Manners—and I did so love poor Edmund!'

And she lay sobbing in agony on the ground. I said—

'My love, I pray that it is not too late: but we must not waste time. Help me *now*, Harriet!'

She sprang up at once.

'Yes! you must have food. You shall go. I shall not go with you. I am not worthy, but I will pray till you come back again.'

I said, 'There is one most important thing for you to do. Let no soul go out or come into the house till I return, or some gossip will bring it to Parker's ears that we have gone to London.'

Harriet promised, and rushed off to get me food and wine. With her own hands she filled a hot-water bottle for my feet in the chariot, supplied my purse with gold, and sewed some notes up in my stays; and, (as if anxious to crowd into this one occasion all the long withheld offices of sisterly kindness,) came in with her arms full of a beautiful set of sables that belonged to her—cloak, cuffs, muff, &c.—and in these she dressed me. And then we fell into each other's arms, and I wept upon her neck the first tears I had shed that day. As I stood on the door-step, she held up the candle and looked at me.

'My dear!' she said, 'how pretty your sweet face does look out of those great furs! You shall keep them always.'

Dear Harriet! Her one idea—beauty. I suppose the 'ruling passion,' whatever it may be, is strong with all of us, even in the face of death. Moreover, her's was one of those shallow minds that seem instinctively to escape by any avenue from a painful subject; and by the time that I was in the chariot, she had got over the first shock, and there was an almost infectious cheerfulness in her farewell.

'It *must* be all right, Dolly!'

Then I fell back, and we started. The warm light of the open door became a speck, and then nothing; and in the long dark drive, when every footfall of the horses seemed to consume an age, the sickening agony of suspense was almost intolerable. Oh, my dear! never, never shall I forget that night. The black trees and hedges whirling past us in the darkness, always the same, like an enchanted drive; then the endless suburbs, and at last the streets where people lounged in corners and stopped the way, as if every second of time were not worth a king's ransom; and sedan-chairs trotted lightly home from gay parties, as if life were not one long tragedy. Once the way was stopped, once we lost it. That mistake nearly killed me. At last a watchman helped us to the little by-street where Dr. Penn was lodging, near which a loud sound of carpenters' work and hurrying groups of people puzzled me exceedingly. After much knocking, an upper window was opened and a head put out, and my dear friend's dear voice called to us. I sprang out on to the pavement and cried—

'Dr. Penn, this is Dorothy.'

He came down and took us in, and then (my voice failing) Robert explained to him the nature of our errand, and showed him the ghastly proof. Dr. Penn came back to me.

'My love,' he said, 'you must come up stairs and rest.'

'Rest!' I shrieked, 'never! Get your hat, doctor, and come quickly. Let us go to the king. Let us do something. We have very little time, and he must be saved.'

I believe I was very unreasonable; I fear that I delayed them some minutes before good Dr. Penn could persuade me that I should only be a hindrance, that he would do everything that was possible, and could do so much better with no one but Robert.

'My love,' he said, 'trust me. 'To obey is better than sacrifice!'

I went up-stairs into the dingy little sitting-room, and he went to call his landlady—'a good woman,' he said: 'I have known her long.' Then he went away, and Robert with him, to the house of the Home Secretary.

It was three o'clock. Five hours still!

I sat staring at the sprawling paper on the walls, and at the long snuff of the candle that Dr. Penn had lighted, and at a framed piece of embroidery, representing Abraham sacrificing Isaac, that hung upon the wall. Were there no succouring angels now?

The door opened, and I looked wearily round. A motherly woman, with black eyes, fat cheeks, and a fat wedding ring, stood curtseying at the door. I said, 'I think you are Dr. Penn's landlady? He says you are very good. Pray come in.'

Then I dropped my head on my hand again, and stared vacantly as before. Exhaustion had almost become stupor, and it was in a sort of dream that I watched the stout figure moving softly to and fro, lighting the fire, and bringing an air of comfort over the dreary little parlour. Then she was gone for a little bit, and I felt a little more lonely and weary, and then I heard that cheerful clatter, commonly so grateful to feminine exhaustion, and the good woman entered with a toasted glow upon her face, bearing a tray with tea, and such hospitable accompaniments as she could command. She set them down and came up to me with an air of determination.

'My dear, you must be a good young lady and take some tea. We all have our troubles, but a good heart goes a long way.'

Her pitying face broke me down. How sadly without feminine sympathy I had been through all my troubles I had never felt as I felt it now that it had come. I fairly dropped my head upon her shoulder and sobbed out the apparently irrelevant remark—

'Dear madam, I have no mother!'

She understood me, and flinging her arms round me, sobbed louder than I. It would have been wicked to offer further resistance. She brought down pillows, covered them with a red shawl, and propped me up till the horsehair sofa became an easy couch, and with mixed tears and smiles, I contrived to swallow a few mouthfuls, a feat which she exalted to an act of sublime virtue.

'And now, my dear,' she said, 'you will have some warm water and wash your hands and face and smooth your hair, and go to sleep for a bit.'

'I cannot sleep,' I said.

But Mrs. Smith was not to be baffled.

'I shall give you something to make you,' said she.

And so, when the warm water had done its work, I had to swallow a sleeping-draught and be laid easily upon the sofa. Her last words as she 'tucked me up' were, oddly enough—

'The tea's brought back a bit of colour to your cheeks, miss, and I will say you do look pretty in them beautiful sables!'

A very different thought was working in my head as the sleeping-draught tingled through my veins.

'Will the birds sing at sunrise?'

Nelly, I slept twelve long hours without a dream. It was four o'clock in the afternoon of Monday when I awoke, and only then, I believe, from the mesmeric influence of being gazed at. Eleanor! there is only one such pair of eyes in all the world! George Manners was kneeling by my side.

Abraham was still sacrificing his son upon the wall, but my Isaac was restored to me. I sat up and flung myself into his arms. It was long, long before either of us could speak, and, oddly enough, one of the first things he said was (twitching my cloak with the quaint curiosity of a man very ignorant about feminine belongings), 'My darling, you seem sadly ill, but yet, Doralice, your sweet face does look so pretty in these great furs.'

* * * *

My story is ended, Nelly, and my promise fulfilled. The rest you know. How the detective, who left London before four o'clock that morning, found the rusty knife that had been buried with the hand, and apprehended Parker, who confessed his guilt The wretched man said, that being out on the fatal night about some sick cattle, he had met poor Edmund by the low gate; that Edmund had begun, as usual, to taunt him; that the opportunity of revenge was too strong, and he had murdered him. His first idea had been flight, and being unable to drag the ring from Edmund's hand, which was swollen, he had cut it off, and thrown the body into the ditch. On hearing of the finding of the body, and of poor George's position, he determined to brave it out, with what almost fatal success we have seen. He dared not then sell the ring, and so buried it in his barn. Two things respecting his end were singular: First, at the last, he sent for Dr. Penn, imploring him to stay with him till he died.

That good man, as ever, obeyed the call of duty and kindness, but he was not fated to see the execution of my brother's murderer. The night before, Thomas Parker died in prison; not by his own hand, Nelly. A fit of apoplexy, the result of intense mental excitement, forestalled the vengeance of the law.

Need I tell you, dear friend, who know it so well, that I am happy,?

Not, my love, that such tragedies can be forgotten—these deep wounds leave a scar. This one brought my husband's first white hairs, and took away my girlhood for ever. But if the first blush of careless gaiety has gone from life, if we are a little 'old before our time,' it may be that this state of things has its advantages. Perhaps, having known together such real affliction, we cannot now afford to be disturbed by the petty vexations and worthless misunderstandings that form the troubles of smoother lives. Perhaps, having been all but so awfully parted, we can never afford, in this short life, to be otherwise than of one heart and one soul. Perhaps, my dear, in short, the love that kept faith through shame, and was cemented by fellow-suffering, can hardly do otherwise than flourish to our heart's best content in the sunshine of prosperity with which God has now blessed us.

## A DAY DREAM. (Feb. 14.)

THE beechen woods, the old brick hall,
The river widening to a lake,
I love them one, I love them all,
I love them for a maiden's sake.

A maiden with whose gathering blush
The very roses dare not vie.
The daisies, which her footsteps crush,
The very daisies love and die.

Her lips half-conscious of a smile;
Her eyes all beaming with delight;
A white rose in her hair the while,
Like frosted moon against the night.

No lovelier roses bloom than these;
No woodland song more sweet than here,
Yet song and roses fail to please,
When love has told me, she is near.

In vain on Alpine snows I stand,
By Danube's osiered stream recline.
I change the sky; I change the land;
Change cannot change this love of mine.

Forgetful of the city's mart,
Of feudal tower, of vine-clad hill,
I only feel an aching heart,
While Love triumphant mocks my will.

I tread in memory by her side
The swelling uplands of the park,
The road, green-swarded, up the ride
To fields, dominion of the lark.

With bated breath, and faltering speech,
I pause enchanted when she speaks.
Gone from my view are hall and beech;
But laughing eyes and dimpled cheeks.

I remember how she came
Out from the school beneath the trees,
Fresh as the moon, when all aflame,
The rose-tints bathe the sky—the seas.

We pass once more the garden wall,
Plantations of the larch and fir,
Beneath the arch and by the hall,
By trees with autumn winds astir.

The bells are ringing in the tower,
We pause a moment at the door.
Within is many a carvèd flower,
And coloured sunbeams stain the floor.

There is the rectory, there the ground
All hooped for croquêt where we played;
There stand the elms long ages crowned,
As guardians of the village glade.

All yellow-red the chestnut stands,
The bridge and willow span the stream;
I feel once more the clasp of hands—
A parting look—and all a dream.

The beechen woods, the old brick hall,
The river widening to a lake,
I love them one, I love them all,
I love them for a maiden's sake.

S. S.

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## A BALL-ROOM REMINISCENCE.

AIRILY beautiful,
Daintily dutiful
To her mamma in the elegant shawl;
Gleaming so purely,
Glancing demurely,
Fair was Floretta that night at the ball.

Sailing divinely,
Dancing supinely,
Waltzing confidingly, sinking away;
Whispering caressingly,
Sighing distressingly,
Hid by the shrubs that encircle the bay.

Wheedling cajolingly,
Wandering strollingly,
Into the ante-room, shady and cool;
Proving convincingly,
Mimicking mincingly,
Magnates and stagnates that whirl in the pool.

Toying deliciously,
Tugging maliciously,
Gloves that are 'sixes' and stick to her hands;
Showing right graciously,
Not ostentatiously,
Destitute fingers awaiting commands.

Champaigning sippingly,
Nibbling up trippingly,
Biscuits and ices and jelly and cream;
Laughing melodiously,
Picturing odiously,
Bachelor habits and serfdom supreme.

Looking up poutingly,
Looking down doubtingly,
Conning her card with a woebegone glance;
Yielding unwillingly,
Answering chillingly,
Withering the Captain who claims her to dance.

Fanning ferociously,
Grumbling precociously,
Seeking a rest after whirligig brief;
Lecturing icingly,
Smiling enticingly,
Making me slink round the wall like a thief.

Rising up buoyantly,
Breathing out joyantly,
'Dear Mr. Robinson, what a relief!'
Sparkling so wittily,
Moving so prettily,
Filling my heart with an exquisite grief.

Leaning reclinингly,
Starting repiningly,
Horrid announcement, 'The carriage is here,'
Pausing coquettishly,
Hurrying pettishly,
Couty papa holds the horses so dear.

Argued litigiously,
Treasured religiously,
Now, in my memory's innermost hall,
Dearest Floretta,
I'll never forget a
Phase of the rapture that night at the ball.

J. C. B.

## A FAREWELL VALENTINE.

WHAT mysterious influence is it that naturally invests the miller's daughter with an amount of romance and charm denied, *à priori*, to the girl-children of the grocer, the shoemaker, or even the corn-dealer? These latter ladies have to achieve *their* honours; they must cultivate *their* attractions; they must show fair cause why *they* shall be considered beautiful, graceful, verse-inspiring. But the miller's daughter is born to a certain rank as inevitably as the earl's; and the one is a beauty just as the other is a 'lady,'——by courtesy, if by nothing else. Unlike Audrey, the gods *have* made her poetical; she has nothing to do but to keep the place which a kind and partial fate has allotted her

Now Phœbe Staunton was one of this privileged class, who was also magnanimously independent of her privileges. I mean, that even had she *not* been the miller's daughter, she would still have commanded a position in her own small but sufficient world, as being very pretty, very vivacious, and very charming. After this, it may be needless to add, that at the age of nineteen she was a most mischievous and inveterate flirt. Vivacity and intelligence, combined with unusual good looks, always take this fatal direction, I have observed, among only partially cultivated young ladies in whatever rank of life. Uneducated, Phœbe was not; for she was quick and clever, and had won a good many prizes, and acquired some amount of useful and ornamental knowledge during three years at boarding school. But as regards 'the higher qualities of the mind and heart,' to speak didactically, they were at present in a very crude and undeveloped state in Miss Staunton. She had had an unwholesomely prosperous life through as many of those nineteen years as she could remember; for her mother died when she was an infant, and her aunt Charlotte, who then came to supply the place of housekeeper at the mill, had consistently spoiled her brother's youngest child ever since. So did the miller himself; and although her brothers teased her after the manner of boys during their earlier years, they, too, gave in more or less to the little witch's fascinations when they came home for occasional visits after they were severally established in the world. Added to this, she was the belle of her native village—her title acknowledged by acclamation by all the disengaged young men and impartial older ones of Cotover, and only disputed by those ladies, lovers, and suborned husbands and fathers, whose opposition, in fact, only served to confirm the distinction. Thus being indulged, praised, and thought much of on all hands, it is no wonder that Phœbe Staunton bid fair to strike on that rock of self-esteem, self-will, and selfishness in general, that has caused so many well-begun voyages to result in disaster and distress. That she was *not* utterly selfish,—that she had her happy seasons of generous thoughtfulness for others, and even of comparative humility regarding herself, must be held as vastly creditable to the original sweetness of her nature, which circumstances had certainly done their utmost to spoil, so far.

Now for her lovers. Without counting those admirers whom inequality of fortune or diffidence of disposition kept at a distance, she had, at the age of nineteen, several devoted aspirants to her favour, who each and all waited, it is supposed, not so much for any sign to be shown of special preference for his individual self, but in the hope that his rivals might either be sent off, or retire of their own accord from what seemed a hopeless siege. It appeared that neither of these young men could summon courage to declare his affection to a damsel who so recklessly scattered both smiles and frowns among her victims, now raising one of them to the seventh heaven of delight by giving him a flower from her garden—

asking him to train for her a retriever or a starling, or entreating his opinion on the comparative merits of pink, or blue, or lilac ribbons in her new bonnet; and the very next time of meeting, perhaps, ignoring the hapless youth's claims on her attention altogether, or snubbing him at every remark with that decisive trenchancy of diction which is generally forthcoming in such cases.

From nineteen to twenty, from twenty to twenty-one, thus it was with Phœbe. And then, interested friends began to remark that Miss Staunton had better look about her; it might be wise to make up her mind in good time; to choose while she had the power of choice; to remember the story of the crooked stick, &c., &c., &c. For, as may be inferred, at that time, and in the primitive community of Cotover, twenty-one was considered rather a mature age for a woman to be still disengaged; and indeed, in a year or two she would be in danger of receiving that honourable title of old maid, which in these days, and in a more sophisticated state of society, is indefinitely postponed to a much later period of existence.

Nevertheless, the miller's daughter seemed to be in no hurry. One by one, most of her earlier devotees had dropped off, it is true; but their places had been supplied by new ones, and there was no falling-off in the actual number of adorers. Moreover, one who had been among the first still remained constant,—patiently waiting on her smiles and frowns now as he had done any time during these two years, apparently unshaken by rebuffs, unwearied by suspense, evincing a courage and a long-suffering endurance, worthy, it must be said, of a better cause.

But in more respects than one David Pierce was considered by his neighbours to be very queer and unaccountable, which epithets, in other places than Cotover, often only signify that the object thereof is widely different from, and perhaps superior to the jury which brings in the verdict on him. In the present case, the facts briefly were that this young man, being an orphan, without relatives or friends, save those he had made for himself, had gradually worked his way from the position of 'odd boy' at Squire Faversham's farm, till he now filled the responsible office of manager and general overseer; that his steady integrity and clear-headed intelligence made him unusually valued by his employer; and that his quiet and studious tastes caused him to pass most of his leisure hours either in his own home, or at the one or two houses where dwelt his particular friends. The miller had been one of these for many years before Phœbe came on the scene in any other character than as a spoiled child, to be petted and played with by him as by the rest of her father's visitors. Then came an interregnum of three years chiefly passed at a school in the county town, and then the young lady came home 'for good,' and to enter on that career of conquest which has been already adverted to, and David Pierce gave in his allegiance at once, and, as it appeared, irrevocably.

Not that he obtruded his attentions on the capricious lady of his love with the busy perseverance of his rivals. An occasional looker-on might have found some difficulty in detecting the lover in this one among Phœbe's many suitors. But *she* knew the extent of her power over him well enough, and used it, too, with artful discretion, always keeping well within its limits, during those two years. She knew her power over him;—but she was not so well acquainted with his power over himself. As yet, she had not forced him to exert it.

Once in the course of a discussion about a very sentimental poem in the local newspaper, she heard Mr. Pierce give it as *his* opinion, that however patient a lover might, could, or should be while there was hope for him, no man worthy the name would spend his feelings and waste his life in sighing after a girl whom he believed to prefer somebody else. Phœbe took no verbal notice of this statement; but she registered it in that restless little brain of hers, together with the resolve to

put the gentleman's hardihood to the test one day. Not that she wished to make him miserable out and out, and for long together, but just to let him feel that it wasn't so easy to shake off the chains he had worn so long, and which, indeed, she was aware, had hitherto hung more lightly on him than on the other pretenders to her favour. It would do him no harm to pull them a little tighter; it would only make him all the happier afterwards, when——

To this effect ran Miss Staunton's meditations; and although she did not pursue them to a more definite conclusion, it may perhaps be gathered from them thus far, that her final intentions with regard to Mr. Pierce were not of an obdurate nature. If the truth could have been known, indeed, it would have appeared that so much of her heart as was not choked up by vanity and self-love *was* fairly devoted to David Pierce. She cared for him more than she knew, although, unhappily, she cared for her own gratification yet a little more.

Of course, opportunity was not long wanting—it never is—of carrying out a malignant plan. At Christmas, one of her brothers brought with him a friend—a fellow-clerk—to swell the circle which annually gathered round the miller's hospitable table. Of this circle, David for years past had always formed one; and it had been a happy time for him, to which he looked forward weeks beforehand with more eagerness than most people would have believed him capable of feeling. The Christmas-eve fireside talk was so pleasant, and Phœbe looked so pretty and so sweet sitting over her work at the table, and putting in a saucy word now and then. Then on Christmas morning, he walked beside her to church—a process which by some mental association always seemed to him peculiarly satisfactory and delightful. Besides, Phœbe was generally her better self at these times: what earnestness there was in her nature seemed then to get the better, for a brief space, of the girlish frivolity that was generally uppermost. And then followed the walk after service, if it was fine, and the early dinner at the mill, and the long evening that yet seemed so short to him, ending in games, and singing, and dancing, and snap-dragon, and such seasonable festivities, in all of which to take part implied being brought into more intimate contact than usual with fair Phœbe.

Christmas had thus been a happy season to David Pierce. This time, however, it was destined to be very different. Robert Staunton's friend, Mr. Ellis, was a most interesting young man. He was pale, thin, tall, and had recently recovered from a serious illness, which had left him still something of an invalid. Robert declared he was given to writing poetry as well as reading it, and it is certain that he had pleasant manners, was gentlemanlike and conversible, and able to make himself unassumingly agreeable at the mill, insomuch that his cordial host declared him to be a right-down good sort of chap, spite of his being so sickly; and Aunt Charlotte 'took' to him, with that kind of protective tenderness which is entirely legitimate in an elderly though unmarried lady with grey curls and a cap, towards a young gentleman with weak lungs and a cough. But it was quite a different thing when Phœbe began to show a similar interest in their guest, and took to paying him thoughtful little attentions, which, although justifiable on broad principles of benevolence, on the score of his health, admitted also of a tenderer interpretation that two parties concerned unfortunately did not fail to attach thereto. Charles Ellis himself, though not suffering from overweening conceit, and David Pierce, slow as he forced himself to be in making up his mind on the momentous subject—these two, at last arrived at the same conclusion, carrying such different emotions to their separate breasts. Not that even to the former it brought unmitigated satisfaction,—for he knew himself too poor and too proud to ask the rich miller for his only daughter, and also, irresistibly charming as that daughter had made herself to him, there was a certain young lady

resident at Islington whom, until now, he had silently thought the most perfect of her sex, and could not entirely dismiss from his tenderest thoughts, even under his present circumstances. He went so far as to make fair copies of divers fragmentary verses, substituting the name of Phœbe for that of Alice,—but he was hardly satisfied with the result,—although the new name fitted into the metre perfectly, in all except one burst of admiration in which he had desired to be a king that he might offer her a marble palace, fit dwelling for the majesty of her his noble, queenly——No, Phœbe would *not* lend itself to the exigencies of rhyme, on that occasion; and, moreover, he was constrained to admit that the preceding epithets scarcely applied to the gay, blooming, active country girl; and his thoughts reverted with something like tender compunction to her who till now had reigned sole sovereign of his affections. If he had as good reason to believe in her preference as Miss Staunton had taken pains to assure him of hers, he could not but own to himself that his heart would not hesitate between the two. Phœbe was very pretty, very winning,—he acknowledged her charms —but his taste *did* run in the direction of darker eyes, a taller figure, a more stately style, than that of the miller's daughter,—if he might be allowed to choose.

Thus it is that no climax and crash of proposal, and consequent rejection, interrupted the suave current of Miss Phœbe's flirtation. In fact, things were in an unusual position. It appeared as if the lady were destined to make those advances she had till now been wont to meet, kindly or coyly, as the case might be, from one and all the swains honoured by her notice. It is impossible to justify Miss Staunton, and I have no wish to seek to do so; but in simple justice to her, arrant coquette and thoughtless little simpleton as she was, it ought to be said that this very shyness and tendency to retreat on the part of Mr. Charles Ellis, hindered her from being aware of the full force of her own behaviour or from seeing the direction in which she was drifting, day after day.

An interested looker-on, however, could not fail to perceive it, and the conviction grew till it became deeply rooted in David Pierce's mind, that Phœbe Staunton at last loved as she had never loved before, and that the pale, romantic-looking Londoner had touched and fairly won the heart which had proved so obstinately invulnerable to the most ardent and long-continued attacks, till now. Unlucky Phœbe! She exulted when she saw David's brown cheek grow pale, and his eyes cloud with something that might be either sorrow or anger, at words or ways of hers that appeared significant of her interest in her new acquaintance. She felt triumphant even, when he excused himself from coming to their usual Twelfth Night party, of which he had been one any time these seven years

'Why—what's amiss!' the miller said, opening his eyes wide, and for the first time admitting to his peaceful mind the supposition that something might be not altogether 'straight' with his much-loved and valued young friend. 'David not coming o' Twelve Night! I never heard such trash. Write off to him immediate, Phœbe, and tell him we'll none such vagaries. Might as well tell me we're t' have no cake as no David.'

'But, father, if he don't want to come there's no need to beg and pray for his company, is there?' Phœbe poutingly observed. To which Mr. Staunton replied with a very obvious wink, intended to be sly and covert, and addressed to no one in particular.

'Oho! That's the way of it, is it? Well then, my lass, if thou'st feelins agin' writin to him to ax him to think better on it,—let a be, let a be. I'll rout him up, never fear; I'll make it all even.'

And although his daughter at this shook herself like an offended pigeon, and declared that she didn't fear,—and she'd no feelins, the miller remained comfortably impressed with the idea that some little tiff had arisen between the two, more indicative of affection than any-

thing else, and that after all, Phœbe and David *were* likely to make a match of it, just as he desired.

David's own manner and David's words, however, speedily put this idea to flight. Quietly, but steadily, he resisted his old friend's persuasion, and made him understand that his decision was unalterable. He had a great deal of serious business on hand, just now, and needed time for thought concerning future arrangements of great moment to him. In a week or two he should tell him more, when more was definitely decided. And the miller went back, a graver man; impressed, he hardly knew why, with the idea of something being wrong—but utterly at sea as to what it was, or how to set it right again.

January went on. Robert and his friend had returned to London, and the inmates of the mill had resumed the quiet way of life always broken into by the festivities of Christmas. And now Phœbe began to wonder, with a gradually increasing ache of the heart, why David kept away so persistently. Was he offended? Was he so much hurt at her behaviour? Was he actually showing resentment? And even at this point, incorrigible Phœbe felt an instant's emotion almost like gratification, in the idea that she had so swayed this man from his habitual sober tranquillity of feeling. She would make it all right, the very next time she saw him, she promised herself.

That event took place on a soft early February morning, as she was walking in the village. The grey sky, the green earth, all looked as if relentingly dreaming of spring. The birds twittered, the first buds, doomed to be nipped by sundry ill-timed frosts and east winds, clouded the outlines that had been so clear and sharp, of willow, thorn, and chestnut branches. There is a certain tender pathos in the atmosphere of such a day, which the spirit—especially if it be young and feminine—must be very obtuse to resist. Phœbe's meditations were gentler and sweeter than usual; and when, lifting her eyes, she saw David a little way off on the opposite side of the road, her heart beat, and her eyes grew lustrous with an eager earnestness that they had scarcely ever been called on to express through all her life before. He was walking towards her, but to her dismay, just as he came within speaking distance, he turned down a bye lane leading to the fields. Evidently, she thought, he did not see her; and on the impulse of the moment, she did what a month before she would have considered utterly impossible and not to be dreamed of—she actually crossed the road, quickened her pace, hurried after him, and when she was near enough arrested his attention and his progress by calling 'Mr. Pierce!' in a clear, though rather trembling little voice.

He turned round, and by the look of his face she felt assured that he had seen her, and that he must have purposely tried to avoid her. But he took her extended hand gravely and kindly, asked after all at home, and then appeared to have said all he had to say. Phœbe, however, was not in that position; and although she was disconcerted, perplexed—even a little frightened—she was bent on 'making it all right,' and summoned sufficient confidence to inquire, reproachfully, why he hadn't been to see them for so long?

'I've been very busy. I've been working early and late,' David replied.

'But you'll come soon, won't you?' the young lady urged. 'Do come soon. We've missed you so much all this time.'

'You're very kind,' he answered steadily and seriously, both as to voice and look, 'but the fact is I'm still very much engaged; I really find no time just now for visiting.'

'That means you don't *care* to find time to come and see us,' Phœbe said, and coloured crimson when she found that he attempted no denial of the charge. The interval of silence was awkward enough, and things looked desperate. Phœbe was already quite at the end of her resources. It was not at all by design, but only on the sudden instinct of the moment, that now, holding out her hand again as she

wished him good-bye—she dropped her eyes, and added timidly—

'We're friends, aren't we?'

'Yes, to be sure,' he replied, with manful readiness, looking down at the pretty blushing face, with an expression in his own that even had she seen it, poor, foolish Phœbe would not have known how to translate.

'And you're not going to give up old ways, are you?' she went on, little guessing in what sense the words were understood by him. 'Oh, please don't!' and for an instant she glanced entreatingly at him; 'it would make me so unhap—— so uncomfortable if I thought——'

'But don't think, don't believe anything of the kind,' David said, steadily. 'Why, Phœbe, you know I wouldn't make you unhappy for the whole world -and you shall never have cause to be, on my account, please Heaven.'

He spoke in a new tone now, full of courage and cheerfulness; and when she fairly looked up, Phœbe saw that his face was bright and cheery as his voice. And yet, somehow, she felt that all was *not* right —*not*, that is to say, as she wished. She was altogether puzzled, although, of course, it was incumbent on her to appear altogether satisfied.

'I'm so glad!' she said, and then they shook hands, and parted.

'Poor child, she partly guesses; but she'—he thought—'doesn't know. I hope she never will know how much I——'

He was still in love, and of course whatever Phœbe said or did was good and admirable, and everything was twisted about to come to that conclusion. He thought her timid appeal to her old friend very touching and sweet; and finally, he made up his mind what to do to set her tender heart at rest, while he walked on to his abode, just now a scene of some considerable confusion and discomfort, as houses are apt to be while in the transition stage between one tenant and another.

As yet, however, it was only known to one or two that David Pierce was on the point of leaving Cotover, and England also. He had agreed to join young Mr. Faversham, who was going to Australia, there to become landowners and farmers on their own account. But as he desired to leave the place where he had lived so long without causing, or at any rate, witnessing that 'sensation' which such an event was sure to cause in the stirless country village, he had kept the fact a secret, intending thus to avoid all formal farewells and curious inquiries from friends and acquaintances.

It was only on the eve of his departure, which chanced also to be the eve of last St. Valentine's Day, that he went up to the mill. Phœbe, as fate would have it, chanced to be out, and he persuaded himself he was glad of it—glad to be spared the trial of consciously looking on her for the last time, at least for many years. He and his good friend the miller had a long talk, and parted at last, more convinced of one another's true-hearted worth, perhaps, than ever they had been before. Unwonted moisture stood in old Staunton's eyes as he wrung David's hand, and wished him good speed.

'I'd thought to ha' had you hard by—a sort o' extra son, like, to th' end o' my days,' he said brokenly; 'but it warn't to be, and it's no good, but bad for us to murmur. And if it's best for yourself, David, I'm not the man to wish things otherways; and so good-bye t' ye, and God bless ye!'

Phœbe never in her life will forget her coming home that night. The news was at once announced, which made her feel for a moment as if she had been shot—so sudden, so stunning and bewildering was the blow. As well as she could, she kept up appearances, however; and, in fact, her father, too frank and direct himself to suspect the possibility of his daughter being otherwise, was quite hurt at her apparent indifference to their old friend's departure from amongst them.

'I doubt ye're a bit over gay and careless, Phœbe. Ye might have more heart, child. Sometimes it

seems as though what you *had* of it was asleep, or summat. And I did hope that the very man to wake it up, like, was him that's not coming near us no more, now. But don't cry, Phœbe; I'm not angry wi' ye, lass. We can't help our feelins, I'm aware; and I'm not blamin' ye for what's not your fault; let alone he never made up to ye like other young fellers. But he's the best of 'em all—the best of 'em all!'

It was an era in Phœbe's life. Never before had she felt pangs like these; never had she found it so difficult to keep back all sign of the emotion struggling within her; never before had she longed so eagerly, so cravingly, to be alone. When she went to her room for the night, she locked her door, threw herself on her bed, and wept bitterly—bitterly; feeling more hopeless, more humble, more ashamed, than, a week or two ago, could have seemed possible to the lighthearted, admired, indulged little beauty.

Next morning she arose, pale, unrefreshed, and went down stairs, and out into the garden, that the fresh air might revive her into something more like herself. With a sad, impotent gaze, her eyes instinctively sought the pretty pastoral hill, on the further slope of which stood David's old *home*—his *home* no more. Already he had left it; he was to start at early dawn, he had told her father, and her father had told her. Phœbe had learned to feel, truly, as she stood under the lilac trees that seemed to shiver in the cold morning breeze, looking out on the landscape that was now so empty, so blank. She had altogether forgot what day it was. When she went into breakfast, the rosy-cheeked maid came to her, with mouth outstretched in a broad smile.

'There's four of 'em for *you*, Miss Phœbe,' she announced, as she handed them to her; 'and I've got one from that Tom, I guess. Like his impidence to send a fat cook to *me*, hain't it, miss?'

And Phœbe had to inspect, with what intelligence and sympathy she could muster, the highly-coloured picture alluded to, with its ironical verse underneath.

'Never mind, Sally,' she consolingly said, as she left her, 'you know he's very fond of you all the time; it's only for mischief he tries to vex you.'

And then sighing, she thrust her own share of the day's harvest into her pocket, without even looking at it. All her old enjoyment in them, her pleased vanity, her petty triumph—were quite gone. There was no room for such feelings in her aching heart; poor, unhappy, sorely-punished Phœbe!

Not till quite late in the dreary, lagging day, did she draw her crumpled correspondence from her pocket, and proceed carelessly to inspect it. But, with what a leap of the heart—what a flash in the dim eyes—what a sudden eagerness of the fingers did she fasten on one, the most ordinary-looking, the only non-ornamented missive of the four.

It was his writing. Actually, he had sent to her, as usual! For, in fact, it had been one of the very few ostensibly lover-like attentions he had permitted himself, that every year he had been wont, on Valentine's Day, to send her verses, carefully transcribed, and which, though less brilliantly and florally illustrated than the rest of the tender communications *received at the same time*, were, as she had good taste enough to perceive, of a very different description, and a considerably higher order of poetry.

And now, had he actually sent her a last valentine? Surely, all could not be over, then? She opened it and read:—

'Good-bye, dear Phœbe; I write to you this once, just to say good-bye, and to make you sure that there is no need to be sorry about me, or to have one painful thought of your old friend. Don't ever suppose that I shall not be thankful and happy to know of your happiness. I am going into a new life in a new country, with good courage and hope. Never think of me otherwise, when you *do* think of me, which may be now and then, as an old friend, as I said, who will always

rejoice to know of your welfare. That is all. Good-bye, and God bless you, Phœbe!

'Your true friend,

'DAVID PIERCE.'

This was the letter that honest David had, with great pains and difficulty, succeeded in producing, with the sole and simple idea of putting Phœbe's tender heart at rest concerning him. This, despatched in entire oblivion of the particular day on which it would arrive, was the closing one of that series of innocent love-letters which once a year he had gratified himself by sending under the shelter of the allowed license of the 14th of February. Alas, poor Phœbe! Too late she knew what she had lost; too late she understood how much she really cared for the man she had played with and had sent from her. She reaped the sorrow of which she herself had sown the seeds, when, in the careless pride of her youth, her good looks, and her untried prosperity, she had dared to trifle with a true heart, and pretend to cast aside a worthy love.

Does any one desire to hear that her punishment was life-long? Though this cannot be said, yet it is certain that during the two or three weeks immediately following that memorable Valentine's Day, Phœbe Staunton suffered with a bitterness and sharpness that made the time more fateful in its influences on her than all the previous years of her life had been. Sadder and wiser, indeed, she was; and the change from passive blank sorrow to keen anxiety that then came to her, was as the climax to her new experience of the deeper realities of feeling.

A letter came to the miller nearly a month after it was supposed David had left England. It was from a London doctor, and stated that Mr. Pierce was there. He had been unable to accompany Mr. Faversham, having caught a fever a day or two before the vessel sailed; that the fever had turned out more serious than was at first expected, and, though vanquished at last, it had left him in a very weak and precarious condition; that he, the doctor, had only now succeeded in ascertaining the name and address of a friend of his patient's, whom he had asked to come and see him. Would Mr. Staunton come at once?

When Phœbe learned all this, and that her father was preparing to start immediately on the long journey, she went to him, and, with her pale face and earnest eyes sufficiently emphasizing the quiet words, she said:

'Oh, father! let me go too!'

The miller looked at her, fairly amazed at first. He was not very rapid in his perceptions usually, but a good deal must have made itself manifest to him, on this occasion, in a very brief space; for that one look seemed to teach him all he had to learn. He took her head between his two great hands and kissed her forehead, saying brokenly:

'Poor lass! my poor lass! How come it about so cross then? Don't fret; don't, love. Courage, my lamb! There, there — we'll go together— we'll go together!'

And they went. And two weeks after their arrival in London—two weeks for the most part spent by Phœbe in lonely anxiety while her father was with David—she sent him a little letter by the good miller's hands. What that little letter contained was never known but to the writer and recipient thereof; but the immediate result appeared to be, that Phœbe accompanied her father next time he went to see his friend, and that David's convalescence progressed towards recovery more rapidly thenceforward. It is rumoured that young Mr. Faversham, if he still waits David's arrival in Australia, will, like another illustrious emigrant, 'wait a long time' But it is also currently reported that the squire is only too glad to get his much-valued agent back to his hill farm again, and that he regards the disappointment of his nephew, in respect of Mr. Pierce, with that temperate regret, not to say equanimity, with which, according to Rochefoucauld, we can always bear other people's misfortunes.

## SITTING ON A ROUT SEAT.

Y imperceptible stages I have now arrived at that age when a lady is considered to be verging on 'elderly,' and, excepting a sober quadrille now and then, have quite given up dancing. But as I have by no means given up looking on, and it is not so very long since I was as indefatigable a dancer as any young damsel in her first season, I may be allowed to give my experiences and opinions, without being suspected of having imbibed them in the days when young ladies wore their waists under their armpits and cultivated a perpetual stoop in imitation of the Venus de Medici. In the first place, I cannot help wondering whether all the young folks I see whirling round like enraptured teetotums, went through as much as I did in acquiring the art. At a tender age I was placed in the hands of one Mr. Wright. Owing to the magnificence of this gentleman's deportment, and the shortness of his stature and legs, he gave the impression of a large chest, moving about without any apparent means of locomotion. This phenomenon, added to a jetty mass of hair and a huge moustache (at that time an uncommon appendage), invested him with a ferocity fatal to the peace of an infant. I was very tall of my age, and my parents and guardians, much to my distress, were perpetually calling attention to the fact. Never had the custom been so offensive as now, when, Mr. Wright having called me up before him, where I stood very conscious of my new shoes, my governess blandly said, 'You must excuse any little shyness at first, Mr. Wright. She has been growing very fast, and is, I fear, a little awkward. Is she not a great girl for seven?' Mr. Wright opened his mouth, and, instead of the ogre-like tones I tremblingly expected, kept it open in amazement, and said finally, in a breathless voice, 'Lor, what a monster!'

This relieved, but, at the same time, embarrassed me, which Mr. Wright perceiving, he hastened to say, kindly, 'Oh! as to awkward, some of the exercises for grace, and perhaps a little cachouca dance, or something-of-that, will soon set everything right. I think, my dear, we'll begin the positions now directly.'

We were great friends from that hour; but I am sorry to say my performances were not at all to his taste. He never got over the length of my strides, frequently implored me to let him 'see no angles,' and always regarded me nervously, after one day seeing me conduct a youth, aged nine, whom he had found refractory, through a quadrille in a style which, to say the least, was muscular. I did not stay long under him, and as we lived for some time in a lonely country place, I soon forgot my dancing.

When I was twelve years old, I was sent to a school kept by a lady whose hobby was gymnastics. She conducted me to a room apparently fitted up with every instrument of torture. This was the gymnasium, and here my sound health and long limbs served me in good stead. I soon rose to the top of the class, and could have stood my ground against most boys of my age.

'Coming out' time at length approached, and it was thought advisable that I should be brought to town and enrolled among the pupils of Monsieur Filbert, an eminent teacher of dancing. One morning, my governess and I arrived at one of his class rooms; I, perfectly comfortable, proud of my

muscles, and strong in the belief that I was as upright as any girl in England. I thought M. Filbert an ordinary-looking man enough, thin and grave, with a naturally ugly figure. He told me to stand up with the rest of the pupils, and took no more notice of me till the lesson was half over. I planted myself in a fine square position and began to dance with much energy and inward satisfaction. I soon found that M. Filbert was not at all slow to criticise; and as he passed me over in silence, I felt that he was satisfied. Hearing him say to a pale little girl near me, 'Dear child, is your back made of jelly? straighten it,' I immediately stiffened my own back with military precision and looked up complacently. M. Filbert's sharp eye saw this directly, and suddenly darting across the room, he said sharply, 'Do you want to knock me down, Miss Julia! your shoulders are in your ears, young lady. Bend your knees. Bend, bend. Lower still. Yield. Relax. Mon Dieu, are you made of iron?' It was all over. My confidence was wrecked and my self-possession vanished. A desolating sense that I was a rough country girl, who had been making a spectacle of herself, came over me; and, had it not been for shame, I should have cried. But I swallowed my mortification, and my wounded pride took a lucky direction, for I determined, cost what it might, that I would make M. Filbert retract before he had done with me. I forced my shoulders down until they seemed on the point of falling off. I nearly fell on my face in my anxiety to bend, and I twisted my unfortunate arms in every possible direction. Seeing I was really trying, the tyrant left me; still, however, repeating that I was made of iron. The next victims he visited were two little girls, who were also there for the first time. They had been wriggling about in a very mysterious manner, and now M. Filbert asked if they had ever learned before. 'Yes,' the elder said, 'Mr. Down, at Lincoln, taught us for a little while.'

'And did Brown at Lincoln teach you to do all that?' asked the tormentor.

'Ye—e—es,' said the little girl, uneasily blushing.

'Then don't do it again, dear children; but do try to keep your chins out of your necks, and don't walk on your insteps.' With this advice he turned away and cried out to a child who was 'poking'—

'*Miss Isabel, I'll cut that chin off* in a minute.' No one escaped. Presently we were told we might sit down a little while, and we ran joyfully to the benches, little knowing this was a trap set to betray our awkwardness. Our backs were no sooner turned than he looked after us like a lynx, and called us all back ignominiously, saying: 'Now go to your seats like ladies instead of racing like boys (looking at me), or waddling like ducks.' This last was for the Lincoln young ladies, who were round and short. We spent three or four minutes very uneasily, while he inspected us and made uncomplimentary remarks on the way we took our seats. Next he ordered us to stand up for a quadrille, and began to arrange us in pairs. Here his active spirit came in with great effect. Sisters were wrenched asunder and sent into different sets, and one little girl, who was very pretty and coquettish, having declined the advances of the only little boy there, who was timid and devoted to her, M. Filbert declared she should be his own partner, which was with reason the most dreaded of all positions. Very soon my masterly style of action drew M. Filbert's attention to me again.

My arms were the offending members in the present instance. It seemed they would *not* bend. M. Filbert, however, was determined they should, and he led me forth to the very middle of the room. After looking at me until I felt exquisitely uneasy, he elaborately explained the carriage it was proper for a lady habitually to maintain, and, in a few moments, my own efforts and some arrangement on his part, bent me into a position not much removed from that of a Chinese mandarin, in-

cluding the bobbing to and fro. Forbidding me to stir, M. Filbert called the attention of the whole room to the improvement he had worked, and practically illustrated my usual appearance, which certainly did appear somewhat devoid of grace. He then led me back to my place, but I was not allowed to relax, and I passed the rest of the time moving about like a stately Cochin China fowl.

There was in the class an unlucky boy of fourteen, whose appearance was quite an irregularity, and who never came again. He has probably not forgotten his experiences.

The narrowness of his chest and the width of his back gave great offence, and at the first opportunity M. Filbert attacked him on the subject.

'Come here, my boy,' said he; 'I want to see whether you've got a chest. Why you have, I declare. I must *see* that, please; throw it out; that's the way; more, more still' (giving him a sound blow in the back).

'Oh-h-h, I can't!' gasped the victim.

'Oh! yes, you can. But what is this? Why, I do believe it is the waistcoat. Do *you* think it is the waistcoat?' he asked in a confidential tone.

Then turning to the room, with a concerned expression—

'He's got such a waistcoat, poor fellow, and such a back, so long; oh! dear, dear, what a length it is!'

The poor boy, overcome with confusion, put his hand on his back deprecatingly, whereat M. Filbert said with sympathy:—

'Yes, feel it. Isn't it long?'

There was no going to sleep under M. Filbert. He never rested himself, and he did not allow any one else to do so. Very rarely he would praise. If a girl did well, he seldom did more than leave her alone; but a fault was never passed over. And yet, with all this severity, he had the tact to make us feel he was in the right, and there was no being angry with him. He was specially merciless to the eldest girls, and so I was often rebuked; but still I felt that he appreciated any effort I made to please him, and he inspired us all with a determination never to give in. In due course I won my long-desired triumph. One day, quite suddenly, he announced that I was one of his best pupils, and was to be promoted to a small class specially advanced. There the lessons were pure enjoyment, and I grieved much when I was taken from his care.

At length the all-important 'first ball' came off and gave me much to reflect upon. The difference between dancing in an orderly manner, with a number of well-schooled young ladies, under the eye of M. Filbert, who would have stopped us had a finger been out of position, and dancing in a crowded room with a succession of strange youths, was indeed striking.

At first I was dismayed at their utter independence of Filbertian rules, but soon grew amused at the curious varieties they presented. My first partner was peculiarly trying. An athletic partner. He held me with a grasp of iron, plunged headlong into the dance, used me as a missile of wrath with which he cleared away all obstacles, and by falling down, involved me and some others in a disgraced heap. Never shall I forget my sensations on rising. I scarcely heard the breathless apologies of this fatal man, and hurrying to a seat in a deserted corner, I bowed a dismissal to him, and felt I could never again appear in the dance.

Scarcely had he left me when the hostess came in with a particularly bright and dapper-looking stranger, whom she presented, and with whom I presently found myself dancing. What a contrast! This was perfect delight, and, by some marvellous contrivance, although the ball was crowded, we never seemed to come near any one, and always had plenty of room. With the zeal of a young dancer, I did not often want to rest, yet, whenever we did stop, I always found myself securely sheltered behind a very broad pair of shoulders. That was my first experience of true dancing; a never-to-be-forgotten sensation.

My next partner was of a different

order. He was pale, and bald, with spectacles, and very red bony wrists, and, after a few turns, he asked me if I had seen that week's '—— Review,' which contained an able article on the late outbreak of cholera, giving the statistics for the last ten years; and whether I was disposed or not to accept the author's views. This was severe matter for a ball-room, and my excited spirits were quite unable to cope with it. From this, he passed to the last census returns, and we soon became so scientific, and danced so dreadfully out of time, that I was forced to plead fatigue. He was succeeded by a very timid young man, who held me at arm's length, lost me several times, and who had nothing further to say, after he had asked me if I walked much in the Park or whether I preferred driving. Later, I danced with a nautical gentleman, who was very good-natured and amusing, told me some wonderful tales, which I implicitly believed, and whose company I thoroughly enjoyed, in spite of feeling so much as if on board ship while dancing with him. His movements were charmingly light and smooth; but it was surprising how often we were nearly off our balance and recovered again, what unlooked-for lurches occurred, and how frequently one of his legs intruded into other couples! I liked him better than my next partner, who was an 'elderly young man,' about forty years of age, thoroughly determined to be no more than twenty-five. He presented a weedy appearance and a general stiffness of joint, had a disappointing way of continually twisting round on the same ground, and whenever we were knocked against by passing couples seemed dreadfully jarred. I thought him very silent, and after one turn round the room, he looked so extremely pale that I proposed a rest, and on his suggesting an ice, in a faint voice, eagerly assented in the hope of finding him a seat. What a mysterious fact it is, making us suspect some malice on the part of hosts and hostesses, that the tallest men in the room invariably get paired with the shortest women, and *vice versâ!* It is grievous to see a poor fellow over six feet, either carrying round a little creature of four feet nothing, or bending his spine to a heart-breaking degree! What reverses that valorous little man is doomed to suffer who *will* lead forth a voluminous lady! How he appears to be hiding behind her skirts, and, after vainly endeavouring to pioneer her through the dance, is fain to come out of it, battered and humiliated!

I often figured personally in such adventures, for my entrance seemed a signal for all the little men in the room to start up. When fairly launched in a dance with one of these pigmies I was oppressed with a sense of responsibility, and found myself wondering whether or no I should deliver him up at the end, safe in limb.

These are recollections of my own dancing days; but as I sit on a rout seat next to the cornet, I notice with sorrow that its dear old familiar snorts do not seem to inspire the present generation, or rather the male portion of it, with the old ardour.

How is it that in these days of gymnastics and volunteer corps, there are so many inert young gentlemen, while there are so many young damsels longing for action?

As a most interested and loving looker-on, I petition them not to give up the old-fashioned love of dancing, and humbly submit to them, that it may possibly be as worthy a grace as many they are at more pains to cultivate.

# LONDON SOCIETY.

## MARCH, 1865.

### TRY A TUTORSHIP.

See page 214

THE last words of the morning service rolled through the vaulted chapel, the reverent pause followed, and then we streamed into the quad. In doctor's robes our venerable Head led the way; after him the surpliced fellows, then in general medley the undergraduates and the newly-fledged bachelors, of whose order I had been dubbed a knight the day before, in all the fluttering glories of long-sleeved gowns. It was one of Oxford's bright June mornings, when the gay sunbeams love to peep over the high-pitched roof of the hall, and make our old battered walls smile again, and the pigeons bustle and strut and bask on the battlements with supreme contentment. It is the season dearest to all true Oxonians. The summer term nearly over, and the festivities of commemoration close at hand, even dons yield to the *dolce far niente*. The last pretence of 'work' is laid aside, and pleasure—calm and boisterous, silent and noisy—rules undisturbed. Cool nooks up the Cherwell, merry cricket dinners at Cowley or Bullingden, jovial Nuneham parties, claret and cider cup flanked with ices and sherry cobbler—these are the joys of the Oxford June—these are the bright memories of unselfish friendship and careless jollity which live in the heart of the Oxford man long after success or disappointment, duns or proctors, have faded to oblivion.

Among the clustering knots about the quad, the largest gathered around the messenger whose hands were nimbly distributing the contents of the post-bag. Many turn away disappointed; many run carelessly over what they get; some eagerly pocket suspicious pink envelopes addressed in a highly angular hand, some pull long faces. On this morning I expected a letter, and got one It was not one of the pink contrabands, nor was it the blue envelope and cramped business hand of the dun. It was no fleeting joy or transient terror. It held my fate. I tore it open hastily — a glance down the page and over told me the worst. My countenance must have reflected the woful import of the curt lines, for I heard a gay laugh above, and a ringing voice shouted 'Why what is the matter, Fred: has he cut up rough after all?'

Looking up, I met the serio-comic face of my friend Henderson, who was leaning head and shoulders out of his first-floor window. A capital fellow and a capital friend was Dick Henderson, only he was most prodigiously 'down on' his slang. His tongue seemed a perfect nest of *ἔπεα πτερόεντα*.

I adjourned to his rooms; we breakfasted together and talked over my little affair. The long and short of the matter was this.

My father had given me a liberal allowance at the University, but, as might be expected, I, without knowing it, spent more, and to my surprise found when I donned my gown that I owed 300*l.* odd. In a moment of unguarded imprudence I informed my father of the fact. His reply was conveyed in this momentous letter. As I told Henderson there were no three months' salmon and willow grouse in Norway for me; no romantic Rhine; no chilling grandeur of glens and glaciers; no gliding gondolas; no blue waves of Baiæ; no ruins; no Capri wines for me—'none of this, my boy;—I must go slap into Uncle Robinson's brewery and work my way up! "Young Dobbin has been obliged to cave through ill health," writes the governor.'

'Ah! I see,' remarked Dick 'drawn the plug too often, eh? poor devil!'

'He goes on to say,' continued I, '"you might be glad of such a chance after your extravagance." How pleasant! Besides, Dick, the Jugglyboggly Mining Company, highly limited and eminently respectable, has come to grief, and the governor swears he won't give me another penny. I must pay my debts with the sweat of my brow.'

The prospect was certainly appalling. There seemed to be no alternative between brewery and beggary.

'What am I to do?'

Now the above question was not mere wanton despair on my part, but sprang from a faint hope that the fertile brain of the facetious Henderson might float me over my difficulties.

He pondered for a few minutes. Then out popped the eagerly-awaited idea.

'My dear Fred, take a tutorship in the family of Lord Dunoboo or the Grand Mogul. It'll suit your book like a knife;—lots of tin—precious little trouble. Your form is not bad either. You know you *did* get a third in Mods. *Entre nous*, Fred, it was a most confounded fluke; but you needn't broach that everywhere, you know.' He wound up with 'This *is* the true and veritable tip, you may depend, old fellow.'

We discussed this brilliant project for some time, and I was at last won over by Dick's native eloquence. Anything was better than a desk at the Brewery. That was certain. I was utterly unqualified for any conceivable pursuit, from the penny-a-liner to the bagman. That was equally certain. So it was clear I must become a tutor.

I clinched the matter after breakfast by a consultation with the Warden. He was bland as ever. He had 'great pleasure' in doing anything for a man who had been 'so uniformly regular and well-conducted.' After a few moments' meditation he proceeded, 'Well, I think I can recommend you to a tutorship that will suit you admir-

ably. It is to take a young man abroad for the summer, perhaps longer. His father, an old college friend of mine, has just written to me on the subject. From what I know of the family I am sure you will find the son an agreeable pupil. More mountain-climbing perhaps than Virgil and Horace.'

I could not have wished a better fate. The Warden wrote to Mr. Egerton Brasherville; and after the exchange of a few letters and a short visit to Brambleborough Hall, the arrangement was concluded. The prospect was highly agreeable. I was to take young Reginald to Switzerland, stopping a week or two in Paris. Once in the land of Tell, we were to settle ourselves for a while, *en pension*, at some eligible spot, and make the most of nature and of books. The former was to have the preference, as young Brasherville was delicate and his health needed to be carefully built up. It was highly satisfactory to learn that he was destined for the Church—he was sure to be a nice quiet fellow who would give me no trouble, or, to quote Dick, 'run no muckers.'

The last-named personage bade me an affectionate farewell. He called 'the holy poker' to witness that he would 'loaf over soon,' and I had better 'keep my weather eye open' if I wanted to catch him 'treading down some glacier,' which phenomenon was morally certain to take place at some future time, somewhat vaguely designated as 'the twinkling of a bedpost.'

Not long after I found myself on board a trim little Channel packet with a tall slight young fellow of about eighteen as my companion. His complexion was of a pale and dark tone; his features regular and handsome; his eyes dark and peculiarly bright. Their expression was very striking. That occasional restless, almost wild, glance made me give full credit to his father's words: 'Reginald has read and thought far too much for his growth, and needs careful handling.' His manner was a strange alternation of reserve, bordering at times on melancholy, and a charming frankness, which when it fairly broke the ice gave me high hopes that the tutorship plan would be crowned with success.

And so we went chopping over a nice cross sea; rolled swiftly past the sandy wastes of Boulogne and the monotonous plains of Picardy; made a rush to the buffet at Amiens; imbibed the *vin ordinaire* of the country with the usual result of extraordinary pangs; rescued our luggage from the tumbling and fumbling of cocked-hatted *sacre-bleu*-ing officials; entered the cheerful little quadrangle of Meurice's, and were shown to a somewhat elevated pair of rooms.

I enjoyed Paris more than ever with my thoughtful reserved pupil. He would rouse himself from a reverie, and a brief remark quietly uttered would reveal a taste and appreciation I was quite startled at in so young a fellow.

I might indeed congratulate myself. Here I was about to pass a delightful summer on the Continent, far from the hateful associations of 'Brown, Jones, Robinson and Co.'s Entire,' and with a companion—for he would be more that than a pupil—whom I was sure I should like better every day. What delightful rambles we should have on the Swiss hill-sides! Sophocles and Schiller would be no drudgery with this rich refined mind.

The fourth day of our stay in Paris we passed in the endless galleries and equally endless alleys of Versailles.

Returning too late for the *table d'hôte*, I took Reginald to the Trois Frères, where we sat down to a comfortable little dinner. Reginald was very animated, more so than I had yet seen him. Those canvas acres of '*la gloire Française*,' to most visitors a decided bore, had awakened in his mind that rich vein of fancy which I had already more than once got a glimpse of. It was not the vague sense of melancholy which petrified magnificence usually excites, but a fresh interest in the life of the past. I drew him out, and enjoyed our chat amazingly.

The last scene in the bright career of the Chevalier Bayard had especially struck him. What I

added to his slight knowledge of the preux chevalier gave me still more insight into his sentiments. The stainless honour, daring bravery, tender courtesy, seemed to live again in his enthusiastic imagination. I was delighted.

He was talking thus earnestly when suddenly his eyes became fixed, a deadly pallor spread over his face, which was quickly changed to a burning red. Turning, I saw stepping jauntily across the room, a man of middle size, with dark whiskers and moustaches (the latter carefully twisted and gummed), apparently about thirty years of age. He was fashionably dressed, and his air was easy and well bred; but his eyes were too piercing, and around them were lines cold and hard, which did not add to the agreeableness of his appearance. I was more surprised than pleased when this personage advanced to our table with a familiar nod, and proffering his hand to Brasherville, said, 'Why, Reggy, my boy! how are you? Hardly expected to see you here!'

Reginald had quite recovered, and with a slight effort, introduced the new comer as 'Captain Fitzstormont,' adding, with a little hesitation, 'a friend of my brother.' The 'Captain' made himself at home, took a seat at our table, and over his *côtelettes* commenced a rattle of small talk. This did not seem much to Reginald's taste, and certainly it was not to mine. I felt an instinctive aversion to the man. Still he went on rattle, rattle, rattle. I was more than bored. At last I could stand him no longer, and made an excuse for leaving, Reginald following my example. As we were going, the 'Captain' asked Reginald rather shortly where we were stopping.

'Ah! Meurice's — nice hotel — charming people one meets there at *table d'hôte* — good night — glad to have made your acquaintance.'

The last remark was addressed to me with an intolerable nonchalance. I answered it with the slightest of bows, and not with the invitation to dine at the *table d'hôte* which I presumed he was wishing to elicit.

I had reason to be annoyed at this rencontre. Whoever the 'Captain' was, it was clear he had some chilling influence on my pupil. Reginald was quite changed. His animation was replaced by a moody reserve which puzzled me greatly.

We were well disposed to retire early after the fatigues of Versailles, and on reaching Meurice's, ascended at once to our rooms.

I slept badly. A motley troop of dreams scoured back and forth before the slumbering vision; now alone, now together, now tripping each other up and vanishing in an indistinguishable mist. Here came Dick Henderson and the Grand Monarque, performing a *pas de deux* in our old Oxford quad. Then the quad budded into the orangery at Versailles. Then out from the bright green alleys peered an evil face, marked with cruel lines about the eyes and with a waxed moustache. Then the ghost of Dobbin, grasping in his right a flagon of home-brewed, flitted rapidly across the scene. Suddenly the vacant features of the ci-devant brewery clerk grew into the noble countenance of Bayard. He was clad in gleaming steel and the flagon was transformed into a trusty brand. Then there came a caitiff knight in armour, black as Erebus. The two did battle *à l'outrance* on the ever-changing incline of the deck of a Channel packet. The blows grew fast and furious. A treacherous stroke from the black knight felled the noble Bayard. Reginald was then supporting his prostrate form, and looking defiance at the victor. The black knight raised his vizor. It was Fitzstormont. On his lips was the smile of malignant triumph. I woke with a start. The sun was streaming in through the muslin curtains. It must be late. I jumped out of bed and tapped at the door communicating with Reginald's room. No answer. He must be sound asleep. I finished dressing and tapped again. Again no answer. I opened the door and looked in. No Reginald. What an early bird the young rascal is! he must have gone out to pick up an appetite for his *déjeuner a là fourchette*.

I was on the point of hurrying down to follow his example, when my attention was attracted to my dressing-case. Surely I had not left my keys in it last night. By Jove it was open, and all the money in it too! I hastily raised the lid. A small twist of note paper fell at my feet. I picked it up, unfolded it, and read these words, written in pencil, in a trembling, half-illegible hand.

'Dear Mr. Langton, I have left you. Worse than that, I have taken part of the money intrusted to you by my father. When you see this I shall be far away. Don't think too ill of me Fate willed it.—R. B'

I sank into a chair overpowered with amazement. Then I slowly examined the contents of my dressing-case. Yes—it was only too true. The refined, highly-gifted young pupil, with whom I hoped to spend so many happy hours, was no better than a rogue, or perhaps a rogue's dupe In an instant the sudden change in Reginald's manner at our rencontre with the Captain crossed my mind. Fitzstormont must be connected with the affair.

I made immediate inquiries at the bureau. All that I could elicit was, that a note had come for Mr. Brasherville late the night before, marked 'immediate,' and had been taken to his room Nobody knew when he had left the hotel.

I lost no time in telegraphing to Mr. Brasherville. On his arrival we naturally had a stormy interview, but at last he had the wisdom to see that I at least was not to blame for the catastrophe. We searched Paris in vain for Reginald. The police were applied to, but that ordinarily sagacious body failed to hit upon a clue to his movements. Mr. B. determined to spare no efforts for the discovery of the unhappy youth. I begged to be allowed to accompany him, but he replied that he would not involve me further in his family troubles, which he knew had already interfered so much with my prospects. I bade him a sad farewell, and a fortnight after I had crossed the Channel I returned to England. My first attempt at the tutorship was decidedly a dismal failure. Its shortness was not compensated for by its sweetness.

Who should I meet first on the pier at Folkestone but the redoubtable Richard Henderson himself!

'Oh! my prophetic ——! you turned up again,' cried he.

My tale of woe was soon told, whereunto he rejoined with deeper sympathy:

'My aunt! what an awful pip you have had, old fellow; never mind though, might have been worse,—better luck next fence!'

Dick was stopping at Shorncliffe with his brother. He implored me to cast dull sorrow to the winds, and represented a stay in that quarter as a 'thundering pick up.' I accepted the invitation, and a week's pleasant and lively society nearly recovered me from the shock of the Paris denouement. Still when reflection, that bane of mortals, forced itself upon me the query 'What is to be done?' faced me again with its perplexing doubts. One thing I was resolved should not be done, and that was, an ignominious retreat upon the brewery. As before, the only other thing was a tutorship—yes, it must be done—this *château en Espagne* must be built into a permanent reality. But how?

'Ha! I have it,' cried I, after profound meditation, 'I will advertise.'

No sooner said than done. Dick and I concocted the most alluring announcement, offering every conceivable inducement to parents and guardians. In due course the tempting bait appeared in print. How complete, how well-timed, how impressive it looked among the lesser fry! The result was eagerly watched for.

I was not long kept in suspense. A day or two after, there were visibly and tangibly on the breakfast-table two letters addressed to 'F. C. L.'

With unsuspecting pride I tore open one of the letters, anxious to see what sleek tunny I had lured to my net. Alas! from the envelope dropped my own advertisement, neatly cut out, and a circular set-

ting forth 'the brilliant results of advertising' in general, and the particular pretensions of a certain newspaper in the North to be a wide educational medium (whatever that might be), winding up with a request 'to be allowed to repeat my advertisement in their own columns.' 'Own columns,' indeed! The second letter was but another apple of Sodom Henderson laughed slily at my discomfiture.

'Ha! ha! the convenient rogues! Why they've played the same game with you as they tried to leg me with once, when I advertised that rascally black mare of mine as "quiet to ride and drive."'

Well, should the cherished plan be thrown up?

'What! give it up so, Mr. Brown?' cried Dick, dramatically. 'Never say die, old fellow. Stick to it like beans, and I'll back you to win a large stake.'

And so I did stick to it. I left Folkestone, and got my brother to put me up in his chambers at the Temple I had frequent interviews with managers of various Tutorial Associations. I wrote to every scholastic old party I could think of about the country. But it was ever the same story. Nobody seemed to know of anything. I was beginning to despair. Even the attractions of penny boats to Kew or Greenwich, with which I gloomily solaced myself, began to pall. Visions of the deserted desk of Dobbin began to float before me. I was almost ready to take the fatal plunge, when one day strolling along Pall Mall, who should I meet but T. B. Now T. B. was a marvel to all who knew him. T B. was everywhere from Ascot and Hornsey Wood to Putney and the P.R. T. B. was at every battue, in every deer-forest, in every hunting field. T. B. was at every operatic début. T. B. was at every rout, assembly, 'at home,' 'fête,' of the fashionable world. No 'select circle' at a country house was perfect without T. B. No 'house-dinner' at the Club could be dreamt of without T. B. T. B. was in the Guards; T. B. was the best dressed man about town; T. B.'s cane-coloured moustache and amber whisker were absolutely unapproachable. For the benefit of those who don't read the 'Owl' or go to Ascot, I may add that T. B. in full was Thomas Bartlett Bartlett, Esq., eldest son and heir apparent of Sir Matthew Bartlett Bartlett, of Dellingham Castle, ——shire, Bart.

After the usual nothings, T. B. asked what were my plans; and on my informing him, exclaimed,

'Why, I know just the thing for you Do you remember my little cousin, Walter Trevor — General Trevor's grandson—down at Brighton last year, you know?'

I replied I did.

'Well, they are going to send him to Eton after all, and they want somebody to coach him. You'll do capitally for them.'

It was soon arranged. I called on General Trevor in Eaton Square, and after a brief conversation with that rigid martinet and courteous old-school gentleman, the matter was clinched. I was to go down to Aberclunie, Perthshire, with little Walter the next week.

'You will not find it a dull place, Mr. Langton, if you can throw a fly; and if you will stay till August, we can show you a few grouse. Good morning to you. Glad to put Walter in such good hands.'

I found Walter and Aberclunie equally to my taste. He was a spirited little fellow, with enough impudence to take away the monotony of coaching him. The house—a huge, delicious, straggling affair of dark stone—was in the midst of the finest Perthshire scenery. The Highlands have been described before. So I need not dilate on the rocky steeps, the dark glens, the gay gorse and heather, the breezy loch, which as a matter of course formed our magnificent panorama. When not hammering at Virgil or Greek verbs, Walter and I would follow the rugged beds of the brawling burns, tempting the wary trout with our gaudy or sombre flies; or we would scour along the slopes on shaggy mountain ponies; or we would out trolling on the loch, or birds'-nesting among the islands. Altogether it was very enjoyable. I soon became oblivious of

Paris sorrow, brewery desks, and an irate governor.

For a couple of weeks we were the sole monarchs of all we surveyed. But at the end of that time our domain was invaded by a coach and four, from which there descended two ladies, several maids, and considerably more boxes of all sizes and patterns.

Walter was wild with glee when he caught sight of them from our study window. He clapped his hands and shouted,

'Oh! how jolly! Here's Aunt Spencer and cousin Geraldine.' And away he ran.

The arrivals were no less than Lady Spencer and the Hon. Miss Spencer, the sister and niece of our gallant General. They were come for their usual summer visit to Aberclunie after the gaieties of the season. General Trevor himself would stop a week or two longer in town before joining them.

Luckily I was acquainted with several connections of the family besides the immortal T. B, and so had no fears of being treated after the manner of 'the regulation' tutor in novels. Besides, the kind courtesy of Lady Spencer was quite enough to remove any awkwardness in my position.

At first I met them only at dinner, and the conversation being general was perhaps not of thrilling interest. One day, however, it turned upon the water-colour exhibitions, and I soon found, from the lively interest she showed, that we were touching on a pet subject of Miss Spencer. For each picture she had a word of delicate appreciation; and when her favourites were mentioned, there was a fascinating freshness of feeling in her expression of approval. The unconstrained naiveté of her manner gave additional piquancy to her conversation. I was charmed.

A day or two after Walter and I had started with our rods and landing-net, when as we cleared the crest of a ridge over which our path led us, we descried a very neat Leghorn hat, a breezy cloud of muslin, a sketch-book, a paint-box, and other articles.

Now I admit that small boys can sometimes be great bores—I may say pests; but sometimes too they can be made of use. And so it proved with Walter in the present case. He was a capital excuse for drawing near to the attractive objects I have mentioned.

Miss Spencer had selected a gap in the hills, through which might be seen the loch and its islets, with the steeps of Ben Ardoch to the left. I begged to be allowed to see her sketch. It was only just begun. 'Might I see her add a few more touches?'

She graciously consented. And so Walter and I left the ott-lashed burn in peace for this once and watched the expanding sketch. The wielding of her brush was a treat to witness, the touches were bold and clear; and the hand—it was firm and white and well rounded—full of life as well as beauty—such a hand as a sculptor might have envied. Certainly sketching on the hills was decidedly agreeable, especially when one was looking on.

It was wonderfully odd, but after this, Walter and I seemed so often to light upon a certain neat Leghorn hat and breezy cloud of muslin, and so often left the trout to shoot across the shallows in peace I don't know how it was, but I suspect it must have been Walter. Ah! I fear he was a sly little rogue.

As I watched each growing sketch, or, not to fib, the eye and hand which made it grow, Walter would 'put himself at' every possible or impossible little hillock of gorse, and would run back glowing with pride to inform us that he had actually 'cleared another button!' Sometimes too I fancied I caught a roguish glance from behind some moss-grown rock, which made me suspect that our young imp saw more in the sketching than met the eye. But then what could the little rascal be thinking of? Surely there was nothing—why, what could there be in studying the beauties of Highland scenery and watching them reproduced on 'double elephant?' And so the bright July days sped away at Aberclunie.

It was now the first week of

August. General Trevor had not yet arrived. He had taken Dellingham on his way, and would stop with Sir Matthew till the 11th. On that day a host of visitors were expected. First and foremost T. B., with his marvellous breech-loaders and his wonderful setters which had won nobody knew how many prizes. The keepers and beaters were on the alert; the gun-room was all in a bustle. Everything was ready for the unsuspecting grouse.

I shuddered as I thought of the break to that dream of bliss. Mind you, I don't refer to the grouse, but to myself.

How ridiculous it was for people to come and bore themselves and everybody else for the imaginary pleasure of slaughtering grouse. Why couldn't they stop away for ever?

But they were coming: there wasn't a doubt of it. Each hour brought the dreaded host nearer. Each hour awakened me to a more vivid sense of the sweetness of the brief dream which was slipping from me.

By Jove! that youthful imp was right after all. There must have been something more than met the eye in the 'double elephant.' Yes, here I was, head and ears in the net of that other little imp whom we by turns fondle and flee.

I knew I had no business to get, much less to keep, my head and ears in that net. What business had I, a penniless wretch of a tutor, as good as cut off with a shilling by an indignant parent, to think of Miss Spencer? It was outrageous.

But such considerations do not at times have the weight which of course they ought always to have in well-regulated minds. In mine they went to limbo with amazing celerity when a vision of soft grey eyes with a world of still merriment in them, of hair which would have been flaxen but for a richer glow, of features expressive though not regular, of a complexion dazzlingly fair, of a figure tall and graceful to which nature had given an extra turn of the lathe, most insidiously and quite irresistibly stole a march on the imagination.

Then came the horrible misgiving that I alone had been netted. But this was impossible. Had I not a guiding star of hope in that cherished glance when we were discussing that *chef-d'œuvre* of sketches? To doubt was to play traitor to my hopes. No, no! 'Faint heart,' &c. I made up my mind to go in and win before the enemy arrived.

As might be expected, as soon as the truth burst upon me—as soon as the resolution was taken on which hung my future happiness or misery, the wished-for opportunity for trying the fatal issue mockingly eluded me. I could never see Miss Spencer alone. The hills too damp—letters to write—some other weighty reason: whatever it was, the result was over the same. Each day closed in blank disappointment. To meet the fair Geraldine at dinner was only an aggravation of my pains. Never did the conventionalities of small talk seem so exasperatingly inane. The time too was ebbing fast.

The last day came: it was the 10th. The foe, already on the way, would arrive on the morrow. It was my last chance. Now or never!

A lovely morning—air cool and fresh—mountain and loch bathed in clear golden light, all the beauties of the Highland scene standing out in bold relief. Bravo! there may be one more sketch after all.

I was impatient to get through my work with Walter and stroll out among the heather. He was stumbling through an ill-prepared ode, and I making random corrections, as often wrong as right I fear, when the crisp roll of wheels over gravel struck upon my ear. I looked out—the last hope was dashed. The grey ponies and the neat little phaeton were hurrying down the drive, and—Geraldine Spencer held the reins.

A turn in the road soon took them from sight, but the whirr of the swift wheels, as it fell fainter and fainter on the ear, destroyed the last remnant of attention I could give to Walter and Horace. I gave it up, pleaded a headache, and sent the little fellow off rejoicing an hour before his time. I wished to be

alone, and was glad to find that the old keeper was going to take him up the burn to some favourite pools.

I mused moodily. Where should I turn for consolation? How give vent to my pent-up feelings? The result of my meditations was that I strode sternly down to the boat-house, loosed the boat, jumped in, seized a pair of sculls, and swept out upon the loch. I was determined to do battle with the blues, and went to work with all my energy. The first burst over, there was a sensible relief. Easying, I floated softly on, pearly drops from the up-raised blades dimpling the quiet waters. Then a violet hue stole over the mental landscape, and my sculls began to startle the salmon trout with their silvery furrows. Then all was blue again—the pace became fast and furious.

So, amid the ebb and flow of feeling, I found myself at last under the lee of a favourite islet, where Walter and I had made frequent raids upon, with nefarious designs on certain nests. I pushed into a shady little nook, and pulling out a volume (what it was I am not sure that I knew then, and certainly don't remember now), I essayed to read. But there was a blur on the page, and the ideas (if there were any at all) ran faster than they came. My eyes strayed to the heathery slopes, lingered over the peaked gables of Aberclunie, followed the broad sweep of the loch, traced the road along the shore till it disappeared round a bold headland not far from my islet. That road had been traversed by a certain pair of spanking grey ponies. They must have gone to visit the Balfours at Duncraigh. After luncheon they would be coming back. I would wait and watch their quick action as they passed.

The slow hours wore wearily away. Two, three, four o'clock came and went, and no grey ponies.

I took to watching the circling movements of a pair of gulls. Their long pinions flapped slowly and monotonously as they came and went, wheeling in ceaseless eddies. At times the wild whistle of the golden plover was borne on the faint breeze from the distant mountain-side. I was soothed to a dull despair. (When I told him of it afterwards, that villain, Dick Henderson, had the audacity to hint that I 'had had no lunch').

Hark! what was that other sound, faint at first, but ever growing upon the ear? I started up and listened eagerly. Yes, it was the whirr of wheels approaching fast. Now it came with a clear ring over the smooth water. Rounding the rocky extremity of the headland came the ponies at a merry pace, tossing their little heads as if proud of their charming burden. How I envied them!

As I gazed with mournful pleasure, suddenly there was a check—the phaeton had careened over, and the ponies began to plunge. I sprang up with alarm. It was the work of a moment to thrust the boat out and make her spin shorewards with strong rapid strokes. Her keel grated on the shingles, and I was at Miss Spencer's side. She was safe, perfectly safe. A wheel had come off; but Johnson, the old coachman, who had been sitting behind, with great presence of mind, had prevented Miss Spencer from being thrown out of the phaeton.

It was impossible to replace the wheel properly; besides, in the shock, one of the ponies had come down on his head and cut his knees badly. Hence it was clear that Miss Spencer could not drive back to Aberclunie; walking was equally impossible. It was more than four miles round by the road, and it was getting late,

But then there was the boat.

Almost overpowered at my good fortune, I begged Miss Spencer to allow me to be her ferryman.

Ah, my good reader! has the unexpected sight of a fair form entering the room ever sent a thrill through you amid the dreary routine of 'duty dances?' Have you ever succumbed to the enchantments of rustling silk—sweet music to Oxonian ears after the toils of the cricket-field and 'the eights?'

If you have, magnify your feel-

ings some million times, and you may get a faint idea of mine when Geraldine Spencer stepped into that dear old Highland tub and seated herself gracefully in the stern.

If you haven't, why I have nothing to say to you, and I hope nobody else has.

Her loveliness was never before so fascinating. The agitation of that little accident had thrown a brighter colour in her cheek, and a deeper brilliancy in those soft grey eyes.

Then how charming it was when she insisted on steering, and of course got the rudder-lines hopelessly entangled, and I had to unravel them, and of course bungled over it from nervousness, and at last got them right and replaced them in her hands, so well rounded, so *bien gantées*.

The very *bouleversement* of embarrassment has its delights, and one can feel infinitely happy even when one has a dim consciousness of looking like a fool.

In a few minutes we were far out upon the loch, leaving Johnson to get to Aberclunie as best he could with the shattered ponies and phaeton. There was plenty of time—I rested on my oars. We watched the rays of the fast-sinking sun as they broke through the misty canopy of Ben Ardoch. We followed the swiftly-changing play of light and shadow among the rocks and heather. We discussed the knotty point whether such 'effects' called for 'dragon's blood,' and such for 'ultramarine ash.'

Soon the lengthening shadows and a waxing breeze ruffling the water, warned us that it was time to move. I blessed the auspicious gale, and raised our craft's little mast and unfurled her little sail, and she was soon under weigh for Aberclunie. The change was delightful. I could now talk freely, and not in spasmodic jerks between the strokes of the sculls.

With beating heart I drew the conversation from art and nature to personal subjects. Each word gave fresh boldness. All the happiness of my life at Aberclunie now found its utterance. I raised my eyes from the rippling wavelets from which I had been drawing inspiration, and ventured to glance at Geraldine, half in hope half in dread. She was looking very hard at the knotted rudder line in her hand. A faint blush delicately tinged her cheek. I bent forward earnestly; the long pent-up tide of emotion welled over its barriers; words came, deep and low and hurried.

'Hey! Good heavens! Look out there! Mind where are you going?' was shouted, or rather roared. I turned hastily—it was too late. A thump, a delirious whirl, and we were engulfed in the cool gurgling water. With a wild cry of 'Geraldine!' I made a powerful effort to seize and support Miss Spencer She was snatched from my grasp as if by magic.

But what! could this be the bottom that I felt? For a moment I was propped up, the next I was down again, the water hissing in my ears. No, it must be some delusion, some slimy monster of the loch must be playing pranks with me. Why, here it was again, bouncing and slipping under my feet. Ha, ha! it was nothing else than a most sticky, tenacious bed of black mud. I floundered forward and got my head above water, it only reached to my shoulder. I was eager to aid Geraldine. Blinking through mud and water, I caught a glimpse of something like a shore, and something like two figures. Was she saved? A step forward, the treacherous mud again gave way, and I disappeared in the murky surge. A sound of cachinnation mingled with the roaring of the water in my ears. Was it the mocking of some fell water sprite? Up again. This time I saw clearly; yes, there were two figures on the bank, and one was my adored Geraldine, dripping like a Nereid, with a cloak thrown round her. Beside her was nobody else than T. B. himself. He too was drenched; and the long amber pendants on either side discharging a very shower-bath.

His being there at all was annoying enough; but his demeanour was simply exasperating. In fact, he was roaring with laughter. And

Geraldine, *my* Geraldine, looked far from sorrowful as she viewed my plunging struggles. It was too cruel!

A few more efforts, and a pole stretched out by that cachinnating fiend, T. B., and I was ashore. The wretch had the coolness to say, between half-stifled bursts, 'I can't thank you enough, Langton, for playing the porpoise to such perfection. . . . Where did you take lessons? . . . I am sure Miss Spencer and I would have caught our deaths of cold if you hadn't made us laugh ourselves warm again. . . . Why, you looked a perfect merman as you bounced up covered with mud and weed.'

Geraldine took mercy on me.

'It is really too bad, Mr. Langton. I hope you won't be vexed; it was such an amusing accident.'

But there was a silent merriment in the soft grey eyes; they told me a sadder tale than words could. She had never cared for me.

* * * * *

T. B.'s presence was soon explained. He had come down with the General a day before they were expected. A stroll across the grounds had brought him in the way of our boat, careering recklessly towards the shore. The rest is told.

The romance was over; Aberclunie had become hateful to me. I longed to put distance between me and its painful recollections.

A brief conversation with the General, an affectionate parting from little Walter, and the next day I was far on my way southwards.

I had had enough of tutorships. I went direct to my father, submitted to an irate lecture, and a few days after actually took my seat at the desk once tenanted by the ill-starred Erasmus Dobbin, Esq., who, as Dick truly guessed, had 'loafed to the canine, owing to a weakness for a crooked elbow.' One day I was turning over that sagacious little humbug, the 'Owl,' when a paragraph riveted my attention:—'We are able to announce that a marriage is contemplated between the Hon. Geraldine Spencer, and Thomas Bartlett Bartlett, Esq., 2nd Life Guards.' It was too true. All the world knows it went off with due state and ceremony at St. George's, Hanover Square, last April

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I am far from miserable. If any one doubts this bold assertion, they have only to ask their way to our brewery, which of course everybody knows, and turn into the office (as, by-the-by, Dick Henderson has done), where they will find me in a small but comfortable box, scribbling with perfect complacency, and with scarce a trace of the scenes of anguish through which I have passed.

Dick, as I have parenthetically hinted, has just 'turned in' Dick is preparing to be an ornament of the bar, and consequently lives in town, and is of course always 'turning in.' I suspect he has a keen appreciation for the merits of the place. To day he is 'terribly knocked up.' He has been 'grinding at practice' ever so many hours at his special pleader's rooms. When Dick is 'knocked up,' I notice he is always extremely 'down upon' the brewery. He is very welcome there. It does me good to see his jolly old face pop over the screen. His coming is always a signal for a temporary 'shut off.'

So I have laid aside my pen, and unperched; we have settled ourselves comfortably in nooks of the aforesaid box, and are chatting of the days of yore.

'By the way, Dick,' said I, after a break in the conversation, 'do you remember the young fellow I took over to Paris?'

'I should think I did. His mizzling was a caution to snakes.'

'Well, I have just heard from his father. The lad has turned up all right; nearly frightened Mr. B. out of his wits by walking in unannounced, with a fine beard and a bag of nuggets. He has just come back from Australia, where he has been all this time picking up health and wealth and wisdom. All is of course forgiven, and Mr. B. is evidently wild with delight. He has told his father the whole story. He was terrified into it by the threats of that scoundrel Fitzstormont (or

whoever he really was), who had, it seems, entrapped him into gambling debts while he was reading at a private tutor's near town, and got him to sign some paper or other, which he afterwards had the villany to use as a means of extortion, threatening that he would charge him with forgery. Reginald was fool enough to believe him, and too sensitive to bear the notion of an exposure. The rest you know.'

'It's to be hoped he wont singe his wings again,' remarked Henderson. 'Fitzstormont, was it? Ha! ha! then he's polished off. Methinks that was an *alias* of the fellow they sent to the galleys for swindling everybody at Baden-Baden.'

'A good riddance; more room for good people like you and I. By-the-by, Dick, what think you now of the tutorship advice? You old rogue, you brought me into all those scrapes.'

'Well, you know, old fellow,' replied Dick reluctantly, 'if you will corner me, it was *pas le jeu*—I reckoned without mine host.'

'Talking of "mine host" reminds me of my duties.'

I hold communication with a page of substantial and cheerful aspect. With a nod of intelligence he departs with silent celerity for unknown regions. Presently he reappears, bearing a small tray. Upon the tray are two glasses of needle pattern, a plate of Huntley and Palmer's crispest, and a flagon tempting to view. Dick eyes the preparation approvingly. A smile of conscious pride and chastened contentment plays over the lips of the substantial page. He slowly inverts the tempting flagon into the needle glasses. Need I say that it is our choicest XXXX, as many as you please?

I elevate my glass and view it complacently against the light.

'There's a clear gold for you, Dick; beats Amontillado, doesn't it?'

'Licks it into fits,' quoth Dick; 'and as for bouquet, why Moet couldn't hold a candle to it.'

## MUMMERS AND DROLLS.

### A Gossip about Pantomimes Old and New.

I WONDER when man first discovered that he was endowed with the faculty of humour, who was the first person to laugh, and what first caused laughter? It is most likely that our first parents wept; but did they ever laugh? I don't know that any one has ever attempted to investigate this subject, and I have no data to found any theory upon. I must, therefore, stop short at the very suggestion of the inquiry, and come to the ascertained fact that the amusing of people as a profession, or calling, was first known among the ancient Greeks. The prototype of our Harlequin sprung into existence shortly after the time of Thespis, and, strange to say, he was, long before the Christian era, very much the same sort of fantastic personage that he is at this day. Did Socrates then take Xanthippe to see a pantomime? and did that fast young swell, Alcibiades, go behind the scenes to flirt with the Columbine? On these interesting points history is silent; but it has something to say of an actor of ancient Grecian times, who, dressed sometimes in a goat's skin, sometimes in a tiger's skin of various colours, which encircled the body tightly, who carried a wooden sword, whose head was shaven and covered with a white hat, who wore a brown mask and was called a *satyr*. This was assuredly the father of the long line of Harlequins which has come down through two thousand years to the present day.

Unfortunately—probably owing to the destruction of the Alexandrian library—a great gap occurs in their history, and we hear little more about them until the fifteenth century, when a fantastic personage

in a parti-coloured dress appears in the Italian tragedies. His name was Punchello; and his business was to play tricks upon heroic folks, parody their speeches, and make jest of their actions. We have no record of a Harlequin in the Roman period, though pantomimical performances were common in the reigns of Nero and Augustus. In these pieces the performers told a story, such as the 'Loves of Mars and Venus,' by dumb show; but there was no character corresponding either to the Harlequin of Italian comedy or to his Grecian prototype. In the reign of Augustus the three great pantomimists were Bathyllus, Pylades, and Hylas, and the character of their performances may be gathered from the record of a contest in which Pylades and Hylas essayed to represent by dumb show the character of Agamemnon. In trying to represent Agamemnon as a great man, Hylas stood up on his tiptoes. 'That,' said Pylades, 'is being tall not great.' Being called upon to give his own rendering of the character, Pylades threw himself into an attitude of meditation, thus giving an idea of the first characteristic of a great man. The actors in these pantomimes or *Fabulæ Atillanæ*, as they were called, from the name of the town (Atilla) where they were first introduced, wore masks and high-heeled shoes furnished with brass or iron heels, which jingled as they danced. Some of them (Funambuli) were performers on the tight rope, *à la* Blondin, and on the trapeze (petaurum) *à la* Leotard.

But we must take a leap into the fifteenth century to find Harlequin assuming the characteristics which are now commonly associated with the name. Finding him here, we lose him no more. From this period the history of the Harlequin family has been written with such scrupulous care, and guarded so faithfully, that we can trace back the genealogy of any modern scion of the house to his mediæval progenitors without missing a single link.

All the mimes, mummers, drolls, and caper-cutters of which we have any knowledge derive their origin from the Satyr or Harlequin of the Greeks. Clowns, Pantaloons, Columbines, Punches, Scaramouches, &c., *ad infinitum*, are but varieties of the same species, called into existence at various times and in various countries. Harlequin was the father of them all. There are many versions of the origin of the name. The French performers of the sixteenth century pretended that the name originated from Harlequin having been the *protégé* of the first president of the parliament, Achille de Harlay, and that he was, in consequence, called Harlequina, the little *protégé* of Harlay. The name Arlechino, however, was applied to the character in Italy long before this. According to the Italian theory the word is derived from 'harle,' the name of a river bird, which had parti-coloured feathers and flew about in an irregular and fantastic manner. Remembering, however, the Greek satyr, with his tiger-skin dress, it is not unreasonable to connect the word with 'Hercules,' who, as the students of Aristophanes are aware, figured in the Greek comedies as a buffoon. No doubt Harlequin took his characteristics from the patron of his tribe, Mercury.

The history of the origin of pantomime in Italy is a well-worn story, and I need only refer to it in a few words before passing to the glorious development of the entertainment in France.

The satire of Punchello was at first directed against persons and things indiscriminately; but in process of time the fun arose out of the comic types afforded by the inhabitants of the various provinces of Italy. The Venetians, the Neapolitans, the Bolognese, and the people of Bergamo, had all distinct characteristics, and it was to satirize these local peculiarities that the characters of Italian comedy were invented. The original characters were Pantalone, a Venetian merchant; Dottoré, a Bolognese physician; Spaviento, a Neapolitan braggart; Pulicenella, a wag of Apulia; Giangurgoto and Corviello, two clowns of Calabria; Gelosommo, a Roman beau; Bellamo, a Milanese simpleton; Brighella, a Ferrarese pimp; and Arlecchino, a blundering servant of

Bergamo. The principal and most active of this set was Arlecchino, and in process of time all the rest became his butts. His original character is thus described: 'He is a mixture of ignorance, simplicity, wit, stupidity, and grace. He is a half made-up man, a great child with gleams of reason and intelligence, and all his mistakes and blunder have something arch about them. The true mode of representing him is to give him suppleness, agility, the playfulness of a kitten, with a certain coarseness of exterior which renders his actions more absurd. His part is that of a faithful valet, greedy, always in love, always in trouble, either on his master's account or his own, afflicted and consoled as easily as a child, and whose grief is as amusing as his joy.' In France the character became completely transformed. He became witty, cunning, a punster, and a bit of a philosopher; and his costume was as much metamorphosed as his character. When he first appeared in France his costume was composed of a jacket fastened in front by ugly ribbons, loose pantaloons covered with patches of various coloured cloths sewn on anyhow: he had a straight black beard, wore a half black mask, and carried a wooden sword in a belt of untanned leather. In the course of a few years, however, the dress was made of a finer material, and the pieces of parti-coloured cloth were arranged more tastefully. These changes in the dress and character were introduced by Joseph Dominique Biancolelli, the father of the race of Harlequins which began to flourish in France about the time of our Merry Monarch. Dominique came to Paris in 1660, on the invitation of Cardinal Mazarin; so that the introduction of the Italian pantomime into France is due to the clergy. When Dominique first appeared in Paris he played second to Locatelli, who then performed the part of Trivelin, a species of Harlequin: but at the death of the latter, in 1671, he had the field entirely to himself, and soon acquired the reputation of being the greatest actor of his age. He died in 1688, aged forty-eight, from inflammation of the lungs caused by a severe cold which he caught in dancing before Louis XV. His companions closed the theatre for a month, as a mark of their grief. The youngest of his children, Pierre, followed in his father's footsteps, and played under the name of Dominique.

In 1689, the part of Harlequin was taken up by Gherardi, a Tuscan, who made his *début* in a song called the 'Divorce,' which had been popularised by Dominique. Gherardi made a great hit as a singer, but failed as a pantomimist. He died in 1700, from the effects of a fall on the stage.

In 1716 the famous Thomassin made his appearance as Harlequin, and acted with great success in pieces written for him by Marivaux, such as 'La Surprise de l'Amour,' 'Le Prince Travesti,' &c. Thomassin added to the part of Harlequin many tricks of extraordinary agility; but many of these were so dangerous, that the public, fearing to lose their favourite mime, persuaded him to discontinue them. Thomassin was an excellent actor—true, naive, original, and pathetic, with much natural gaiety and humour. Like Dominique, he had many imitators; but they were all miserable failures until the appearance of Carlin.

In the year 1741, Carlo Bertinazzi, commonly called Carlin, made his *début* as Harlequin with triumphant success. His impersonation of the character was distinguished by a perfectly natural comic humour. Garrick seeing him in a piece in which he had just received chastisement from his master (threatening the latter with one hand, and rubbing his back with the other), was charmed with his acting, and exclaimed, 'See, even the back of Carlin wears the same expression as his face!' 'Carlin,' says M. Sand, 'like most clever buffoons, had a very melancholy disposition, and as with Dominique, his gaiety was what the English term humour. It belonged to his mind, and not to his temperament.' There is an anecdote told of Dominique—and, if I mistake not, it has been told of Joe Grimaldi—that being greatly afflicted with spleen, he consulted

Dermoulin, a celebrated physician, who advised him to go and see Dominique, as he made everybody laugh. 'Alas!' replied the actor, 'I am Dominique, so I may consider myself a lost man' To his theatrical talents Carlin joined all the qualities of an honest man, and he was possessed of great information. He wrote a book called 'Les Metamorphoses d'Arlequin.' Carlin died in 1783, and was succeeded in the favour of the public by Golinetti.

The character of Harlequin has undergone as many variations in the type as in the orthography. Thus Harlequino became Arlechino, and then Arlecchino. The character is now little in fashion in Italy, where it first arose, having been replaced by Mineghino and Henterello. There were many varieties of the Harlequin, the most notable being Trivelin and Truffaldin. The former was, under a different name and dress, the same species of Harlequin which Dominique so much improved upon. His dress, instead of the lozenges symmetrically arranged, had triangular patches along the seams only, and suns and moons for patches. He wore the soft hat and hare's tail, but did not carry the wooden sword.

*Truffaldin* is a species of Harlequin, which first made its appearance about 1530. He represented a cunning, lying valet, under the name of *truffa* (the villain). It became very popular in Italy, and towards the middle of the seventeenth century was an established type of Harlequin.

It is not difficult to recognize, even in the pantomime of the present day, the first principles and elements, so to speak, of the comedy of life and manners. In Pantaloon we have the obdurate father or uncle; in Columbine, the daughter or niece; in Harlequin, the handsome, dashing lover; and in Clown, the lying servant of Harlequin. But there were many other characters which have no corresponding representative in modern pantomime, though they were originals or well-known personages in comedy. Among these were the Captain, a great braggart and swaggerer—such as Dame Quickly had a horror of—the Doctor, an old fogy; the Apothecary, a lean, miserable creature, with a red nose (with whom Shakespeare was acquainted), and a female character corresponding to the French *soubrette* and the English chambermaid, who did for her mistress, the Columbine, what the Clown did for his master, the Harlequin; that is to say, told lies, carried messages, delivered notes on the sly, and beguiled the old gentleman. Let us review these drolls in the order of their importance.

First, then, *Pantaloon*. This character is one of the four principal maskers in the Italian 'Commedia dell' arte.' In Venice, four of these characters appeared in every piece: the Tartaglia (stammerer), Truffaldino (caricaturist), Brighella (representative of orators and other popular characters), and Pantaloon (the Venetian citizen). The name of the last character is derived from 'pianta leone,' (plante lion). The ancient merchants of Venice, in their zeal to annex all they could to the republic, set up every now and then about the isles of the Mediterranean the lion of St. Mark, and because they boasted of their conquests, the people nicknamed them 'plant lion.' According to another account, the name is derived from San Pantaleone, the ancient patron of Venice.

Pantaloon took all characters; sometimes those of father, husband, uncle, widower, &c. He was sometimes rich, sometimes poor; at others, miserly and frequently prodigal. The dress of Pantaloon has been considerably altered in modern times; originally he wore tight drawers, generally red, a long flowing coat, and a little skull-cap. When the republic of Venice lost the kingdom of Negropont, mourning was adopted throughout the state; Pantaloon, as a good citizen, adopted it with the rest, and has worn it ever since. Possibly they were not aware of it, but the Pantaloons this season at Drury Lane and Covent Garden were in mourning for the dismemberment of the ancient republic of Venice.

In Italy, about 1750, Darbes was one of the best Pantaloons. He once played the part of Pantaloon in one of Goldoni's comedies. The character being a serious one, he played without a mask, and failed. Goldoni wrote him another piece, and he again assumed the traditional mask. The character made a great hit, and Darbes never afterwards ventured to appear without the mask.

The Doctor, Cassandre, Facanappa, and several others, were varieties of this character. The Doctor was first brought on the stage in 1560. He was sometimes a learned man, sometimes a lawyer, but rarely a physician. From 1560 to the middle of the seventeenth century he was always dressed in black from head to foot, in the professor's robe; wearing underneath a short black tunic and black stockings. He also wore a black mask covering the forehead and nose. In the troop

GRIMALDI'S 'BOLD DRAGOON,' IN THE PANTOMIME OF 'THE LILD DWARF.'—See page 214.

called 'Gelosi,' which came to France in 1572, the part of Docteur was filled by Lucio Burchiella, an actor of great merit. 'Le Docteur' was played in 1653 by Angelo Lolli, of Bologna. His companions called him the 'angel,' probably on account of his name. He does not appear, however, to have been very angelic in temper, for he quarrelled with Turi, the Pantaloon, and fought him in a duel. Possibly Turi was jealous of the innovation, and thought there should be only one Pantaloon in the piece.

Cassandre was introduced in the troupe of the 'Gelosi' in 1580. He took the part of serious fathers, ('heavy fathers' as we call them in modern theatrical parlance), jealous husbands, &c. The most celebrated French Cassandre was Chappelle, whose credulity and *naïveté* were proverbial. He was short and fat;

his eyes continually opening and shutting, were surmounted by a thick black eyebrow; his mouth, always open, gave him a stupid appearance, and his legs resembled those of an elephant.

Facanappa, though in some respects resembling Pantaloon, possessed one of the attributes of our modern Harlequin. He introduced unexpected changes during the representation of the piece, and at the end of the play announced the performances for the following evening. He had the privilege of making various allusions, employing in his Venetian dialect the most popular slang terms, and coining new ones if necessary. He had a long parrot-shaped nose, surmounted by a pair of green spectacles, and wore a flat hat with a broad brim, a waistcoat covered with tinsel, and a long white coat with large pockets. The Baron is another variety. Palermo formerly possessed a na-

GRIMALDI'S SET TO I "THE PANTOMIME OF 'HARLEQUIN AND ASMODEUS'"—(see p. 211)

tional theatre like Naples, but of a totally different character; thus 'Il Barone,' the father of the family, a Sicilian lord, the dupe of his valets, deceived by his daughter, was the personification of the nobility of the country, and of the body of citizens aiming at distinction. 'Il Barone' still figures in the marionette pieces in Sicily.

We come next to the heroine of the comedy, the *Columbine*. There were originally many types of this character. From the flattering and corrupt slave of the Roman period, there arose on the Italian stage the *servetta*, or *fantesca*, confidential servant, called later in France, *soubrette*. In 1528 we find these women playing at the Padua theatre. In 1530, the servants in the troupe of *Intronati* bore the names of Colombina, Oliva, Fianetta, Pasquella, Nespola. Colombina was sometimes mistress

and sometimes maid. The most famous representatives of the character in France were Therese, Catherine, and the second Therese Biancolleli, grandmother, granddaughter, and great granddaughter, a generation of Columbines. The most remarkable for her varied talents and numerous creations was Catherine, daughter of the celebrated Dominique. She was sometimes mistress, sometimes soubrette, avocat, danseuse, singer, &c., all of which she played equally well. She spoke several languages, dialects, and jargons, and was exceedingly pretty and graceful. She made her *début* in 1683, in 'Arlequin Protée,' with great success. It was at the theatre of the Comédie Italienne that Columbine first took the dress of Arlequine in 'Le Retour de la foire de Besons,' in 1695. As that costume was very much liked, columbine came to be dressed in a particoloured gown, like a female Harlequin. The airy being in short muslin petticoats is a creation of very modern date. In the French comedies Columbine was often Harle-

COLOMBINA (1685)

SCAPINO (17 )

quin's wife; but she was never a fairy with power to effect transformations. The Ballerina, sketched by our artist, was a dancing girl first introduced on the French stage.

The Clowns of the Italian comedy were named Bertoldo, Paghaccio, Gros-Guillaume, Pedrolino, Gilles, Coviello, and Peppe Nappa. In France these eventually become Pierrot in all his varieties. In the sixteenth century, at Bologna, there lived an improvisatore named Giulio-Cæsare Croce, who sang in public places, accompanying himself on a stringed instrument, the history of a fictitious person named Bartoldo (possibly a Billy Barlow of the period), which was so popular that his songs were printed.

This person's talent for improvisation gained for him so great a reputation that the cavalieri of Bologna gave him a pension in his old age. The popularity of the characters of whom Croce (Della Lira) sang soon

caused them to be embodied on the stage, and at the end of the sixteenth century Bertoldo, Bertoldino, and the others, were commonly represented in the Italian theatres.

Pagliaccio, one of the first of this type, made his appearance in 1570. The name (literally *paille hachée*), which has become synonymous with *étourdi* (blunderer), is a corruption of *bajaccio*, a stupid wit. Pagliaccio is thus described by Salvator Rosa: 'He is clothed in a loose puckered dress, fastened by enormous buttons, a white flexible hat, wears a mask, and is smothered in flour.'

Gros-Guillaume appeared at the end of the sixteenth century. He was a great eater, fat beyond measure, and wore two waistbands, one above and the other below the stomach. He also was dressed in white, and floured his face. A famous representative of the part was Robert Guérin, called 'La Fleur,' a great favourite with Henry IV. and Richelieu, who frequently invited him to their palaces.

Pedrolino was an honest, faithful Clown, whose business was to watch the wife of his master when the latter was asleep or away from home. He wore a long white smock and a straw hat, and carried a large stick. He was, in fact, the Italian peasant. Pierrot originally was the French peasant. The character, however, was completely changed by Debureau, a celebrated representative of the part. He made Pierrot sometimes good and generous by fits and starts, sometimes a thief, a miser, and a coward. If ever he became rich, his natural faults soon made him poor again. Debureau not only changed the morals of this character, but also the physical powers and the dress. The short woollen jacket with large buttons and tight sleeves reaching to the wrists, became a loose blouse of calico with large and long sleeves covering the hands; and intsead of the white nightcap and the pointed hat, he wore a black velvet cap to heighten the whiteness of his face. The proper name of the character is Pagliaccio, though the French call it Pierrot.

The son of Debureau played the same part as his father, in 1847, and was said to be the best-looking and most elegant Pierrot that ever existed.

Paul Legrand, who formerly played comic parts in the vaudevilles, and that of Léandre in the pantomimes, came out as Pierrot, in 1845. He was greatly praised by the French critics in this strain: 'His resources were extensive; he had a fine characteristic expression, a comic and fanciful invention, and particularly distinguished himself by his great power of pathos. Like Thomassin, he makes one laugh and weep at the same time.' We in England are unable to fathom the idea of weeping at the acting of a clown. Indeed, Legrand, as some of our readers may remember, played for a time at the Adelphi, in 1847-8, and did not succeed in evoking even laughter. His French admirers were very indignant, and said that the English public, being accustomed to the exaggerated fun of their clowns, could not appreciate the delicate expression and refined wit of the French Pierrot.

The French view of the English Clown is interesting. 'The English Clown (whose nearest representative on the French stage is Pierrot) is an odd, fantastical being. The Florentine Stentorella alone resembles him in his jests and tricks. His strange dress seems to have been taken from the American Indians. It consists of a white, red, yellow and green network, ornamented with diamond-shaped pieces of stuff of various colours. His face is floured and streaked with paint a deep carmine; the forehead is prolonged to the top of the head, which is covered with a red wig, from the centre of which a little stiff tail points to the sky. His manners are no less singular than his costume. He is not dumb, like our Pierrot; but on the contrary he sustains an animated and witty conversation; he is also an acrobat, and very expert in feats of strength.'

M Blandelaire gives a more poetical description: 'The English Pierrot is not a person pale as the moon, mysterious as silence, straight and

long like the gallows to whom we have been accustomed in Deburcau. The English Pierrot enters like the tempest, tumbles like a parcel; his laugh resembles joyous thunder. He is short and fat; his face is floured and streaked with paint; he has a great patch of red on each cheek; his mouth is enlarged by a prolongation of the lips by means of two red bands, so that when he laughs his mouth appears to open from ear to ear.'

Nevertheless, the English Clown came direct from France. Our own Joe Grimaldi studied under his father, who was a French Pierrot. Joe's grandfather played similar parts in Italy, where he was born. It was about 1704 that Joe's grandfather appeared in Paris. He was called Grimaldi *Jambe-de-Fer* (iron-legged), because, when playing one evening before the Turkish ambassador, he sprang so high as to touch the crystal lustres over his head, and one of the drops, being thus detached, fell upon the nose of the ambassador, who, in a great rage, complained to the minister, demanding that the pantomimist should be punished. Grimaldi, however, was only condemned to make a public apology.

But before proceeding to notice the peculiarities of the English drolls, let us glance at one more of the prominent characters of the Italian comedy and the French pantomime—the Captain.

The Captain, in his original form, wore a leopard's moustache, a starched ruff, a felt hat and plume, immense boots, and a long sword. It is said that he was originally a character peculiar to the comedy of Spain. At any rate, he has been known from a very early period; and though he has changed his dress with every age, his character has always remained the same. He has always been a great braggadocio, and so great a liar as sometimes to impose upon himself. The first Italian Captains date from the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century, the character was introduced into France, and a century later into Germany. In the Italian company which visited France in 1577, the part of Captain was played under the name of Spavento, by Francesco Andreini. He played on several musical instruments, and bragged and lied in no less than six languages, including Greek and Turkish. There were many varieties of the Captain: Crocodillo, Spezzafer, Giangurgolo, Il Nappo, and Rogantino. Spezzafer wore the costume of the seigneurs of the court of Henry the Fourth, a slouched hat, a plume, a moustache and beard, a woman's collar, and a large sword. His great representative was Giuseppe Bianchi, who 'flourished' about the middle of the seventeenth century. Giangurgolo was the Calabrian type of Captain. He was passionately fond of the women; but at the same time always afraid to meddle with them lest a lover or brother should arrive and give him a drubbing. He was a boaster, a liar, and a coward, and a glutton into the bargain. Il Nappo was the Neapolitan type, and represented the bravo a great quarreller, but a great coward when it came to a fight. Rogantino was the Roman type, satirizing the police and civic officers, a prototype of Dogberry and Verges. He was fond of showing his authority, and often arrested innocent people when the real culprits escaped—on the principle of making some one suffer.

The varieties of these and the other prominent characters of the old comedies are almost innumerable, and yet most of them seem to have been well established, owing, no doubt, to the excellence of the actors. Their Italian representatives met with great favour in France: many of them were received at court and by the great dignitaries of the church. War or political differences never in any way interfered with the homage paid to these artists. They could presume and take a liberty when a foreign ambassador could not. This was illustrated lately in America, where James Wallack, the actor, a great favourite of the American people, was the only person, except Lord Lyons, who dared to hoist over his house the Union Jack.

A story of the Italian Clown,

Angelo Constantini, shows the very close intimacy which subsisted between princes and pantomimists in the old days to which I have been alluding. After the breaking up of the famous troupe of the Gelosi, Angelo Constantini went to Germany to find employment, and was patronized by Augustus the First, King of Poland. For some time he played in comedy and sang in opera alternately, and so pleased the king that he was ennobled and appointed to a post in the royal household. Almost immediately he ventured to make love to the king's mistress, declared his passion for her, and endeavoured to poison her mind against the king Incensed at his insolence, the lady informed the king, who had himself in the room when Constantini was expected. Augustus disclosed himself sabre in hand, and threatened to cut off the audacious actor's head; but cooling down a little, had him arrested and conveyed to the castle of Konigstein, where he remained a prisoner twenty years. At length, however, he was released through the intercession of another lady-favourite of the king, and all his property was restored to him.

Harlequin was first introduced upon the English stage, in 1717, by Mr. Rich, the manager of Covent Garden, in a piece called 'The Sorcerer.' The entertainment was quite a novelty at the time. It was described as a species of dramatic composition, consisting of two parts, one serious and the other comic. Between the acts of the serious part of the story, there was interwoven a comic fable consisting chiefly of the courtship of Harlequin and Columbine, with a variety of surprising adventures and tricks, which were produced by the magic wand of Harlequin, such as the sudden transformation of palaces and temples to huts and cottages; of men and women into wheelbarrows and joint stools; colonnades to beds of tulips, and mechanics' shops into serpents and ostriches. This magic power was not an attribute of Harlequin before this period. It seems to have been the invention of Mr. Rich, suggested probably by the stage business necessary to 'The Sorcerer.' The Harlequin of Rich was, to a great extent, a copy of the Italian. He still preserved his proper place as the hero of the story, and he acted only in dumb show. The wits and critics, not being aware that it was proper for Harlequin to be silent, accused Rich of closing his mouth because he himself (being the representative) could not speak a sentence of English grammatically. Rich's education had been grossly neglected, and his language was very coarse and vulgar. He was in the habit of calling every one 'Mister,' as, for example: 'Well, Mister, how are you?' 'I say you, Mister, look here.' On one occasion, Foote being very much irritated by this, asked the manager why he did not call him by his name. 'Don't be angry,' said Rich, 'for I sometimes forget my own name.' 'I know that you can't write your own name,' said Foote, in reply, 'but I wonder you should forget it.'

The theory of the pantomime, as invented and adapted by Rich, was this: Harlequin, was the lover of Columbine; Pantaloon was her father, and the Clown was a blundering servant of Harlequin. The harlequinade represented the courtship of Harlequin and Columbine, whose course of true love was constantly arrested and diverted by the interference of her old father, the Pantaloon. The pantomime, when it became a separate and distinct piece, generally opened with the abduction of Columbine from Pantaloon's house. Pantaloon discovered his loss and followed in pursuit, and when overtaken, Harlequin used his magic bat to play tricks upon the old man and defeat his paternal intentions. In this the Clown was the assistant and servant of Harlequin, and his function was to delude and beguile the Pantaloon while Harlequin was courting his daughter. Afterwards Clown became the servant of Pantaloon, bribed by Harlequin to favour his courtship by deceiving his master. In the course of their adventures, Columbine was often rescued by her father and taken back home, but was always

carried back again by her lover, with whom she is at last made happy with the old man's consent. The bat or wooden sword was supposed to have the power of changing copper into gold, cutting people in half, and enabling Harlequin to jump through stone walls and vault over the tops of houses. The four colours of his dress had a special meaning. The yellow indicated jealousy; the blue, truth; the scarlet, love; and the black, invisibility. Rich—the famous 'Lun,' as he was called—dressed for Harlequin in a loose jacket and trousers. The present style of dress was introduced by Byrne some years afterwards. It consisted, as then made, of a white silk shape fitting without a wrinkle, into which variegate patches were sewn, the whole being profusely covered with spangles. The innovation was accepted with great applause. With the assumption of the new dress, Harlequin lost much of his importance. This was owing to two circumstances first, the fact that the part had fallen into the hands of a ballet-master, whose genius lay chiefly in his legs; and secondly, to the appearance at this time of Grimaldi in the character of Clown. In Grimaldi's hands Clown became the great mirth-maker of the piece, and the extraordinary talent of the actor gave it a patent of pre-eminence for the future. Grimaldi's dress was different from that now in vogue. He 'made up' to represent a lubberly, loutish boy —a clown, in fact, as the character ought to be. His trousers, large and baggy, and well defined in the posterior quarter by the aid of stuffing, were buttoned on to his jacket, and round his neck he wore a schoolboy's frill—a part of the dress borrowed directly from the Spanish Captain and the French Pierrot. He did not chalk and paint his face in the elaborate manner now adopted (and which makes all our modern Clowns look exactly alike), but put on some patches of red, so as to give the notion of a greedy boy who had smeared himself with jam in robbing a cupboard. Grimaldi produced all his effects by the genuine humour of his acting, by the comic faces which he drew, by the grotesqueness of his pantomimic action, by the *naiveté* of his blunders, and by the humour of all his practical jokes. He did not, like the Clowns of the present day, call in the aid of acrobatism, and dance upon stilts, walk upon barrels, or play the fiddle behind his back; nor did he seek to gain the applause of his audience by astonishing leaps and feats of strength. He trusted all to the force of his natural humour; and such was his power that he made the success of pieces which were utterly wanting in even the commonest accessories of a spectacle. We have all heard of the famous pantomime of 'Mother Goose;' but this pantomime was only famous on account of Grimaldi's acting. It was a very poor piece, and nothing was done for it by the management. Grimaldi was possessed of infinite resource. He could transform himself with anything that came to hand—with a bunch of carrots or turnips, a saucepan, a pillow, a lady's muff, or a tablecloth. Many of those wonderful transformations he effected on the spur of the moment with stage properties which fell in his way by accident. He refers to one of his favourite drolleries in his rhyming adieu to the stage:—

'Ne'er shall I build the wondrous verdant man,
Tall, turnip-headed, carrot-fingered, lean,
Ne'er shall I, on the very newest plan,
Cabbage a body—old Joe Frankenstein,
Not make a fire, nor eke compose a coach
Of saucepans, trumpets, cheese, and such sweet fare
Sorrow hath ta'en my number—I encroach
No more upon the chariot, but the chair'

There is no need to dwell upon the well-known career of Joe Grimaldi; but it may be interesting to fix the fact, that the pantomime, as we now know it, was first introduced in his time, and mainly by his efforts. Joe's father, Signor Grimaldi, was originally a Pierrot, and the pieces he played in were ballets rather than pantomimes. The most popular performers in these entertainments at this period were foreigners. Two of old Grimaldi's pupils were M. Mercerot and M. Laurent, described in the bills of Philip Astley's theatre, then called 'The Amphi-

theatre of Arts,' as 'Performers of action, Pierrots, and buffo dancers.'

The dress, manner, and habits of the Clown, as we now know him, are all derived from Joe Grimaldi. He it was who first introduced the song of 'Hot Codlins,' in the pantomime of 'The Talking Bird,' first played on the 12th April, 1819. The following is an extract from the bill: 'Clown, Mr. Grimaldi, with a new song, 'Hot Codlins,' composed by Mr. Whitaker; Columbine, Miss Tree.' Among the most celebrated mummers and drolls of Grimaldi's time may be mentioned, besides Joe himself, Bradbury, Clown; Bologna, Harlequin; and Barnes, Pantaloon.

The old boys among us are fond of saying that there are no Clowns now-a-days—'You should have seen Joe Grimaldi, sir,'—just as they are fond of saying there are no tragedians—'You should have seen Kean, sir!' It is natural that they should have a favourable recollection of the actors they saw in the days of their youth and freshness; but there is little just occasion to depreciate the merits either of our tragedians or our clowns, when we can boast of such artists as Mr. Phelps, Mr. Barry Sullivan, Mr. Brooke, Mr. Charles Kean, Miss Faucit, and Mrs. Charles Young, as representatives of the former, and a whole host, including Boleno, Payne, Barnes, Lauri, Tom Matthews, Paulo, Herring, Leclercq, and last but not least, Hildyard, as representatives of the latter. With regard to the Clowns it must be remembered that the scope of the character has, in recent times, been much circumscribed by the introduction of many mechanical and scenic effects which were not known in Grimaldi's time.

The present generation is acquainted with a class of mummers and drolls which did not exist a quarter of a century ago. This class includes nigger serenaders, and the so-called comic singers at the music halls. The niggers, relying to a great extent upon music of a popular and catching kind, are universally popular; and their grotesque antics are often exceedingly amusing. Poor Pierce, of Hoop-de-doo-dem-doo celebrity, at a time when the market was not so fully stocked with talent, might have attained a fame equal to that of Joe Grimaldi. His humour was of the true stamp—rich and unctuous. Mackney's humour and many accomplishments as a musician and dancer entitle him to a high place as a professional droll. Unsworth, too, possesses an original genius. Of the 'general run' of comic singers at the music halls the less said the better. They cannot sing; they are vulgar, ignorant, and offensive; and their songs are gross and indecent, without one redeeming touch of wit or humour. When the theatrical monopoly—that last dirty rag of protection—has been broken up, and any one will be at liberty to act plays where he chooses, under the ordinary regulations for the preservation of public order, these blatant fellows will be sent back to their proper occupation, the sweeping out of shops and the scouring of pewter pots; and the humbler classes of the public will be supplied with an entertainment calculated both to afford them amusement and elevate their tastes.

## A MISS IN HER TEENS KEEPING HOUSE.

ALL the young folks of my acquaintance come to me with their household troubles, and, I believe, look upon me as a sort of dragon in the art of housekeeping, with a specialty for solving the vagaries of tradesmen's bills, and gifted by nature with sufficient courage to cope with that terrible bugbear, a domestic servant. When I see their anxious young faces, and listen to their sorrowful tales, my thoughts go back to an adventure of my own early youth.

It was winter, and I was about fifteen years old, when my mother's health obliged her to leave London, so that a long perspective of Christ-

mas preparations and the entire charge of the housekeeping fell to my lot. So many solemn injunctions accompanied the trust that I became rather unhappy, and secretly would have given much to escape my promotion; but of course, when mamma, upon my faintly hinting my misgivings, said: 'My dear, you are no longer a child, &c.,' I assumed a mature air, and vainly endeavoured to understand her instructions. A day or two after she was driven away in a carriage full of pillows and shawls, while I stood watching her from the door, with a very large bunch of keys in my hand, and something in my eyes that made the street look very queer and confused.

As the orders for that day had been given, I had a short time before me in which to reflect upon my newly-acquired empire. My ruminations were of a very dismal character, when I remembered that I was on terms of painful familiarity with the cook, who was in the habit of calling me 'My dear.'

When we had dinner-parties, our man Byron seemed to have a weather eye open to intercept the wine as it approached my neighbourhood. I was very sore upon this subject, although I infinitely preferred water; but, with the martyr-like spirit common to my age, would have gladly sacrificed my tastes to induce people to think me a year or two older than I really was. Byron's officiousness offended, and at the same time awed me, so that a reprimand would, I felt, be more than I could manage in connection with him. The housemaid regularly ordered me out of my own bedroom if I intruded at cleaning times, and would ruthlessly destroy any trifles which she judged useless and troublesome to dust. In fact, I was generally considered of no account by the servants. When I thought of this, and what foundation my ignorance gave for it, my heart sank. The more I thought, the more I felt some desperate move on my own part was necessary, and I finally resolved to astonish papa himself by my demeanour.

No sooner had I made the resolution than I determined to carry it into execution that very evening, when a stranger was coming to dine.

For the better fulfilment of my purpose I got out a book on housekeeping, and turning to that portion which treated of 'the mistress,' I found a recommendation to glance at the newspapers in order to be able, upon the return of the master in the evening, to converse with him upon the topics of the day. This struck me as an excellent idea, and I accordingly buried myself in the 'Times' until it was time to dress. After a careful and lengthy toilette, I descended to the drawing-room, and sat upright on a sofa, with my heart beating very fast, waiting for papa and his friend. When they arrived, I was rather disturbed by papa's saying, 'Mr. Freeman, this is my *little* daughter Rose, my housekeeper for the present,' however I behaved with much dignity, and tried to look as accustomed to it as I could. I thought papa very cruel for calling attention to my taking mamma's seat as a great joke, and I was further outraged by his asking me if I hadn't better send the soup to him to dispense, and by Byron's intense enjoyment of this sally. However, we got through dinner with tolerable smoothness, and I should again have become quite comfortable had not my mind been perturbed by anticipation of the critical moment when the ladies usually leave the dining-room. How majestic appeared the idea of rising amid general confusion and a rush of gentlemen to open the door! How I longed to sweep out, leaving a napkin-strewn room behind me. But, alas, papa was seated opposite! Then torturing fears arose that I was in the way, and I began to get very red cheeks as these thoughts trooped through my head one after the other. Never can I forget the relief I felt when Mr. Freeman looked at his watch and declared he had only time to catch his train. My gratitude to kindly Fate, who had caused him to live out of town, was unbounded; and when I sat down to play to papa, I reflected

with delight that, in Mr. Freeman's eyes, my dignity was unshaken.

After tea, papa being thoroughly aroused from his nap, I brought in some work, and seating myself on the opposite side of the fire-place, felt that now was my time for the topics of the day. After rejecting one or two subjects as being too feminine, I made a bold plunge and said:—

'Papa, surely the Premier is a very incompetent man?'

Papa was reading the 'Quarterly Review,' and did not answer. Then it occurred to me that he was very likely tired of politics, so I tried another 'topic.'

'Papa, dear, what a nice place Tattersall's must be; I should like to see it.'

Papa had been fidgeting and impatiently following the lines in his paper with his forefinger, and at this point he looked up with rather a bewildered air and said—

'What, in heaven's name, are you talking about, Rosy?'

'I was reading in the paper about a place called Tattersall's, papa, and it said that the amount of speculation on the turf created quite an agreeable surprise. It must be delightful to play at cards on the grass, but wouldn't it be rather cold at this time of year?'

'There, good night, my dear child. It is past ten o'clock, and quite time you were in bed.'

I was much blighted by this failure, but there was some consolation in the fact that my humiliation had had no witness.

At breakfast next day, sore troubles began. The first thing I did was to lose the keys, and go despairingly up and down looking for them, and expecting every moment to hear papa's heelless slippers (the comfort of which I have never been able to appreciate) slapping the stairs. At last they were found, and I had just made the tea when papa came down. Being late, he wanted everything at once, and nothing was forthcoming. When I poured out the tea, I was alarmed to observe its pale appearance, and when the milk was put in, it looked decidedly forbidding. Papa pronounced it 'flat as ditchwater.' The newspaper, too, had not been aired, and I could see he was regretting the absence of mamma, who was one of those charming people who can always give you a pin, a postage-stamp, or two sixpences for a shilling, and who invariably know the day of the month.

When, at last, papa got off, I felt greatly relieved, and presently, when Julia Gray came for me to go and see her Christmas-tree, I joyfully put on my bonnet and sallied forth utterly oblivious of my responsibilities. On returning, about half-past twelve o'clock, in high spirits, I found the cook in an unapproachable temper, declaring she had 'been looking for me high and low, with no dinner ordered and going for one o'clock, and master so pertickler; and she wondered why missis couldn't stop at home, she did,' and so on, until all my courage oozed away; and with the hope of bringing her round, I even descended to coaxing. This, if not dignified, was, perhaps, the best thing I could do. The good old soul took pity on my youth, and not only forgave me, but did her best with the cookery department until my mother's return.

Byron and I did not agree so well. I was not on such familiar terms with him, and he treated me with distant contempt, as a creature altogether too infantine to be worthy of consideration. When I dined or lunched alone, instead of sounding the gong, he would tell me casually that I could go down, or send me a message by any one who happened to be passing. He was apt to spread a tablecloth over only half the table, and to give me a small knife and fork. He insisted upon my taking tea in the dining-room, and would in time, I think, have brought me down to milk and water. A teacup at breakfast he considered best suited to my age, and he never by any chance posted my letters.

My mother had been in the habit of visiting all the tradespeople once a week, so on the first Saturday I sallied forth, and, with many misgivings, called on the butcher. I

had never been to his shop before, and consequently was not known there. As it was quite full, I remained for some time standing in one corner, very much distressed by some pendant liver, on one side, and on the other by a whole carcase, with long straggling limbs which now and then, when I unwarily gave them an opportunity, poked me in the back in a ghostly and alarming manner. I thought, and still think, the men unnecessarily emphatic in thumping down the meat, and that they displayed a fiendishly triumphant dexterity in sharpening their knives and in flinging the inferior parts of the meat through the window on to a kind of bed, covered with a sheet, which stood outside. Crowding round this place were a number of anxious faces with large baskets, and generally carrying halfpence in their hands, carefully heaping together scraps and bones which their well-to-do brothers had rejected, and behind them were still leaner figures, looking wistfully over their shoulders, not even venturing to ask the price.

I was painfully absorbed in watching these grim specimens of a poverty I had scarcely seen before, when the master of the shop—a large man with a soothing manner—came up and asked for my commands. I tried to look knowing as I glanced up to the roof of his shop where was a grove of legs and loins of mutton, and said bravely I wanted a piece of beef. 'Quite so,' murmured the butcher, 'nice-tender? What part would you like?' Here was a poser! However, driven to desperation, I answered briskly, 'Send me a round.' I thought I detected a slight smirk about the butcher, and on my return the cook greeted me with, 'Lawk, my dear! what have you been a buying?'

'Wasn't it right, cook?'

'Right? Why, my child, there was enough there to feed four or five 'ulkin' boys for a week! Not a hounce less than thirty pounds of beef if you'll believe me! I sent it back directly, and more shame for him to send it here.'

I defended the butcher, and confessed my sins; but I never ventured into his shop again, and ever after, when I passed it, the men would nudge one another to look at the young lady who bought a round of beef!

And now I must confess to a piece of cowardice which haunted me for years, causing me to feel hot and uncomfortable whenever I remembered it.

Mamma had very strict and distinct rules concerning visitors in the kitchen, and I had witnessed many a struggle between her and the servants upon the subject. One evening when papa had gone out after dinner, and I was quite alone, I heard strange and unmistakeably masculine voices issuing from the kitchen. I felt very much disturbed and alarmed, and approached the kitchen door with caution. I noticed that it was only just ajar instead of being wide open as usual. Peeping through the crack, I saw within a hilarious party. The table was spread with much profusion with our best china and plate: at one end was placed a large ham, which had appeared that day at our table, at the other, a fine Stilton cheese, and the interval was filled up with side dishes and sweets which had all made their *début* upstairs. The company gathered round the board was numerous. Cook presided, arrayed in a large-patterned tartan dress, and was supported by a stout, bald gentleman, in shirt-sleeves and a black satin waistcoat, diligently carving ham. A portly lady, who was drinking beer from papa's silver tankard, appeared to be his wife, as she addressed him as 'Father, dear.' Our housemaid was dandling their baby, who indulged in loud crowing, interspersed with shrieks. Cook divided her attention between hospitality and a youth apparently about eighteen, who was seated by her side and appeared to be a lover. A strange young lady, who was nursing our cat, sat by a vacant place which Byron had evidently just quitted for the purpose of uncorking several bottles which stood on the dresser, and which looked

suspiciously like papa's old port. I stared long at this horrible sight, and was only roused by the cold from the fascination which possessed me. I shivered, hesitated, walked towards the kitchen, then suddenly turned and *ran away*.

What an evening I passed! Wandering from room to room, every now and then gloomily listening over the banisters to the mirth below, and suffering all the tortures of a bad conscience! When at length I went to bed, I could not sleep for thinking of the party in the kitchen, and, with strange inconsistency, when I heard them going, I felt thankful that papa had not come home to find them. I got out of bed and stood shivering at the window to watch them pass the lamp at the corner of the square to make sure they were all gone, and then crept back to pass a night of terrible vacillation. In the morning I arose with half a determination to carry fire and sword into the kitchen. But somehow or other, when I approached the enemy, the cook was so obliging and cheerful, showed so much sympathy in aiding me to grapple with the mincemeat question, and altogether confronted me with such an innocent face, that, I confess with shame, I ignored the previous evening and have kept my discoveries to myself ever since. Day by day I sank lower. When it was necessary to reprove any of the servants, I grew cold with alarm, and at the most unsuitable moments, as visions of some forgotten duty would come into my mind, my cheeks and ears would become scarlet.

One day, while the kitchen was empty, I accidently discovered two volumes of the 'Waverley Novels,' belonging to a very handsome set of which papa was extremely fond. Strange to say, I blushed violently when I discovered them. Why, I do not know. Was it intense sympathy for the servants, I wonder, as it was not so many years since I had left off such sins myself? Was it papa I feared? or mamma? I was only fifteen, and I am afraid it was the servants. Still, had any one come in at that moment I think the worm would have turned for once. But, alas! I had ample time to cool, and I did nothing but carry a dreadful load of anxiety about with me. Every day I visited the bookcase in the fond hope that the books might be replaced, then I stole some opportunity of contemplating them in the kitchen, and watched, without a murmur, their progress from the cook's drawer to the housemaid's work-box, and thence to Byron's pantry. In the evenings I was always dreading the moment when papa might ask for them, and at such times resolved to strike the next morning. Those were dreadful days, and my sufferings were not the less acute as Christmas time approached, and I had the prospect of playing hostess to a party from the country about to visit London for the first time

Mr. and Mrs. Higgles were farmers, and they had one child, a boy. Papa had encountered them years before, when he had been concerned in some election, and had taken a great liking to Mr. Higgles. Ever since, we had received substantial civilities from them at Christmas time, and this year they were to come up and stay with us to see the wonders of the metropolis.

On the day of their arrival, papa went to meet them at the station, and I sat at the drawing-room window nervously looking out for them. At length a cab drew up and I was surprised to see nothing on the top but a moderately-sized trunk, covered with cow-skin of the most vivid red and white ever produced by nature, and a huge bundle of evergreens. I hurried down stairs and found papa vainly endeavouring to lead Mrs. Higgles into the dining-room, for she was too much occupied with anxieties concerning her baggage to pay any attention to him. Byron was drawn up behind the door, where he had retired in dudgeon because his services in handing bundles had been declined; and Mr. Higgles, very rosy with exertion and the cold air, was pulling and straining at the box. Meanwhile the cabman, after liberating the party, stood holding the cab door open, and disclosing the interior of the vehicle perfectly

crammed with bundles of every size and shape. I have never properly understood how they were all collected at the railway station; and papa, when I questioned him about it, had no clearer recollection than that he had had a fearful time of it altogether, until the party was safely landed in our house.

At length the box was laid on the door-mat, whence it was immediately taken by Byron, whose taste was severely wounded by its gaudy outside. The evergreens were next attacked, and these Mr. Higgles most inconsiderately placed in the middle of the hall, where they effectually fenced in the whole party; and poor Mrs. Higgles could only gaze across this prickly barrier, and shriek agonized directions concerning her favourite bundles. Among these was a large basket with a handle in the middle and a lid on either side, from under one of which a black bottle peeped. This contained a strong brew of tea, and the basket was further provided with substantial provisions which had been packed up for refreshment on the road. There was also a large bunch of laurestinus, which Mrs. Higgles had that morning gathered in her garden, another of sweet herbs, and they both smelt delightfully of the country, and a huge hamper filled with rural delicacies. A large bandbox, tied up in a blue and white cotton handkerchief, contained Mrs. Higgles's best bonnet; and when the calm i's profaning hands brought it forth, her anxieties were so vivid that I feared she would immolate herself on the spiky holly like a Balaklava hero on the Russian bayonets. Now, when all these treasures had been extricated, Master Job Higgles, who had been buried behind them, became apparent. He emerged in an embarrassed state, and immediately commenced wiping his shoes on the mat, from which performance he was with difficulty induced to desist.

Mr. Higgles was about fifty years old, spare in figure, with a weather-beaten red face, bright watery blue eyes, and scanty gray hair and whiskers. His ordinary attire was black, his coats appearing to be made of some exceedingly unsympathetic material which declined to fit his figure. His coarse linen was always spotlessly clean; and he had a rough, broad-brimmed hat which he invariably placed on the ground beside his chair. He had a fearfully loud voice, which was alarming at first; but his manner was so kindly, and he gave such an impression of general honesty and heartiness, that he reminded one of frosty weather, which nips very sharply, but is withal wholesome and sound.

Job Higgles had a shock head of hair, quite white, an ever-blushing complexion, and he appeared to be in a perpetual state of surprise at the shortness of his sleeves and trousers, the result of rapid growth.

Mrs. Higgles was of another style, being fat and full-blown. She must have been pretty once, and still had an abundance of fair hair, now sprinkled with gray, worn in little bunches of curls on either side of her face. Her dress of black satin was a remarkably tight fit, and was fastened at the back. Her caps were very curious, and not unlike those sweetmeats dear to the infant palate called 'all sorts,' which consist of a little of everything. Thus, you may begin by a tame enough comfit which disappoints your expectation of arriving at a definite flavour in the centre by crumbling into gritty particles and revealing a carraway-seed! Your next venture which looks deep-coloured, hollow, and unpromising, suddenly bursts and inebriates you with a rush of liqueur! This may be corrected by lumps of luscious gluten; and should lock-jaw or somnolence ensue, is there not peppermint to counteract?

It was doubtless an indistinct remembrance of these joys which influenced Mrs. Higgles's taste; and the adornments of her cap seemed put on to counteract one another. She was very careful of her clothes, and in the evening, when we gathered round the fire, she was an extraordinary sight, sitting in a prie-dieu chair, a handkerchief spread over the back to lean her head against, and her skirts folded over her knees.

At dinner, papa talked to Mr. Higgles a great deal about farming

and horses, when I was so much afraid he was going to tell about Tattersall's, that I was not able to talk to Mrs. Higgles. It did not matter much, though, as she was closely occupied in looking very hard at all the things on the table; and Job seemed as shy as I was.

After dinner, however, when we were alone, Mrs. Higgles indulged in conversation, and plunged into matters of housekeeping which I had never even heard of. When she asked what meat was per pound in London, I thought of my round of beef, and changed the subject. Then she went into details of cleaning, and poured recipe upon recipe into my ears until I was quite bewildered. However, I made up my mind to conceal my deficiencies as much as possible, though I was rather alarmed when I thought of the servants.

The next morning, on coming down, the fire had every appearance of having been just lighted. Instead of that generous mass, with its glowing heart of live coal flashing at every breeze, little jets of gas bursting out all over it that squeak with good-fellowship, and the top covered with soft brown coals that look as if they had bubbled and swelled from intense warmth, there was a chilly grate, looking hard-hearted from recent black lead, heaped with flinty coal, black, shining, and cold, a row of spiteful sticks cracking and spurting and sending out stinging sparks, a layer of obstinate damp brown paper, with edges that curled up tight and produced nothing but sky-blue tinder, and a volume of thick green smoke that came into the room on the slightest provocation.

How despairingly I placed the kettle on the unaccommodating coals and watched its brightness fade under a shower of blacks, and how cold the water sounded inside! How fast I talked to Mrs. Higgles, to make the time seem short, and how she *would* look at the fire and see that tell-tale little piece of charred wood! And how terrible it was, when I told Byron to bring mustard, and he said there was none, looking as if he defied me to send him for any!

So much did I fear that man, that I sometimes fetched coal myself from the hall, and often nearly let the fire out when he had neglected to put any there.

Papa, being engaged in the morning of the first day, told me to go for a walk with the Higgleses in order that they might get a general idea of the town. When we started it was a sore trial to me to take them past our neighbours' houses, Mr. Higgles and Job having turned their trousers up round the ankles, and Mrs. Higgles wearing an unmistakeably agricultural bonnet and shawl. I found the family had been studying, with great diligence, a little book descriptive of the sights of London, and were rather more 'up' in the matter than I was. When they began to quote their 'Guide,' which was highly eulogistic in tone, I feared they would be disappointed when they came to inspect the realms of wonder so glowingly described.

I first took them to Regent Street and its neighbourhood, where they would be able to see the shops and their Christmas contents. With these they were delighted; and I had no sooner drawn them away from one shop than they were transfixed before another.

Much amused by their remarks, I next took them to Buckingham Palace They were exceedingly loyal, and had so exalted an idea of everything connected with the Queen, that I rather trembled when we came in front of her palace.

Surely it *is* rather hospital-like to be the dwelling of the highest person in the realm? Is not its architecture somewhat mean and characterless? and are not those dismal narrow windows conducive to low spirits? And that very unregal sea of mud which lies before the chief entrance, and in which London sparrows delight to paddle, can scarcely excite national pride! So keenly did I feel its sordid appearance that I endeavoured to turn their attention from it by descanting at great length upon the splendors within. Upon this theme I waxed so elo-

quent, that Job became excited, and I stopped abruptly, fearing he might at some time make a second Boy Jones of himself. But if the palace was a failure, it was made up for by the club-houses and private residences. It was not very difficult to amuse our guests, as they were good enough to provide jokes for themselves. They laughed readily; and I earned the reputation of being quite a wag upon selecting Apsley House as the residence one day I intended to have.

They couldn't forget it, and Mr. Higgles kept bursting out into little shouts all the way home, and murmuring, 'You're a deep un, you are—aint she, mother?' This sally, and Job's suggesting that his father should take a hint from the Iron Duke in the construction of his scarecrows, lasted them all the time of their visit, and, I believe, were scarcely considered stale for years after.

I was preparing to cross the road, when Mrs Higgles suddenly set up a shrill scream, and clutched me by one arm while Mr. Higgles seized the other, and Job rushed at a tree with obvious intentions of swarming up it. The cause of this was the supposed peril of being run over; and it was not without great difficulty that we at length reached the lamp-post in the middle of the road. Here they made a desperate stand until ignominiously rescued by a crossing-sweeper. I thought them very cowardly, and silently congratulated myself on my own superiority, until we met a drove of cows, on which occasion, I am afraid, I retreated into the nearest shop. On returning home I found the fire out in the dining-room and no lunch ready. Byron, on my venturing to remonstrate, declared with acrimony that 'he never seed sech a 'ouse. He never 'ad no time for nothink; an' nif 'e jes set down to write to 'is mother, blowed if the bell didn't ring that instant minnit! Coals? It was coals, coals, coals, hall day long.'

Things now begun to tell upon me, and I became so dejected that Mrs. Higgles more than once noticed it.

In the afternoon, in consideration of the fact that they had been kept awake all night by the strange noises, and in anticipation of the theatre to which we were going in the evening, Mr. and Mrs. Higgles indulged in fitful slumber, now and then waking up and accusing each other of it, while Job and I played at draughts. I was signally worsted; and after each defeat he would set out the board again, all the while shaking his head in a congratulatory manner to himself. We were to dine at half-past five, so the family retired early to their toilettes, and came forth at dinner-time with every appearance of having suffered in a noble cause. Mr. Higgles had laid aside his black clothes and deemed the occasion worthy of a pair of nankeen trousers, a red velvet waistcoat, and a large blue satin stock.

We ladies make a great hubbub concerning 'the shocking ignorance of men' in all matters relating to feminine attire; but I suspect we are quite as open to remark when we meddle with the manly garb. It must be so; for how else is it that every male convalescent who has been affectionately assisted into his clothes by his wife looks so supremely ridiculous?

Poor Job's appearance bore unmistakable evidences of his mother's revising hand. His garments sat uneasily on his body, and his head, from the excessive redness of his face and sleekness of his hair, appeared to have been subjected to immersion in cold water.

But, perhaps, Mrs. Higgles presented the most striking result, being attired in a transparent shawl-patterned dress, very short in the skirt, and a cap so completely covered with ribbons of all colours, that she looked like a butcher's shop at Christmas time. I was violently affected at the sight of her, and was obliged to leave the room precipitately. I only hope they didn't hear me outside. I can never forget the contrast her appearance presented to papa's as he handed her to the box. She, in a fur tippet and scarlet hood, looking like a pantomimic Red Riding-Hood, and he, so tall and gentlemanlike, with his beautiful white

hair and beard, and snowy plain of shirt!

The Higgleses seemed to be troubled with a feeling that everybody was looking at them, and very much objected to a prominent position. Mrs. Higgles shrunk behind the curtain, and scarcely ventured to peep forth till the evening was half over; and Mr. Higgles, on being placed with Job in the middle of the box, sat on the extreme edge of his chair, bolt upright, with his knees far apart, and scraped his chin very sheepishly. Job, I suppose, was too young for these feelings, for he immediately tilted his chair forward by putting his toes behind the front rail, placed his chin on the velvet front of the box, where his white hair, which was dry and bushy by this time, showed in high relief, and applied himself to staring at everything and grinning till every tooth in his head showed. When the music struck up he began to rock his chair with such energy that we were in great peril.

I was glad to see Mr. Higgles grow more reconciled when the performance began, and it was delightful to watch the effect of it on the whole party. The actors had reason to bless Mr. Higgles, for whenever there was the slightest opening, he rose in the box, and led the applause with hands, feet, and voice, and at the end of the performance sank breathless into his chair, and declared, while wiping his forehead, that 'it was like going to hounds; and he never thought to have made so much noise in London.'

The Museum next day was not such a success. Mrs. Higgles thought the stairs very dirty, which made me wonder what she thought of *our* stairs. In the Reading-room Mr Higgles said, 'Very fine, very fine! but I never *was* fond of book-learning.' I suppose that was why they were so indifferent to the statues, and said it was time such broken old things were thrown away. The mummies excited commiseration, and an inquiry as to 'what the poor things had died of, and why they didn't bury 'em decently out of sight?'

The stuffed birds were the only things that pleased them; and with characteristic taste Mrs. Higgles remarked that 'a couple or so of cases filled with 'em would be a vast improvement to our drawing-room!'

The following week was harrowing. The housemaid became insubordinate, and there were dreadful mounds of dust under everything. I reproached her, and she promised amendment; but, as far as I could see, she never altered her ways. Mrs. Higgles was, indirectly, a great consolation to me after a certain evening we passed alone together.

She seemed very thoughtful, and I, as usual now-a-days, was despondent, when she suddenly began to cry, telling me not to mind her. Of course I went to her directly, and then she flung her arms round my neck, and said, with many sobs and excuses, that 'she couldn't help being low now and then when she thought of her dear precious children dead and gone.' She had had three besides Job, and 'buried them all.' I sat down on the ground beside her in the firelight; and when she stroked my hair and talked of those babies so sweetly and simply, her smooth round face became quite lovely! We went early to bed that night, and somehow my cares were lightened as I heard her footsteps in the next room; and instead of my usual nightmare of brushes and brooms, Byron in papa's clothes, no fires, and everything forgotten, dreamed pleasantly of her and of my own dear mother. Still, domestic matters grew worse and worse, until at last the crisis came.

Mr. Higgles went with Job to the Cattle Show, and Mrs. Higgles and I returned early one morning from a walk. When we got home, the housemaid let us in, and, in answer to my private inquiries for Byron, tossed her head and said she knew nothing of him. This was the last feather on the camel's back; and I went up to my room unable to conceive what ought to be done.

Suddenly, with one muddy boot

off, I rushed to Mrs. Higgles's room, and, throwing myself into her arms, began to cry.

'Why, my pussy! what's the matter?' cried she, in great alarm.

'Oh, dear Mrs. Higgles! What *shall* I do? Byron's gone out.'

'Gone out?'

'Yes; and Jane's in such a rage, and says she won't do his work. Cook reads papa's books, and uses such quantities of brandy in everything. The house is *so* sticky and dirty! Oh! I wish mamma would come home. Dear, dear Mrs. Higgles, *do* help me. The servants won't mind me, and Byron is *so* unkind! What shall I do—what shall I do!'

'There, there, don't cry, my pet. Why, I didn't like to say anything, but I've been looking about me, and certainly the house *does* look muddled up. But don't you cry. I'll see to it; and we'll have the place like a pin before your ma comes.'

The dear old lady was so cheering, and went bustling off to the kitchen at once. By the sounds I heard a tremendous storm seemed to be going on; but presently there was a lull, and she came up again, flushed with triumph. Jane submissively followed, and I heard them go into all the rooms; and there was a heaving about of bedsteads and carrying up of pails all day. With what ease she went about!

How marvellous her knowledge of dusters and brooms and furniture-polish! How humble Jane became! With what unparalleled daring she questioned the cook concerning missing articles of food; and—greatest wonder of all—in a single interview, with Rarey-like skill she put her foot on the head of the zebra Byron!

How happy the rest of the time was until my mother returned, and how pleased I felt to see the meeting! My darling mother, with her sweet, lady-like manners, won Mrs. Higgles's heart directly; and, at parting, she kissed her, and thanked her for coming to the rescue so cordially, that Mrs. Higgles drove away, with the cow-skin box and the bundles, looking quite moved and flattered.

## THE ETHICS OF LOVE AFFAIRS.

'AT lovers' perjuries,' they say, 'Jove laughs.' This is, of course, a pestilent heresy, a heathenish and atheistic remark. But it embodies a fallacy which I am afraid is only too common. An immense amount of false swearing goes on in love affairs. That morality, which is mixed up with all the affairs of life, is certainly not relegated from a region which is as important as any, and to nearly all of us, more interesting. Something may certainly be said concerning the Ethics of Love Affairs.

There is to my mind something very unsatisfactory in the way in which love-making is at present carried on. Of course it was very different in the days when I was still young. But as it is said at chess, that lookers-on see most of the game, so I am annoyed by seeing a vast number of false moves by those who are playing this game of love-making, the most delicate, important, and complicated of all. The result is, that a man or woman when mated, is frequently just as often checkmated. And very often the failure in the higher game is from the same cause as the checkmate on the board; want of thoughtfulness, of close attention, briefly of brain, which has led to some stupid blunder. Moreover, the intellectual causes and the moral causes, as usual, are inextricably mixed up together. It is always the case that a bad man is not only a bad man, but a miserable fool. To divorce Ethics or Morality from certain episodes of life, is an equally effectual divorce from wisdom and from happiness. There is something to my mind ineffably sad in the low comic view which is so often taken of those relationships

concerning which we are now writing with some distrust and hesitation; in that spasmodic unnatural fun, or weak, shallow, unreflecting sentiment. It is as bad as the levity, or selfishness, or cool calculation, which one so frequently meets with in real life. One infinitely prefers a little generous romance and enthusiasm, for, although they do not count for much, they are often preparatory and prophetic of real ripe fruit to come. Our country is peculiar in this respect, that, thanks mainly to Lord Westbury, the picture of married unhappiness is always before the mind and eye of the country. Perhaps a good deal of that folly and guilt which we often see in the married state may be shifted back to the earlier stage of the love affair.

I am not speaking of dark and flagrant matters—although every now and then one is startled to hear of such—but of circumstances which, according to ordinary considerations, are not judged harshly. The business habits of our business age are now largely imported into matters from which they are best kept distinct; not that they should be entirely overlooked, but that a broad distinction should be maintained. Young men and women are often as mercenary as their seniors. There are a great many young ladies even, who could pass a very satisfactory examination in the rights of primogeniture, and on the differences between post-nuptial and anti-nuptial settlements. Your very prudent marriages, when, for instance, young May weds January, because January is rich or titled, give very scant happiness, although they may not crop up in the court which is the latest boast of our civilization. Natural rules, whenever violated, ultimately obtain their revenge. Again, how very much of the misery of private life is occasioned simply by an absence of right principle, and even stability of character. When a love affair is in full progress, young people think they have entered on a phase of life where pleasures and romance are everything, and the true notions of duty and responsibility need scarcely enter. But for want of these the little romance often speedily vanishes away. We have all known of various unhappy cases, although they were generally withdrawn from light very quickly. You see a worthy young fellow meet some worthless, shallow girl, or some really nice girl meet some worthless fellow, and they are thrown a good deal together, and become, or fancy that they become, lovers. Then a period of illusion, oftentimes fraught with disaster, sets in. Youth is reckless and generous, and attributes readily to others the qualities which it possesses itself. A being generous, affectionate, devoted, at once attributes generosity, affection, devotedness, to this other being, when in fact these attributes exist very scantily, or rather bear no proper existence at all. When there is no moral worth as the substratum of affection between young people, the affection itself depends on a most fragile link. If young Lovelace is only attracted by pouting lips and pretty eyes, he is unable to resist lips of a brighter ruby and eyes of a deeper sapphire. Then the fickle affections are lightly transferred to another choice; the first engagement comes to a bad end; but it frequently happens that in the one case while only an engagement is broken, in the other a heart is broken. I am as sceptical as the Duke of Wellington himself respecting young people dying of love. 'We read occasionally,' says his Iron Grace, 'of desperate cases of this description; but I cannot say that I have ever yet known of a young lady dying of love. They contrive in some measure to live and look tolerably well, notwithstanding their despair and continued absence of the lover, and some have even been known to recover so far as to take a second lover if the absence of the first has lasted too long.' Of course people do not literally die of love, but they may suffer that, compared with which any physical rupture of the heart, of which physicians tell us, is a

mere trifle. I believe, however, that physicians will tell us that when there is a predisposition to disease, unhappiness of this sort—'something on the mind' is the phrase—has been the determining cause of death. Thus an incalculable amount of misery is produced, not by any deliberate wickedness, but by fickle feeling and light-hearted selfishness. A really tender and profound nature is tortured until sensibility is blunted by some gaudy worthless insect of a moment, only noteworthy for its terrible capacity of inflicting pain.

There is something most deteriorating to the moral character in flirtation, using the word in its extreme and odious sense. In this universal flirting there is such a waste of feeling and emotion. Waste is at all times an extravagant and wicked thing. Our feelings, like all the good gifts of the Creator, are to be guarded and treasured and rightly developed. The muscles must not be stretched beyond a due degree of tension. Brain and heart will do their appointed work, but will avenge too frequent and undue demands. The young man who flirts with half a hundred girls is depriving his own true future wife of a portion of that love and loyalty which he owes her. Those feelings which are the tenderest and deepest of our fallen nature —reliquary graces' of the lost Eden happiness—lose their brightness, sweetness, graciousness, with their marvellous healing, regenerating power. The unhappy man or woman is perhaps so far fallen as to scoff at them, or deny, or deride, or to find herein a theme for polished sarcasm or coarse jeering. I believe it is a common saying among young people, that a piece of the heart has been given here, and a piece there, until no heart is left to offer. And then, for such, the matter-of-fact marriage, in the highest and most blessed sense, is no real marriage at all; the sweet virginal emotions have long ago been dissipated and lost; the feelings are all blunted and worn out; and it is true of these reforming rakes, the married male and female flirt, that they are, in the language of Professor Plumptre's fine poem of Gomer—

> 'Renouncing all the joys,
> The blessings of the bridegroom and the bride,
> When each in other brings the virgin heart,
> The Eden-bliss of lilies white and pure,
> The stainless passion purifying sense.'

It is also to be remembered that we are all the creatures of habit; and the habit of flirting, though laid aside for the honeymoon, is too often speedily assumed. The inveterate flirt of half a score seasons is too often an inveterate flirt to the last, and too often the pleasant vice, indeed, becomes a scourge. The slight want of conscience in the outset, becomes a total want of conscience in the issue. The domestic misery and public scandal may often be traced back to the want of Ethics in Love Affairs.

It is not my intention, however, to dwell exclusively on the gloomy and unhappy side of things. It is unnecessary also to dwell on the bright *per contra* side of things, which even English family life evermore furnishes. Let us notice a few points which arise in our social life, as well as some which have occupied the attention of jurists and casuists.

In the second edition of Addison, on the 'Law of Contracts,' that great legal authority goes into questions of this kind with a particularity to which in subsequent editions he does not condescend. Some of the legal particulars which he lays down connected with love-making are highly amusing. A letter conveying an offer does not require a stamp. 'An offer, or promise of marriage, sent by post, or left at a lady's residence for her consideration, is deemed to be continually renewed, until she has had an opportunity of accepting or rejecting it.' Generally speaking, European law has taken a highly ethical view of these matters, and embodied it in jurisprudence. Sometimes it administers that kind of justice which is called poetical justice. Mademoiselle Bourdenet made the Lord Desportes promise

to marry her. The clever Frenchwoman was only too clever. She got a note from him, thus written: 'I promise to Mademoiselle Bourdenet to marry her.' In this case the French law held that marriage is a reciprocal, and as there was a promise from the gentleman to marry the lady, so there ought to have been in existence a promise from the lady to marry the gentleman. Our own law, however, is much more gallant to the ladies; and when an express promise is shown on the one side, makes little difficulty in implying a promise on the other. Coke and Hardwicke declare 'the modesty of the sex is considered by the common law,' and regard the lady as *semper parata*, although 'it can hardly be expected that a lady should say to a gentleman, "I am ready to marry you; pray marry me."' The case of a thorough snob is recorded on the books. He was courting the daughter of a rich man, and, in a clandestine interview, obtained from the girl a bond, in which she bound herself in a penalty of five hundred pounds not to marry any other person, and, on his part, gives her a bond of a very similar description. The young lady, grown wiser, after her father's death filed a bill in Chancery to be released from this penalty, and the Court ordered it to be delivered up to be cancelled. The bond, however, would have been valid, if it had not been clandestinely obtained. The English law endorses the axiom that silence gives consent. When a gentleman asked for and obtained the consent of the parents to his marriage with their daughter, and the young lady stayed in the room within the hearing of the parties, and made no objection to the match, it was held that her silence under such circumstances afforded as cogent evidence of her assent as an express affirmation. This position is to enable a young lady to recover damages if she wants them. But if she be the defendant, here the English law, with its usual gallantry, steps in to help her, and rules that there must be an express promise on her part to enable a man to sustain an action. Again, the law does not object to long engagements in the case of young people, and even encourages them; but in the case of older persons, requires a little more alacrity in espousals. It seems to view with approbation the maxim of the Roman law, that an engagement should not extend over two years. A curious case is given, that of *Mallet* v. *Halfpenny*, in which the fair behaved in a very faithless and disgraceful way. A father promised an intended husband to give his daughter a certain sum as a marriage portion, and the unnatural parent misliking this circumstance, contrives with the daughter that she 'should put on a good humour,' and should get possession of the document and deliver it back to him, and then get married, which she did, the father standing at the corner of the street to see her go to church. In this case the Court of Chancery, like a benignant genius, interfered, and ordered the agreement to be carried into effect. It is very curious to notice the pleas which are sometimes brought among those humble people with whom this description of action is not uncommon. A bucolic case occurs to me, tried somewhere down in the country. The defendant pleaded drunkenness as his set-off. He said that he was drunk when he made the promise, drunk when he spoke to the parents, drunk when he bought the ring, drunk when he fixed the day. This plea, I have no doubt, had no effect beyond eliciting some severe remarks from the presiding judge.

There was a rather remarkable case tried in the city a few years since, and one of the jury subsequently explained to me how he and his brethren had decided the case. The wretched defendant had represented to the young lady and her friends, from motives of silly wrongheaded vanity, that he was an exceedingly rich man, whereas he was only moderately rich. He had acted very badly, and the question was simply one of damages. He had retained Sir Alexander Cockburn, the present Chief-Justice, and Mr. Edwin James, as his counsel, perhaps

hoping to crush his gentle opponent by this monopoly of the most fervid eloquence of the bar. It was, however, generally thought that Sir Alexander's eloquence on behalf of the defendant was very tame indeed compared with what it might have been if he had been on the side of the plaintiff. The judge summed up, and the jury retired to consider their verdict. When they had entered the room, one of the number proposed that each juryman should write down on a separate slip of paper the amount of damages which he proposed to award. A very remarkable amount of variation was exhibited. One juryman gave in an estimate as low, I think, as a hundred pounds; another certainly proposed a sum as high as ten thousand pounds. I suppose the first estimate was given by some gay young fellow who failed to comprehend the full enormity of the offence, and the last by some father of a family, who could better appreciate a case of outraged feelings. One of the jury proposed that an average should be struck, and this was found to be three thousand pounds. But neither the young gentleman nor the old gentleman were satisfied. To one the sum was ridiculously too high, to the other too low. Each maintained his side with much zeal and eloquence, the other ten being content with the average. At last the time arrived when mortals dine. One of the two then thought it would be highly presumptuous on his side to oppose himself to the opinions of so many men his seniors in years and wisdom, and then the other could not think of disturbing the unanimity of the party. A verdict for three thousand pounds damages was accordingly given. An attempt was afterwards made to set aside the verdict. One ground was that the defendant's means had been greatly exaggerated; but as the wrong impression had been created by his own lying vanity, this was set aside. He complained grievously that at the consultation his learned counsel had 'chaffed' him, and not done much besides; but Sir Alexander Cockburn, who called him a most troublesome client, gave a full and complete version of the matter.

Let me now add a few words respecting the case when a breach of promise of marriage occurs in addition to these legal notes. Most of my readers must have casually noticed the newspaper literature of the subject. Of course, no lady or gentleman ever brings any such action. This litigation seems to appertain exclusively to the lower orders. To this I only remember one exception, which is remarkable enough, as the plaintiff was a gentleman, and recovered really substantial damages. To the best of my recollection he was an officer in the army, whom some worthless woman, becoming rich, had jilted, and then spread lies about him to justify her heartlessness. In this case the plaintiff was both an officer and a gentleman, and probably took a right line of conduct, which met with a proper result. But I do not think that any lady of real feminine feeling—like a beggar exhibiting his sores—would parade her injured feelings before a jury of her civilized countrymen; and when a man brings such an action, generally and deservedly he is cast. But these cases, tried in no formal tribunal, but in the court of one's own conscience, are often of a very painful and difficult character. I remember the case of a very good girl who went to consult the clergyman of her parish whether she ought to fulfil an engagement which she had formed. Her difficulty was, that she was not certain whether she loved him enough, and she would have to swear that she would love him. The clergyman, who was one who took high ground on the inviolability of promises, ruled that she could not relinquish her engagement. He doubtless explained that love, as an ecclesiastical term, did not mean the high-flown feelings of young lasses, but the feeling of affection and regard which might be regarded as satisfying and sufficient. Whether this advice was quite right or not, the young lady took it as a direction from the confessional, and made what proved a tolerably happy marriage. Many of my readers are doubtless acquainted

with Mr. Trollope's current amusing serial, 'Can you Forgive Her?' It is a question which most readers will answer in the affirmative, but many also will answer in the negative. A young lady accepts a lover and discards him; she then accepts a second lover and discards him; she then returns to her first lover, and, at the present stage of the story is evidently about to discard him, and marry, or ought to marry, the worthy man of the story, John Grey. The facts thus nakedly stated, of course insure an unfavourable verdict; but then Mr. Trollope brings forward so very many 'extenuating circumstances,' that the verdict is modified or altogether altered. You are probably acquainted with Milton's 'Tetrachordan,' a treatise arguing in favour of the permissibility of divorce. As the illustrious author, in his well-known sonnet, relinquishes his case, it is not worth while to show its weakness. But some of the cases put, though insufficient to justify a divorce, would justify the annulling of an engagement. 'Indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering, and ever likely to hinder, the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace,' is, according to Milton's abjured argument, a sufficient plea for the dissolution of marriage. It might, however, be very plausibly maintained that such is a sufficient plea for the dissolution of an engagement. I have observed in civil trials that when some sensible hard-headed man has urged on his own behalf that he really believed that he had made a mistake in selecting an unfit partner for his future wife, although this was of course no defence in point of law, yet the judge has commented on it with approbation, and the damages have been substantially modified.

And yet perhaps a man of very refined and generous nature might reasonably hesitate before taking up such ground as this. There is a certain saying respecting the blessedness of the man who swears to his neighbour, and disappoints him not, although it be to his own injury. I knew a man once, something of a student and recluse, who carried out a rather unwise engagement into which he had entered, on the strength of a passage in the writings of Bishop Butler, the substance of which is, that he who can in a small matter forfeit the highest worldly advantages, for the sake of adherence to equity, will, at the last, find himself immeasurably the gainer. It all depends whether you take a selfish or unselfish view in such matters. If the maiden is poor, or fragile in health, or broken in spirits, or in other respects disappoints the taste and the ambition, all this surely involves a plea for tenderness and forbearance, and is a plea for the strong support and guidance which might be rendered, to elevate and make happy. 'If,' says the French jurist Pothier, who is very fond of placing himself in all kinds of imaginary positions connected with love-making, 'anything has happened to my betrothed which would have prevented me from entering into the contract, could I have foreseen it at the time I promised to marry her, I am discharged from my engagement.' We are sorry to say that we have only a low opinion of Pothier's principles. From such positions some consequences would flow, from which all right feeling revolts. A man becomes engaged to a girl because she has a fair face or a fair fortune. But disease may mar the one or reverses destroy the last. This may be French law, but we do not believe that it is English law; or that any English gentleman would thus forfeit his honour for merely selfish considerations.

There is a small matter connected with the minor ethics of love affairs which should be mentioned. Lovers are proverbially selfish; and this selfishness is often shown in their treatment of their kin. I confess I have much sympathy with Paterfamilias. He has been educating his daughter with infinite pains and expense, and she has become a charming and intelligent companion, full of kindness and good sense and honest feeling; and suddenly some big fellow comes hulking about the premises, with demonstrative whiskers, and full of his youthful self-

conceit. In Mr. Burgon's charming 'Portrait of a Christian Gentleman' —a memoir of the historian Tytler —something like this is brought out. The following is the historian's love experience as mentioned by his sister:—'He himself, after being introduced to her, found it very difficult to penetrate those convent walls; but the old gentleman, after he had recovered from the first shock of seeing a young gentleman frequently calling on what appeared to him very frivolous pretences, became so fond of my brother, that soon no pretence whatever was necessary his visits appearing to give equal pleasure to all parties.' My friend Jones remarked to me once, that he had married Mary Ann, and had not married the family. Herein I think he was wrong. Having married into the family, in a certain sense he marries the family. Having become a son of the house, he owes, after a sort, a son and brother's duty to the parents and to the brotherhood and sisterhood. I think my Ethics apply here. Mary Ann had a younger brother in the days before the engagement, a tall, gaunt, thin-shanked, hulking youth. The regard and friendship which Jones at that time professed for this generally objectionable young man was simply preposterous. He used to call upon him, and make engagements with him, and lend him books, and volunteer to correct his exercises for his private tutor. The youth mildly suffered himself to be surprised into this violent friendship. This Pylades became very cool with his Damon after he felt his ground sure with Miss Damon. After the marriage, though young Damon continued his affability and easy familiarity, Mr. Jones 'didn't seem to see it;' and when he at any time makes himself an unbidden guest, Jones is hardly prepared to treat him with brother-in-law civility. I think Jones is quite wrong. All the wonted friendship and hospitality is still due, and in redoubled measure, to the youthful Damon. And now that he is going up to St. John's, where he will really prove himself a credit to his new connection, I hope that Jones, with the becoming spirit of new relationship, will put in a handsome quota towards the bearing of those college expenses which Mary Ann's family, single-handed, would find it hard to sustain.

I repeat what I said at the outset, that the onlookers see most of the game. I see a good deal that some young people would give worlds to see. There is that lovely and demure Kate Newton. Young Morrell, the scholar of Trinity, loves her devotedly; but he is shortsighted and shy, awkward and embarrassed, and without that little encouragement which she will never give, will never have the courage to tell her so, although if she knew him better she would certainly like him very much. No; that rattling, flippant, thin-brained lieutenant, who has nothing but his pay and is troubled with no modest scruples about his own merit, will probably woo and win high-souled Kate. Your Titania is always involving herself with a certain description of animal. Bright gay little Fanny would suit him admirably, but bright gay little Fanny is not to have him. She is to marry that elderly and morose-looking conveyancing solicitor, who will make her happy life gloomy and morose. It is only what we see throughout life. There is a wonderful love of contradictions. I see so many fair prospects nipped in the bud, and so many marriages where we instinctively feel that a higher degree of happiness will be missed and only a lower degree of comfort and happiness be attained. Let me tell the story of my friend Lascelles —who tried to be so very clever in these things—and which I think has a 'moral' in it.

Lascelles is the Fellow of a Cambridge college. With everything in the world to make him comfortable he is a most uncomfortable man. Possessed of a lucrative fellowship, he is always sighing after a fellowship of a different description. And what a quantity of mathematics the man knows! He will weigh the world for you, or calculate the recurrence of a comet, or tell you where in the heavens you

are to look for a planet. His fame is not very far behind that of Le Verrier or Adams. But starry eyes have a charm for him beyond all mixed mathematics. Indeed I believe that he irretrievably mixes up in his mind the starry eyes and the mixed mathematics. He will inly murmur to himself, with Romeo,

> 'Two of the fairest stars in all the heavens
> Having some business, do entreat her eyes
> To twinkle in their place till they return'

When he turns his telescope on the distant luminaries, he thinks of the fire of celestial eyes; and when he beholds the beautiful human eyes he murmurs something to himself about a near conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. As a matter of fact, Lascelles is a most retired, bashful, modest man; but mentally, theoretically, imaginarily, he is quite a Lothario, wandering and pondering amid half a hundred beauties, in a manner little becoming the gravity of a Fellow of a College. He is wondering whom he shall promote to the vacant wifeship, what time old Bunkum shall vacate the living of Foot-in-Clover, and he shall succeed, as he is entitled according to his seniority, to that greatest prize in the gift of his college. In the meantime Lascelles' efforts to please are not happy. The tradition will long remain of the grand evening party which Lascelles gave in his fine rooms. He was very nervous, and the unpolished manners of his early youth crept out: for he was brought up in a northern farm-house, and came up to the University from a great northern grammar-school. He wished to be very polite; but the actual expression which he addressed to the brilliant bevy was briefly this: '*Ladies, are you full?*' You may imagine the titter and little shrieks which went round the festive board.

Lascelles is a Public Examiner of his University; and it occurred to his powerful mind that the system of marks and classes pursued in the Senate-House might be applied to the various young ladies, and enable him to discover who among them was entitled to the honour of being Senior Wrangler. Dear Lascelles, I hope the term is not ominous, that thy wife will not be a veritable wrangler, nay one who has attained to the highest honours in the Wrangling Art. The application of this system to social life abounded in some curious and interesting results.

One evening I called upon Lascelles. It was in the early dusk of a day in early spring. In his excellent library, abounding with mathematical treatises and 'Books of Beauty,' with that enormous telescope by his side, with the attendant microscope not far off, the grave college don and tutor sat, to use a vulgar undergraduate phrase, 'mooning.' I think that old Bunkum—who seemed in a fair way of practically solving the question whether human beings can live to be centenarians—had shown symptoms of an ultimate breaking-up. That question of the vacant wifeship more than ever assumed a paramount importance. But there was a pleased and satisfied expression about my friend's visage to which it had long been a stranger. When he had poured me out a glass of College port—a wine of rare vintage—he silently and contemplatively handed me over a paper, which I perused with great amazement, and shall do best if I simply copy it for my readers.

*Wranglers.*

Clara Lawson.
Adelaide Monroe.
Mary Clay.
Julia Augusta Addington.
Hon. Lucy Saville.
Kate Wilson.

*Senior Optimes.*

Elizabeth Kingsley.
Elizabeth Merton.
Kate Merton.
Adelgiza Johnson.
Louisa Smith.
Constance Ellis.
Sarah Garth.

*Junior Optimes.*

Arabella Smethwick.
Alice de Crespigny.
Ellen Jeffreson.
Anna Maria Hodgkinson.
Mrs. Worthington.

'Your list is much smaller than the Cambridge tripos,' I observed.

'True,' replied Mr. Lascelles; 'but then you must also consider that it is much larger than the average Oxford mathematical list.'

'You see,' continued Mr. Lascelles, 'that my great difficulty lies between Miss Lawson and Miss Monroe. They are bracketed, and do what I can, I cannot get them out of the bracket.'

'How do you get at the result?' I ventured to inquire.

'Nothing can be more beautifully simple and precise,' he replied. 'You see there are six subjects, in each of which there are a certain standard of marks. There are Principles including Temper; Education, which includes Mental Power; Beauty, Family, Fortune. Fifty is the highest number of marks to which each young lady can attain.'

'But where is your sixth subject?'

'Oh! that I call my *Problem* paper. It depends on how much I may like any young lady, and how much any young lady may like me. But here, too, the marks are rigorously confined to fifty. And this occasions my difficulty, for I undoubtedly like Clara Lawson the best, although all the marks point unhesitatingly in the direction of Miss Monroe, who has got both a straighter nose and two thousand pounds additional fortune.'

'I think you give rather an undue preponderance to Family.'

'Yes, I have a weakness that way,' returned Mr. Lascelles. (It was natural enough, considering his own humble origin.) 'I frankly confess that that alone got the Honourable Lucy her first class, and her Norman name was of considerable use to Miss de Crespigny.'

'I see you have only given a second place to those nice Merton girls.'

'No money, my dear fellow. They stand very high on my Problem paper—in fact, I disinterestedly gave them equal marks—otherwise they would not be where they are. It was her money alone which got the widow, Mrs. Worthington, a place on the class list; otherwise she would have been "gulfed."'

'Been—how much?' I exclaimed with horror.

'Gulfed,' repeated Lascelles; 'that is to say, not good enough to be classed and too good to be plucked.'

'What about the Lorimers?' I inquired.

'Ah! poor girls,' returned Mr. Lascelles; 'they look very pretty; but they came out very badly on paper. The one was gulfed and the other plucked.'

My friend had certainly shown a good deal of judgment and taste in this classification. I had the honour of being acquainted with a large proportion of these young ladies, confessedly very nice girls. A sudden thought occurred to me.

'Observe, my dear Lascelles. Suppose one of these very clever girls has alighted upon some similar scheme of classification, and should apply it to yourself. Let us see how you would come out under such a scrutiny.'

Lascelles expressed an opinion that this was rather coming down upon a man.

'You are not good looking, my friend; indeed, you are not!' I ruthlessly continued, notwithstanding his deprecating gesture. I thus proceeded in that vein of candour which is so truly delightful among friends:—

'You are very bald and rather near-sighted, your hands and feet are clumsy, and your voice has a grating Northern, provincial accent. As for fortune, if you gave up your fellowship to marry before Foot-in-Clover Vicarage fell vacant, you are simply a pauper. As regards family, it is highly to your credit that your grandfather was only a small grocer, and your great-grandmother most probably a housemaid. Your principles are hardly so firmly fixed as your best friends could wish, and as respects the problem paper, perhaps the most modest estimate might be the least disappointing in the result.'

Poor Lascelles winced and looked for a time really put out of sorts. 'For all these defects,' I thought to myself, but did not think necessary

to impart the consolation to my friend, 'some discerning lady may overlook these numerous defects in consideration of that kindly heart and that magnificent intellect. Anyhow, when he gets his living of twelve hundred a-year, as matters go, I suppose he may pretty well choose for himself.' In due time Lascelles really got Foot-in-Clover. There was a splendid dinner in college, I assure you, on the day when his presentation was made out. Alas! however, for theorizing, the examination scheme did not work, practically speaking. Lascelles fell in with a designing minx in his new parish, who could not bear a comparison with the Lorimers, either the one plucked or the one gulfed, who married him off hand, and did not allow him to discuss her substantial merits. He consoles himself as he best can with his mathematics and telescopes, and confesses that his Quantitative Estimate was a comparative failure.

I have just spent a minute in recalling the names of some whom I have known in their youth of grace and beauty. Many are happily married, but many—it is astonishing how many—are either old maids, or have passed away where 'they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are even as the angels.' A large proportion of the very nicest girls became old maids. It is very remarkable. I am afraid that the reason is this, that there are not really good men enough in the world to mate with them Like seeks like, and a possible suitor is repelled when he has a dark suspicion that the young lady is in every possible point of view superior to himself. Little Isaac, in Sheridan's 'Duenna,' says, 'Nothing keeps me in such awe as perfect beauty. now there is something consoling and encouraging in ugliness.' Perfect beauty has its attendant awe. The inferior creature cannot withstand the clear steadfast gaze of the higher being. We know that there is a beauty in holiness. We may also reverently say that there is a holiness in beauty. But then this holy beauty is that where the countenance reflects the mind, and is refulgent with pure, holy, and lofty thought. Excessive prettiness always draws an adoring crowd; but to mean and unholy natures this saintly and intellectual beauty, that highest beauty where the face reflects the soul, is something repellent. And thus a really beautiful face is often allowed to grow marred and faded, even while the one that wears it attains to a diviner beauty even than that of the human countenance when most glorious. Perhaps such a one has cashiered an unworthy lover. She had exalted an idol of clay and fallen down and worshipped. The eyes of the understanding became enlightened. The idol was shivered and the idolatry was over. Some wayward man marred the happiness of two lives, because to him that was little less than a whim, and was not made a matter of honour, trust, and conscience, which to the other was more than life itself. How much of the unhappiness of life is caused by these fatal mistakes which are as much errors against conscience as mistakes. Things would be different if we were not so absurdly shy or wickedly selfish, and would be content to make our love affairs one of the most serious matters of reason, conscience, and religion.

Perhaps it is as well that the disillusioning process should take place thus early, instead of that later period when it would be too late. There is always some amount of disillusion. A man thinks he has married an angel, and subsequently discovers that he has only married a woman. Unquestionable marriage, which has sometimes the highest human happiness, has often also the keenest human agony. What a doleful account is that which honest Izaak Walton gives of the nuptials of the illustrious Hooker, the author of the 'Ecclesiastical Polity!' He tells us how very injudiciously the judicious Hooker had hooked himself. He asked his landlady to choose for him, and she selected her own daughter, who had neither beauty nor fortune. What an evil repute has Izaak Walton given to this ill-favoured woman for all time. I dare say she was not

so bad as he has painted her. It is a melancholy story how the great author's friends sought him at his vicarage, and found that Richard was wanted to rock the cradle. Nevertheless, I should like to be in possession of Mrs. Hooker's version of that transaction. I am afraid her husband had not the best of tempers, and that he was too much absorbed in his books to give her that moderate amount of attention which even a plain woman unaccountably expects. She thought, however, that she must utilize him, and the cradle seemed the best means of utilizing him. But old Walton has some very wise and gentle remarks upon this ill-starred match. Affliction, he tells us, is a 'divine diet,' and perhaps this kind of affliction was the best for this kind of man. You remember that remarkable poem of Charles Kingsley's, of which the concluding lines point to the true consolation of the unhappy wife or maid:—

'Oh! thou hadst been a wife to Shakespeare's self!
No head, save some world-genius, ought to rest
Above the treasures of that perfect breast,
Or nightly draw fresh light from those keen stars
Through which the soul awes ours; yet thou art bound—
Oh, waste of nature!—to a craven hound,
To shameless lust and childish greed of pelf,
Athenè to a Satyr was that link
Forged by the Father's hand? Men's reason bars
The banns which God allowed Ay, so we think,
Forgetting, thou hadst weaker been, full blest,
Than thus made strong by suffering, and more great
In martyrdom, than throned as Cæsar's mate.'

## LETTER FROM A COUNTRY CURATE ON DREAMS.

WHEN, in the organ of my slumbers, Alexius, I pull out the dream-stop, odd are the tunes, quaint and Chinese-like the music which I am generally fated to hear. Nor are there wanting cadences of remote and mystic loveliness—sighs of spheral harmony, which the ear of sense is too gross to perceive. If I often awake laughing, I as often regret that I have awaked. So vivid and real are my cubicular fancies, that, in the very height and heat of noonday, I can almost look back on them as veritable experiences. Sleep introduces me, and everybody, to another world inside this; one, though, hardly less natural. To be sure the laws of that country are somehow different from those of every-day life. They are sublimed, lightened, etherealized. The material through which they act has lost the grossness inherent in it on this side the bedclothes. Have you never thought, Alexius, what an odd thing it is that, while the bodily instruments of sensation are locked up from use, the soul, aided by memory and imagination, performs all their functions, and seems to do excellently well without them altogether? We see without eyes, hear without ears, talk without tongues, touch without hands, walk without feet. In the shadowy land of dreams, the *simulacra* of ourselves achieve ghostly feats of action and passion, desire, lament, pursue, fail, succeed, experience the greatest misery, the greatest bliss. There the history—often the *new* history—of our days repeats, continues, develops itself. The secret wishes of our hearts, the shy hopes that live in the depths of our consciousness, like sunless waters in a cavern, overflow our slumbers with the full tide of realized happiness. We clasp the hands which are mouldering in the grave; we kiss the lips which are blanched by death or separation; the past regret, the future hope, meet and blend into one fairy shape of present satisfaction. We lie down on the plains of Fortune, and in our sleep are lifted to her heights: or, less happily, the shadow which lay upon our hearts when we fell asleep, darkens into perfect cloud, and all the storm of sorrowful anticipations drives fiercely and shrilly across our dreams.

Moreover, Alexius, what wonderful fellows sleep makes of us! How the ambitious thoughts which

struck root in the day shoot up, blossom, and bear fruit in the night! What feats of daring, what exploits of hardihood are achieved by the coward! What victories crown the wise plans of the unsuccessful general! The sons of mediocrity paint their pictures, write their poems, to the admiration of a world. The veriest muff of an angler fills his basket thrice over; and the last despair of a volunteer firing-party carries off the cup! So rich is Nature, my friend, in compensations! So kindly does she restore the balance of our injured sensitiveness! We make up in dreams for the failure of the day. In them, the dull eye of the speculator flashes with unwonted keenness; the slow merchant takes a rise out of the market; the caustic repartee drops, blistering, from the lips of the disappointed wit; the cook dishes up to perfection her for ever spoilt dinner; the caned boy says his lesson like a book; the hissed M.P. sits down to the plaudits of St. Stephen's; the cricketer, who never scored ten runs in his life, walks off to the tent to be presented with a new bat, amid the acclamations of thousands. O, Sleep! if, in one Sancho Panza sense, thou wrappest us round like a blanket,—in another, and a higher, thou takest off the covering of the soul, loosing those bandages of sense and time which bind us down, so harshly, to cold obstruction and restraint! Hail to thee, thou blessed relief of the day's dark picture!—thou kindly buffer, that receivest and resistest the shocks of a too colliding world! Ah! if only your sleepers are sound, how smoothly runs the locomotive of life! And what a terminus is bed,—not only to the fatigued muscle and throbbing nerve, but to the carking care, the irritable suspicion, the vexed spirit, the aching thought, and all the miseries which knot themselves in serpent folds about our hearts!

But that, Alexius, is a digression. To resume: How often in dreams does our other—our nobler, better self—revive and assert itself! We are then what we would wish to be: we do what we always thought we could best have done. Grisi dances; Liston acts tragedy; and Grimaldi, instead of singing 'Hot Codlins' and 'Tippitywichet,' grows plaintive in 'Deeper and Deeper Still,' and positively weeps in 'Che faro senza Euridice!' We cast the artificial slough of habit—the garment in which a cross-grained fortune has clothed us. Down from their pegs come the radiant vestments in which we once hoped to strut upon the stage of life. For my own part, I confess that, next to playing the finest Macbeth on the boards, I should like to have been a little greengrocer in an obscure country-town. But it was not to be. Shall I therefore complain? No. No, says the Lincolnshire parson, who snores and storms, sword in hand, the bastions of Richmond. No, repeats the fat chandler, who, after melting-day, finishes another chapter in his dream-romance. No, echoes the weary miner, who, tired out by a hard day's work on the banks of the Sacramento or the bars of the Frazer, at night thunders in the Senate and fulminates over Westminster or Washington.

Nor is it only what we might have been, but what we might have possessed, which forms the picture of our dreams. *Nihil ex nihilo fit* is hardly true in the land of Nod. On the contrary, from nothing comes a great deal. The illusions of hope may be handled and perceived. We walk in the grounds of the estate which our offended avuncular relative declined to bequeath us. We ask the time from that dear old richly-chased and jewelled repeater which our godmother wore at her waist, and promised to leave us at her death, but never did. We imagine it is Clementina who is sleeping so beauteously at our side, and when we wake, it is only poor Mary Ann. Where is that thousand pounds which cousin John engaged to give us when we set up in business for ourselves? Where, Madame mon épouse, is the wedding-veil of real Valenciennes lace which your aunt Jane gave you every reason to expect, together with those five houses in Piccadilly Pleasaunce and those two farms in Norfolk? Where, O boy,

is the pony that was to have carried you three summer holidays ago, but which has never yet been seen by your longing eyes, nor bestrode by your anxious legs? Where, thou dear child with the wondering eyes and floating gold of hair!—where is the picture-book like a shifting aureol of colour?—the doll, all moving eyelids and pink cheeks, which, Christmas after Christmas, fails to lie at the foot of your little bed? Ah! where is my *Opus Magnum* yet unwritten? Where the fifty-guinea brief I was to have held? —the Governor-Generalship of India I was hinted for—the bishopric I ought to have obtained,—the ambassadorship I did not get,—that Cornetcy in the Blues—that appointment at the Cape -that partnership in Bass's Brewery—that extra half a crown a day to my pension—that new pair of boots—that deferred guinea of my rich successful brother?—Ah! where? I ask, without troubling echo for a reply. Well, they all exist; they all come to us in dreams and visions of the night. Their shadowy satisfactions at least are ours. Kindly Nature performs a miracle. We realize the impossible. We touch the untangible. The shipwrecked ventures of Antonio bully and swagger over the peaceful flood. Paris kisses the pleased cheek of Juliet Laodamia clasps Protesilaus, and Earl Russell charms the world to peace with a wave of his diplomatic foolscap.

But Sleep, Alexius, plays on the organ of fancy much less agreeable tunes than these. I do not mean those incubi of the pillow, nightmares, dark serpents of the imagination, that knot themselves around the throat of our sensations, and are only burst asunder by some terrible shriek splitting the startled ear of night. No, I don't mean nightmares. I mean dreams—disagreeable dreams, ungentlemanly dreams, dreams that are always playing you some dirty trick; *ignes fatui* that invariably land you in a bog; that begin Ariel and end Puck. You are, as you suppose, walking in some beautiful woodland region, say with Sylvia. The happy flowers are conscious of her presence; the blade of grass she treads on dips and turns to look at her; the yellow crocus runs, like flame, before her steps; the violet murmurs from her shades, the primrose from her tufts, because she does not stop to gather them. The briars snatch at her dress, and the roses shower their petals into her bosom. Ah, how happy are you! It seems the lark can scarce get out his notes for joy! Overhead the white clouds sail with the motion of delighted consciousness; the breeze sighs congratulation in your ear; and the little anemones, which grow like weeds among the ground-ivy, or round the knotted roots of old trees, seem, as they shake in the wind, to be ringing peals of fairy marriage-bells! You turn, you look; you would speak, and—lo! it is the face of that dirty, drunken old Irish woman who so fearfully abused you last night because you declined to let her sleep in the gutter before your door! What a falling off is that, Alexius! How is the bright picture degenerated to a daub! Fancy the peroration of your most beautiful dream-speech, into which you were about to pour your most excited thoughts, your most glowing phrases, ending in a miserable anti-climax like that! The taste of that ill food sticks to your palate even after you awake. You have a feeling of having been ridiculously swindled and sold—for no man, even in his dreams, likes to be made a fool of,—and you hope, when you drop asleep again, that some more blissful vision will descend to console you and restore harmony to your jarring self-love.

I should not be surprised, Alexius, if even majesty itself were subject to these visionary mischances. Does not our good Queen, for instance, sometimes find that whilst the assembled dignity, beauty, and freedom of the country are standing attentively before her, she is unable to exercise her power of silvery enunciation, and strives in vain to read her Royal Speech? Nor is it at all unlikely that the Duke of Wellington, though his bed was so soldierlike, his sleep so decided, now and then imagined himself, when on the point of directing the most mo-

mentous fortunes of the battle, seized by some fatal incapacity to pronounce the *mot d'ordre*. And to take other examples. I dare say Herr Joachim, Signor Sivori, Monsieur Vieuxtemps, and other arch-fiddlers, are not ignorant of the misery of dreaming that, having turned up the corners of their concerto, tightened their bows, and looked at the band, they suddenly discover, to their intense dismay, both bridge and strings wanting on their instruments. And so with us all. The foxhunter runs his hounds into a well; the crack shot makes a bull's-eye and kills a cow; the barrister quotes precedents from a three-volumed novel; the detective lays his hand on the shoulders of Sir Richard Mayne; the admiral steers the fleet into a duck puddle; the surgeon cuts off the wrong leg of the patient; the bridegroom stands at the altar with the wrong woman; and the wrong horse, though he passed the winning post right, kicks the bankrupt better fairly across the Atlantic. Now, Alexius, it is true these disappointments are only the disappointments of a dream. Still, my dear fellow, they are very disagreeable whilst they last, and I cannot see why anyone who believes in the immateriality of the soul should pooh-pooh these miseries for being as immaterial as itself. If the soul be a shadow, these shades darken it. Positively, I am surprised that moralists, when discoursing on the evils of life, have not set down these metaphysical distresses in the catalogue!

The chief annoyance of my dreams, Alexius, is one, I fancy, pretty generally known to most members of my cloth. It usually takes the form of an utter incapacity on my part to perform my clerical duties. However, this ghostly distress is very often not unpleasantly preluded as follows: I fancy myself walking in the streets of a strange old town. It is a quiet, ancient place; a place of silent pavements down square, antique courts, the houses composing which bulge forward with overhanging stories, have black-banded woodwork on their fronts, corbels at the corner of their roofs, and grinning monk's heads at the end of their rain-spouts. A place so old, still, and tranquil—with so much of the dust of the Past gathering in out-of-the-way corners, settling on old gables, blown round old weathercocks, lying in matted silence under the arches and amid the ruins of old monasteries, and feeding the old soil of former conventual gardens, famous for old-flavoured strawberries, and quaint, old-fashioned flowers — that one would hardly be surprised to encounter Antiquity himself, in the shape of a feeble old man, poring over the mossy tombs under the shadow of the lichen-spotted church tower, or sauntering with melancholy footsteps along the old, mouldering wharves at the river's side. A place in which on hot summer afternoons the out-door existence ceases altogether. A few pigeons, indeed, may be crooning in the shade of the twisted chimneys, and one may see the tireless swallows chasing one another round the market-place, or taking the drowsy length of the High Street at a flight: otherwise life seems a mere tradition. Dreams, warm, lazy, idle summer dreams alone brood over the scene; and I, in my shadowy travels passing under the old, yet massive feudal gateways, enter an apparent city of the dead—a city in which I know nobody, expect nobody to meet me, and, therefore, feel my disappointment of the universal silence to be most unreasonable. Why do I wish to be shaken by the hand and welcomed by some cheery voice? Why does an undefinable melancholy haunt my steps, and lead me slowly onward beneath the sweet, sad chiming of the morning-service bells? What are those bells to me? Do they clash and peal on my account, chiding my lingering movements? Well, I suppose so; for suddenly I find myself beside the church doors. The old clerk is on the look-out. He conducts me into a remote, ancient, ghostly-looking chancel. Somehow or other I discover that I am stoled and surpliced, and standing in the reading-desk before a numerous congregation. I com-

mence the service, and for a time all goes on successfully. But by-and-by I fall into dreadful misery. With a shudder I become muddled among the confused rubrics, irregularly-placed prayers, unwonted responses, irreconcilable collects, of some terribly entangled imbroglio of all the prayer-books, ancient litanies, Scotch services, Augsburg confessions, Westminster catechisms, Acta Apostolorums, Romish missals, golden gloves, Baxter's Compromises, *et hoc genus omne* of works ever thought of, written, or published for the use of public worship. It is in vain that I turn over page after page to recover the lost clue of the liturgical order. I cannot find the Psalms and Lessons for the day. I am tempted to be heretical or absurd. I mutter under my breath, or make senseless blunders. As a natural consequence I become confused and very red in the face. The clerk stares up at me in sorrow, intensifying into sternness. He would be glad to take my place, I know: I wish he would. He is much the best man of the two. As for the congregation, they begin at last to consider me an utterly hopeless character, probably an impostor, or at least a parson out of place and to be defied. They rise and go slowly out of the chancel, bending on me, even to the doorways, strange eyes of rebuke and scorn. Oh, how glad I am to awake and find it nothing but a dream! But a dream so vivid and real, that a cold perspiration often attends it, breaking out over my whole body; and I gasp and shiver for very thankfulness at the mere thought of what I have escaped.

But it is time to bring this slight egotistical epistle to a close. I have said nothing, though I might have had something to say, about dreams mysterious, tragical, prophetic; dreams tender as moonshine, or as melodramatic as spangled dresses and Bengal lights. I have said nothing about dreams in their own nature utterly absurd, transcendental nonsense, fancies thrice befooling. Nor have I discoursed, as was in my power, on the influence which these visionary visitants of the pillow have exercised in the world—what superstitions they have fostered, what crimes they have prompted, what virtues they have inspired. If, Alexius, we are such stuff as dreams are made of, there is nothing wonderful in the fact of our liability to be so bewildered and led astray by the wandering fires of the imagination. Alas, how much of the history of the world is the tale of dreams! For what is the ambition of the conqueror but a lurid dream; the superstition of the fanatic but a ghastly dream; the false religions of the world but so many dreary dreams! And for these millions have lived, fought, conquered, or died; and by these they have been beguiled, befooled, betrayed, sold, slaughtered, satisfied. Nor, my friend, dare we, who live in peaceful nineteenth-century days, boast that our eyes are altogether opened; that no cobweb of somnambular fancies takes our clearer judgment in the net. What! Are the conventionalisms of society, the false fashions of the hour, the miserable delusions of what is respectable and desirable no dreams? Is this ceaseless grind at the mill of worldliness no dream? Is the senseless aspiration to live in larger houses, and feed on the barren pastures of a wider sphere of acquaintance, turning life itself into a foolish portrait-gallery of merely visitable faces—are these things better than dreams? Are the shams, the gold-leaf, the tinsel, the lacquer, the enamelled surfaces of our modern life, based on greater certainties than the vague thoughts of our dreams? But did I ask, are they *better* than dreams? Oh, they are worse: they are delusions, dark, stupid, hateful and destructive! To the true man or woman, who, studious of the eternal verities, righteousness, humility, and love, has ascended into a calmer, healthier region, these social incubi will appear as very nightmares, under the influence of which society groans, shrieks, and is intensely miserable. Pray heaven, Alexius, that you and I may be preserved from their deadly clutches!

## HARRIET'S ADVICE TO A BROTHER.

WHY, heyday, what's the matter, Jack?
You look so grave and serious.
Love, is it? what, a fresh attack?
Say! who's the fair imperious?
Come, tell me all the pleasant woe:
Out with it, sir, instanter—
Make haste! I'm bound for Rotten Row
To have a glorious canter!

How do you like my hat? 'Not much!'
It's what De Boots calls 'hawsy:'
I thought it had a piquant touch—
A *soupçon* of the saucy.
Well! never mind about the hat!
Pray who's the sweet enchanter?
I'm dying, Jack, to find out that—
But I cannot lose my canter.

What! Bessie Wilmot? Dear! how strange!
I never should have guessed it!
Are you quite sure your mind won't change?
Your passion—you've expressed it?
Take time, Jack! There: don't look so glum!
All right—I'll drop my banter:
Make haste before the horses come:
I can't give up my canter.

I understand! You're caught, that's clear:—
And 'popping' the next course is.
But just remember this, my dear,—
That girls are just like horses!
Show that you're master from the first,
And she'll do all you want her.
I'd teach you how to curb the worst
If you'll just take a canter.

A light but firm hand on the rein—
Don't hurry her, or press her.
Show her that restiveness is vain,
And when she's good, caress her.
Don't saw her mouth, or jerk the bit,
Yet too much head ne'er grant her:—
I'll show you all the art of it,—
Just come and take a canter.

Don't let her shy or back or swerve
Or show off airs and graces.
Ah, Jack! I fear you've not the nerve
To put her through her paces!

You ought to be as stern and grim
As some old Covenanter.
My husband!—won't I manage him
When we've through life to canter!

Oh, I could show you how to back
The wildest filly going!
But, look,—there come the horses, Jack!
Does't the grey look knowing?
Pa bought him for my birthday gift:
I've called him 'Tam O'Shanter,'
Come down and 'give a chap a lift:'—
Oh, [redacted] have a canter!

## DRAWING-ROOM POETRY—FILIGREE PHILOSOPHY.*

SO long since as the beginning of the year 1846 Mr. Charles Knight 'rejoiced to learn that there was a probability of Mr. Praed's poems being published in a collected shape;' but it was only the other day that this probability made a palpable emergence into certainty. We speak, it should be observed, of home and authorized editions; for America, more on the alert or more impatient than ourselves, had already witnessed the issue of not fewer than three partial and tentative collections, the first of which was put forth twelve or thirteen years ago. It has been feared that the present is not the happiest moment to raise into the glory of a corporate existence the fugitive productions which, to the generation to whom they were more immediately addressed, gave so much delight by their blended sentiment and knowledge of the world, by the geniality of their satire, and the piquancy of their tenderness. At this stage of the century we are accustomed to have the intense in feeling so announce itself; and even to have the shallowest of poetic waters self-soiled and self-troubled, if no better subterfuge than obscurity be available to give them an appearance of profundity. In literature and in art we are accustomed, to a great extent, to 'wear our hearts upon our sleeves.' We do not, perhaps, so much as our fathers did, understand how a Psyche can stow away all the sorrows and the cares of the soul as a freight for the wings of a butterfly. Mr. Praed makes his reappearance, therefore, to-day, as, in some sort, a *genre* poet. His is the court-language of the heart; and to us, who, imitating an untrusted government, have gone to the country, it sounds considerably like a patois. But the truth of nature, to those who have an eye for its detection, is no more hidden, however it may be dissembled, in Mr. Praed's fountain, than it is at the bottom of that 'well of English undefiled,' our glorious evergreen Chaucer. To say nothing of the kindly traditions which every contemporary of Praed's has faithfully transmitted, and by the transmission of which expectancy has been kept alive, it by no means follows that we may not heartily turn aside from our admiration of Tennyson, or stay our efforts after the comprehension of Browning, to watch with a chequered interest an old-new rendering of human joys and sorrows, the very tears of which, falling as drops from an April cloud, glisten in the sunlight and settle on parterres. Far below the sparkling surface of Mr. Praed's effusions we recognize

* 'The Poems of Winthrop Mackworth Praed. With a Memoir by the Rev. Derwent Coleridge.' In two volumes. London: Edward Moxon and Co., Dover Street. 1864.

the serious play of feeling, and peer into the chafe and tumult of the heart. And where the heart is concerned, there is humanity interested; a challenge is thrown out to permanence, and a claim established on ever-recurring popularity.

From one point of view, indeed—egotistically, shall we not say from the 'London Society' point of view?—that kind of poetry is the most valuable which best preserves the accid[illegible]long with the essential; which gives the colour along with the fragrance, and both with the changeless beauty of the form. In this kind of poetry, this *à la mode* pathos, this decorous, delicate and refined *vers de société*, where the heart, really speaking, spoke in the correct vernacular of the drawing-room—a kind of poetry which the resumption of a war-intermitted intercourse with France helped to bring about, and the personal gaiety, combining with the lugubrious nationality, of a Tom Moore helped to encourage, Praed was confessedly a master. Mr. Coleridge is not carried away by the blind and resistless force of the dear remembrance of a severed friendship when he says of Mr. Praed, 'that he has left behind him a permanent expression of wit and grace, of refined and tender feeling, of inventive fancy and acute observation, unique in character, and his own by an undisputed title.'

Winthrop Mackworth Praed was the third and youngest son of William Mackworth Praed, Sergeant-at-law, and for many years chairman of the Audit Board. He was born in London, on the 26th of July, 1802. Always delicate as a child, at the age of six years he passed through a critical illness, on his recovery from which his father wrote in his name a set of thanksgiving verses, into which he was made to incorporate a prayer 'that the last of his mother's days might be far distant.' It was an ungranted petition, for his mother died a year after; and her place was supplied by an elder sister, to whom he lived long enough to return, at the close of her life in 1830, the watchful and loving care she had bestowed on almost the commencement of his own. Praed would, of course, be too young to understand the full and bitter meaning of his mother's death; but that it was, throughout his after life, present to his filial imagination, the following beautiful song from the first canto of 'The Troubadour,' written in 1823, may serve to illustrate.

'My mother's grave, my mother's grave!
Oh! dreamless is her slumber there,
And drowsily the banners wave
O'er her that was so chaste and fair.
Yea! love is dead, and memory faded!
But when the dew is on the brake,
And silence sleeps on earth and sea,
And mourners weep, and ghosts awake,
Oh! then she cometh back to me,
In her cold beauty darkly shaded!

'I cannot guess her face or form;
But what to me is form or face?
I do not ask the weary worm
To give me back each buried grace
Of glistening eyes, or trailing tresses!
I only feel that she is here,
And that we meet, and that we part,
And that I drink within mine ear,
And that I clasp around my heart,
Her sweet still voice, and soft caresses!

'Not in the waking thought by day,
Not in the sightless dream by night,
Do the mild tones and glances play,
Of her who was my cradle's light!
But in some twilight of calm weather
She glides, by fancy dimly wrought,
A glittering cloud, a darkling beam,
With all the quiet of a thought,
And all the passion of a dream,
Linked in a golden spell together!'

In 1810, Praed was sent to Langley Broom School, near Colnbrook, where he remained under the care of Mr. Atkins, the gentleman by whom it was then conducted, for four years. Here the boy was seen to be 'the father of the man.' His delicate constitution precluded now, as ever, any very large or boisterous mingling in athletic sports. Plutarch's 'Lives,' Shakespeare, and chess, were his most recreative studies, diversified occasionally by the recreative production of small dramatic pieces.

He was transferred to Eton on the 28th of March, 1814, before he had completed his twelfth year; where he was placed under the charge of the Rev. J. F. Plumptre, then one of the assistant masters, afterwards one of the Fellows of Eton College. His progress was

rapid; and in little more than a year he was 'sent up for good,' as it is termed, for a copy of Latin lyrics, the first of a series of similar distinctions, numerous beyond all previous example. His poetic faculty had from the first been watched and fostered at home; and at Eton it received encouragement from the judicious training of Mr. Plumptre. He and the late Lord Carlisle carried off between them most of the honours awarded by their master for this species of exercise. Praed's verse, almost from the time of his earliest lisping in numbers, was, thanks to the judicious criticisms of his father, as remarkable for its precision as it afterwards was for its classical elegance and its vivacity.

Preceding school periodicals, 'The College Magazine,' and 'Horæ Otiosæ,' in which, on account of his juvenility, he had taken no share, fired Praed with emulation; and in 1820 he set on foot the 'Apis Matina,' a manuscript journal, conducted with much ability, of which only one copy is known to have been preserved entire. This publication, after running through six numbers, was replaced by 'The Etonian.' 'In 1820,' Mr. Charles Knight writes that he 'was the editor of the Windsor newspaper, and had a general printing establishment at Windsor in connexion with that paper. His father had printed the "Microcosm," the work of Etonians, in the school-days of George Canning; and thus there was a sort of natural connexion between the Windsor press and Eton College. Two Etonians, one of whom was Mr. Praed, the other a King's scholar, proposed to him to undertake the printing and publishing of a magazine to be wholly written by members of the school, with the assistance of a few friends who had recently left Eton for Oxford and Cambridge. It was a bold undertaking, for it was not to be a weekly essay, but a magazine of considerable size, and of course wholly original. When the first number was produced, its success could not be doubted. The papers which Mr. Praed contributed to the work occupied a very large portion of the book; and they exhibited, not only an extent of acquirement far above the average of even Eton learning, but a power of writing, and a knowledge of society which were little less than extraordinary.' Were it not that we are bound jealously to preserve our space for specimens of his verse, we should be tempted to trespass with an example or two of the youthful wit and manly wisdom, the easy grace and the facile insight into char[illegible] which distinguished such pape[illegible]s his 'Yes and No,' 'Reminiscences of my Youth,' and others.

Records remain of his skill at whist, at chess, and in dramatic impersonation; and, in spite of his bodily fragility, of his dexterity at fives and at tennis; and he is remembered as one of the main founders of the 'Boys' Library.'

'The summer of 1821,' says Mr. Coleridge, 'terminated Praed's brilliant career at Eton, and in October of the same year he commenced his residence as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge.' His proceeding to the University had been heralded by greater anticipations than had attended the migration of any Etonian since the days of Canning. The following critical remarks, for which the compiler of the 'Memoir of Praed'—the Rev. Derwent Coleridge—professes himself indebted to a friend, are so much to the point as to the question of Praed's scholarship, that they are given in his own words:—

'The character of Praed's Latin and Greek verse is peculiar. It is the exact translation for the most part of the same style and diction which he wielded with hardly greater ease in his native language. The same sparkling antithesis, the same minute elaboration of fancy, whether employed in depicting natural or mental objects, and the same ever-present under-current of melancholy are found in both. Of a certain kind of Greek, adapted to the curious production called at Cambridge a Sapphic Ode, and of a certain degree of Latin scholarship, competent to express all the ideas necessary to his verse, but not to sound the depths or exhaust the

capacities of the language, he was master. His epigrams are perhaps the most scholarlike of his productions in classic verse; but it may be said of them all, what cannot be said of many such exercises, that they were Greek and Latin poetry.'

But Praed was not a severe student, neither did he take kindly to the specialty of his Alma Mater. 'For scientific pursuits he had no peculiar liking or aptitude, though he acquired without difficulty the modicum of [redacted]matical knowledge which [redacted]ured from a candidate for c[redacted] honours.' It is easy to see, from this rather euphuistic passage from Coleridge, that it was likely that Praed would fall short, however striking his extra academical distinctions, of the most exalted position which his friends, who had settled the route along which his Pegasus should travel, had mentally bespoken for him. Yet his honours were many. Twice he carried off Sir William Browne's medal for the Greek ode and twice for the epigrams. In 1823 and in 1824 he gained the Chancellor's medal for English verse, 'Australasia' being the subject in the former year, and 'Athens' in the latter. In the classical tripos his name appeared third on the list; in 1827 he was successful in the examination for a Trinity Fellowship; and in 1830 he completed his University successes by gaining the Seatonian prizes. But by far the larger portion of his time was devoted to the exercise and improvement of his oratorical powers, to the cultivation of his literary talents, and to the enjoyment of social intercourse, in all of which he recognized the true instruments of his training for public life. He was, at this stage of his career, feeling after opinion in matters social and political. Until he arrived at fixity, he did not encourage the probes of friends, or lay himself open to universal dissection. He arrayed himself against the evils of uncertainty in a panoply of banter; and his oratory was thus being formed at the Union, not on the models of perfervid eloquence, so much as on those of incisive and trenchant debate. This faculty of sifting correctness clung to him afterwards at the bar and in Parliament. On the hustings, where the right to the indulgence of passion seemed clearer, he could distinguish himself by the fuller sweep of a more Demosthenic eloquence.

During Praed's stay at Cambridge 'Knight's Quarterly Magazine' was projected, and the first number published in June 1823. The publisher was the responsible editor—Praed, as in the case of the 'Etonian,' and scarcely in an inferior degree, the animating and directing spirit. 'Mr. Praed,' says Charles Knight, writing in 1846, 'contributed much prose and more verse to the "Quarterly Magazine." A very brilliant, and, in many respects, truly beautiful poem, "The Troubadour," there appears. Although unfinished — owing to a temporary misunderstanding of author and publisher, under the circumstances not blameable on either side, and very soon handsomely condoned—we trust it will be reprinted with his collected poems. It is marked by his well-known characteristics of blended wit and pathos. No one could judge of its merits by any extract.' In spite of which dictum, we have already quoted from it a song of almost certainly autobiographic piety, and we shall complete our offence by asking the reader to compare the following broadly powerful portrait of Richard Cœur de Lion, with the description of that monarch left us by Master Geoffrey de Vinsauf and Richard of Devizes. Thus opens the 'Troubadour:' —

'In sooth it was a glorious day
For vassal and for lord,
When Cœur de Lion had the sway
In battle and at board
He was indeed a royal one,
A Prince of Paladins;
Hero of triumph and of fun,
Of noisy fray and noisy fun,
Broad shoulders and broad grins.
You might have looked from east to west
And then from north to south,
And never found an ampler breast,
Never an ampler mouth,
A softer tone for lady's ear,
A daintier lip for syrup,
Or a ruder grasp for axe and spear,
Or a firmer foot in stirrup.

A ponderous thing was Richard's can,
And so was Richard's boot;
And Saracens and liquor ran
Where'er he set his foot
So fiddling here, and fighting there,
And murdering time and tune,
With sturdy limb, and listless air,
And gauntleted hand, and jewelled hair,
Half monarch, half buffoon,
He turned away from feast to fray,
From quarrelling to quaffing,
So great in prowess and in pranks,
So fierce and funny in the ranks,
That Saladin the Soldan said,
Whene'er that mad-cap Richard led,
Alla! he held his breath for dread,
And burst his sides for laughing!"

'My First Folly,' and 'Points,' were two of the lively, antithetical, and slightly extravagant prose papers which Praed contributed to the 'Quarterly.' But our author is not the only one of its writers who have obtained an abiding distinction. Of their names, some belong to the political and literary history of their country; whilst others, alas! have perished in the promise of their prime. Among other contributors we hear of the Rev. John Moultrie, the Rev. Derwent Coleridge, Lord Macaulay, William Sidney Walker, Henry Malden, and Henry Nelson Coleridge; to which list, as furnished by Mr. Knight, Mr. Coleridge adds the name of Mr. Knight himself. The 'Quarterly' had a short existence of, in all, six numbers, and was subsequently brought out as a work in three octavo volumes.

A few of the celebrated enigmas and charades, for which Praed had a unique faculty, appeared in the 'Quarterly Magazine.' We find room for two or three of these most characteristic and elegant productions. The charge to which they are most obnoxious as puzzles is that they reveal too much — that they are too easy of solution. But any one who has learned to value the æsthetic compromise which the opera exhibits will be tolerant of a loss which is, perhaps, the necessary consequent of their 'high poetical spirit.' They are not riddles of the Sphinx, and it would be a sort of affectation to withhold their solutions. They are to be found at the end of this article.

ENIGMA.

'A Templar kneeled at a Friar's knee;
He was a comely youth to see,
With curling locks, and forehead high,
And flushing cheek, and flashing eye
And the Monk was as jolly and large a man
As ever laid lip to a convent can
Or called for a contribution,
As ever read at midnight hour
Confessional in lady's bower,
Ordained for a peasant the penance whip,
Or spoke for a noble's venial slip
A venal absolution

'"O Father! in the dim twilight
I have sinned a grievous sin to-night;
And I feel hot pa[illegible]ow begun
For the fearful [illegible]e done.

'"I rent my viet[illegible] green,
I pierced his neck [illegible] dagger keen,
The red stream mantled high
I grasped him, Father, all the while,
With shaking hand, and feverish smile,
And said my jest, and sang my song,
And laughed my laughter, loud and long,
Until his glass was dry!

'"Though he was rich, and very old,
I did not touch a grain of gold,
But the blood I drank from the bubbling vein
Hath left on my lip a purple stain!"

'"My son! my son! for this thou hast done,
Though the sands of thy life for aye should run,"
The merry Monk did say,
"Though thine eye be bright, and thine heart be light,
Hot spirits shall haunt thee all the night,
Blue devils all the day!"

'The thunders of the Church were ended;
Back on his way the Templar wended,
But the name of him the Templar slew
Was more than the Inquisition knew.'

CHARADES.

VIII

'Alas for that forgotten day
When Chivalry was nourished,
When none but friars learned to pray,
And beef and beauty flourished,
And fraud in kings was held accurst,
And falsehood sin was reckoned,
And mighty chargers bore my First,
And fat monks wore my Second!

'Oh then I carried sword and shield,
And casque with flaunting feather,
And earned my spurs in battle field,
In winter and rough weather;
And polished many a sonnet up
To ladies' eyes and tresses,
And learned to drain my father's cup,
And loose my falcon's jesses.

'How grand was I in olden days!
How gilded o'er with glory!
The happy mark of ladies' praise,
The theme of minstrels' story;
Unmoved by fearful accidents,
All hardships stoutly spurning,
I laughed to scorn the elements—
And chiefly those of Learning.

'Such things have vanished like a dream;
The mongrel mob grows prouder;
And everything is done by steam,
And men are killed by powder
I feel, alas! my fame decay;
I give unheeded orders,
And rot in paltry state away,
With Sheriffs and Recorders.

XI

'The canvas rattled on the mast
As rose the swelling sail,
And gallantly the vessel past
Before the cheering gale,
And on my First Sir Florice stood,
As the far shore faded now,
And looked upon the lengthening flood
With a pale [illegible] brow —
"When shall I [illegible] my silken glove
Where the proudest Moslem flee,
My lady love, my lady love,—
O waste one thought on me!"

'Sir Florice lay in a dungeon cell
With none to soothe or save,
And high above his chamber fell
The echo of the wave;
But still he struck my Second there,
And bade its tones renew
Those hours when every hue was fair,
And every hope was true —
"If still your angel foot-steps move
Where mine may never be,
My lady love, my lady love,
O dream one dream of me!"

'Not long the Christian captive pined—
My Whole was round his neck,
A sadder necklace ne'er was twined
So white a skin to deck
Queen Folly ne'er was yet content
With gems or golden store,
But he who wears this ornament
Will rarely sigh for more —
"My spirit to the heaven above,
My body to the sea,
My heart to thee, my lady love,—
O weep one tear for me"'

XII

'When Ralph by holy hands was tied
For life to blooming Cis,
Sir Thrifty too drove home his bride,
A fashionable Miss
That day my First with jovial sound
Proclaimed the happy tale,
And drunk was all the country round
With pleasure or with ale

'Oh! why should Hymen ever blight
The roses Cupid wore?
Or why should it be ever night
When it was day before?—
Or why should women have a tongue?
Or why should it be curst
In being, like my Second, long,
And louder than my First?

'"You blackguard!" cries the rural wench,
My Lady screams—"*Ah! bête!*"
And Lady Thrifty scolds in French,
And Cis in Billingsgate;
Till both their Lords my Second try
To end connubial strife,
Sir Thrifty has the means to die,
And Ralph, to beat his wife!'

XXIX.

'My First was dark o'er earth and air,
As dark as she could be;
The stars that gemmed her ebon hair
Were only two or three;
King Cole saw twice as many there
As you or I could see.

'"Away, King Cole!" mine hostess said,
"Flagon and flask are dry;
Your nag is neighing in the shed,
For he knows a storm is nigh"
She set my Second on his head,
And she set it all awry.

'He stood upright upon his legs;
Long life to good King Cole!
With wine and cinnamon, ale and eggs,
He filled a silver bowl;
He drained the draught to the very dregs,
And he called that draught—my Whole!'

XXX.

'Come from my First, ay, come;
The battle dawn is nigh;
And the screaming trump and the thundering drum
Are calling thee to die;
Fight, as thy father fought;
Fall, as thy father fell
Thy task is taught, thy shroud is wrought;—
So, forward! and farewell!'

'Toll ye my Second, toll;
Fling high the flambeau's light;
And sing the hymn for a parted soul
Beneath the silent night;
The helm upon his head,
The cross upon his breast,
Let the prayer be said, and the tear be shed,
Now take him to his rest!

'Call ye my Whole, go, call;
The Lord of lute and lay;
And let him greet the sable pall
With a noble song to-day.
Ay, call him by his name;
No fitter hand may crave
To light the flame of a soldier's fame
On the turf of a soldier's grave!'

The last, however, belongs to a later date (1829). It is a most graceful tribute to a departed bard whose numbers sometimes leaped forth rattling in armour from his labouring brow.

Early in 1826 Charles Knight and his friend, Barry St. Leger, projected a weekly sheet for the relief of the town from the dulness and depression caused by the recent commercial panic. Mr. Praed, who at that time resided at Eton, in fulfilment of a two years' engagement as pri-

vate tutor to Lord Ernest Bruce, was appealed to for his co-operation. The name of this venture, 'The Brazen Head,' was unfortunate, because it was 'caviare to the general;' and the whole thing, in spite of the brilliancy of Praed's contributions, 'had no success whatever.' Praed took the management of the oracular decrees of 'The Brazen Head;' 'and fun and wisdom were mingled in the sententious voice of the imaginary creation of Friar Bacon, in a sort of philosophy of which the inventor of gunpowder and spectacles could have no conception.' The following is one of the 'Chaunts of the Brazen Head.' It looks almost like an adapted secular version of 'The Lie,' or 'The Soul's Errand' of the more earnest age of Elizabeth to the slightly-twinged conscience of the first quarter of the present century.

'I think, whatever mortals crave,
With impotent endeavour,—
A wreath, a rank, a throne, a grave,—
The world goes round for ever.
I think that life is not too long,
And therefore I determine,
That many people read a song
Who will not read a sermon.

'I think you've looked through many hearts,
And mused on many actions,
And studied Man's component parts,
And Nature's compound fractions.
I think you've picked up truth by bits
From foreigner and neighbour,
I think the world has lost its wits,
And you have lost your labour.

'I think the studies of the wise,
The hero's noisy quarrel,
The majesty of Woman's eyes,
The poet's cherish'd hamel,
And all that makes us lean or fat,
And all that charms or troubles,—
This bubble is more bright than that,
But still they all are bubbles.

'I think the thing you call Renown,
The unsubstantial vapour
For which the soldier burns a town,
The sonnetteer a taper,
Is like the mist which, as he flies,
The horseman leaves behind him;
He cannot mark its wreaths arise,
Or if he does they blind him.

'I think one nod of Mistress Chance
Makes creditors of debtors,
And shifts the funeral for the dance,
The sceptre for the fetters.
I think that Fortune's favoured guest
May live to gnaw the platters,
And he that wears the purple vest
May wear the rags and tatters.

'I think the Tories love to buy
"Your Lordship"s and "your Grace"s,
By loathing common honesty,
And lauding commonplaces.
I think that some are very wise,
And some are very funny,
And some grow rich by telling lies,
And some by telling money.

'I think the Whigs are wicked knaves—
(And very like the Tories)—
Who doubt that Britain rules the waves,
And ask the price of glories:
I think that many fret and fume
At what their friends are planning,
And Mr Hume hates Mr Brougham
As much as Mr. Canning.

'I think that friars and their hoods,
Their doctrines and their maggots,
Have lighted up too many feuds,
And far too many faggots.
I think, while zealots fast and frown,
And fight for two or seven,
That there are fifty roads to Town,
And rather more to Heaven.

'I think that, thanks to Paget's lance,
And thanks to Chester's learning,
The hearts that burned for fame in France
At home are safe from burning.
I think the Pope is on his back,
And, though 'tis fun to shake him,
I think the Devil not so black
As many people make him.

'I think that Love is like a play,
Where tears and smiles are blended,
Or like a faithless April day,
Whose shine with shower is ended.
Like Colnbrook pavement, rather rough,
Like trade, exposed to losses,
And like a Highland plaid,—all stuff,
And very full of crosses.

'I think the world, though dark it be,
Has aye one rapturous pleasure
Concealed in life's monotony,
For those who seek the treasure,
One planet in a starless night,
One blossom on a briar,
One friend not quite a hypocrite,
One woman not a liar!

'I think poor beggars court St Giles,
Rich beggars court St Stephen;
And Death looks down with nods and smiles,
And makes the odds all even.
I think some die upon the field,
And some upon the billow,
And some are laid beneath a shield,
And some beneath a willow.

'I think that very few have sighed
When Fate at last has found them,
Though bitter foes were by their side,
And barren moss around them.
I think that some have died of drought,
And some have died of drinking;
I think that nought is worth a thought,—
And I'm a fool for thinking!'

We cannot follow Praed into his

professional or parliamentary life. The landmarks only may be indicated. At some future time, if the probable publication of his political squibs and other writings should take place, it will be necessary to take the cue from them. But at present we are scarcely anything but literary. 'Praed,' Mr. Coleridge tells us, 'was called to the bar at the Middle Temple, May 29, 1829. He went the Norfolk Circuit, and was rapidly rising in reputation and practice. But the main current of his mind had run from the first in another direction.'

In his earlier days of debating, Praed had taken part with the Whigs, as Macaulay with the Tories. To keep up the opposition, things were exactly reversed when they met in the House of Commons. This change, difficult and disagreeable, was one rather of appearance than of fact. The truth is that the Liberal torrent had gathered such fury, that Praed found himself stranded amongst the Conservatives. The state coach was going too fast down hill, and he felt it his duty to put on the drag. In 1830, and again in 1831, he was returned to Parliament for the borough of St. Germains; and in 1832, after the passing of the Reform Bill, by which St. Germains had lost its franchise, he contested, unsuccessfully, the borough of St. Ives in Cornwall. He was, however, returned in 1834, with Mr. T. Baring, for Yarmouth This, under the circumstances, was a signal triumph; but he paid for it the price of first sowing the seeds of the disease which was fatal to him five years after. In 1837 he migrated, politically, to Aylesbury, where he successfully contested an election. He represented the constituency of that place till the time of his death. Meanwhile everything was bright. A confidential acquaintance which he had formed with the Duke of Wellington promised much for the future, and under the ministry of Sir R. Peel, 1834-5, Praed was Secretary of the Board of Control. During the latter years of his life, also, he held the office of Deputy High Steward of the University of Cambridge.

'In 1827,' Mr. Charles Knight tells us, 'he edited a volume of the "Friendship's Offering," one of those perishing flowers with which the world soon grew satiated. The best poem that Praed ever wrote, in many respects a poem unequalled in the language, was volunteered by him with his accustomed kindly aid:'—

THE RED FISHERMAN

'The Abbot arose, and closed his book,
And donned his sandal shoon,
And wandered forth alone, to look
Upon the summer moon
A starlight sky was o'er his head,
A quiet breeze around,
And the flowers a thrilling fragrance shed,
And the waves a soothing sound
It was not an hour, nor a scene, for aught
But love and calm delight;
Yet the holy man had a cloud of thought
On his wrinkled brow that night
He gazed on the river that gurgled by,
But he thought not of the reeds,
He clasped his gilded rosary,
But he did not tell the beads;
If he looked to the heaven, 'twas not to invoke
The Spirit that dwelleth there;
If he opened his lips, the words they spoke
Had never the tone of prayer
A pious priest might the Abbot seem,
He had swayed the crozier well,
But what was the theme of the Abbot's dream,
The Abbot were loth to tell.

'Companionless, for a mile or more,
He traced the windings of the shore
Oh, beauteous is that river still,
As it winds by many a sloping hill,
And many a dim o'erarching grove,
And many a flat and sunny cove,
And terraced lawns, whose bright arcades
The honeysuckle sweetly shades,
And rocks, whose very crags seem bowers,
So gay they are with grass and flowers!
But the Abbot was thinking of scenery
About as much, in sooth,
As a lover thinks of constancy,
Or an advocate of truth.
He did not mark how the skies in wrath
Grew dark above his head;
He did not mark how the mossy path
Grew damp beneath his tread,
And nearer he came, and still more near,
To a pool, in whose recess
The water had slept for many a year,
Unchanged and motionless;
From the river stream it spread away
The space of half a rood;
The surface had the hue of clay
And the scent of human blood;
The trees and the herbs that round it grew
Were venomous and foul,
And the birds that through the bushes flew
Were the vulture and the owl;
The water was as dark and rank
As ever a Company pumped,
And the perch, that was netted and laid on the bank,
Grew rotten while it jumped;

"

And bold was he who thither came
At midnight, man or boy,
For the place was cursed with an evil name,
And that name was "The Devil's Decoy!'

'The Abbot was weary as abbot could be,
And he sat down to rest on the stump of a tree:
When suddenly rose a dismal tone,—
Was it a song, or was it a moan?—
"O ho! O ho!
Above,—below,—
Lightly and brightly they glide and go!
The hungry and keen on the top are leaping,
The lazy and fat in the depths are sleeping,
Fishing is fine when the pool is muddy,
Broiling is rich when the coals are ruddy!"—
In a monstrous fright, by the murky light,
He looked to the left and he looked to the right,
And what was the vision close before him,
That flung such a sudden stupor o'er him?
'Twas a sight to make the hair uprise,
And the life-blood colder run
The startled Priest struck both his thighs,
And the abbey clock struck one!

'All alone, by the side of the pool,
A tall man sat on a three-legged stool,
Kicking his heels on the dewy sod,
And putting in order his reel and rod,
Red were the rags his shoulders wore,
And a high red cap on his head he bore;
His arms and his legs were long and bare,
And two or three locks of long red hair
Were tossing about his scraggy neck,
Like a tattered flag o'er a splitting wreck
It might be time, or it might be trouble,
Had bent that stout back nearly double,
Sunk in them deep and hollow sockets
That blazing couple of Congreve rockets,
And shrunk and shrivelled that tawny skin,
Till it hardly covered the bones within
The line the Abbot saw him throw
Had been fashioned and formed long ages ago,
And the hands that worked his foreign vest
Long ages ago had gone to their rest
You would have sworn, as you looked on them,
He had fished in the flood with Ham and Shem!

[locks,
There was turning of keys, and creaking of
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
Minnow or gentle worm or fly,—
It seemed not such to the Abbot's eye;
Gaily it glittered with jewel and gem,
And its shape was the shape of a diadem
It was fastened a gleaming hook about
By a chain within and a chain without;
The fisherman gave it a kick and a spin,
And the water fizzed as it tumbled in!

From the bowels of the earth,
Strange and varied sounds had birth;
Now the battle's bursting peal,
Neigh of steed, and clang of steel;
Now an old man's hollow groan
Echoed from the dungeon stone;
Now the weak and wailing cry
Of a stripling's agony!—
Cold by this was the midnight air,
But the Abbot's blood ran colder,
When he saw a gasping Knight lie there,
With a gash beneath his clotted hair,
And a hump upon his shoulder

And the loyal churchman strove in vain
To mutter a Pater Noster;
For he who writhed in mortal pain
Was camped that night on Bosworth plain—
The cruel Duke of Gloster!

'There was turning of keys, and creaking of
locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
It was a haunch of princely size,
Filling with fragrance earth and skies.
The corpulent Abbot knew full well
The swelling form, and the steaming smell,
Never a monk that wore a hood
Could better have guessed the very wood
Where the noble hart had stood at bay,
Weary and wounded, at close of day

'Sounded then the noisy glee
Of a revelling company,—
Sprightly story, wicked jest,
Ratzd servant, greeted guest,
Flow of wine, and flight of cork,
Stroke of knife, and thrust of fork
But, where'er the board was spread,
Grace, I ween, was never said!—
Pulling and tugging the Fisherman sat;
And the Priest was ready to vomit,
When he hauled out a gentleman, fine and fat,
With a belly as big as a brimming vat,
And a nose as red as a comet
"A capital stew," the Fisherman said,
"With cinnamon and sherry!"
And the Abbot turned away his head,
For his brother was lying before him dead,
The Mayor of St Edmund's Bury!

'There was turning of keys, and creaking of
locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box
It was a bundle of beautiful things,—
A peacock's tail, and a butterfly's wings,
A scarlet slipper, an auburn curl,
A mantle of silk, and a bracelet of pearl,
And a packet of letters from whose sweet fold
Such a stream of delicate odours rolled,
That the Abbot fell on his face, and fainted,
And deemed his spirit was half-way sainted

'Sounds seemed dropping from the skies,
Stifled whispers, smothered sighs,
And the breath of vernal gales,
And the voice of nightingales
But the nightingales were mute,
Envious, when an unseen lute
Shaped the music of its chords
Into passion's thrilling words
"Smile, Lady, smile!—I will not set
Upon my brow the coronet,
Till thou wilt gather roses white
To wear around its gems of light
Smile, Lady, smile!—I will not see
Rivers and Hastings bend the knee,
Till those bewitching lips of thine
Will bid me rise in bliss from mine
Smile, Lady, smile!—for who would win
A loveless throne through guilt and sin?
Or who would reign o'er vale and hill,
If woman's heart were rebel still?"
'One jerk, and there a lady lay,
A lady wondrous fair;
But the rose of her lip had faded away,
And her cheek was as white and as cold as clay
And torn was her raven hair.

"Ah ha!" said the Fisher, in merry guise,
"Her gallant was hooked before;"
And the Abbot heaved some piteous sighs,
For oft he had blessed those deep blue eyes,
The eyes of Mistress Shore!

'There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
Many the cunning sportsman tried,
Many he flung with a frown aside;
A minstrel's harp, and a miser's chest,
A hermit's cowl, and a baron's crest,
Jewels of lustre, robes of price,
Tomes of heresy, loaded dice,
And golden cups of the brightest wine
That ever was pressed from the Burgundy vine.
There was a perfume of sulphur and mine,
As he came at last to a bishop's mitre!

'From top to toe the Abbot shook,
As the fisherman armed his golden hook,
And awfully were his features wrought
By some dark dream of wakened thought.
Look how the fearful felon gazes
On the scaffold his country's vengeance raises,
When the lips are cracked and the jaws are dry
With the thirst which only in death shall die
Mark the mariner's frenzied frown
As the swaling wherry settles down,
When peril has numbed the sense and will,
Though the hand and foot may struggle still
Wilder far was the Abbot's glance,
Deeper far was the Abbot's trance
Fixed as a monument, still as air
He bent no knee and he breathed no prayer,
But he signed—he knew not why or how,—
The sign of the Cross on his clammy brow

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he stalked away with his iron box
"O ho! O ho!
The cock doth crow;
It is time for the Fisher to rise and go
Fair luck to the Abbot, fair luck to the shrine
He hath gnawed in twain my choicest line,
Let him swim to the north, let him swim to the south,
The Abbot will carry my hook in his mouth!"

'The Abbot had preached for many years
With as clear articulation
As ever was heard in the House of Peers
Against Emancipation,
His words had made battalions quake,
Had roused the zeal of martyrs,
Had kept the Court an hour awake,
And the King himself three quarters
But ever from that hour, 'tis said,
He stammered and he stuttered,
As if an axe went through his head
With every word he uttered.
He stuttered o'er blessing, he stuttered o'er ban,
He stuttered, drunk or dry;
And none but he and the Fisherman
Could tell the reason why!"

As a relief to the deeper colours of 'The Red Fisherman' let the reader look at the following bit of well-nigh the wisest flimsy, the most gossamer satire extant.

'A LETTER OF ADVICE.

'You tell me you're promised a lover,
My own Araminta, next week,
Why cannot my fancy discover
The hue of his coat and his cheek?
Alas! if he look like another,
A vicar, a banker, a beau,
Be deaf to your father and mother,
My own Araminta, say "No!"

'Miss Lane, at her Temple of Fashion,
Taught us both how to sing and to speak,
And we loved one another with passion
Before we had been there a week
You gave me a ring for a token;
I wear it wherever I go;
I gave you a chain,—is it broken?
My own Araminta, say "No!"

'O think of our favourite cottage,
And think of our dear Lalla Rookh!
How we shared with the milkmaids their pottage,
And drank of the stream from the brook;
How fondly our loving lips faltered
"What further can grandeur bestow?"
My heart is the same;—is yours altered?
My own Araminta, say "No!"

'Remember the thrilling romances
We read on the bank in the glen;
Remember the suitors our fancies
Would picture for both of us then
They wore the red cross on their shoulder,
They had vanquished and pardoned their foe—
Sweet friend, are you wiser or colder?
My own Araminta, say "No!"

'You know, when Lord Rigmarole's carriage
Drove off with your cousin Justine,
You wept, dearest girl, at the marriage,
And whispered "How base she has been!"
You said you were sure it would kill you
If ever your husband looked so;
And you will not apostatize,—will you?
My own Araminta, say "No!"

'When I heard I was going abroad, love,
I thought I was going to die;
We walked arm in arm to the road, love,
We looked arm in arm to the sky,
And I said, "When a foreign postilion
Has hurried me off to the Po,
Forget not Medora Trevilian
My own Araminta, say "No!"

'We parted! but sympathy's fetters
Reach far over valley and hill,
I muse o'er your exquisite letters,
And feel that your heart is mine still;
And he who would share it with me, love,—
The richest of treasures below,—
If he's not what Orlando should be, love,
My own Araminta, say "No!"

If he wears a top-boot in his wooing,
If he comes to you riding a cob,
If he talks of his baking or brewing,
If he puts up his feet on the hob,
If he ever drinks port after dinner,
If his brow or his breeding is low,
If he calls himself "Thompson" or "Skinner,"
My own Araminta, say "No!"

'If he studies the news in the papers
While you are preparing the tea,
If he talks of the damps or the vapours
While moonlight lies soft on the sea,
If he's sleepy while you are capricious,
If he has not a musical "Oh!"
If he does not call Werther delicious,—
My own Araminta, say "No!"

'If he ever sets foot in the City
Among the stockbrokers and Jews,
If he has not a heart full of pity,
If he don't stand six feet in his shoes,
If his lips are not redder than roses,
If his hands are *not* whiter than snow,
If he has not the model of noses,—
My own Araminta, say "No!"

'If he speaks of a tax or a duty,
If he does not look grand on his knees,
If he's blind to a landscape of beauty,
Hills, valleys, rocks, waters, and trees,
If he dotes not on desolate towers,
If he likes not to hear the blast blow,
If he *knows not* the language of flowers,—
My own Araminta, say "No!"

He must walk like a god of old story
Come down from the home of his rest;
He must smile—like the sun in his glory
On the buds he loves ever the best;
And, oh! from its ivory portal
Like music his soft speech must flow!—
If he speak, smile, or walk like a mortal,
My own Araminta, say "No!"

'Don't listen to tales of his bounty,
Don't hear what they say of his birth,
Don't look at his seat in the county,
Don't calculate what he is worth;
But give him a theme to write verse on,
And see if he turns out his toe;
If he's only an excellent person,—
My own Araminta, say "No!"'

It is the gaiety with the undertone of sadness, the quiet humour and the moving tenderness—it is the sparkling melancholy that is the distinguishing mark of Praed. The same words might possibly be written of Hood with equal truth; and yet without praising or blaming either at the expense of the other, how mistaken a notion would any person have who made the acquaintance of these two through mere verbal description! For subtle terms of difference, however, our time and space are becoming too precious for us to set about a search. How soon the keenest human joy becomes retrospective! We know that Praed was wonderfully precocious in insight into character; his was therefore just the nature to be expected to exhaust very soon the *romance* of humanity. All honour to him that we have no bluntness of feeling generated by his crowded experience!

A whole group of poems of a mournful retrospection, of gaily sad memories, might be adduced in this connection. He has learned to tremble amidst the dawn and the bloom; for from afar he discerns the advance of the destroyer, where others would first, if not exclusively, anticipate maturity. He has a mournfulness which detects the withered *ethos* in the blooming flower, and in all beauty, incipient decay. But tenderness beautifully mingles with the fountain of his grief, as witness the fun and pathos of 'My Little Cousins.' We have here the Psalm-tune played quick of Punch's 'Serious Organ-Grinder.'

'Laugh on, fair Cousins, for to you
All life is joyous yet,
Your hearts have all things to pursue,
And nothing to regret;
And every flower to you is fair,
And every month is May
You've not been introduced to Care,—
Laugh on, laugh on to-day!

'Old Time will fling his clouds ere long
Upon those sunny eyes;
His voice whose every word is song
Will set itself to sighs,
Your quiet slumbers,—hopes and fear
Will chase their rest away
To-morrow you'll be shedding tears—
Laugh on, laugh on to-day!

'Oh yes, if any truth is found
In the dull schoolman's theme,
If friendship is an empty sound,
And love an idle dream,
If mirth, youth's playmate, feels fatigue
Too soon on life's long way,
At least he'll run with you a league,—
Laugh on, laugh on to-day!

'Perhaps your eyes may grow more bright
As childhood's hues depart,
You may be lovelier to the sight
And dearer to the heart;
You may be sinless still, and see
This earth still green and gay,
But what you are you will not be
Laugh on, laugh on to-day?

'O'er me have many winters crept
With loss of grief than joy,
But I have learned, and toiled, and wept;
I am no more a boy!
I've never had the gout, 'tis true;
My hair is hardly grey;
But now I cannot laugh like you
Laugh on, laugh on to-day!

'I used to have as glad a face,
As shadowless a brow;
I once could run as blithe a race
As you are running now;
But never mind how I behave!
Don't interrupt your play;
And though I look so very grave,
Laugh on, laugh on to-day!

But dearer family ties were awaiting him than those of mere cousinhood, and more intimate and serious anxieties and responsibilities. In 1835, while yet high in hope of advancement and health, 'he was happily united to Helen, daughter of George Bogle, Esq., a lady to whose virtues and accomplishments' we follow the suit of Coleridge in making only 'a respectful allusion. Suffice it to say, that during the four years of their companionship, she devoted to her husband, whose high qualities, intellectual and moral, she was every way qualified to appreciate, all the resources of the most assiduous affection; and that during the four-and-twenty years of her widowhood, she never ceased to mourn his loss. Her own decease occurred early in the autumn of the past year' (1863).

Marriage, as frequently happens, brought other responsibilities. Hear how the paternal tenderness wells out, and this time without qualification, as he is supposed to be pressing his child to his bosom:—

'LATIN HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

'Virgin Mother, thou hast known
Joy and sorrow like my own,
In thy arms the bright Babe lay,
As my own in mine to-day;
So he wept and so he smiled;
Ave Mary! guard my child!

'From the pains and perils spread
Round about our path and bed,
Fierce desires, ambitious schemes,
Moody doubts, fantastic dreams,
Pleasures idle, passions wild,
Ave Mary! guard my child!

'Make him whatsoe'er may b
Dearest to the saints and thee;
Tell him, from the throne above,
What to loathe and what to love;
To be true and just and mild,
Ave Mary! teach my child!

'By the wondrous mercy won
For the world by thy blest Son,
By the rest his labours wrought,
By the bliss his tortures bought,
By the Heaven he reconciled,
Ave Mary! bless my child!

If about his after fate
Sin and sorrow darkly wait,
Take him rather to thine arms
From the would and the world's harms;
Thus unscathed, thus undefiled,
Ave Mary! take my child!'

A fatal disease, at first unsuspected, had been advancing upon Praed since the exciting election of Yarmouth in 1834. But he fought on against it even after the existence of it could no longer be blinked or denied.

In the middle of June, acting under medical command, he parted off with Lord Arundel for the remainder of the session; and on the 17th he was removed to Sudbury Grove, a villa in the neighbourhood of Harrow. 'But it was too late to hope even for a partial restoration. He grew rapidly worse, and his return to London was not accomplished without difficulty. He entered into his rest,' continues Mr. Coleridge, who ministered to him in his last moments, 'on the 15th of July, 1839, at his own house in Chester Square, and was interred, on the 23rd of the same month, in the cemetery at Kensal Green. He left two daughters, under whose authority the present collection of their father's poems is given to the public.'

If Mr. Coleridge thought it graceful to say as little as possible of the late Mrs. Praed, he cannot help it, and he cannot complain, if our readers draw their own complimentary and admiring inferences from the lovely little poem, all heart and unselfishness, written at Sudbury, July 7th, 1839, only a week before her husband's death, and addressed by him

'TO HELEN.

'Dearest, I did not dream, four years ago,
When through your veil I saw your bright tear shine,
Caught your clear whisper, exquisitely low,
And felt your soft hand tremble into mine,
That in so brief—so very brief a space,
He, who in love both clouds and cheers our life,
Would lay on you, so full of light, joy, grace,
The darker, sadder duties of the wife,—
Doubts, fears, and frequent toil, and constant care
For this poor frame, by sickness sore bested;
The daily tendance on the fractious chair,
The nightly vigil by the feverish bed
'Yet not unwelcomed doth this morn arise,
Though with more gladsome beams it might have shone:
Strength of these weak hands, light of these dim eyes,
In sickness, as in health,—bless you, My Own!'

We have paid our tribute of tears; but the commonplace occupations of life beckon us from the death-bed and the tomb. Let us go back to the ordinary world from the following genial portrait, the first in a gallery of 'Every Day Characters.' We shall again, it is true, end at the grave; but this time the pilgrimage thither will be more supportable, and the return more easy. Following, in his own way, in the footsteps of Chaucer, Dryden, and Goldsmith, Praed gives us his version of the 'Good Parson,' in the poem of

'THE VICAR

'Some years ago, ere time and taste
Had turned our parish topsy-turvy,
When Darnel Park was Darnel Waste,
And roads as little known as scurvy,
The man who lost his way, between
St Mary's Hill and Sandy Thicket,
Was always shown across the green,
And guided to the Parson's wicket.

'Back flew the bolt of lissom lath;
Fair Margaret, in her tidy kirtle,
Led the lorn traveller up the path,'
Through clean-clipt rows of box and myrtle;
And Don and Sancho, Tramp and Tray,
Upon the parlour steps collected,
Wagged all their tails, and seemed to say—
"Our master knows you—you're expected."

'Uprose the Reverend Dr. Brown,
Uprose the Doctor's winsome marrow;
The lady laid her knitting down,
Her husband clasped his ponderous Barrow;
Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,
Pundit or Papist, saint or sinner,
He found a stable for his steed,
And welcome for himself, and dinner.

'If, when he reached his journey's end,
And warmed himself in Court or College,
He had not gained an honest friend
And twenty curious scraps of knowledge,—
If he departed as he came,
With no new light on love or liquor,—
Good sooth, the traveller was to blame,
And not the Vicarage, nor the Vicar.

'His talk was like a stream, which runs
With rapid change from rocks to roses
It slipped from politics to puns,
It passed from Mahomet to Moses;
'Beginning with the laws which keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending with some precept deep
For dressing eels, or shoeing horses.

'He was a shrewd and sound Divine,
Of loud Dissent the mortal terror;
And when, by dint of page and line,
He 'stablished Truth, or startled Error,
The Baptist found him far too deep,
The Deist sighed with saving sorrow;
And the lean Levite went to sleep,
And dreamed of tasting pork to morrow

'His sermon never said or showed
That Earth is foul, that Heaven is gracious,
Without refreshment on the road
From Jerome, or from Athanasius.
And sure a righteous zeal inspired
The hand and head that penned and planned them,
For all who understood admired,
And some who did not understand them

'He wrote, too, in a quiet way,
Small treatises, and smaller verses,
And sage remarks on chalk and clay,
And hints to noble Lords—and nurses;
True histories of last year's ghost,
Lines to a ringlet, or a turban,
And trifles for the Morning Post,
And nothings for Sylvanus Urban.

'He did not think all mischief fair,
Although he had a knack of joking;
He did not make himself a bear,
Although he had a taste for smoking,
And when religious sects ran mad,
He held, in spite of all his learning,
That if a man's belief is bad,
It will not be improved by burning

'And he was kind, and loved to sit
In the low hut or garnished cottage,
And praise the farmer's homely wit,
And share the widow's homely pottage
At his approach complaint grew mild,
And when his hand unbarred the shutter,
The clammy lips of fever smiled
The welcome which they could not utter

'He always had a tale for me
Of Julius Cæsar, or of Venus;
From him I learnt the rule of three,
Cat's cradle, leap-frog, and *Quæ genus*
I used to singe his powdered wig,
To steal the staff he put such trust in,
And make the puppy dance a jig,
When he began to quote Augustine

'Alack the change! in vain I look
For haunts in which my boyhood trifled,—
The level lawn, the trickling brook,
The trees I climbed, the beds I rifled
The church is larger than before;
You reach it by a carriage entry,
It holds three hundred people more,
And pews are fitted up for gentry

'Sit in the Vicar's seat you'll hear
The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,
Whose hand is white, whose tone is clear,
Whose phrase is very Ciceronian
Where is the old man laid?—look down,
And construe on the slab before you,
"*Hic jacet Gulielmus Brown,*
*Vir nullâ non donandus lauru*"'

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ANSWERS TO ENIGMAS AND CHARADES.

| | |
|---|---|
| Bottle | Bellrope. |
| Knighthood. | Nightcap. |
| Bowstring. | Campbell |

A. H. G.

# THE GREEK AMBASSADOR.

## A Ball-room Scene at Transmarina.

'I SAY, Trevyllian, such fun!—the people have never seen your uniform, and there will not be the least difficulty in persuading them that you are the diplomatic representative of the new Hellenic monarchy. Will you play the part for one night only? Say yes, and we shall have such a lark as never was seen.'

This speech was addressed to me in a ball-room in the distant colony of Transmarina, the particular locality of which can be found in any 'Gazetteer.' The glare of chandeliers lighted up faces a shade more tawny perhaps than are usually seen in the British isles; but there was no lack of beauty, and the soft crushing of crinolines, and the hum of conversation, partly drowned by the tuning up of fiddles and other instruments, formed, in my young ears, a delightful prelude to the coming fray.

'Decide!' said Screech, the gentleman who spoke above.

I was admiring a very pretty girl, the daughter of the Deputy-Assistant-Quartermaster-General, and my friend Screech, a naval officer, was obliged to repeat his interesting proposition.

'I shall be delighted, my dear fellow,' said I, when I had heard him to the end; 'but I can't speak a word of Greek. At school, like Bonaparte in Russia, as Brummel remarked—I was "stopped by the elements."'

'No matter - talk French.'

'Can't. I'll do you a little broken English, if you like.'

'Just as good—come along. Allow me, Sir Piper Timkins, to present to you his Excellency Count Polu-phlois-boi-o Thalasses, ambassador from his Majesty the King of the Greeks to——'

The rest was inaudible; but Sir Piper bowing low, expressed the great pleasure he felt in making the acquaintance of so distinguished a functionary, and to my great relief, did it in the vernacular. My reply was brief, and sufficiently disjointed to pass muster.

'He is a nasty upstart little brute,' remarked Screech, *sotto voce*, 'and please the pigs, we'll lead him a regular dance. He is detested in the colony. You'll see how he'll stick up to you; for though he tries to snub his inferiors, his deference to those above him is disgusting. Come, we'll march down the room; the band is playing "See the Conquering Hero," which suits exactly; and Whymper and Topham are bearing down before us, announcing, in a loud whisper, your exalted title and dignity.'

As we proceeded through the crowded but spacious salon, I could perceive that I excited a sensation in my new uniform (strictly according to the sealed patterns), but here quite unknown, for the —— had never been quartered in Transmarina. The people stood up on either side at my approach, a lane was formed for me to pass through, and eyes, eye-glasses, and spectacles scrutinised my appearance in the most interesting manner. To say the truth, I looked the character very well, being (spare my blushes) decidedly handsome, as well as possessing much dignity of deportment, though rather young to fill so high a post as that of ambassador plenipotentiary from his Majesty the King of the Greeks.

When we had made a circuit of the room, I stood on the dais at the upper end in a graceful attitude, and said, in a tolerably loud tone, 'Breeng zat girl up to me for to dance.'

All eyes were at once turned towards the pretty daughter of the Deputy-Assistant-Quartermaster-General, for my little finger had indicated that choice. There was a rush of palming puppies to escort the lady, and the charming little creature curtsied as she accepted me for 'The Lancers.'

Sir Piper, who was a short fat man, with a very pale but rather

pimply face, came up biting the end of his straw-coloured kid glove, and asked, in a nervous tone, if 'I would do him the honour to be his *vis-à-vis* in a set?'

I bowed acquiescence, and Sir Piper went in search of a partner.

Now it so happened that Sir Piper had not ingratiated himself with the young ladies of Transmarina—the consequence of which was that he failed to produce the article he wanted in the specified time, and, indeed, came up during the middle of the second figure, in a great state of excitement, for Screech had told him that 'his Excellency' was very angry indeed. He made a lengthened apology. I had provided myself in his absence, and so accepted his explanation. He again asked for the honour of dancing in my set; and after a little hesitation, I agreed to allow him to do so. But Sir Piper a second time failed to procure a partner. I waited for him, and lost the dance purposely. He found me sitting on a sofa, frowning angrily. He made an abject apology. After listening in silence for some time, I told him he had behaved most improperly, and that only for his assertion that he could get no young lady to dance with him, I should have treated the matter as a direct and premeditated insult to his Majesty the King of the Greeks.

Would any one believe his next step? It was no other than to sidle himself on to the sofa beside me, and, after a short preface, to ask for a place in the Legation!

'Pray, sare, can you talkee Greek?'

'No, your Excellency; but I could learn.'

'You speak—a—Frainch?'

'No, your Excellency, I cannot.'

'What foreign lankwidge do you know?'

'None, your Excellency.'

'Then, sare,' said I, very severely, 'what ze deyvil do you mean by asking for to be attach to ze Embassy?'

Sir Piper looked up quickly and very timidly, through his spectacles, but had not a word to say. I frowned horribly, rose from the sofa, walked over to Screech, who was standing not far off, and who, by the way, had suggested my course of proceeding, and began talking mysteriously to him. We looked at the disconcerted Sir Piper from time to time. I walked to the dais, ordered another pretty young lady out, and danced a round dance, while Sir Piper's heart was chilled to the core by some remarks which fell from Screech.

'You have grossly insulted his Excellency,' was the first observation my friend made. 'You have disappointed him in a dance, done him out of another, and you have had the astounding effrontery to petition for a post in the Legation, when you cannot speak a word of any foreign language. Sir Piper! Sir Piper! you have behaved most improperly.—you have not only insulted his Excellency Count Poluphloisboio Thalasses, but the whole Grecian nation! And what will be the consequence, considering the fiery nature of the Hellenic race, and that of his Excellency the Ambassador in particular, it is impossible to foresee; but that they must have a serious bearing against yourself, you may rest perfectly assured.'

Cold perspiration broke from Sir Piper's brow; he sought the refreshment-room to partake of some stimulant, and to consider the possibility of making a sudden and secret retreat from the ball-room by a circuitous route.

Screech, suspecting his design, told him that his Excellency 'wished to see him at the conclusion of the dance.' Sir Piper nearly fainted. He bolted into the cloak-room at once, and in his agitation lost the ticket which gave him a right to claim an Inverness cape. In an attempt to find the garment, his eyes chanced to turn to a solitary chair near the door. Horror of horrors! there sat his Excellency the Greek Ambassador, with a determined air watching him like a lynx. Sir Piper produced his pocket-handkerchief—approached—blew his nose violently, and was on the point of rushing past me to the

door—when I called out in a loud tone—'STOP!'

He looked round and saw the muzzle of a blunderbuss peeping out from under my overcoat. I had taken my coat and cap into the dancing-room, and had hid them behind a curtain, so as to avoid the delay and confusion which sometimes take place in a cloak-room, and was therefore ready for departure before my friend Sir Piper.

Sir Piper came back, and sank down beside me with a fascinated expression in his eyes.

'Sir,' said I, 'you have insult me and ze wholl nazion of ze Greeks!'

'I really did not mean it, your Excellency. I implore your Excellency's pardon. I did not intend—I never thought—I—I—I——'

'"Tis too late, sare; you have wound my pride. We most shoot each ze oder, ezer ze two or ze von!'

Sir Piper stared at me in a hopeless state of terror, and presently skipped out of a neighbouring window, which happened to be open, with greater agility than I should have expected from a person of his age and appearance.

People have since told me that no one but a very young and very reckless fellow would have behaved as I did on that memorable night. I believe they are right. *I* skipped out of the window after Sir Piper. He was caught in his own trap. There was no outlet from the sort of yard into which he had got; and Sir Piper was in the position of a stag at bay. His bearing, however, was not so defiant, and really it is scarcely fair to censure him. I am a formidable-looking young man. I was also possessed of a very ferocious-looking weapon which, at a short range, was capable of blowing a large breach in an elderly gentleman's person, or of filling him with a sufficient number of slugs to make him feel uncomfortable when retiring for the night. He proposed to make a written apology. I decided upon tossing for first shot. The blunderbuss was not loaded, but fortune favoured me: Sir Piper was to shoot last! He went down on his knees and clasped his hands. He presented the most absurd appearance. He was half under the shadow of a sort of meat-safe of considerable height, which had a pointed conical roof. The moon shone on his agonized face and flashed on his spectacles. Suddenly an idea came into my head. 'Sir Piper,' said I, lowering the muzzle of the blunderbuss, 'I'll gif-a-you one shance. If you will beg-a-my pardon on ze top of zat howze of meat, I sall forgif-a-you.'

The thing appeared impracticable even for me, but Sir Piper scrambled up in no time, sat on the apex at the top, and in the most piteous way implored forgiveness for insulting his Excellency the Ambassador of the King of the Greeks.

'For goodness' sake *do* come down, my dear fellow,' said I, dropping my weapon, 'or you will kill me with laughter.'

It was a second or two before Sir Piper could comprehend. He at length scrambled from his perch and dropped on to the paved surface of the yard. I thought I perceived symptoms of rising ill-temper on the part of Sir Piper, when I explained to him who I really was; upon which I said:

'Sir Piper, this story will tell against you more than against me; but if you mention what has occurred, upon my word and honour I really *will* shoot you.'

Screech was much amused; and when the story eked out, all Transmarina was in extasies. Count Poluphloisboio Thalasses made his escape from the colony next morning; but he has since gained the friendship of Sir Piper Timkins, who, though conscious of the mysterious influence which Mr. Trevyllian has over him, laughs as much as any one at the story of the 'GREEK AMBASSADOR.' Z.

P.S.—I have since married the daughter of the Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General of Transmarina, and having taken serious practical views of life, have left off practical joking.

# THE MERCHANT PRINCES OF ENGLAND.

## CHAPTER X.

### JOSIAH CHILD OF LONDON.

JOSIAH CHILD, the Baring of the seventeenth century, was born on the 7th of May, 1630. Three or four hundred years before that date his ancestors were men of mark in English history. Several L'Enfants and Le Childs, the names being identical in those days, were concerned in Henry II.'s conquest of Ireland and its subsequent government, and others were settled at Pool-Court, Shrewley, and Pencook, all in Worcestershire, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A Richard le Child was living at Northwick, in the same shire, in 1320, a William le Child in 1350, and a Thomas le Child in 1353. Another Thomas le Child, probably a son, was escheator for the county of Worcester in 1428. From him descended William Child, of Northwick, whose grandson and great-grandson, both named William, were high sheriffs for the county, under Queen Elizabeth, the one in 1586, the other in 1599. The manor of Northwick remained with the family until the reign of Charles II.; but before that time a younger and more important branch had left Worcestershire for districts nearer London. Richard Child, a great-great-grandson of the second Elizabethan sheriff, was sheriff of Bedfordshire in 1640, the year of the Long Parliament's assembling. Born somewhere near the beginning of the century, he had by that time acquired considerable wealth as a London merchant, and become the owner of valuable property in Bedfordshire. Finding most of his business in connection with the lately opened and now highly prosperous trade to the East and West Indies, he paved the way for the yet greater success of his son Josiah.

The foreign trade of England was not materially damaged by the political troubles of England under Charles I. and during Commonwealth times. In some respects it was benefited by those troubles, as thereby the energy that ought to have found expression in domestic commerce and manufacture was forced into other channels. 'When I survey,' writes Lewis Roberts, an intelligent but wordy Welshman, in his 'Merchants' Map of Commerce,' published in 1638, 'every kingdom and great city of the world, and every petty port and creek of the same, and find in each of these some English prying after the trade and commerce thereof, I am easily brought to imagine either that this great traffic of England is at its full perfection, or that it aims higher than can hitherto by any weak sight be either seen or discerned. I must confess England breeds in its own womb the principal supporters of its present splendour, and nourisheth with its own milk the commodities that give both lustre and life to the continuance of this trade, which I pray may neither ever decay nor yet have the least diminution. But,' he adds, in a spirit of timidity that is amusing when we compare the commerce of to-day with that of two hundred years ago, 'England being naturally seated in another corner of the world, and herein bending under the weight of so ponderous a burden, cannot possibly always and for ever find a vent for all those commodities that are seen to be daily imported and brought within the compass of so narrow a circuit, unless there can be, by the policy and government of a state, a mean found out to make this island the common emporium and staple of all Europe.' The emporium of a good deal more than all Europe this island has become, in consequence of the enterprise that so astonished Master Roberts. 'Will you,' he grandly exclaims in another place, 'view Muscovia, survey Sweden, look upon Denmark, peruse the East Country, and those other

colder regions? there you shall find the English to have been: the inhabitants, from the prince to the peasant, wear English woollen livery, feed in English pewter, sauce with English Indian spices, and send to their enemies sad English leaden messengers of death. Will you behold the Netherlands, whose eyes and hearts envy England's traffic? yet they must perforce confess that, for all their great boasts, they are indebted to London for most of their Syrian commodities, besides what other wares else they have of English growth. Will you see France, and travel it from Marseilles to Calais? Though they stand least in need of us, yet they cannot last long without our commodities. And for Spain, if you pry therein from the prince's palace to the poor man's cottage he will vow to God there is no clothing comparable to the English baize, nor pheasant excelling a seasonable English red-herring!'

The East India Company, in Roberts's opinion, was the most important machinery of English trade at that time. To Persia, India, and

SIR JOSIAH CHILD, BART.

Arabia it sent numbers of ships every year, loaded with European goods, to bring back 'pepper, cloves, maces, nutmegs, cottons, rice, calicoes of sundry sorts, bezoar stones, aloes, borax, calamus, cassia, mirabolons, myrrh, opium, rhubarb, cinnamon, sanders, spikenard, musk, civet, tamarinds, precious stones of all sorts, as diamonds, pearls, carbuncles, emeralds, jacinths, sapphires, spinals, turquoises, topazes, indigo, and silk raw and wrought into sundry fabrics, benzoin, camphor, sandal-wood, and infinite other commodities.' In this lucrative trade—so lucrative that, as Burton remarks in his 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' 'a merchant, though his hazard be great, yet, if one ship return out of four, he likely makes a saving voyage,'—the East India Company had not the exclusive monopoly promised in its successive charters. Great obstructions came to it from the jealousy of the similar companies established in Holland and Portugal, and frequent patents of trade were granted to private Englishmen, as in the case of Sir

William Courtier, who in 1635 was authorized to trade during the next five years with Goa, Malabar, China, and Japan. Yet the Company fared well. In 1614, Sir Thomas Roe had been sent on a special embassage to cement the advantages that Sir Henry Middleton, as we saw in a former chapter, had bought with his life, and therefrom many important benefits had sprung. A capital of 429,000*l.* having been raised in 1612, a fresh subscription of 1,600,000*l.* was begun in 1617, and in 1632 a further addition of 420,700*l.*, called the third joint-stock, was made to the existing capital. In 1657 another change took place. The private association, starting with Sir William Courtier's enterprise, and afterwards known as the Company of Merchant Adventurers, had grown so important that the larger Company was glad to effect a coalition. Thus was done, a fresh subscription to the amount of 786,000*l.* was made, and a revised charter was obtained from Lord Protector Cromwell by the beginning of 1658.

Next in importance to the East India Company, at this time, was the Turkey or Levant Company, greatly benefited by the wisdom and energy of Thomas Mun, the author of a clever 'Discourse of Trade from England to East India,' of whose private life nearly all we know is contained in his son's testimony, that 'he was in his time famous amongst merchants, and well known to most men of business for his general experience of affairs and notable insight into trade; neither was he less observed for his integrity to his prince and zeal to the Commonwealth. Mun speaks of the Levant trade as among the most extensive and remunerative open to London merchants in 1621. And of the Turkey Company in 1638 Lewis Roberts writes: 'Not yearly but monthly, nay, almost weekly, their ships are observed to go to and fro, exporting hence the cloths of Suffolk, Gloucester, Worcester, and Coventry, dyed and dressed, kerseys of Hampshire and Yorkshire, lead, tin, and a great quantity of Indian spices, indigo, and calicoes; and in return thereof they import from Turkey the raw silks of Persia, Damascus, and Tripoli, cottons, and cotton-yarn of Cyprus and Smyrna, and sometimes the gems of India, the drugs of Egypt and Arabia, the muscatels of Candia, and the currants and oils of Zante, Cephalonia, and Morea.'

Then there were other companies, in addition to the crowd of independent merchants, zealously promoting the interests of London commerce. The Company of Merchant Adventurers, trading chiefly with Hamburg, Rotterdam, and the other great cities of the Netherlands, made monthly shipments of cloth and other English commodities, and brought back an equivalent in miscellaneous articles from lawn and tapestry to soap and crockery. The Eastland and Muscovy Companies also had cloth for their staple export, making their return cargoes of 'ashes, cardboard, copper, deals, firs, rich furs, masts, pipe-staves, rye, timber, wainscot, wheat, fustians, iron, latten, linen, quicksilver, flax, hemp, steel, caviare, cordage, hides, honey, tar, sturgeon's roe, tallow, pitch, wax, rosin, and sundry others.' 'The merchants of England trading into Italy,' says Roberts in continuation of his summary, 'are not observed to have any joint-stock or company,' but private enterprise fared quite as well as any combined effort could have done in supplying the Italian market with all sorts of goods, and obtaining thence a large supply of velvets, satins, damasks, and the like; so that 'here likewise all other foreign nations willingly give place to the English, as the prime and principal merchants that either abide amongst them or negotiate with them.' Besides all this there was a respectable trade with the north and west coasts of Africa. But of this, Roberts gives us no precise account. 'Neither,' he says in conclusion, 'need I nominate the home-land commerce of this kingdom to Scotland and Ireland; neither go about to particularize the large traffic of this island to their late plantations of Newfoundland, Bermudas, Virginia, Barbadoes, and New England, and to other places which rightly challenge

an interest in the present trade and traffic of this island.'

Yet that was a branch of trade and traffic well worth particularizing. Already a great impetus to commerce had come from the settling of various colonies in North America and the West Indies since the beginning of the century. Wheat and timber, saltpetre and potash, were largely imported from Virginia, besides another staple which called forth an edict from Charles I. requiring 'some better fruit than tobacco and smoke to be returned from thence,' so as to avoid 'the speedy ruin likely to befall the colonies and the danger to the bodies and manners of the English people, through the excessive growth of tobacco.' New England was only beginning to make return for the capital expended in its colonization; but Bermuda was a thriving settlement, and Barbadoes was spoken of, in 1659, as already 'having given to many men of low degree exceeding vast fortunes, equal to noblemen.' 'Upwards of one hundred sail of ships,' says the same authority, writing in 1659, 'there yearly find employment, by carrying goods and passengers thither, and bringing thence other commodities, whereby seamen are bred and custom increased, our commodities vended, and many thousands employed therein.'

It is in connection with these new fields of commerce that we first find Josiah Child actively engaged. Besides his ventures in East Indian trade, of which at this time we have very scanty details, the old Admiralty papers in the Record Office show that he was an extensive contractor for the supply of American timber to be used in shipbuilding. Among several tenders sent in, at the beginning of 1665, when he was five-and-thirty years of age, for masts, bowsprits, and yards, those furnished by him and one John Shorter, his partner, were accepted in August of this year. We find him writing to the Navy Commissioners about a cargo of masts that he had procured from New England. Most had been accepted, but there was hesitation about five of the largest. Child urged the acceptance of the whole parcel, as he had ordered them solely for the King's service, and such large masts were hard to get and harder to sell among private dealers. He gained his point, and obtained payment at the rate of 25*l.* for the masts 20 inches in diameter, and 33*l.* for those of 25 inches. A fortnight later he wrote to the Admiralty clerk, saying he was to have the highest price recorded in the Admiralty-books, that being the dearest time for masts that ever was. On the 4th of October in the same year we see him requesting a convoy through the Channel for a ship he is sending to New England for a further supply of timber, as thus much time would be saved, besides the charge of seven or eight shillings a day for demurrage; and on November 17th, he complains of the hazard and delay he has been put to for want of the convoy as far as Plymouth, and begs that suitable protection may be given to the vessel for the rest of the voyage, until it is at sea. These are among the earliest instances that we meet with of his employment as government contractor. Every later year has its own records of similar transactions.

But he was not simply an East and West India merchant. One curious document in the State Paper Office, is a message dated April the 30th, 1666, from Charles II. to the Company of London Brewers, recommending that Josiah Child, merchant of London, who has done faithful service in supplying the navy with beer, and has bought a brewhouse in Southwark to brew for the king's household, and for the navy, be admitted a free brother of the Company on payment of the same subscription as had been paid by the late Timothy Alsop, the king's brewer. Unfortunately we hear nothing more of the success of this speculation.

In one way and another, however, the merchant, still a young man, was amassing wealth. About this time, and, probably, as a consequence of his frequent visits to Portsmouth, in connection with the

naval dockyard, he married Anne, the daughter of Edmund Boat, a gentleman of that town, and he was able to provide her with a comfortable home, by buying Wanstead House, the time-honoured mansion at which, nearly eighty years before, the famous Earl of Leicester had entertained Queen Elizabeth, with the help of a masque written for the occasion by his more famous nephew, Philip Sidney; and which, at a later period, had been given to 'Steenie' Buckingham by Charles I.

Wanstead House was rebuilt by Josiah's son, Richard, the first Earl Tylney, in 1718; but the old-fashioned mansion served for the merchant. He was there during the autumn months of 1665, the year of the Great Plague, and he used his forced leisure in the preparation of a little book entitled 'Brief Observations concerning Trade, and the Interest of Money,' the producer of an angry paper-war that lasted more than thirty years, and almost the parent of our modern science of political economy. 'The prodigious increase of the Netherlanders,' it begins, 'in their domestic and foreign trade, riches, and multitude of shipping, is the envy of the present, and may be the wonder of all future generations; and yet the means whereby they have thus advanced themselves are sufficiently obvious, and in a great measure imitable by most other nations, but more easily by us of this kingdom of England.' Therefore, the mer hant sets himself to show, with a mixture of wisdom and error, what seem to him the points in the Dutch policy best worth copying. 'These,' he says, 'are fifteen in number. First, they have in their greatest councils of state, and war, trading merchants that have lived abroad in most parts of the world, who have not only the theoretical knowledge, but the practical experience of trade, by whom laws and orders are contrived, and plans projected, to the great advantage of their trade. Secondly, their law of gavelkind, whereby all their children possess an equal share of their fathers' estates after their decease, and so are not left to wrestle with the world in their youth, with inconsiderable assistance of fortune, as most of our youngest sons of gentlemen in England are who are bound apprentices to merchants. Thirdly, their exact making of all their native commodities, and packing of their herrings, cod-fish, and all other commodities which they send abroad in great quantities; the consequence whereof is, that the repute of their said commodities abroad continues always good, and the buyers will accept them by the marks without opening; whereas the fish which our English make in Newfoundland, New England, and herrings at Yarmouth, and our pilchards from the west country, often prove false and deceitfully made. Fourthly, their giving great encouragement and immunities to the inventors of new manufactures, and the discoverers of any new mysteries in trade, and to those that shall bring the commodities of other nations first in use and practice amongst them, to which the author never goes without his due reward allowed him at the public charge. Sixthly,' (we quote only the most interesting passages of the tract,) 'their parsimonious and thrifty living, which is so extraordinary, that a merchant of 10,000*l.* estate with them will spend scarce so much per annum as one of 1,500*l.* estate in London. Seventhly, the education of their children, as well daughters as sons; all which, although of never so great quality or estate, they always take care to bring up to write perfect good hands, and to have the full knowledge and use of arithmetic and merchants' accounts; the well understanding and practice of which doth strangely infuse into most that are the owners of that quality, of either sex, not only an ability for commerce of all kinds, but a strong aptitude, love, and delight in it. And, in regard the women are as knowing therein as the men, it doth encourage their husbands to hold on in their trades to their dying days, knowing the capacity of their wives to get in their estates, and carry on their trades after their deaths; whereas, if a merchant in England arrive at

any considerable estate, he commonly withdraws his estate from trade before he comes near the confines of old age, reckoning that if God should call him out of the world, while the main of his estate is engaged abroad in trade, he must lose one-third of it, through the inexperience and unaptness of his wife to such affairs, and so it usually falls out. Tenthly, their use of banks, which are of so immense advantage to them, that some, not without good grounds, have estimated the profit of them to the public to amount to at least 1,000,000*l.* sterling per annum. Eleventhly, their toleration of different opinions in matters of religion; by reason whereof, many industrious people of other countries, that dissent from the established government of their own churches, resort to them with their families and estates, and after a few years' cohabitation with them, become of the same common interest. Twelfthly, their law-merchant, by which all controversies between merchants and tradesmen are decided in three or four days' time, and that not at the fortieth part (I might say, in many cases, not the hundredth part) of the charge they are with us. Thirteenthly, the law that is in use among them for transference of bills for debt from one man to another. This is of extraordinary advantage to them in their commerce, by means whereof they can turn their stocks twice or thrice in trade for once that we can in England, for that, having sold our foreign goods here, we cannot buy again to advantage till we are possessed of our money, which it may be shall be six, nine, or twelve months in recovering; whereas, were the law for transferring bills in practice with us, we could, presently, after sale of our goods, dispose of our bills and close up our accounts.'

Those sentences give very interesting information touching the state of trade in England two hundred years ago; besides showing us, in clear light, the shrewd money-making character of the London merchant, anxious to make his nation as thoroughly commercial as was Holland. But the point which he thinks specially worth imitating from the Dutch, and to the discussion of which he gives most of his space, is 'the lowness of interest of money with them, which in peaceable times, exceeds not three per cent. per annum,' whereas the rate of interest in England is six per cent. at the least. 'This, in my poor opinion,' he adds, 'is the *causa causans* of all the other causes of riches in that people; and if interest of money were with us reduced to the same rate as it is with them, it would in a short time render us as rich and as considerable in trade as they now are.' He argues that the prosperity of England has increased in exact proportion to the abatement of interest, which by law, before 1635, was ten per cent., to be reduced in that year to eight; and, again, in 1645, to six per cent.; and that the grand impediment to the wealth which England ought to attain comes from the rule that makes it hard for young merchants to get on in the world, ('most of our trade being carried on by young men that take up money at interest,') and tempts elder men, as soon as they have gained experience at their work, to abandon commerce for usury, 'there being, to every man's knowledge, divers English merchants of large estates, which have not much past their middle age, and yet have wholly left off their trades, having found the sweetness of interest; neither scattering by their expenses, so as the poor may glean anything after them, nor working with their hands or heads to bring either wax or honey to the common hive of the kingdom; but swelling their own purses by the sweat of other men's brows, and the contrivances of other men's brains. And how unprofitable it is for any nation to suffer idleness to suck the breasts of industry, needs no demonstration.'

There we have good common sense and sound morality. But political economists have taught us that the rate of interest, like everything else, from gin-drinking to theological belief, must be left in the hands of the people themselves,

and that only mischief can come from legal restrictions of whatever sort. That was a point, however, that neither Child nor his crowd of pamphleteer-opponents were able to understand. During thirty years the subject was hotly discussed in a small library of treatises, that make very uninteresting and unprofitable reading. The controversy itself has lost all its value, and the books in which it found expression are only worth preserving for the scraps of information they contain about the state of commerce and society in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Some of those scraps we have already given; some others may be culled from Child's 'New Discourse of Trade,' a greatly amplified edition of his former work, published in 1692, but chiefly written in 1669. The chapter most attractive in itself, and most interesting also to us, because of its illustration of the natural kindliness of the author's character, is 'Concerning the Relief and Employment of the Poor.' 'Our poor in England,' he says, 'have always been in a most sad and wretched condition; some famished for want of bread, others starved with cold and unkindness; many whole families, in all the out parts of cities and great towns, commonly remain in a languishing, nasty, and useless condition, uncomfortable to themselves and unprofitable to the kingdom.' Hence the country is stocked with thieves and beggars, and materially weakened in its productive resources. But the chief blame, it is urged, lies not with the poor wretches themselves, but with the laws that make every parish chargeable with its own paupers, and so waste nearly all the money and energy that should go to their relief in 'shifting off, sending, or whipping back the poor wanderers to the place of their birth or last abode.' 'A poor idle person that will not work, or that nobody will employ in the country, comes up to London, to set up the trade of begging. Such a person, probably, may beg up and down the streets for seven years, it may be seven-and-twenty, before anybody asketh why she doth so; and if, at length, she hath the ill-hap, in some parish, to meet with a more vigilant beadle than one in twenty of them are, all he does is but to lead her the length of five or six houses into another parish, and then concludes, as his masters the parishioners do, that he hath done the part of a most diligent officer. But suppose he should go yet further, and carry this poor wretch to a justice of the peace, and he should order the delinquent to be whipped, and sent from parish to parish to the place of her birth, which not one justice of twenty, through pity or other cause, will do; even this is a great charge upon the country, and yet the business of the nation itself wholly undone; for no sooner doth the delinquent arrive at the place assigned, but for shame or idleness, she presently deserts it, and wanders directly back, or some other way, hoping for better fortune; whilst the parish to which she was sent, knowing her a lazy, and perhaps a worse qualified person, is as willing to be rid of her as she is to be gone from thence.' The merchant—'more qualified to manage the detail of a counting-house, than to correct the errors of legislation,' as Eden remarks; but, however unsound his views, as jealous as any professed philanthropist to improve the condition of the poor—proposed to remedy the present evils by doing away with the distinction of parishes, and dividing England into two or three poor-law provinces, each under the government of a body of 'Fathers of the Poor,' appointed by the crown, with power to buy lands, erect, and endow workhouses, hospitals, and houses of correction, as well as 'petty banks for the benefit of the poor;' to send such poor beyond the seas as they shall think fit, into his Majesty's plantations; and to employ those kept at home in useful work. 'The girls may be employed in mending the clothes of the aged, in spinning, carding, and other linen manufactures, and many in sewing linen for the exchange, or any housekeepers that will put out linen to the matrons that have the government of them; the boys

in picking oakum, making pins, rasping wood, making, hanging, or any other manufactures of any kind; which, whether it turns to present profit or not, is not much material, the great business of the nation being first but to keep the poor from begging and starving, and enuring such as are able to labour and discipline, that they may be hereafter useful members to the kingdom.' To obtain funds for these purposes, Child proposed a continuance of moderate assessments by law, with the addition of weekly collections in all parish churches; taxes upon the receipts at playhouses, and 'whatever else his Majesty and Parliament shall think fit to recommend to them, or leave to their discretion.' Those projects have been much decried by professional advocates of the English poor-law; but the successful working of the 'Assistance Publique,' in France, in many respects curiously like the old merchant's scheme, entitles them to some consideration. But the most interesting feature of this treatise to us is its evidence of Child's practical sense and generous disposition. Very characteristic of the man is his proposal, made at the very time when the cry for test acts and intolerance of all sorts was noisiest in England, 'that there be no oaths or other tests imposed upon the said fathers of the poor at their admission, to bar out nonconformists, amongst whom there will be found some excellent instruments for this good work.'

'Compulsion in matters of religion,' moreover, is one of the causes to which Child ascribes the falling of English trade in wool, apparent in his time. He shows that the difficulties thrown in the way of English operatives, and the more tolerant customs of foreign nations, as well as the facilities coming from the low rate of interest abroad, encourage our merchants to export raw wool, instead of enriching the country by first manufacturing it into cloth.

In this treatise Child speaks of the East Indian trade as, in four ways, the most beneficial of all branches of foreign commerce. '1. The trade worthily employs twenty-five to thirty sail of the most warlike ships in England, with sixty to a hundred men in each ship. 2. It supplies the nation constantly and fully with that (in this age) necessary material of saltpetre. 3. It supplies the nation, for its consumption, with pepper, indigo, calicoes, and several useful drugs, near the value of 150,000*l.* to 180,000*l.* per annum. 4. It furnisheth us with pepper, cowries, long-cloth and other calicoes, and painted stuffs, proper for the trade of Turkey, Italy, Spain, France, and Guinea, to the amount of 200,000*l.* or 300,000*l.* per annum; most of which trades we could not carry on with any considerable advantage, but for those supplies. And these goods exported do produce in foreign parts, to be returned to England, six times the measure in specie that the Company exports from hence.' 'Were it not for the East Indian Company,' he adds, 'we should be at the mercy of the Dutch traders; we should have to buy foreign linens instead of the calicoes that come from our own dependencies, and we should lose the protection secured for the country, by the employment of so many stout ships and mariners.'

That was in 1669. In 1677 appeared 'A Treatise, wherein it is demonstrated that the East India Company is the most national of all foreign trades,' of which there is little doubt that Child was also the author. At that time, we learn, there were from thirty to thirty-five ships in the Company's employ, used in exporting about 430,000*l.* worth of goods and bullion, and in bringing to the English market commodities worth at least twice that sum. Every year showed much progress in wealth and importance to the members of the East India Company. Their actual capital was only about 370,000*l.*; but they borrowed vast sums of money at the six per cent. interest, which Child wished to see reduced to four, and were rumoured to make about thirty per cent. profits thereby. In 1676 every proprietor received a bonus equal to the value of his stock, and the shares

which, in 1664, were to be bought at 70*l.* for 100*l.* worth of stock, rose in 1677 to 245*l.*, in 1681 to 300*l.*, and in 1691 to 360*l.* or more.

In that period of almost unexampled prosperity many fortunes were made; by far the greatest of all being that accumulated by Josiah Child. Among the entries of shareholders, prior to these years, we do not find the merchant's name; but it is probable that he bought stock in 1657, when a new subscription was made, and a charter with fresh privileges was obtained from Cromwell. In that year he was seven-and-twenty, and starting upon the commercial life for which his father had prepared him. A little later we saw him becoming famous as a timber merchant, bringing masts and the like from New England for sale to the Admiralty Commissioners. He was also a brewer, and doubtless, after the fashion of merchants in those generations, he embarked in enterprises of every sort that promised success. By 1665 he was rich enough to buy the old manor at Wanstead, and some years after that, his first wife being dead, he increased his wealth and influence by marrying Mrs. Mary Stone, widow of a thriving merchant, and daughter of another merchant, William Atwood, of Hackney. Ever since the accession of Charles II. he had been a favourite at Court, doing his share of money-lending to the spendthrift king, and gaining esteem by the honest deportment which even the most dishonest well knew how to prize. Politically he was a Whig, and by his tolerant spirit and bold defence of schismatics, he had won the special hatred of the Duke of York, who was to become King of England as James II. But with Charles, and Charles's courtiers, he was in favour, and that favour secured him a baronetcy on the 18th of July, 1678, and enabled him to marry one of his daughters, with a dowry of 50,000*l.*, to the eldest son of the Duke of Beaufort, in March 1683; an older daughter having already wedded a gentleman of Streatham, to become grandmother of a Duke of Bedford.

It was at this time that the merchant began to be the foremost man in the management of the East India Company. For some years he had been a member of the committee of management, having been with great difficulty raised thereto, said his enemies, by the friendship of Sir Samuel Bernardisson, Sir John Mordaunt, Thomas Papillon, and other great Whig merchants in the city; and lately, the same men, seeing his great talents, joined in promoting him to the office of governor. Then a division arose. According to the statements of his enemies in pamphlets so scurrilous, that they would hardly be worth noticing, had not many of their assertions been adopted by Lord Macaulay, as grounds for condemning the merchant, Sir Josiah Child turned Tory, got rid of all the honest servants of the Company, and became the abject slave of the court, for purposes of his own aggrandisement. By far the richest member of the Company, with a third of its stock in his own hands, or the hands of some fourteen of his dependents, it was alleged that he could do whatever he liked, and that he managed the whole business so as to enrich himself, and curry favour with King Charles and the Duke of York. 'By his great annual presents,' says one of the pamphleteers, 'he could command, both at Court and Westminster Hall, what he pleased.' 'A present of ten thousand guineas,' writes Macaulay, on the authority of these libellers, 'was graciously received from him by Charles. Ten thousand more were accepted by James, who readily consented to become a holder of stock. All who could help or hurt at Court, ministers, mistresses, priests, were kept in good humour by presents of shawls and silks, birds'-nests and atar of roses, purses of diamonds, and bags of guineas. His bribes, distributed with judicious prodigality, speedily produced a large return: just when the Court was all powerful in the State, he became all powerful at the Court.' That Child did shift his political ground, and give way to the tide of Tory feeling that preceded the accession of James II.,

that prosperity, did their utmost to bring it into disrepute. They were supported by the other joint-stock companies, and the many private traders who, from choice or from necessity, were left to carry on their businesses in independent ways. Not heeding their opposition, Sir Josiah carried on the work he had taken in hand, and did his utmost to extend the influence and enlarge the prosperity of the Company. The documents treasured in the India House and Record Office, show that during these years, he was the life and soul of the whole business. At one time he writes about the prospect of trade in Ceylon; at another he is considering how best the lost ground may be recovered in Java. On one day he discourses to his Majesty's Chief Secretary about the Great Mogul, and the growing disputes with him; on the next he has an interview with some Japanese ambassadors, and urges them to bring about an opening for English trade with their country—'which I apprehend,' he says in a letter, 'might prove of very great advantage to this nation, by the sending of vast quantities of the English woollen manufactures, the Japanese being a great and rich people, and the situation of many of their provinces northerly enough to wear such clothing as this kingdom affords.'

Meanwhile the opposition grew, and having no influence among the authorities at home, it produced very disastrous results in the far-off provinces of the Company, most mischief being done at Bombay, where John Child, the elder brother of Sir Josiah, was chief factor of the Company. This brother,—'a person of known sobriety, wisdom, truth, and courage, esteemed and beloved by all people of all nations in India, that have so much ingenuousness as to acknowledge virtue in an enemy,' according to a friendly writer—a man 'grasping and violent,' from the first, and whose 'pride and oppression grew intolerable' as he advanced in power, as his enemies asserted—had been in India ever since the year 1653. How he was occupied during most of that time, whether busied with trade on his own account, or employed in the Company's service, we are not told. He seems to have had some connection with Bombay from the time of its cession by the Portuguese to the English in 1664. In 1682 he was appointed its governor. That appointment was the signal for open resistance among the private traders, or interlopers, in the district, and through them, among those servants of the Company who had been induced to join the opposition. Mutiny and massacre began in the autumn of 1683, and were only suppressed by the appearance of a fleet off the island, and the sending of the insurgent leaders to England. After that, Governor John Child appears to have acted with, occasionally, too great severity. Anxious to keep down a spirit of rebellion, he perhaps helped to increase it by the sternness of his conduct. That, at any rate, caused some base Englishmen to make treasonable offers to the Great Mogul. Aurungzebe, never as friendly to the English as he had been to the Dutch and Portuguese, readily listened to their complaints, and issued such orders to the natives trading with the Company that war seemed necessary. An armament was despatched from England in 1687, and letters from King James II. were also sent out, making Bombay the head-quarters of Indian Government, with a baronetcy for its governor, John Child, along with the title of General of the English forces in the northern parts of India, Persia, and Arabia. 'Our neighbours, the French and Dutch,' says the mocking pamphleteer, 'could not put themselves in a posture enough of laughing at it.' But while they laughed the new baronet made good use of his authority. 'He managed that hazardous war against the Mogul,' we are told, 'with such success and moderation that he took almost all the Mogul's and subjects' ships sailing in and out of Surat, without spilling a drop of their blood, and dismissed the prisoners with cloths and money in their pockets, which gained such a reputation to our nation, even amongst the Moors themselves, that

they became universal advocates and solicitors to the Mogul, for the pacification.' That friendly feeling did not last long. Other contests had to be carried on, and much blood had to be shed. Child fought unwisely, and Aurungzebe, then in the fulness of his power, sharply punished the English for attempting to crush him. He attacked Bombay and captured a portion of it, before consenting to come to terms, and then he made it a condition of peace, that the offending governor should be deprived of his office. That stipulation was unnecessary. While it was being despatched, on the 4th of February, 1691, Sir John Child died of a fever brought on by hard work and chagrin

His worthier brother lived for eight years longer, retaining to the last his share in the direction of the East India Company. Before that time the revolution of 1688 had changed the aspect of the political world, and Sir Josiah Child's Toryism, left him but little influence at Court. The old libels were revived and new ones every year were added. But he troubled himself very little about them, and allowed them in no way to alter his scheme, for the welfare of the Company. In some years he held the office of governor, in others he left it in other hands; but in either case alike he was its guide and ruler. Every proposal was submitted to his consideration, and every edict reflected his wishes. After the revolution, and after the disasters incident to the war with the Mogul, commerce had had a temporary check. The annual profits were not so large, and Child saw the importance of strengthening the Company's footing in the Indies. 'The increase of our revenue,' it was asserted in instructions issued by the directors in 1689, 'is the subject of our care, as much as our trade. 'Tis that must maintain our force, when twenty accidents may interrupt our trade. 'Tis that must make us a nation in India. Without that we are but as a great number of interlopers, united by his Majesty's royal charter, fit only to trade where nobody of power thinks it their interest to prevent us; and upon this account it is that the wise Dutch, in all their general advices which we have seen, write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare, and the increase of their revenue, for one paragraph they write concerning trade.' In other words, it was resolved thus early in the history of the Company, to make sovereignty in the East its chief object of pursuit, and to draw wealth more from imports upon native and British subjects than from direct commerce. Child's libellers asserted that he carried his love of government and power to the absurdest limits. According to one statement, unverified, but accepted as truth by both Mill and Macaulay, the new governor of Bombay having written home to say that the laws of England made it impossible for the instructions sent out to him to be obeyed, Sir Josiah wrote back in anger, 'that he expected his orders were to be his rules, and not the laws of England, which were a heap of nonsense, compiled by a few ignorant country gentlemen, who hardly knew how to make laws for the good of their own private families, much less for the regulating of companies and foreign commerce.' That assertion is hardly credible; but it is certain that the Tory merchant sympathized little with the new-fashioned principles of the Whig rulers of the country, and that his measures, measures for which he was responsible, whether propounded in his name or in those of the governors who succeeded him, were carried out with a high hand. His great success in accumulating wealth for himself, and in forwarding the interests of the Company, made him somewhat haughty and imperious in his deportment, and gave colour to some of the envious charges brought against him by his enemies. There is substantial truth, doubtless, in the epitome of his character as an old man, given by Tindal, the contemporary historian. 'He was a man of great notions as to merchandize, which was his education, and in which he succeeded beyond any man of his time. He applied himself chiefly to the East India trade, by which his management was raised

so high that it drew much envy and jealousy both upon himself and upon the Company. He had a compass of knowledge and apprehension unusual to men of his profession. He was vain and covetous, and thought too cunning, though he seemed to be always sincere.'

With that opinion of him among the best informed and most impartial of his time, Sir Josiah Child died at Wanstead on the 22nd of June, 1699. Some fifteen or eighteen years before he had married a third wife, Emma, the daughter of Sir Henry Bernard, of Stoke in Shropshire, and widow of Sir Thomas Willoughby, of Wollaton, in Nottinghamshire, a lady who lived on till the year 1725, 'at which time,' it is recorded, 'she was nearly allied to so many of the prime nobility that eleven dukes and duchesses used to ask her blessing, and it was reckoned that above fifty great families would go into mourning for her.' Of the three children born to him by his first wife, two sons had died in infancy and a daughter had been nobly wedded. As issue of his second marriage, he had two daughters, also nobly wedded, and a son Josiah, who after being knighted by William III. at a Lord Mayor's dinner in 1692, and obtaining for wife the daughter of Sir Thomas Cook, —who succeeded Sir Josiah Child as governor of the East India Company, and was in 1695, on charge of bribery, committed to the Tower by order of the House of Commons, to be promptly acquitted by the House of Lords—died without issue in 1704. Before that date, had died Bernard, the first-born of the third marriage, so that the wealth of the family descended intact to the youngest son, Richard, who much increased it by wedding the granddaughter and heiress of Francis Tylney, of Rotherwich. He represented the county of Essex in Parliament for many years, and by virtue of his large fortune, was created Baron Newton and Lord Castlemaine in 1718, and Earl Tylney in 1732. From him the earldom passed first, to his eldest and then to his second son, to become extinct with the latter, while Wanstead and the appendant possessions in Essex, descended through the last earl's sister, Lady Emma Long, to her granddaughter, Catherine Tylney Long, who in 1812, married the scapegrace Earl of Mornington. He died in 1859, leaving to be bequeathed by his son to Earl Cowley, the wreck of his property as the last representative of the richest and most influential of England's merchant princes in the latter half of the seventeenth century.

## CHAPTER XI.

### EDWARD COLSTON OF BRISTOL.

Among the many notable contemporaries of Josiah Child in the busy world of English commerce—and to describe the lives and influence of all would require a bulky volume—none has so great a claim upon the grateful recollection of posterity, as Edward Colston, the merchant philanthropist of Bristol.

He was the last of a long line of Bristol merchants. A Thomas Colston, of Preston, had settled in the city made famous by the successes of William Canning and his fellow-traders, about the year 1400, and his offspring, through five generations, appear to have been almost exclusively devoted to commerce. A later Thomas Colston was an eminent mayor of Bristol under Queen Elizabeth, and a William Colston was a conspicuous royalist in the troublous times of Charles I. 'The king's cause and party,' says one writing in 1645, 'were favoured by two extremes in that city; the one the wealthy and powerful men, the other of the basest and lowest sort; but disgusted by the middle rank, the true and best citizens.' William Colston was a true and good citizen, however, notwithstanding his adherence to the Stuart cause. He was sheriff in 1643, and on that occasion received Charles I. as a visitor at his house in Small-street. In 1645, he was dismissed by the Parliamentarians from his offices in the corporation, to be reinstated in 1660. He died in 1681, at the age of seventy-three. Five-and-forty years before that time, on the 2nd of November, 1636, his son Edward was born, to

be christened on the 8th of the month, and put out to nurse at Winterbourn in the neighbourhood. With those slender facts the biographer who tells his history in 507 pages has to content himself through the first 313.* Of the way in which his youth and early manhood were passed we have no record save his own statement that he had his education in London, although there is good reason to accept the tradition that part of his early commercial life was spent as a factor in Spain, where his kinsman, Humphrey Colston, was consul. When he was about forty years old, at any rate, he was settled as a merchant in London. In 1681 he was chosen a governor of Christ's Hospital, and in almost every subsequent year we find entries of his gifts to that institution, in sums varying from 100*l.* to 500*l.*

An interesting tradition refers to an earlier date. 'In 1676,' we are told, 'he paid his addresses to a lady, but being very timorous lest he should be hindered in his pious and charitable designs, he was determined to make a Christian trial of her temper and disposition. Therefore,—having filled his pockets full of gold and silver, in order that if any object presented itself in the course of their tour over London Bridge, he might satisfy his intention,—while they were walking near St. Agnes's Church, a woman in extreme misery, with twins in her lap, sat begging, and as he and his intended lady came arm-in-arm, he beheld the wretched object, put his hand in his pocket and took out a handful of gold and silver, casting it into the poor woman's lap. The lady being greatly alarmed at such profuse generosity, coloured prodigiously, so that when they were gone a little further towards the bridge foot, she turned to him, and said, "Sir, do you know what you did a short time ago?" "Madam," replied Colston, "I never let my right hand know what my left hand doth." He then took leave of her, and for this reason never married.'

That story is in keeping with all we know about Colston, most of the 'all' having to do with his work as a philanthropist. In the beginning of 1682 his name is first found in the annals of Bristol, and then he is spoken of as a merchant of London, lending to his native city 1800*l.* at five per cent. interest. But he was at home in both the great centres of seventeenth-century commerce. In December, 1683, he received the freedom of Bristol; and about that time, or earlier, it seems that his chief business consisted in sending ships to the West Indies, there to sell English goods, and bring back commodities for home consumption. Six years later, in 1698, he set up a sugar refinery at an old house known as the Mint, in St. Peter's Churchyard, his partners being Richard Beacham, of London, Sir Thomas Day, and the Captain Nathaniel Wade, whose republican vehemence had inclined him in his youth to go and form an ideal colony in New Jersey, and who, more lately, had been implicated in Monmouth's rebellion against James II., and narrowly escaped execution. In taking so fierce a regicide for partner, Edward Colston showed that he in no way shared his father's royalist prejudices. Had it been otherwise, he would hardly have chosen to live in the quaint, roomy house at Mortlake, yet standing as a ruin, where Oliver Cromwell had dwelt before him. There we find him settled down in 1689, attending vestry-meetings, and otherwise doing duty as an orderly parishioner whenever he could be at home. But he was frequently away; often at his lodgings in town, apparently in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, whence he could have personal supervision of the shipping in which he was interested, but oftener still at Bristol, where he retained his father's house in Small-street.

Bristol and London divided his benefactions. To Christ's Hospital, as we have seen, he gave large sums nearly every year. On one

* 'Edward Colston, the Philanthropist: his Life and Times.' By Thomas Garrard. Edited by Samuel Griffiths Tovey. Bristol, 1852. A work to which we are indebted for nearly all the facts given in this short chapter.

occasion he gave 1000*l.* towards the relief of the poor in Whitechapel; and in 1701 he sent another 1000*l.*, to be spent in maintaining the poor children of the same parish, then, as now, one of the wretchedest parts of London. Twice every week, we are told, he had large quantities of meat and broth prepared for distribution among the paupers in his neighbourhood. Every year he went through Whitechapel Prison and the Marshalsea to empty his purse in freeing the most deserving debtors for small amounts; and at one time he sent a lump sum of 3000*l.* to relieve and liberate the poor debtors in Ludgate Prison. In 1709, again, a year of famine, he sent a noble present of 20,000*l.*, to be applied by the London committee in helping the starving poor of the city.

Those were casual charities. Most of Colston's permanent endowments were in Bristol In 1690 he obtained leave from the civic corporation to buy about three acres of ground on St. Michael's Hill, called The Turtles, 'to erect thereon an almshouse and chapel, and three other messuages,' for which 100*l.* were to be paid. That was done, and by the autumn of 1695 the almshouses were built and endowed, accommodation being afforded in them for twelve poor men and twelve poor women, whose care and future election was assigned to the Company of Merchant Adventurers of Bristol, incorporated by Edward VI. in 1547, and confirmed by Elizabeth in 1566. That year, 1695, was rich in other good works. 'One of his ships,' it is recorded, 'having been missing for upwards of three years, and having been given up as lost, arrived deeply laden. He said, as he had given her up as totally lost, he would claim no right to her, and ordered the ship and cargo to be sold, and the produce to be applied towards the relief of the needy, which was immediately carried into execution.' In October, 1695, he proposed to maintain six poor sailors, if the Merchants' Company would be at the cost of building a wing to the almshouses at The Turtles, an offer that was accepted, with the generous addition of an endowment for six other mariners; and in the following month Colston made provision for the admission of six new boys into Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, a charitable institution founded in 1589 by William Bird, merchant, and some time mayor of Bristol. A year or two later the untiring philanthropist made a further endowment for six boys, raising the number of inmates to fifty. In 1697 'Edward Colston and Co., partners,' sold their sugar-refinery at the Mint for 800*l.*, Colston himself advancing a large part of the money, and in that way the Mint workhouse was established. The rich merchant's charities grew as he advanced in years and wealth. They were so large and numerous that his neighbours, in unreasonable jealousy, resented his labours for the good of the town. When, in 1703, he made a munificent proposal to increase the number of Queen Elizabeth's hospitallers from fifty to a hundred, he was 'hardly censured,' and the institution he wished to benefit was stigmatized as 'a nursery for beggars and sloths, and rather a burden than a benefit to the place where they are bestowed.' But Colston would not take a refusal. In March, 1706, he repeated his offer, saying, that were the like made to the corporation of London, he knew well it would be gladly accepted for Christ's Hospital, 'but although I have had my education, and spent good part of my days there, yet since I first drew my breath in your city, I rather incline that the poor children born there should partake thereof.' The Bristol aldermen had grown wiser in the interval. This time they promptly accepted the proposal. By August, 1707, 'Mr. Lane's house in St. Augustine's Back' had been bought for 1300*l.*; and further sums having been spent in fitting it for a new and suitable school-house, the old endowments were augmented by a gift representing 640*l.* a year, and the new establishment was opened in July, 1710. While Colston was at Bristol, attending the ceremony, a woman is said to have gone to him with an urgent request that he would obtain for her son admission into the school,

and, on his agreeing thereto, to have promised to teach the lad all life long to thank his benefactor. 'No,' was the merchant's characteristic reply, 'teach him better; we do not thank the clouds for rain, nor the sun for light, but we thank the God who made both clouds and sun.'

A complete enumeration of Colston's charities would fill more space than we can afford, but we have already given instances enough. They have secured for him renown as the most illustrious of Bristol's many noble benefactors. In English history there is hardly another instance of such lifelong perseverance in well-doing.

The worthy merchant represented his native city for many years in Parliament. He was a member of the committee appointed to consider the charges of bribery brought against Sir Thomas Cook and the East India Company in 1704; and in other ways he worked carefully but quietly. We have no record of his taking any active part as an orator in the business of the nation. In 1710 he was chosen again. He had refused to stand, alleging that he was too old to perform the duties that would devolve upon him. But the people were determined to have him, and he was elected by acclamation. 'It was very surprising,' wrote the correspondent of the 'Post Boy' newspaper, 'to see the joy it occasioned in this city when they carried their member along the city, with the mitre and streamers before him; and the whole city was illuminated, and the night concluded with bonfires and ringing of bells.' Parliament was dissolved in 1713; and from that time we hear little more of Edward Colston prior to his death at his house in Mortlake, he having attained the ripe age of eighty-five, on the 11th of October, 1721. 'As to what relates to my funeral,' he wrote in the will that assigned about 100,000*l.* to his kindred and friends, besides the vast sums expended in benevolence, 'I would not have the least pomp used at it, nor any gold rings given, only that my corpse shall be carried to Bristol in a hearse,' and attended to the grave by the recipients of his various charities, 'and that the money that might otherwise have been expended in gold rings be laid out in new coats and gowns, stockings, shoes, and caps for the six sailors, and the like, except the caps, for so many of the men and women in my almshouse that shall accompany my corpse as above, and are willing to wear them afterwards.'

H. R. F. B.

# THE LADY IN MUSLIN.

## CHAPTER VI.

### HOW I WON THE RACE.

ONE morning, to my agreeable surprise, I found a small parcel of what I immediately decided were books and periodicals, lying on the breakfast table, addressed to M. Owenson, Esq., Hazeldean. I was a little puzzled, as I had given no orders for the same, and I was not aware of the existence of any editor, publisher, or friend, who was likely to pay me such a delicate attention. It struck me also as queer, that the address should be Owenson instead of Owen; still, as the initial of my Christian name was correct, and the parcel had come direct to my abode, I opened it without any hesitation.

It contained some half-dozen magazines of light literature, a number of the 'Fashions' for the month, and two or three of the newest novels; altogether, a selection that added not a little to my surprise at its coming to me.

As I turned over the leaves of the 'Fashions'—very much bewildered as to its use to me, or any one else, indeed, if other minds were as obtuse as mine in comprehending the explanatory foot-notes attached to the bright engravings of females in all kinds of costumes, and in all stages of dressing—out dropped a note, bearing again the name of M Owenson, Esq., and so of course I opened it. Imagine my dismay at reading the following:—

'*London.*

'DEAR MARGARET,—I hasten to perform your request. I'm afraid, however, the selection may possibly not suit your taste, you should have said what kind of novels you like. I can quite believe you are almost ennuied to death down in that poking little village. I hope you don't mean to allow more than a month to the pursuit of your wild-goose chase, and that you will rejoin us in time to go and spend the autumn reasonably at some watering-place.

'All Indian news shall be duly forwarded; my eyes are on the alert, and always devotedly at your service.

'When you write, tell me your address. I suppose there is no danger of this not reaching you, yet, under circumstances, I should like to know the address as fully as possible, to avoid mischances.

'Yours in great haste,

'CAROLINE.

'M. Owenson, Esq ! ! !'

'Read that, Richard,' I said, in a very frightened tone, to Gaunt, 'and tell me what I am to do.'

Dick did read, and then looked almost as perplexed.

'Mistakes will happen,' he said, slowly; 'but what the deuce did you go opening a letter addressed to Owenson,' he added, angrily; 'your name's not Owenson.'

'You see it came here, and there's my initial all right,' I said meekly.

'I don't envy your position, Mark, I tell you candidly,' he said presently. 'To have to explain to any one that you have opened their letters and read their affairs is confoundedly unpleasant; but to have to front a woman, and tell her that you have by mistake taken a sight of her secrets, is more than my nerves would stand.'

I made no reply, but sat down to my breakfast. Without any explanation, we both made no hesitation about M. Owenson being our fair neighbour, and of course the affair assumed greater importance in our eyes.

'With tact,' I observed presently to Gaunt, 'this accident may be turned into a very fortunate occurrence.'

'Tact!' he answered, accompanying the word with one of those deep guffaws of his that always grated so irritably on my keen ear. 'Try your tact over there?' he added,

pointing in the direction of the villa. 'I wish you luck.'

I recollected pretty well the lady at the railway station, and I must confess if she and the lady of the cottage were one, as I conjectured, I had not much more faith in the efficacy of my 'tact' than Dick had. However, I kept that to myself, and tied up the parcel again, with an assumption of cool indifference.

I am not, generally speaking, a moral coward; but I must acknowledge the going to the lady of the cottage, and explaining my mistake under the present circumstances, made me feel queer, not to say nervous. I remembered so well that steady unabashed gaze round the waiting-room, the calm rudeness with which my polite advances had been received, and I thought of the possible scene that might ensue with such a person, when justly provoked.

I thought of all that while I smoked a cigarette beside Gaunt on the verandah; and the result of such reflections was, that I determined to smoke another, and after that another. It was twelve o'clock when I screwed up my courage to the point of encasing myself in my most unimpeachable garments (our every-day attire being more airy than elegant), and absolutely prepared to go on my expedition.

'You're sure, Gaunt, you've all you want within reach?' I said, coming back to his side with affectionate solicitude.

'Quite sure,' he said, indifferently enough; and raising his eye-glass to survey my person, with perhaps just a touch of jealousy. 'You're determined to do the thing in style,' he added; 'good luck.'

'Good-bye,' I replied with dignity.

I went along at a quick pace, the parcel under my arm, and soon arrived at the entrance of the cottage. As usual at that hour, all the blinds and awnings were closely drawn, and not a sound from living thing broke the stillness reigning around.

With rather a hesitating hand I gave a feeble ring, which received no answer; so after patiently broiling in the sunshine for about five minutes, I rang again; another five minutes of patient suffering, then a rather more vigorous pull at the bell. Still no answer, till my patience exhausted, and my courage revived, I gave a tug which sent a good peal through the house.

This summons was answered by the Indian servant, who, evidently aroused from sleep, did not greet my appearance more civilly than usual. On presenting my card, and requesting to see his mistress on business, he gave me a sleepy, wary smile, and ushering me into a large well-shaded apartment, carefully closed the door on me.

I stayed there long enough to begin to feel a little nervous as to what I should say when in the presence of that mysterious lady, and how I should say it, and to listen eagerly to the closing and opening of doors, and the movement of feet along the uncarpeted floors, when the Indian returned, and with a lower bow than ordinary, requested me to follow him to his mistress's room.

He led me quite across the building to the room from which our interesting neighbour gave us nightly the pleasure of listening to her magnificent voice, and throwing open the door, admitted me into that mystic apartment. It was so closely shaded by Venetian blinds, that coming as I did from the glare of noon, it seemed like passing from day to night; the temperature was agreeably cool, and the sweet scent of flowers came not overpoweringly from the conservatory, which stood with its doors thrown open on one side of the room. The furniture was all of the lightest, airiest description; and the luxury of coolness seemed the only luxury admitted there, with the exception of a handsome rosewood piano, and a kind of sofa settee, from whose soft and abundant cushions my lady had evidently only lately risen, probably roused by myself from her usual midday slumbers.

I had time just to note all this, and to seat myself with studied ease on one of the chairs, when I heard a slight swishing in the adjoining

room, and the door communicating opening slowly, in came the lady of the cottage—and—was it the lady at the railway station? The same filmy, cloudy style of dress, she had certainly; but then in summer most women affect that; she had also the same careless attitude and bearing; but then that profusion of blond hair, worn drawn back from a brow that was particularly smooth and beautiful, and collected in the net at the back, gave a youthfulness to the face that was altogether wanting, and strikingly so, in that of my railway acquaintance. There was certainly a something which recalled her vividly; but then, curiously enough, in comparing the remembrance to the reality, the very peculiarities recalling her seemed to deny her identity. The expression resembled, but it certainly was not the same; the dark full eyes resembled, but the gaze was not the same; the cast of the features, the complexion, resembled, yet were different, and I could no more have sworn to the lady at the railway station being identical with the lady at the cottage, than I could have sworn to the identity of the man in the moon.

I was so utterly bewildered with this strange resemblance, and non-resemblance, that as I stood bowing before her I almost forgot my errand, and in my curiosity lost sight of my embarrassment.

She stood before me in the shady light of the apartment, calmly leaning one hand on the table, and waiting for me to speak, with the dignity of a queen giving an audience.

'I trust you will pardon my intrusion,' I began politely; 'I come to explain and apologise for a most unfortunate mistake on my part.' As I spoke I pointed to the packet of books and unclosed envelope, which I had laid on the table.

'Ah!' she exclaimed quickly, and snatching up the letter, she read hurriedly the address, flushing deeply, I didn't know whether through anger or any other emotion.

'My name being so similar'—I began again; but I stopped short, for the lady was running her dark eyes with intense anxiety over the letter, and apparently utterly heedless of my presence.

When she had finished she laid down the paper on the table; her eyes and expression seemed to quiet down, and with a smile she said—

'Make no apologies, pray; I see this is a pure mischance, which, however, harms no one. A lady's correspondence generally contains no very dangerous intelligence.'

As she spoke she looked into my face with the same steady eager gaze which recalled my railway acquaintance strongly, and an expression of triumph which, however, was but momentary, giving place to one of doubtful inquiry, came suddenly, making the resemblance so perfect that once again I felt convinced of their identity.

I proceeded to make some remarks explanatory, apologetical, &c., during which the lady, or as I suppose I may call her now, Miss Owenson, turned over her magazines, lingered lovingly over the fashions, and merely condescended to fill up the pauses I made to take breath by short 'Oh, yes-es,' and 'oh, noes'

When, however, I took my hat, preparatory to departure, she suddenly threw off her indifferent and ennuied manner.

'Some evenings ago,' she said, 'you sent in to me for some music, you or Mr. ——, I forget your friend's name.'

'Oh, yes, Gaunt admired the song you were singing,' I replied, in my turn, assuming the indifferent and careless.

'He seems a great invalid,' she said in an interested tone, going towards a pile of books and loose music, and beginning to turn it over. 'I was sorry not to be able to give him the information he required. However, yesterday, by chance, I came on the very piece. Do you think he would care to have it now?'

I was perfectly aware that Dick knew as much about music as he did of metaphysics, but I did not hesitate to accept my lady's civil offer with enthusiasm, and to prophesy Gaunt's unutterable pleasure

at the possession of such a treasure.

'He's an uncommonly good-hearted fellow,' I said, alluding to my friend; 'but he makes an abominable patient.'

'He seems to give you plenty of occupation certainly,' she replied, 'and his little girl too; I suppose he is a widower.'

'His little girl!' I exclaimed, smiling in spite of myself, and noticing how earnestly the lady listened and how earnestly she seemed to examine my smile. 'My friend is not married; little Cecile is his niece and god-daughter.'

Miss Owenson half drew back a step, not in a surprised or startled manner however, and she said 'Oh,' in a low tone.

Suddenly changing the conversation, she pointed to the conservatory.

'Have I not made the most of my time?' she said; 'when I came here there were six miserable geraniums, and now look.'

I followed her willingly enough among her flowers, and certainly she had reason to be proud of the show they made. They were arranged with great taste, and amongst them I saw some rare exotics, that evidently belonged to the land of her Indian servant, and, I could not help suspecting, of her own too.

Of course I admired, and behaved as a gentleman similarly placed should behave, and would behave, when he has a very vivid idea that he is in company with a handsome, romance-loving opera star; but to my surprise my compliments and soft speeches fell on very stony ground. My companion neither encouraged nor rebuffed such, she simply disregarded them; only now and then she addressed me some pointed question concerning my own life, Gaunt, or little Cecile, that at last woke me to the certainty of what I had at first dimly suspected, viz, that the lady of the cottage was merely spinning out her conversation on flowers, music, &c, that she might have the opportunity and leisure for what in school days I used to call 'pumping' me.

Such a conviction was not flattering; but my curiosity as to her reason for so doing being piqued, I conquered my desire to make my bow and dignified exit, and allowed her to continue her game for a little longer.

When I did at length make my adieu, she held out her hand—a very creamy, plump hand, I remarked—in a friendly manner. And I left her presence, having certainly seen her face, and won the race of Gaunt, but more than ever puzzled as to who and what she was.

All that I could announce with any certainty to my friend was, that Margaret Owenson, Esq., was one of the most peculiar but beautiful women I had ever seen.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### FISHING IN THE BOUNDARY STREAM.

That evening we were prevented talking about my morning call by the presence of the celebrated surgeon who had undertaken the cure of Gaunt's ankle. His presence also prevented our usual attentive observation of our neighbour, very much to my annoyance, for Cecile came once privately to inform me that the lady, dressed in black silk, was walking about the garden, and that she had nodded to her (Cecile). Of course I considered this friendly demonstration entirely owing to my own conduct and 'tact.'

To my great satisfaction the surgeon found Gaunt's foot so far recovered that he no longer ordered such strict rest; he gave us leave to try a short walk in the garden the following day, prophesying from the present state of the ankle a now speedy recovery.

Gaunt's delight at the news was only equalled by my own; for I was not yet sufficiently in love with Miss Owenson to make the occupation of watching her so absorbingly interesting as to supersede every other delight, and I planned with infinite satisfaction a number of expeditions that we would make directly Dick should be able to mount his horse or bear any fatigue.

For the next few days, if the lady of the cottage cared to cast her eyes

in the direction of our verandah, she must have found it very frequently deserted. Gaunt, only too glad to make as much of his freedom as he could, had hired a light chaise, with a pair of capital ponies, and these animals he kept in perpetual motion, bearing him and me about somewhere or other. Cecile generally was of our party, except when we drove to the town of —— (which was tolerably often, both of us tiring of the picturesque), or when we visited an old acquaintance of Richard's whom he had discovered on some distant expedition quite by chance.

I noticed all this silently; for I kept most rigidly to our tacit agreement that I should not seek to penetrate Gaunt's secret; but nevertheless I noticed it.

I was becoming very much accustomed, however, to the mystery, and it ceased to harass me. I accepted Cecile's presence without further questioning, and became so accustomed to hear her call Dick 'Uncle,' while she addressed me more familiarly as Mark, that I had almost forgotten that it was *not*, all things considered, the most natural thing in the world.

I dare say a woman's penetrating eye, in watching Gaunt's manner and behaviour to the child, would have guessed with tolerable precision Gaunt's actual connection with her. To my mind he seemed to treat her very much as I did myself. She was not a petable child, her greatest delight being to affect and be treated as the young lady. With a strange precocity too, she appeared almost to understand that her position in our regard was strange and embarrassing, and, with true female delicacy, I have often noticed her remaining and evidently wearying herself in the garden for hours, rather than join us, when she fancied we were talking confidentially and didn't want her.

Gaunt was always kind to her, as a man naturally is to a pretty little girl. Her every whim he did his best to gratify; her every comfort, so far as he understood it, he did his best to supply; she had toys in abundance, dress the same; but then Brunlow was her only companion by Gaunt's inexorable command, and perhaps the poor little heart pined for a more sympathising friend: she certainly used to look very sad at times.

Her veneration for Gaunt was edifying; and I was not long in concluding she must have been brought up by some one who had duly impressed her with such. She was devotedly fond of him also. I have seen her flush crimson with delight at kind words from him, and more than once she has treasured them up, and come repeating them to me, always adding, 'Mark, do you think uncle Gaunt loves me truly?' And to my assurance of the fact she would listen smilingly, her long downcast eyelashes quite shadowing her pretty cheek, with as much pleasure and faith as any damsel double her age.

As to Gaunt, with his usual carelessness, he troubled himself no more with explanations, or anything else. Quite content that I made no attempts at penetrating his secret, he let things remain as they were; and most carefully did he avoid the slightest allusion, not only to his connections with Cecile, but to everything concerning her.

Where she came from—why she remained with him—whether her stay was temporary or for always—he never alluded to in the remotest manner.

Cecile herself was also uncommunicative on such matters I flattered myself I enjoyed her entire confidence, and I felt persuaded the child had either forgotten, or she had received strict injunctions to be silent on all things regarding her short past.

Poor Cecile's lot was not bettered by Gaunt's recovery. As he grew stronger our drives to —— became more frequent, and we seldom returned from such expeditions till late in the evening Even the landlady took pity on her, and came the morning after one of these long drives, as we were sitting at breakfast, and begged Mr. Gaunt to let his little niece go on a visit with her to some friend's at a short distance, adding—'the poor child was so lonesome, it would be quite a

charity to let her have a romp with her farmer friend's children.'

Gaunt was firm in his refusal, though Cecile stood by looking up at him with dancing eyes for permission. I could not help breaking through my rule of non-interference, and remonstrating with Gaunt for his ridiculous strictness. Dick was as firm as a rock, or, rather, obstinate as a mule.

We had been planning for ourselves a very agreeable little expedition, which, however, did not include poor Cecile; but after that short scene I was not surprised to see Dick take down his fishing-rod and straw hat, and, without any allusion to our intended drive, propose a morning's fishing in the boundary stream.

We selected the spot where the stream came gushing out from the dark wood, and there, under the shade of a pair of venerable oaks, we sat ourselves down on the soft turf, with fishing-rods, &c., pipes and smoking apparatus, and other personal comforts which the heat and labour we were undertaking necessitated. From this position we had a very excellent view of the garden of the cottage, and we were not a little pleased, considering the 'slowness' of our present occupation, to perceive shortly our neighbour making her appearance, first at the window, then on the verandah, and, finally, in the garden of her domains.

We were still very much interested in my lady; but now that we were able to seek amusement elsewhere, our curiosity was not sufficient to render the occupation of watching her at a distance so absorbing as it had been.

Perhaps Miss Owenson from behind her venetians had observed that her watchers' vigilance flagged, and like a skilful general determined to change her tactics. At any rate, on that particular morning the lady of the closed shutters and mysteriously turned-away face came slowly but surely down the lawn, even to the bank of the boundary stream; then she unfastened the little gate that, with the hedge of prickly thorn, formed the side boundary to her garden, and, passing out, sauntered along the bank of the stream till she came directly opposite to us.

She stopped, bowed to me, nodded to Cecile, who sat perched on a projecting root of the oak, fishing with all her might, and then stood, looking very much as if 'further advances' would be graciously received.

Gaunt had stuck his eye-glass in his eye, and pretended to be examining the end of his fishing-rod with the greatest care, taking the opportunity, however, of now and then sending a glance across the stream, which, perhaps, gave the lady courage to say, 'You look so comfortable there I should like to join you, if you will give me leave.'

Of course both Gaunt and I were eager in our invitations (men like frank women, you know, on a hot morning), but at the same time expressed our embarrassment as to how she could effect it, unless she made a considerable circuit to the rustic bridge.

My lady laughed, and said, 'Oh! don't mind that.'

At a little distance from where we were sitting the stream suddenly narrowed, and the banks, steeper than elsewhere, and overgrown with brambles, bushes, and brooms, overhung a very rushing, foamy yard or two of water.

I had often stood and contemplated the possibility of a leap across this spot, but the difficulty of descending the one bank low enough to bring the base of the other within springing distance, and the swift current of the stream lying between making the idea of a cold bath very disagreeable in case of a slip, I had always been contented with assuring myself that of course I could do it, and that there was no occasion to try. I did feel considerably surprised, then, when I saw Miss Owenson walk quietly to this spot, and begin to draw her dress securely round her previous to making her descent among the brooms and bushes.

'She's going to jump!' Cecile cried.

Gaunt raised his eye-glass. 'The

deuce she is! Go and stop her, Mark,' he exclaimed, 'for heaven's sake!'

I did dart forward, but I was too late; when I arrived the lady had already torn her way through the bushes, three-fourths down the bank, and now stood firmly poised on a ledge of clear ground, eyeing the distance, and preparing to make the spring that should bring her on the other side of the sparkling, rushing water.

'Don't!' I cried from the top of the bank; 'pray don't!'

'Oh, go away! you make me nervous,' she replied, looking up, with her audacious eyes sparkling as brightly as the stream. I was so alarmed at her position that my eloquence failed me; I could only reiterate, 'Don't! pray stop!'

It was no use, with steady hand she cleared her dress from every entanglement, drew it tightly round her, and then gave a bold spring. The shrubs and bushes prevented me from seeing if she had arrived at her destination below, and for an instant I stood listening intently for some signs that she was safe. I was looking over, leaning against a young tree, getting every moment more anxious at neither seeing nor hearing anything, when I heard a laugh at my elbow, and, turning, there stood the lady, as elegant, calm, and unruffled as if she had just passed from her drawing-room, not a sign of that leap on either herself or her dress; and to look at her, as she stood laughing in the sun, she appeared a very unlikely person to attempt or think of such a thing.

I started. 'Be thankful you are safe!' I exclaimed.

'What a fuss you make about a trifle,' she replied. 'Strong limbs and good nerves were all that was necessary to insure my safety; and those I had, I knew.'

I was silent. I don't like masculine women, and, the danger over, I was very ready to criticise the good taste of my companion for thus exhibiting her strong limbs and nerves.

She looked at me for a moment, then, turning away, began whipping the blossoms off an unfortunate bush growing close by with a vigour that witnessed to her strength of muscle at any rate.

'Ah!' she exclaimed suddenly, 'how well I can read your thoughts! It was shockingly unladylike, wasn't it? Well, never mind, let us join your friend. I want to learn angling.'

There was something in her manner that quite disturbed my usual equanimity and self-possession. I didn't know what to say to her very good reading of my thoughts, and I was more perplexed by feeling that she cared very little for my unflattering opinion of her.

'They must have seen you make the leap,' I said, as we walked slowly side by side towards the couple under the oak trees. 'My friend is one of those who think as highly of such feats of strength as yourself.'

'We shall sympathize, then,' she answered shortly.

Gaunt came to meet us, and was profuse in his compliments at the lady's agility. He had witnessed the whole proceeding. Then, throwing his plaid on the ground, he began arranging a seat for her; and she took possession of it with a graceful *abandon*, and lounged there beside him as if they were acquaintances of years' standing.

For myself, I walked away to a short distance, where I fancied the fishing would be better.

I could hear their voices distinctly —almost distinguish the words they spoke. Gaunt's laugh came often, hers at rarer intervals, but in concert with his, and then it sounded clear and ringing, music even in my criticizing ear. Cecile's tones mingled now and then with theirs, but they soon ceased; and when I turned once to look at the group, I noticed that she had quitted her perch, and, like myself, was seeking her fish at a little distance.

Directly she caught my eye she drew in her line, gathered up her apparatus, and came slowly towards me.

'Well, Cecile,' I said, as she stood silently beside me, 'why have you left the lady? Don't you like her?'

'No,' she answered quickly and emphatically, 'not at all. Do you, Mark?"

'She's very handsome, Cecile,' I replied, hesitatingly.

'So is Uncle Gaunt,' said the child, turning and looking at them both

I don't know why, but Cecile's very inconsequent remark gave me a strange qualm. I turned and looked. They were not regarding us. Gaunt was fixing her fishing-rod, and she was assisting him, her creamy fingers almost touching his, I could see, and they were both laughing.

'A quarter of an hour ago,' I thought, 'they were perfect strangers! What is all this?" Then, with a very impatient 'Tut,' I turned away What was it to me?

'Don't fish any more—let us go and hunt birds' nests in the wood, Mark,' said Cecile, softly 'It will be so cool under the trees.'

I could not resist her, so, throwing down my rod, I took Cecile's willing little hand and we went rambling together into the dark shady wood.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MARGARET OWENSON.

Margaret Owenson was indeed a puzzle, and one that, as day by day our acquaintance ripened into intimacy, became more intricate, and, at the same time, interesting.

A young, singularly handsome

and accomplished woman living alone in her strange house, with strange servants, with habits and ways that bespoke a long residence —if not birth in a foreign land— would have attracted the attention of the most careless on-looker: strange and out-of-the-way, however, as her mere outward habits were, they were as nothing to her strange bizarre character.

Like a kaleidoscope that never presents the same picture, and almost fatigues the eye with its perpetual change, she seemed to take a delight in presenting herself ever under some new phase to the gaze of those around her; and as if not content with that means of rendering herself incomprehensible and mysterious, she most carefully concealed all the details of her previous history and all her schemes for the future. I never encountered a young person who seemed to confine herself so mysteriously to the present—as to have apparently severed every tie that interested her in the past and every expectancy that might connect her with the future. With a freedom that might have subjected her to considerable criticism, if there had been neighbours to criticize, she threw her house open to us, visited us in return and joined us in walks, drives, and rides, with as complete an ignoring of the usual restrictions imposed on girls of her age and in her position, as if such had never existed.

Yet, with all this contempt for outward *convenance*, her manner, language, and bearing could have borne the eye of the severest moralist Frank she was always— audacious occasionally—bold often —but loose or coarse never.

The same contradiction was apparent in her education. She sang, as I said before, like a 'prima donna,' drew caricatures and painted with considerable skill; but beyond reading, writing, and spelling, there her accomplishments ended. She was fearfully ignorant of even the elements of what other women know well; but then a little wild reading, and a mass of newspaper literature in the possession of a naturally clearsighted, acute mind, became a source of wealth from which she drew sufficient to render her conversation sharp, sensible, and, by its very wants, quaintly original.

Men in our position were not likely to quarrel with a young woman for being what our landlady once called 'unparticular, very unparticular, sir,' and we accepted as frankly as they were given her invitations to pass the evenings at the cottage, to listen to her music, to join her in her walks, or to take her out in our chaise. Poor Cecile! her comfort was not so rigidly consulted on those occasions as formerly, and she was obliged to conceal her dislike as best she could, sitting on a stool at my lady's feet, in the bottom of the carriage. How the child grew to hate the lady! I was amused and yet almost pained to watch her, as day by day the intimacy between Margaret and Gaunt increased. I have seen her come creeping to the drawing-room, with a quiet stealthiness in the dusk of the summer evening, and then as she saw, as she always did see, Gaunt, either lounging by the piano where Margaret Owenson sat sometimes singing, but more often making believe to play, while she carried on a low-toned conversation with Dick,—or Gaunt bending over her, as if in an energetic humour, she dashed off spirited little drawings of himself, or as perhaps she would catch sight of them in the conservatory arranging the plants (for my lady was a fidget and always altering and re-altering her arrangements); or about some other work, far enough to be out of my hearing as I sat, perhaps about as much satisfied as Cecile, smoking my cigar alone; as she saw one or the other of these scenes, a look of intense trouble would come into the child's face, and when the opportunity came how vindictive she was! I could account for her strong dislike to Miss Owenson, knowing her jealous fondness of Gaunt; but the disfavour with which, in spite of herself, Miss Owenson could not hide from my eyes, she regarded her tiny rival, was more puzzling. To imagine her jealous of a mere child, to whom, besides, Gaunt now showed no very

strong affection, would have been ridiculous; yet I noticed she listened with eager attention to the slightest remark Gaunt addressed to his little niece, and watched with a kind of fascinated gaze his most trivial action when it concerned her.

At the commencement of our visits to the cottage, she had attempted to court Cecile's friendship by caresses, gifts of flowers and fruit, or other articles of value in most children's eyes; but her advances had been so decidedly repulsed by the young lady, her gifts declined, or, if accepted, carelessly destroyed under her eyes, her caresses unnoticed or even avoided, that she soon gave up her attempts, and, I saw, decided to look at Cecile in the light of a necessary nuisance.

One evening, after Gaunt had left us for a few moments to take the child back to the inn, I could not help saying, 'Why do you dislike little Cecile so, Miss Owenson?'

We were sitting in the twilight, she by the window, watching the retreating figure of Richard Gaunt, I lounging comfortably on her settee.

She turned sharply round.

'Dislike her! what! do you think I am such a fool as to entertain such a strong sentiment as dislike for a baby of that age?'

'I don't think you are a fool,' I replied, 'but I *do* think you dislike poor little Cecile.'

'Think what you choose—it is too fatiguing to contradict you, only, I'll thank you not to put such a silly idea either in the child's head or her uncle's,' was the lady's answer, in a voice that contrasted strangely with the gay, pleasant tones she had been addressing to us all the evening.

'Don't be under any alarm,' I replied carelessly, 'I seldom trouble myself with setting before my friends disagreeable truths.'

'You are right, nothing is more foolish,' she said drily; then, turning away, she went to the piano and began playing and singing a noisy Italian song.

I smoked on. From the commencement of our acquaintance, I had been accustomed to be treated by, and to treat my fair eccentric friend in a very off-hand manner.

The day she had joined us so unceremoniously whilst fishing in the boundary stream, I had learned at a glance that to cope with such a character I must meet her on her own grounds, and fight her with her own weapons, or else submit unto her, which I was not at all inclined to do.

With Gaunt it was different. He had the happy art of making love to women in such a manner that, whilst submitting to them, he always remained master; besides, his love-making was of that pleasant, light description—here to-day, there to-morrow, back again the day after, and so on—directly Margaret Owenson's eccentricities become tiresome he would save himself in flight, I knew.

I was lying very comfortably, not at all disturbed by the evident irritation which was venting itself in that noisy, passionate song, when it suddenly stopped, and she began wailing more than singing the most plaintive little air I ever heard. The words, almost whispered, sounded like an Indian dialect of which I knew a little, and they came breathed almost lovingly from her lips, with a pathos that one can only throw over a familiar tongue.

When she had finished she came and stood beside me, with her usual freedom:—

'Do you know that I have never sung that since I left my——' Gaunt's figure darkened the window at that instant, and she paused. 'Did he hear, do you think?' she half muttered, and then, not waiting for an answer, she went to meet him.

Gaunt replied to her question himself by asking immediately 'Where she had learnt that Hindoo air?'

Margaret, as if scarcely noticing that he spoke, uttered a careless 'What?' and turned away to give a rather lengthy order to the Indian who happened to enter the room at the moment, and then, as he quitted it, she also left by another door, with the free abruptness to which

we were now too accustomed to question its politeness.

When she returned, supper was on the table, and we sat down to it, Margaret, I fancied, with a slight shade of embarrassment. However, we talked as usual, ate and drank with our usual gusto, and if the lady of the cottage had any disquietude, she certainly concealed it well under more than her wonted gaiety and wit.

After supper she did not, according to her ordinary habit, sit down to the piano. She complained of the heat and proposed going into the garden, and then, when we were there, my lady was so restless and fidgety that we thought it best to take ourselves off.

She did not press us to remain, neither did she accompany us, as usual, to the end of the garden; but, like an impatient child, no sooner were the simple words 'Good night' pronounced, than she bounded into the house, and when we reached the stream, the light shining from her bedroom window showed that my lady was already following Gaunt's advice to go to bed immediately.

## CHAPTER IX.

AN ARM WITH A GOLDEN BRACELET.

It was a pouring September day. We met each other with imprecations against the weather, exclamations of disgust at everything, and with every sign of anger, disappointment, and bad temper.

We had planned a particularly agreeable excursion for that day.

'Confoundedly provoking!' Gaunt exclaimed, as he watched the pouring down of the rain on the climbing roses, on the already drenched flowerbeds, on the gravel walks, on everything and anything. 'Patter, patter, how hopeless that sound of rain is!'

I sensibly arranged myself with pens, ink, and paper, and left Dick to his groans and smoke.

After writing a very good article and a capital critique for the ——, which, I solemnly declare, owed their piquancy to my own wit, and not, as Gaunt ill-naturedly declared, to that little meteorological disappointment, I felt refreshed and my nerves invigorated, and, as a light recreation, I determined to go and have a ride.

I can't say much for the horses that mine host took such a pride in. They were skinny and bony, and did little credit to either their parents, supposing they were as respectably connected as their possessor declared them, or to their diet. There was a nag, however, which went tolerably well, and him I mounted in spite of the still falling rain.

It was about four o'clock P.M. and I calculated I should have time to ride to Q——, deposit my despatches in the post, and return in time not to aggravate Dick's raspiness by keeping him waiting for dinner.

With my waterproof coat on my shoulders, my legs similarly encased, and mounted on my whitey-brown nag, I flatter myself I made a peculiar if not an elegant appearance, and one admirably suited to the wet, narrow country road, with its overhanging dripping trees, if not to Rotten Row.

It was not unpleasant to ride quietly along—the damp earth sent up a refreshing smell—the country all around looked brightly green, and, to a poetical ear, the chirpings of birds in the neighbouring copses, the only sounds breaking on the stillness, might have been poetically suggestive.

I am not of a poetical disposition; but the scene, combined with the quiet, rather sleepy motion of the horse, made me meditative, and I mused so deeply that I paid no attention to where I was going or the distance I had already gone.

The nag jogged on, neither turning to the right nor to the left, apparently well accustomed to follow that road; and when I roused up I discovered, to my discomfiture, that I must certainly have passed the turning that lead into the L—— road.

Pulling up my horse and looking round, I saw a lane on my left, which, according to my knowledge of the *locale*, ought to lead me by a short cut to the town of L——,

so towards this lane I turned the nag's head.

It was a very damp ride down that narrow lane. The trees on either side hung low, bowing to each other across the path, and as I passed along, I drew on myself a perpetual shower-bath from the drenched leaves.

My macintosh ought to have rendered this a very slight annoyance, and so it did, so far as my shoulders were concerned; but the said garments belonging to Gaunt, whose proportions are not so elegant as mine, fitted me very loosely about the neck, and there the raindrops found easy entrance.

Perhaps you, my dear reader, know the feeling of little rills from your hat trickling down your back between the skin and shirt. You know, perhaps, the peculiar sensation of steaming that the rain and exercise combined produce. It *is* disagreeable, is it not?

That ride gave me a very good taste of the water-cure, and it was not a *bonne bouche*.

I jogged on, thankful to reach, as I thought, the L—— road, and then putting the nag to a sharp canter, rode away for a mile or two.

In spite of sharp cantering, however, the road still refused to assume a familiar appearance, although from the distance I had come, I felt sure L—— ought not to be far off.

I began to have misgivings concerning that short cut.

The road was undulating; just before me it rose considerably, so I determined to ride up to the highest part, and there try and make out the country.

This I did, but no signs of L—— appeared. As I looked carefully around I caught sight of a small cottage, the only habitation visible, standing almost buried among the trees at the corner of a lane which led away from the road on my right.

'I may perhaps get some information as to where I am, at any rate,' I thought; and with these hopes I pushed on down the road and soon reached the cottage.

A little green paling, enclosing a small garden, separated the dwelling from the path, and a large willow, standing in front, drooped its branches so thickly as almost to hide it from view.

As I came slowly along, before I could see or be seen by any one in the cottage, the sound of voices coming from an evidently open window attracted my attention.

I could not, at first, catch the words spoken, but a laugh, low, long, and merry, followed by a loud 'No, no, Geoffrey—Geof!' startled me. I could have sworn that it was the laugh and voice of Margaret Owenson I advanced, and bending down, tried to peep through the screen of willow branches into the house. All that I could see was a portion of a creamy-skinned arm leaning against the window-sill; but on that arm was a band of gold that I knew well, and as it was suddenly moved and a hand came in sight, clasping some baby-looking fingers, on that fair hand were rings, rings I knew well also.

I was just about to exclaim, 'Miss Owenson,' when the arm and hand disappeared with a quick movement; the window was closed softly and swiftly, and I heard a faint cry as of a child quickly hushed. I felt considerably puzzled. What could Margaret Owenson be doing there? Had she seen me? And had she disappeared to avoid being seen by me?

I entered the garden and knocked at the cottage door.

A young woman dressed more like a respectable servant than a peasant opened it slightly, not sufficiently to enable me to see into the interior, and asked me rather abruptly what I wanted.

I told her I had lost my way, and would be obliged if she would direct me to L——.

She seemed a little embarrassed at my question. She evidently did not know how to answer it, and was unwilling to quit her post to get the necessary information. While she hesitated, a child impatiently began to scream. There was a struggle within—a voice said in a suppressed tone—Hush!

'L—— lies further down the road,' the young woman said firmly, after

giving a hasty look over her shoulder, and then, without further ado, she slammed the door in my face. 'Polite,' I half ejaculated as I turned away and went out of the gate. 'Margaret Owenson can't be far off.'

At the moment I heard a scream, and looking round, I perceived a child attempting to make its way out of a side kind of half door, half window. One short leg was over the sill, and a curly head, that, in spite of its baby proportions, was remarkably fair and handsome, was struggling to follow it, when two braceleted arms caught the little fellow in a strong determined grasp and almost tore him away.

'Margaret Owenson as I'm alive,' I muttered, and conquering the inclination to go back and make myself sure of the fact, remembering the peculiarity of my lady's disposition, I quietly remounted my horse and trusted to my own wits to refind my way

Fortunately, I met a farmer about a quarter of a mile further on, and he put me on the right track. What with jogging, sharp cantering, and short cuts, I was nearly eight miles distant from Hazledean. What was Margaret Owenson doing in that solitary cottage eight miles from home?

I was not surprised to find that Dick had dined and gone out, when I reached the inn.

In answer to my questions, Cecile told me, dolefully, that Uncle Gaunt had gone out early in the afternoon, but had soon returned and done nothing but smoke till dinner. She thought he was at the cottage now; she supposed he was, as he always did go there; and she supposed I was going too, wasn't I?

I glanced up at the rueful face of the child, as she sat the picture of despondency almost buried in Dick's arm-chair. 'Cecile,' I said, gravely, 'don't you know it's wicked to dislike any one?'

'I can't help it,' answered Cecile, dolefully; 'I do hate Miss Owenson, and it's no use.'

'And why do you hate her?' I asked. 'You have no cause. She is not unkind to you.'

Cecile began nibbling her delicate little nails, and did not reply.

I should have watched this jealous little rival, with great amusement, had I not seen that big tears were brimming over the dark eyes and falling on the little clenched hands in slow droppings. I was concerned but puzzled, for Cecile was not a young person to be soothed with kisses.

I rose and began arranging my neckcloth at the glass, casting meanwhile furtive glances at the arm-chair. Cecile would not look up, would not be consoled in any manner—the tears dropped on slowly and constantly till the white fingers were quite bathed.

'Cecile,' I said softly, 'are you coming with me?' She looked up—then, if 'looks could kill, I had not lived,' and bounding from her chair marched out of the room with the air of an offended queen.

Since we had become so friendly with our neighbour of the cottage, Gaunt and I had constructed a rustic kind of bridge across the boundary stream by throwing a couple of planks across from bank to bank.

It was rather a nervous passage to ordinary individuals; but Gaunt and myself soon became accustomed to it; and as to my lady, after so unceremoniously leaping across the stream, it was not likely she would hesitate at the planks.

I sauntered quietly towards the cottage, but on arriving at the bridge, I confess I stood for some instants pondering whether it would not be more prudent that night, to go round by the road. The rain that had been falling heavily for the last twenty-four hours, had swelled the stream considerably; and as it rushed, brown, bubbling, and very swiftly below, I stood looking down shuddering at the idea of a false step on the narrow plank.

I watched the rushing water till the very sound made me feel giddy, and then very prudently, I turned and went round by the road.

Margaret and Gaunt were playing chess Miss Owenson was a very skilful player, and Dick had no objection to allow her to beat him game after game, while it enabled him to

carry on those pleasant, low-toned *tête-a-têtes*

As I entered, Margaret merely glanced up, lifting her hand at the same time, as if entreating me not to speak, then turning back to the board she appeared absorbed in her move I took my stand behind Gaunt, and watched the game I annoyed her I think, for once she looked up impatiently, and then leaning her elbow on the table, shaded her face with her hand, and so hid it from my view

Margaret had the most beautifully rounded arm I had ever seen, and the loose lace sleeve and broad band of gold showed it off to perfection I gazed at it Such an arm and bracelet were recognisable anywhere

'Checkmate—checkmate!' Gaunt at length said triumphantly (He seldom won)

Miss Owenson pushed the board from her and rose up half pettishly

'You lost me the game!' she said, turning sharply on me 'Your entrance spoilt the most splendid manœuvre I was just about to make'

'I am very sorry I came,' I said calmly 'Accept my profound apologies,' then suddenly assuming, in my turn, the offensive, I exclaimed, 'But I have also a little complaint to bring against you Why were you so cruel this afternoon when, in my distress, I came to the cottage, as to have the door slammed in my face?"

She threw into her countenance a look of the greatest bewilderment but at the same time I noticed the slight colour in her cheeks deepened visibly

'What are you talking of? I ordered the door to be slammed in your face!' Then suddenly laying her hand on the bell, she gave an angry peal Before I could utter a word, the Indian appeared

'You told me it was Mr Gaunt who called this afternoon,' she exclaimed to the servant, and pointing to Dick, who was regarding the scene considerably bewildered

'And so it was,' Richard said. 'I called twice, and were told that you were ill.'

The Indian stood mute. Margaret turned to me—

'What do you mean then?' she exclaimed. 'When,' she added, angrily, to the servant, 'did you slam the door in Mr. Owen's face?'

'Never,' Zemide replied, with a glance of defiance at me.

'Never,' I repeated. 'You conduct the proceedings too quickly, my dear Miss Owenson,' I added slowly, and with a slight touch of sarcasm. 'In the first place, I did not accuse your Indian servant, or indeed any servant of yours, of the offence—neither did I allude to the door of the cottage. You may allow Zemide to retire.'

Without further bidding the Indian disappeared.

'Pray go a little faster,' Miss Owenson said, in a tone that she vainly endeavoured should not show her ill-humour

'Were you not in a little solitary cottage about eight miles from here —not far from L——, at about half-past five o'clock this afternoon?' I asked quickly and point-blank.

'A little cottage!' Margaret exclaimed; then turning with a forced laugh to Richard, she exclaimed, 'Mr. Gaunt, your friend has been dining alone, has he not?'

Dick laughed.

'A cottage,' I continued, 'at the corner of a lane. I went there to ask my way to Hazledean, and a young woman after answering my question very uncivilly, and also wrongly, banged the door in my face.'

'And what on earth have I to do with that?' laughed the lady. 'O, Mr. Owen, Mr Owen!'

'Have a little patience,' I began.

'Impossible. Know that all the afternoon I have been lying on my bed with a distracting headache. You, my dear Mr. Owen, must have been having some pleasant little adventure, and afterwards an excellent bottle of wine to recruit your strength, which has confused your ideas.'

Dick laughed.

Miss Owenson was standing close beside me, and as I looked up in her face, I was ungallant enough to feel convinced she was telling anything but the truth.

'My confusion of ideas then, is owing to this,' I exclaimed, rising and laying my hand on the bracelet, 'and these,' touching the rings.

To my surprise her fingers closed round mine with a grasp that evidently besought silence.

'An excellent bottle of wine,' she laughed, her fingers still retaining their grasp. 'Now confess.' And then she looked up into my face, with an expression that seemed suddenly to chase away the beautiful lady of the cottage, and transform her into the impatient, suffering woman at the railway station, as she had stood casting that daring, careless glance round on the occupants of the waiting-room.

'Well, well—have it your own way,' I said; and turning round, I met Gaunt's eyes fixed rather sternly on us both. He was listening intently to what we said, and as I dropped Margaret's hand, I saw he noticed it.

After that he leant against the window which was partly open, silently; and it was in vain that Margaret Owenson seated herself at the piano and asked him, with her glowing smile, what she should play, hoping to draw him to his accustomed place.

## MARCH MUSINGS.

'Nunc nemora ingenti vento nunc litora plangunt.

I.

THE March wind sweeps amid the pines,
While through the dark plantation where
The larch boughs quiver in the air
A fitful ray of sunlight shines.

II.

The March wind blows across the sea,
And through the pine trees o'er my head
Its voice is as the voices dead.
What are the words it speaks to me?

III.

Hard to define: for as it sweeps
Through the thick branches on its way,
The echoes quickened by its sway
Are heard by me as one who sleeps.

IV.

Heard as the memories that wake
From their long rest when in an hour,
Least marked we find a faded flower,
And straightway all the fetters break

V.

That bound the past in silence. So
Floats back the soul upon that stream
Whose current passes as a dream,
Whose waters all so stilly flow.

VI.

The wild March wind smites on my face
With stinging strength, and yet the past
Rises so surely and so fast
That I scarce feel it for a space.

VII.

What says the March wind? Does it speak
Of its work done a year agone,
When eyes that erst so sweetly shone
With love's light darkened as the weak

VIII.

Last sigh of life was swept away,
By the cold March blast which had been
Laden with arctic chills all keen,
Sealing her doom ere break of day?

IX

In vain, in vain the sunny South,
In vain the work of love and care,
Though love grew maddened with despair,
To touch with life the rosebud mouth.

X.

What says the March wind? Does it tell
Of that night when the truest friend
Met in the wrecked mail-boat his end,
And in the March gale heard his knell?

XI.

Or shall I deem a higher strain
Is uttered by the March wind's voice?
Perhaps it were the better choice
To hear in it no sounds of pain:

XII.

But to believe its echoes bring
Promise of fragrant wealth of flowers;
Token of violet-perfumed hours
And snowdrop-coroneted spring;

XIII.

And hope and peace—the happiness
Which each from his own heart must take,
Which hidden lies perchance to wake
Beneath calm Nature's loveliness.

XIV.

Better and truer. Sweep then, breeze,
Across the sombre dusky pines,
Where fitfully the sunlight shines;
Sweep on—and bring such thoughts as these.

W. R.

LONDON SOCIETY.

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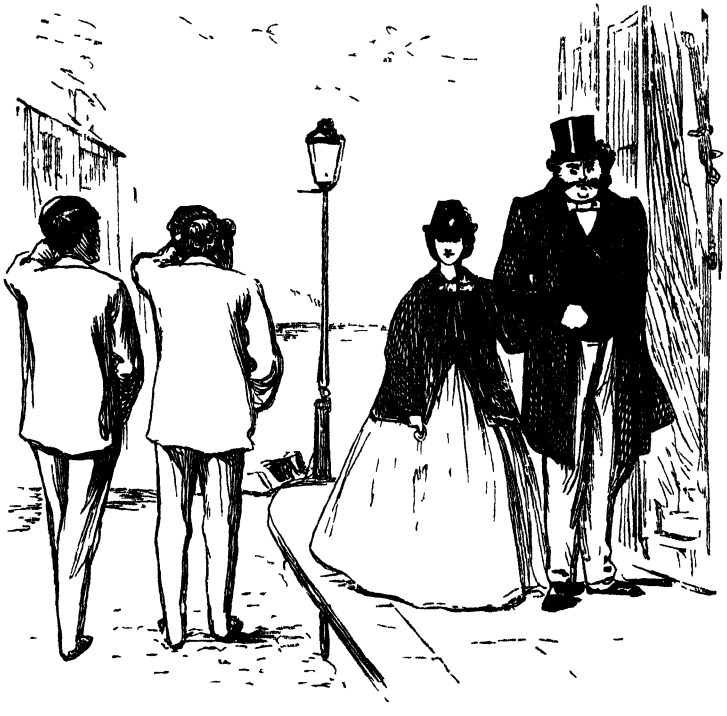
# THE INGENUOUS WOBBLER.

## A Story, with a Moral for Bachelors.



'JE suis mariée, Monsieur.'

I bowed to the intelligence, and just lifted my eyebrows to show a proper amount of interest in it. In my own mind I thought it rather strange that she should volunteer such a statement to me, for it was only eleven minutes since I had first seen her, and not seven since I had first spoken to her. But when I looked down upon her slight figure and childish features, and met her fearless open eyes, the perfect naïveté and self-unconsciousness with which they encountered mine quite disarmed me.

I had asked her to dance because, at the first glance round the room, I had settled in my own mind that she was the prettiest girl there, not excepting even my regular flame, Jennie Galton. And when for the second time I looked down, I saw that I had but done her justice. Her figure was small, and, if anything, wanted dignity, but it was made up

abundantly by the unstudied grace that shone in every movement of her body. Her walk was a miracle of ease and freedom. Her eyes were of soft velvety black, lustrous, but tender too, and drooping, and when she turned them upon me, which she did frankly every now and then in a kind of youthful wonder, I thought I saw depths of passion in them quite unfathomable. She had a pretty little graceful action of the head, which she moved from side to side, resting it now on one dimpled shoulder, now on the other. Jennie Galton afterwards told me that it was to assist the play of her eyes, and that she hadn't patience with her; but I thought showed a simplicity quite delicious.

'Je suis mariée, Monsieur, et pourtant je n'ai pas encore dix-huit ans.'

This time I did not let slip the opportunity of learning what I could about her, and before the end of the quadrille she had confided to me that she was Parisian; that her husband was in Paris (and here she gave a little sigh); that she was at Dieppe with her mother; that her name was Lucie; that she adored dancing; that one rarely allowed her to enjoy it, because mamma was so difficult, would not permit her to dance with everybody. But though mamma would not permit her to dance with the French she did not know, she would permit it with the English, because she adored them. And did one really sometimes see the sun in England? and did the English always marry for love? (another sigh), and did I admire her coiffure? She had sent away her maid and arranged it herself. Thus she prattled on in her unsophisticated way, with her head going like a dear little shuttle, so that I quite forgot I was engaged for the next dance, and I should probably have remained by her side to the end of the evening but for Marston, who came skating across the waxed floor, and looking all the time (very rudely, as I thought) at the little head, addressed me:—

'I am sent for you. Miss Galton says you are engaged to her for this waltz, and that you mustn't flirt.'

I felt very thankful (I don't know why) that Lucie didn't understand English, and, making my bow, hurried him away lest he should attempt some of his stupid witticisms in her own language.

'Who is she?' he whispered, eagerly.

But I saw Jennie Galton frowning at me for wasting the precious moments of the Faust waltz, and I hastened to make up for lost time by snatching her out of her seat and going off with her on the reverse turn, which I knew Jennie adored, leaving poor Marston in the middle of the room to be tossed about in the raging sea of dancers.

Marston was a thorough Englishman; no one could look at his florid complexion and fair curly hair and doubt it. As a man of the world he was too young and too untravelled to be very excellent; but as an animal he was really perfect. Not over tall, but splendidly proportioned was he, with limbs like an athlete, and a waist like a woman's. His face, without being strikingly handsome, was noble, and reflected instantly every change of his feelings. He was an adept in all games requiring skill and courage, and although only in his first year at Oxford, was counted the best tennis-player in the University. He could swim by the hour and dive by the minute, rode like an Australian cattle-driver, skated like a Dutchman, danced like a Frenchman, and led cotillons for half London.

As soon as the waltz was over he attacked me again.

'Who is she? who is she?'

The fair Jennie laughed. 'It is too bad of you, Mr. Marston,' she said, 'to want to snatch away his last conquest.'

I laughed too. The shot had missed its mark; in fact, the delicious waltz had driven all else than Jennie out of my head.

'Besides,' she continued, 'you can introduce yourself; you know it is the fashion here. There, they have begun a schottische.'

Two minutes after Marston was whirling round with Lucie like a

tornado, almost carrying her through the crowd of dancers, while she, as a good dancer should, had abandoned herself wholly to him, and lay in his arms almost as in a trance. Yet the little head was in great movement, now resting voluptuously on his shoulder, now nestling in his shirt-front, and he all the time blushing like a girl.

'Look at your friend,' whispered Jennie, when she saw that I was looking at him, 'and take care of him. She's very pretty, but I don't like the way she moves her head and turns up her eyes.'

'Ah, I dare say. I think it charming; so naive and simple.'

'Yes, so innocent, isn't it? My brother Harry calls her the "Ingenuous Wobbler."'

Now I knew that Jenny's brother was himself smitten by the beautiful Parisian, and I moreover knew that he hadn't two ideas of his own to put together; so I came to the conclusion that the nickname was Jennie's own invention. 'Like all the women,' I said to myself, 'can't help disparaging any rival attraction.' But she was unfortunate in her criticism, for she had selected the very little innocent ways that had most pleased me.

For the rest of the evening Marston scarcely quitted his new acquaintance. When I left the ball he was dancing a cotillon with her that promised to be endless, and the music of which, coming up by fits and starts through the open window of my bedroom, which looked out on the plage, lulled me to sleep, and made me dream that I was condemned to play the Faust waltz on the trombone for ever and ever, while Jennie and Marston, dressed as Marguerite and Mephistopheles, danced it round me.

The next morning I was walking home after my bath, when I suddenly came upon Marston. He was standing before a placard pretending to be deeply interested in the offer therein made of a reward of an astounding sum (in francs) for the apprehension of one 'Caboche, forçat, evadé et escroc.' Not that he was reading it through, for his face was turned down the street, and he seemed to be looking at the Hôtel de l'Europe.

When I took his arm, he turned sharply and blushed (it was the second time I had witnessed that phenomenon).

'Don't laugh at me, old fellow,' he stammered. 'I know I'm a fool, but I can't help it; I've been looking at those dirty windows for the last hour, just to catch a glimpse of her.'

Without inquiring nicely who 'her' might be, I compassionately treated the subject generally. 'You don't suppose,' I said, 'that she'd be up yet, do you? Depend upon it she's just going off into her second sleep.'

At that moment two people turned the corner of the street in earnest conversation. One of them was the Parisian herself. I could not help smiling. Not so Marston. He started, bowed to the lady, in some confusion, and instantly fixed a dark glance upon her companion. Frenchmen, be it said parenthetically, always run extremes as to size: they are either gigantic or microscopic—shrimps or elephants; and the specimen who now so suddenly loomed before us was one of the largest I ever saw. He was not prepossessing either; and, when once one had got over the surprise at his huge proportions, his eyes seemed to be the most noticeable feature about him. They seemed to have usurped to themselves all the movement of which he was capable, and to make up by their restlessness for the unwieldiness of the body to which they belonged. They had, too, a furtive way of looking only out of their corners, unpleasantly suggestive of a wild beast over a bone. He was a man of surprises. When he returned Marston's salute, bringing his hat quite off his head like a real Frenchman, he disclosed a most astounding head of red hair growing low upon his forehead, and forming a violent contrast with the black, beetling eyebrows it almost overshadowed: altogether not a pleasing physiognomy.

'Her husband!' whispered Marston, between his teeth. 'Hush! what's that?'

'Le bon Dieu se chargera de nous secourir, mon ami.' And with that she gave one little convenient twist of her head, shot a Parthian glance at poor Marston, and disappeared with the red-headed into the hotel.

The next day Marston was very low-spirited; the second day he was worse, and made himself perfectly obnoxious at the établissement by devoting himself to a distant and melancholy contemplation of the fair Lucie, to the detriment of all the other beauties. But on the third morning a wonderful change came over him. His countenance not only cleared up from its gloom, but appeared wreathed in smiles. He had long fits of oblivion, apparently ecstatic, and answered absently; while ever and anon he would give a sigh of secret satisfaction. Then he would be jovial; and he even went so far as to make a wretched pun about his being tied to Dieppe like the ebb tide. From that day forth, too, he entirely disappeared from the afternoon concerts; so that Jennie, with much laughing and nodding, professed herself 'quite unable to understand it.'

At length the murder came out. One sultry afternoon the band was floundering through the overture to the 'Fiancée du Roi de Garbe,' the habitués were chattering through the music, and I was dozing in a corner of the pavilion, and trying to wonder where 'Garbe' might be, when Marston suddenly stood before me, looking very agitated.

'Come to my hotel, there's a good fellow,' said he. 'I've had such a narrow escape!'

He spoke hurriedly and eagerly; and I followed at once, thinking by the way of the many narrow escapes I had had myself.

This is what had happened: Marston, as the intelligent reader guesses, had been at the Hôtel de l'Europe every day. Perhaps the intelligent reader will also have guessed that the husband had returned to Paris. Anyhow, so it was. Thus the fair Lucie was left under the care of her mother, Mde. Chenaille, who had readily welcomed Marston, and encouraged his visits; though, she said, they must, for form's sake, be discontinued when Jules returned, 'for he was of a jealousy dreadful, and would be furious.'

That afternoon Marston had been sitting with the two ladies as usual. Now Mde. Chenaille was a most industrious personage, and was working an elaborate *prie-dieu* (for the whole family was pious) in parti-coloured worsted, when she suddenly discovered that she had left her green ball of wool up-stairs, and went to find it. This seems to have been an undertaking of some difficulty; for a good half-hour passed and still she had not returned. Meanwhile the young people had very naturally been talking about themselves. Lucie, with many sighs, had confessed that hers had been a 'marriage de convenance—that—oh, but he must not ask the question—well then, of course she loved her husband—at least she respected him;' that he had 'eaten her fortune,' and was now nearly ruined; that he, upon a recent loss of money on the Bourse, had even insisted upon selling her jewels, which were an heirloom, a sacred legacy from a sainted aunt. And here she could not suppress one little tear, which was the only thing needed to drive poor Marston wild. He used very heated language (fortunately in English, in order to a greater facility), swore she should never be humiliated while he could prevent it, and was in the act of invoking the fires of heaven upon all mercenary minds, when the door suddenly burst open, and the red-haired colossus stood before them. He was positively smoking with rage, and began to utter the most dreadful imprecations before he had even glanced round the room.

Lucie could not resist the shock; she fainted, and would have fallen but for Marston, who caught her, and stood confronting the malignant giant, whose rage at last found words.

'Eh bien, Lucie!' he hissed out—but seeing his wife senseless, he addressed himself to Marston. 'As for you, sir,'—and he raised his hand and advanced towards Mar-

ston, who stood holding the lady, and, in a manner, defenceless.

But the peril seemed to revive Lucie. By a supreme effort she aroused herself, and standing before her husband, waved him off with a faint smile.

'How you frighten me, mon ami,' said she.

'Hold your tongue—this individual will render me reason of this.'

'What do mean, mon ami? Monsieur is a—a——'

'Who is he, Madame?'

'Oh you have so upset me. Monsieur is—a—jeweller, from England.'

'Jeweller! Do you take me for an imbecile?'

'You know, my dear, my jewels that I am going to sell. This is the gentleman who buys them.'

The husband's brow—as much of it as there was—partially cleared up.

'But why does he come here?'

'He came—to' take them away. You know you wished the affair arranged.'

The brow quite cleared up, and took an air of serenity which made it look uglier than ever. The same movement that unknit his brow from its frown knit his eyes, by way of a smile, which, however, was equally unsuccessful in point of beauty.

'I beg ten thousand pardons. I pray Monsieur to excuse this absurd misconception. If Monsieur would call to-morrow—yes!—good-day!'

Marston stood for a moment lost in admiration at the device, which, as he reflected, was, after all, perfectly harmless. Then recovering himself, he bowed to the giant, and passed out at the door, looking back once as he went, just in time to see Lucie drop into a chair, overcome by the scene she had gone through.

'There,' said he, as he finished his story; 'was ever such devotion?—Was ever such a woman?'

I am afraid I was about to make some remarks disparaging to women in general, where there came a knock at the door.

'Come in,' said he, eagerly. 'A letter perhaps.'

The next moment, the little yellow wrinkled face of Mde. Chenaille made its appearance, followed by the little dried-up body thereunto belonging. Her bonnet was awry, so was her shawl, both giving the idea of having been hastily put on; and she entered with an air of great trepidation, which, however, I thought changed to an air of disgust, on seeing me.

'Ah, pardon, Monsieur! but an affair grave—very grave. Can I speak to you in particular?'

'You can speak before my friend—he knows all,' said Marston.

She took another look at me.

'Ah tiens! it was true. It was the gentleman who danced with Lucie. He would sympathize—and he was so young too!'

The last remark sounded somewhat like an observation made to herself. But she continued.

'Monsieur could not figure to himself the scene that had passed. The husband of Lucie, who was of a jealousy—had asked to see her jewels. Lucie had already given them to the jeweller, who had gone to England, and was to send the money to-morrow. She was frightened. She had said that Monsieur was the jeweller—that Monsieur had taken the jewels with him. Then her husband had asked for the price of them, the 10,000f.—cette chère Lucie was interdicted—had fainted away; but she herself, Mde. Chenaille, had fortunately overheard all, and had come to Monsieur, who alone could set it right. It was very easy, very simple, nothing but to lend Lucie the 10,000f. just till the jeweller arrived to-morrow, and in the morning one would return them to him.' And Mde. Chenaille took the pose of a friendly Providence which had found an easy way for him out of all his difficulties.

Marston looked at his watch, rushed to the table, and began to write a cheque.

'There's just time to go to the bank,' said he, 'and get the money before it closes.'

Mde. Chenaille gave one involuntary little start and a nervous clutch at her parasol, neither of which escaped me; although she

recovered herself instantly, and simpered most benignly, on meeting my eyes. 'No harm to try,' I thought. 'Did Madame know the name of the English jeweller?' I asked.

'Yes, certainly. His name was—what — Monsieur Smittth;' and Mde. Chenaille again fell into the pose of the Providence. Marston looked up.

'There are a great many Smiths in England,' said he, smiling.

Mde. Chenaille looked less Providential and more flurried; but I came to the rescue.

'Madame probably means Monsieur John Smith?'

'Yes, yes, she remembered, John Smith.'

'Of London?' (suggestively). Marston began to look puzzled.

'Yes, of London.'

'Then,' I said, 'it is useless for M. Marston to lend Madame the money, for M. John Smith of London is already here. I saw him arrive myself by this afternoon's boat. He is at the Hôtel Bristol.'

'Really! But perhaps he hadn't brought the money,' said Mde. Chenaille, off her guard.

'Oh, but yes,' I replied, 'he had it, for he had told me so.'

'Very lucky you saw him,' said Marston, throwing down his pen.

Strange to say, Mde. Chenaille did not seem to think it so lucky. It may have been imagination, I cannot say; but I am impressed with the conviction that I never in my life beheld such a crestfallen appearance as Mde. de Chenaille then presented.

'Hôtel Bristol, Madame—John Smith,' I repeated, holding the door politely open.

'Merci, Monsieur,' she stammered, and precipitately disappeared downstairs.

I didn't tell Marston what I thought. In fact, I was convinced in my own mind that I had been rather clever, and had done him no small service; but I was content to leave it to time to show it to him. But events succeeded each other rapidly. In five minutes came another knock, and this time there appeared a very small military officer in full uniform, and of extraordinary fierceness of countenance, and tempered only by a pair of spectacles.

'Monsieur Marston? Oui. Eh bien, he came from the part of Monsieur de Valtran to request that, if Monsieur were the English jeweller he represented himself to be, he would at once return the jewels of Madame de Valtran; if not Monsieur de Valtran would do himself the honour to await Monsieur de Marston in the Forest of Arques tomorrow morning, and would bring a pair of swords, or if Monsieur de Marston preferred, pistols.'

I felt a pang of remorse. Perhaps for the sake of those ten thousand francs he might lose his life, and hastened to reply.

'I do not think, Monsieur, that my friend is forced to accept the challenge from a man who—that is, whose wife——'

And there, I regret to say, I stopped. In fact, it occurred to me while speaking that, after all, I knew nothing. I had suspicions, but they might be quite unfounded. And so I stood in speechless perplexity.

The little officer laughed fiercely.

'Ah! those English are all like that. They never fight.'

Marston broke in. He was very pale.

'You mistake, sir, we do fight. I shall be at the forest at seven o'clock. There is the door.'

And the little warrior stalked out almost as discomfited as Mde. Chenaille had been.

I am afraid I did not do so much as I ought to have done to dissuade Marston from fighting a duel. I think the prominent feeling in my mind, for the moment, was pleasure at seeing him resent the sneer at our countrymen. And, in fact, I had always professed to respect the much-abused duel as an admirable means of keeping people on their good behaviour. After all, he knew all the stupid old arguments on the subject as well as I did, and I had too often demonstrated (to our mutual satisfaction) that the abolition of single combat had demoralized society, to be very successful as an

opponent of it now. I reflected that he would choose swords, of course. He could fence a little. Indeed in London he was considered a good hand with the foils, for he had naturally a quick eye, and tennis had given him a wrist of iron. His great fault was a want of closeness in his play, a tendency to slash about and parry in large circles, which used to drive our fencing-master, Maurice, wild. 'You think all the time that you play at single-stick,' he used to tell him; and perhaps, the next moment Marston, by mere strength, would twist his foil out of his hand, and leave it dangling by the martingale, which generally provoked the remark: 'He would be strong, that gentleman, if he would only understand the straight line.'

Far into the night we sat and talked, and Marston wrote several letters, in case, as he said, 'anything should happen.' One of them, I noticed, was addressed to Mde. Valtran. That done, I insisted upon his going to bed, and went myself to take a few hours' sleep.

The next morning was damp and chilly, for the summer was well-nigh over, and a fine mist was falling which obscured everything, and gave a melancholy appearance to the scene in unison with my feelings. I dressed and went for Marston, whom I found up and ready.

We had ordered a carriage overnight, and in half an hour found ourselves at the place of meeting.

The red-headed and the little officer were already there, and, judging from the wrecks of cigarettes strewed on the grass, had been for some time.

My experience of duels was derived solely from novels (and most of those French), but acting upon it, I bowed to everybody, and with the officer proceeded to select the ground; for though nothing had been formally said, I, of course, looked upon myself as Marston's second. The grass was very slippery, and, to the astonishment of the adversary, I chose the most slippery piece I could find, but it was advisedly, for I had taken the precaution to make Marston wear a pair of spiked cricketing boots, and I wished to make the most of them. I had also secured the heaviest pair of duelling swords I could find in the town, and insisted upon their being used in preference to those brought by De Valtran, which, as I expected, proved much lighter. Again, the little officer was astonished, and pointed out to me, what I saw perfectly well, that his swords were the much better balanced pair of the two; but I knew that Marston's strength of wrist would give him an advantage with heavy weapons, and I knew that my duty was to gain for him all the advantages I could.

Meanwhile he himself was walking up and down impatiently. The paleness of the preceding night had quite gone off, and his flushed face wore an expression of eager expectation, just as I had seen him at the University boat-race sitting in the Oxford boat, waiting for the starter's gun. Once only he seemed to wince, and that was when he shook hands with me and said, 'Don't forget my mother, if——' Instead of finishing the sentence, he walked to his place.

The swords were then handed to them, and they were left facing each other. They crossed their weapons; and I noticed with joy that Marston at once made himself master of the line of attack, which was naturally in carte. The Frenchman, after playing a bit with his sword, and failing to find an opening, suddenly disengaged and lunged. I felt a cold shudder run through me. But the huge body did not move quite swiftly enough. Marston, quick as lightning, parried the thrust; but, to my horror, with the old wide movement; and when he riposted, it was so unsteadily that his point went over the shoulder of his adversary, who recovered himself the instant after. Then came a pause. De Valtran evidently didn't quite like his opponent, and for some time kept just out of distance and changed and changed his sword, cunningly seeking for an opening. But Marston was too quick—and when he was not too quick was too strong for him, and always

proved to have command of the line of attack. Then De Valtran changed his tactics, and retired a step, giving a pretended opening himself. Marston made an eager movement—and again I shuddered; but he forbore to attack, and still wisely remained on guard. Then the Frenchman began to lose his coolness a little, and advancing, joined his sword quickly, disengaged, and lunged again. Marston stood his ground, but parried, again in the same dangerous way, and threw his point so far out of line that if the Frenchman were only steady he was at his mercy. De Valtran smiled, and made a quick movement: Marston another wild parry. I felt sick, and shut my eyes; when a yell from the Frenchman made me open them again. Marston, in his riposte, had transfixed the red-head, and his point appeared at the back of it. De Valtran dropped his sword, and reeled. I ran to support him—but another moment revealed the absurd truth. The Frenchman, as it seemed to me, ran away from his head, while Marston stood confronting him in horror with—a red wig on the point of his sword!!

De Valtran put his hand under his arm and ran about in agony (for Marston, in his wild parry, had slashed him across the fingers as with a whip), and for a moment did not seem to be aware of the full extent of his misfortune. But it was too much for the gravity of the seconds, who I suppose ought to have known better. I burst into a loud laugh, and the little captain lay down (in his spectacles) under a tree and gave way to convulsions, which had the effect of doubling him up like a hedgehog.

A glance showed the giant how matters stood. He turned literally green with rage, and with one howl, rushed at Marston, who had scarcely recovered from his astonishment, but who mechanically stepped aside. Then gathering himself up with difficulty on the slippery grass, the giant rushed again at him; but this time Marston was prepared. He steadied himself on his legs, dropped his sword, and received him with a blow from the shoulder which in an instant stretched him on the grass: so effective was the 'facer,' that he lay stunned and motionless.

Everybody was taken by surprise at this unexpected termination to the duel; and we were debating what to do, when suddenly voices were heard.

'Les gendarmes! Come, gentlemen, come; leave him to explain himself,' said the little officer; and before we had quite realized the situation, we were in the carriage, galloping at a furious rate back to Dieppe.

Once at home and alone, there came a reaction. Marston, whose English respect for law had been asleep, began to see his conduct in a different light; and even talked of informing the authorities of what had taken place. I proposed that we should go and confidentially state the case to our friend M. Boucher, the juge d'instruction for Dieppe. No sooner said than done; and we at once set out with that intention.

The first person we met was M. Boucher himself.

'Bon jour, gentlemen!' he said. 'Cannot speak to you: I am in a great hurry. We have just captured the celebrated Caboche.'

'Caboche!' said I. 'Where?'

'In the forest of Arques. He was found lying, stunned, with his disguise—a red wig—by his side. Probably, had attempted to rob some stout French peasant, and got the worst of it. He says himself that he had fought a duel with an Englishman; but of course we don't believe that.'

Marston turned pale. 'Come to the Hôtel de l'Europe,' said he.

'I shouldn't advise you to go there,' said Boucher; 'for we have seized Mde. Chenaille, alias Leroux, and Marie, called Caboche, alias La Fileuse, who were Caboche's accomplices, and they are now undergoing their interrogatory there. Bon jour.'

Marston went to England the next day; and Caboche and his friends to the Galleys at Toulon, the next week.

# IN THE WITNESS-BOX.

THE RESPECTABLE MARRIED WITNESS.

I HAVE a theory that a man's fate lies in his natural disposition; not the disposition which he has control over, but a certain secret and unsuspected bent of his mind, which leads him, right or wrong, against his will and against his knowledge. Thus, I believe that the man who never gets on in the world has within him a certain bias towards the wrong side of the road of life. He is like one of those balls used in playing bowls. He is, to all appearance, perfectly round and equally balanced; but, roll him as straight as you will, he invariably inclines to one side. When we see men equal in all other respects—in talent, education, physical strength, and personal appearance—it is, I suspect, this secret bias which makes the difference in their fortunes. One goes straight along the high-road of life to the goal; while the other struggles onward for a while, inclining little by little towards the side, until at last he rolls into the ditch. This bias is placed variously, and disposes the ball to every variety of accident. Thus one becomes rich, another poor; one catches all the diseases that flesh is heir to, another escapes them; one is drowned, another is hanged. I have long entertained the belief that it is a certain and particular kind of person who catches the small-pox and becomes pitted by it; that it is a particular kind of person who is destined to a wooden leg; that it is a very exceptionable and distinct kind of person who is destined to be murdered: I further believe that, if we could only make a diagnosis of the predisposition of these persons, and ascertain the nature of the bias and its general indications, we should be able to look in a man's face and tell him for a certainty that he will one day have a wooden leg, or that he will be murdered, or that he will be smashed in a railway accident. There are certain things that I am not afraid of, because I feel that they will never happen to me. I feel that I have the bias which will, under certain circumstances, always keep me right side up. There are other things, again, that I am afraid of, because I am not sure how my bias lies with regard to them.

In pursuing this theory, I am disposed to believe that there is a certain kind of men and women whose bias is always rolling them into the witness-box; whose bias first of all rolls them into situations where they see and hear things bearing upon matters which will become the subject of litigation or criminal process. Look at the people whom Mr. Brun-

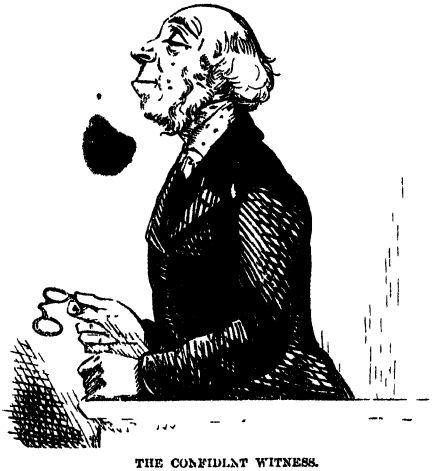
ton has so happily sketched in illustration of these remarks. There they are, born witnesses; types which we see in the box repeated over and over again, with all the fatuity which leads them into the position of witnesses, and all the attributes which so peculiarly fit them for the operations of counsel, plainly stamped upon their features. They cannot help being witnesses, any more than Dr. Walls' bears and lions could help growling and fighting. It is their nature to. Mark the dull witness. Have you not seen him times out of number? At the police-court in a case of assault and battery—he happened to be in the way at the time, of course: at the inquest—he was passing just at the moment the deceased threw himself from the first-floor window: in the Court of Queen's Bench, on a case of collision, where the defendant is sued for damages on the score of having taken the wrong side of the road.

THE DULL WITNESS.

Of course he gets into the dock instead of the witness-box; of course he stumbles up the steps, and equally of course stumbles down them again. He takes the book in the wrong hand, and when he is told to take it in the other, that hand is sure to be gloved; the court is kept waiting while he divests himself of this article of apparel; and the consciousness of the witness that all eyes are upon him, concentrated in a focal glare of reproof and impatience, only tends to increase and intensify his stupidity. He drops the book; he kisses his thumb—not evasively, for he is incapable of any design whatever; he looks at the judge when he ought to be looking at the counsel, and at the counsel when he ought to be looking at the judge. There is such an utter want of method in the stupidity of this witness that counsel can make nothing of him. He perjures himself a dozen times, and with regard to that collision case, gets into such a fog about the rule of the road, that at last he doesn't know his right hand from his left. It is useless for counsel to point with triumph to the inconsistencies of this witness's evidence; for it is obvious to everybody that he is quite incapable of throwing any light on the subject whatever, and that what he says one way or another is of no importance. The examining counsel is only too glad to get rid of such a witness, and very soon tells him to stand down—a command which he obeys by tumbling down and staggering into the body of the court, with a dumbfoundered expression quite pitiful to behold.

Now the Confident Witness steps into the box. He is, in his own idea,

prepared for everything. He is prepared for the slips; he is ready at all points for the greasy New Testament. He looks the counsel steadily in the face, as much as to say—'You will not shake my evidence, I can tell you.' The counsel meets this look with a glance of anticipated triumph. There is a defined position here whose assumption of strength is its greatest weakness. The confident witness has resolved



THE CONFIDENT WITNESS.

to answer yes and no, and not to be tempted into any amplifications which will give the cross-examining counsel an opportunity of badgering him. The counsel can make nothing of him for a while; but at last he goads him into an expression of anger; when, seeing that he is losing his temper, he smiles a galling smile, and says—'No doubt, sir, you think yourself a very clever fellow: don't you now? Answer me, sir.' The confident witness falling into this trap, and thinking 'answer me, sir,' has reference to the question about his cleverness, snaps the counsel up with a retort about being as clever as he is; and immediately the badgering commences.

'How dare you interrupt me, sir? Prevarication won't do here, sir. Remember you are on your oath, sir!' And the indignation of the witness being thus aroused—by, it must be confessed, a most unwarrantable and ungentlemanly course of proceeding—away goes the main-sheet of his confidence, and he is left floundering about without rudder or compass in the raging sea of his anger. It is now the worthy object of the learned counsel to make him contradict himself, and to exhibit him in the eyes of the jury as a person utterly unworthy of belief.

There is a nervous variety of this witness, who is occasionally frightened into doubting his own handwriting. He is positive at first; has no doubt on the point whatever. It is, or it is not. Then he is asked if he made a point of putting a dot over the i in 'Jenkins.' He always made a point of that.

'Do you ever omit the dot?'

'Never.'

'Then be good enough to look at this signature' (counsel gives him a letter, folded up so as to conceal everything but the signature). 'You perceive there is no dot over the i there. Is that your signature?'

'I should say not.'

'You should say not—why? Because there is no dot over the i?'

'Yes; because there is no dot over the i.'

'Now, sir, look at the whole of that letter. Did you write such a letter?'

'Certainly; I did write such a letter.'

'Did you write *that* letter?'

'I—I—'

'Remember, sir, you are on your oath. Is it like your handwriting?'

'It is.'

'Is it like your signature?'

'It is.'

'*Is* it your signature?'

'It might be.'

'Gentlemen of the jury; after

THE WITNESS WHO IS FRIGHTENED INTO DOUBTING HIS OWN HANDWRITING

most positively denying that this was his signature, the witness at length admits that it might be. What reliance then can be placed upon the doubts which he expresses with regard to the document upon which this action is based?'

This witness has really no doubts about his handwriting at all, until he is artfully induced to commit himself with regard to the dotting of i's and the crossing of t's.

The deaf witness is not a hopeful subject for counsel to deal with; and when, on entering the box, he settles himself into a leaning posture, with his hand to his ear, the gentlemen in the horsehair wigs will be seen to exchange glances which imply mutual pity for each other. Those glances say plainly enough, 'Here is a deaf old post, who will pretend to be much more deaf than he really is, and will be sure to have the sympathies of the public if we bully him.' The deaf witness, when the counsel begins to ask awkward questions, says 'eh?' to everything; and if he be a knowing witness at the same time, pretends not to understand, which justifies him in giving stupid and irrelevant answers. As a rule, both sides are not sorry to get rid of a deaf witness; and he is told to stand down in tones of mingled pity and contempt.

The knowing witness, who is not deaf, is a too-clever-by-half gentleman, who soon falls a prey to his overweening opinion of his own sharpness. They are not going to frighten him by asking him to kiss the book. He kisses it with a smack of the lips and a wag of the head, by which he seems to indicate that he is prepared to eat the book if required. Then, after a question or two, when he thinks he is getting the best of it with the lawyers, he winks at the general audience, and so fondly believes he is taking everybody into his confidence, against his cross-examiner. This is the gentleman who is credited with those sharp retorts upon lawyers which we find in jest-books and collections of wit and humour; but I fear he

has little real claim to distinction as a dealer in repartee. Those smart things are 'made up' for him, as they are made for the wag, and generally for Joseph Miller. The retorts of the knowing witness are

THE DEAF WITNESS

usually on the simplest principle of *tu quoque*, and as their pith chiefly consists in their rudeness — only counsel are allowed to be rude in court—they are certain to be checked by the court. The court does not tolerate jokes that are not made by itself

THE KNOWING WITNESS

The witness who introduces foreign matter into her evidence is generally of the female gender, and is a person whose appearance and manner warrant counsel in addressing her as 'my good woman.' She

will declare that she is '*not* a good woman,' and secure for that standard witticism the laugh which it never fails to raise, whether spoken innocently or with intent. She deals very much in 'he said' and 'she said;' and of course the counsel doesn't want to know what he said

THE WITNESS WHO INTRODUCES FOREIGN MATTER INTO HER EVIDENCE

or she said, but what the good woman saw with her own eyes and heard with her own ears. But nothing on earth will induce her to stick to the point; and though she is pulled up again and again, she still persists in giving all collateral circumstances in minute detail. I should say that when this witness goes to the play, she provides herself with a small bottle of rum and an egg-cup.

THE INTERESTING WITNESS

The interesting witness is also of the feminine gender—slim, prim, modest, and demure. She is a young lady of 'prepossessing appearance,

and notably interesting. The moment she steps into the box and puts up her veil to kiss the book, the gentlemen in the [redacted]air wigs fix their eye-glasses and scrutinize her narrowly; and, as the gentlemen of the long robe are proverbially polite, they will be seen, while staring the interesting young lady out of countenance, to nudge each other and pass round pleasant jokes. The interesting young-lady witness is rarely to be met with in the Queen's Bench, the Common Pleas, or the Exchequer. The place to look for her is the Court of Divorce and Matrimonial Causes, where it is generally the object of the cross-examining counsel to prove that the interesting witness, who has prepossessed every one by her modest demeanour, is no better than she should be. There is possibly no warranty for this course of proceeding; but then the noble practice of the law requires that a barrister shall do the best he can for his client, and that he must not scruple to blacken the character of the innocent, in order to protect from the consequences of his crime one whom he well knows to be guilty.

The interesting female witness is of two kinds. One is what she seems; the other is *not* what she seems. The mock-modest lady usually gives her cross-examiner a good deal of trouble. She is wary; brief in her answers, decisive in her replies; and her habit of dropping her eyes enables her to conceal her emotions. This witness holds out to the last. The other, who is really the interesting, modest, demure, timid creature that she appears, soon betrays herself under a severe cross-examination. Her only weapon of defence rises unbidden from the depths of her wounded feelings, in the shape of a flood of tears.

## COX AND FIVE.

### The Terrible Adventure in a Railway Carriage of the latter.

'I SAY, Baby, come now, you've had your glass, so don't look anxiously at the bottle; pass it on, and eat as many biscuits as you like; Snipe advises them.'

'Just half a glass more, Tomkins.'

'No, not a drop, Baby, or hanged if I don't tell Snipe. If you don't know how to take care of yourself I must look after you. Come, pass the fruity at once, you silly little thing.'

The 'silly little thing,' commonly known in New College as 'Baby,' was a brawny, sandy-whiskered, good-natured giant, weighing fourteen stone to a pound, who had just gone into training for the University race. Snipe, by mentioning whose name Tomkins had compelled his friend to pass the bottle without filling his glass, was the University coxswain. Having steered the dark blue in two winning races, and having the smallest person in the University, with, without exception, the loudest voice, Snipe was looked upon as a model of what a coxswain should be. It was generally known through the University that Snipe was the only man in Oxford whom the captain ever condescended to consult in the selection of his crew, and that the training of the men was left entirely to his discretion, so his influence among boating men was unbounded.

At the beginning of the week the captain, together with Snipe and Hurdles, the editor of a well-known sporting journal, and an old University oar, had been noticed for more than an hour pacing up and down the pavement outside Exeter. Hurdles had given his opinion that the boat had not enough strength, and that five should be turned out for a heavier man. Several men had been mentioned for the new five. Snipe was for Bowling of Christchurch, but both Hurdles and the captain were inclined to try Baby Smith of New.

'Baby is a fine oar,' said Snipe, 'no doubt, but won't train. Now guess, Hurdles, what that fellow did last May races.'

'Can't guess at all,' said Hurdles, lighting his pipe.

'Well, you know, both of you, I am the last man in the world to hurt a fellow's character, especially an old schoolfellow; but what I am going to say I say for the good of the 'Varsity. Smith, on the very first day of the race, ate pastry in hall! Ah! and that's not the worst—toasted cheese that fellow had for supper! though the captain of the New College boat besought him, almost on his knees, to have oatmeal porridge instead. Why, I should not have thought worse of him if he had eaten a whole cucumber. My faith in that fellow is shaken, and have I not cause, eh?'

'Certainly, old fellow,' said the captain. 'Still, you know, he might turn over a new leaf. Now he is more likely to be afraid of you than any one else. S'pose now you trot down to New, see him in private, speak solemnly and firmly to him, tell him we will try him for a week, if he promises to train and not make a fool of himself any more. Eh, Hurdles, isn't that our form?'

Hurdles took a long pull at his pipe and nodded oracularly. 'We'll try him, but I have not much faith in a man who eats toasted cheese.'

Snipe started off at once, and found Smith in an arm-chair before the fire reading 'Bell's Life,' with a pewter of beer on the floor beside him. 'Baby,' he said, 'I wish to have a little real serious talk with you.'

The Baby, who had risen from his chair as Snipe entered, looked wonderingly down on the earnest face of the coxswain, in his official blue coat and straw hat, who scarcely reached up to the third button of his waistcoat, which he had taken hold of.

'Well, old fellow, what is it?' he said.

'I say, Baby, how should you

like to take Sniffles' place—five—in the 'Varsity?' said Snipe, with an air of supreme patronage.

'Uncommon,' said Smith, whose chief ambition, lazy fellow as he was, was to earn his dark blue. 'Uncommon, Snipe. Take some beer.'

'My Baby,' said Snipe, reproachfully, 'you must lay aside these weaknesses. Promise me, before I speak more to you, for my time is precious, that you will train.'

'Yes, Snipe, old fellow, of course I'll train.'

'Well then, Baby, no more beer, except a pint at dinner; a mile's run before breakfast; get up at seven; bed at ten; gruel previous, no more getting festive at wines; one glass of fruity, never more unless I see you are getting low, then I may stick it on again. How much do you weigh?'

'Fourteen stone, to a pound. Weighed yesterday.'

'How much last races?'

'Thirteen stone five.'

'Well, then, run two miles every morning instead of one, put a little nitre in your gruel, and we will give you a trial, down at the boats, at two. Try to get down four pounds, then tell me. Come, begin at once. Adieu, mon enfant!'

As Snipe ceased speaking he took the beer and emptied it into the coal-scuttle, and walked across the court to Tomkins' rooms.

'Tomkins,' he said, 'I am going to give Baby Smith a trial; keep your eye on him, and see that he trains.'

Tomkins promised to keep his eye on his old schoolfellow Smith, whom he could remember a little white-haired boy at Winchester, the smallest boy in the school, when he had gained the name of 'Baby,' which, like most names given at Winchester, clung to him for ever after. Tomkins was a man who never undertook a thing without thoroughly doing his duty in it. Being a reading man himself, with no muscles, he took the greatest pride in those of his friend; every morning before seven, Tomkins made his appearance in Smith's rooms, and would not leave them till he saw him safe out of bed; every night at half-past nine, Tomkins was to be seen in Baby's room hanging over a saucepan, where was simmering the regulation feed of oatmeal porridge; or tenderly plastering up any raw places on the hands, or elsewhere, which the day's row might have caused. The 'Baby' was a sociable, and what was commonly called at New College, rather a festive man, and no exhortations of his friend could induce him to take his glass of wine in private, and leave his corner next the fire at the end of the horseshoe table in the junior Common room, where the men drank their wine after hall. Tomkins, finding that nothing could keep his friend from the society and merriment of the Common room, although he much preferred the quiet of his own rooms to the heavy Carbonel port and noise, sacrificed himself every night, so as to be able to keep his eye on his charge.

The boat had, on the day when the conversation recorded at the commencement of my story took place, gone for its first long row over the entire course, and the Baby was unusually thirsty and inclined to break through the *régime* which Snipe had laid down for the boat.

'Horrid fellow, Snipe, I do think,' said Smith, as he took a biscuit from the dish and munched it moodily, looking wistfully at the glass on the opposite side of the table, which had just been filled by its owner. 'Horrid little fellow; trains too hard; bow got a boil on his thumb. Snipe sees it, tells him to take another glass; "Rather too low," says Snipe, as if he could know you fellows. Wish sometimes I could get a boil. Don't think much of Snipe's training, eh?'

'Good cox'en, very,' said an Exeter man sitting at the end of the table. 'Scarce seven stone, pea coat and all; voice like a brass band, keeps the boat in order, well. How he sat on bow just to-day, for catching that crab; plenty of cheek. Talking about cheek, do you remember Snipe's terrible railway accident, as we used to call it, eh, Tomkins?

'Just about do remember it,' said Tomkins; 'tell it to Scrimpton; he may not have heard it. Baby, it's your particular story.'

'Well,' said Smith, 'here goes, though telling stories is not training, seeing it makes one so dry. Think I might eat an orange, Tomkins?'

'Yes, Baby, I think you might; not too much sugar, and don't eat any of the peel, here is a ripe one.'

'Give us a catch then; here goes. Well, you know, Scrimpton, and all you other fellows who have not heard me tell the story fifty times before, I consider Snipe went through more in that hour which I am going to tell you about, than most fellows do in a lifetime. I consider a man's feelings looking out of the behind third-class carriage of an excursion train, and seeing the express spurting into it, are not to be compared with Snipe's feelings. Talk about cheek, if ever man required cheek, Snipe did then. Tell me about people being shut up with madmen, boa-constrictors, and bowie-knives in the same compartment, I say their feelings can be nothing to those of Snipe when he was shut up with an old lady and her two daughters for a whole hour, under the following distressing circumstances. Well, you know, Snipe and I are old friends, Winchester men both of us. One whole holiday it was settled that we were to play a cricket match on the Durford ground—the College *versus* "Durford Duffers." I was captain of our eleven in those days, and used to keep wickets. Snipe was cover point, and as neat a batter all round as ever we had in my time, though of course he was too short to have much reach. Men used to laugh when Snipe came in, pitched him up slows, not wishing to be hard on the little fellow, as they used to say. This used to rile Snipe a bit. Left-handed corporal in garrison match chaffed Snipe, and gave him a slow; Snipe catches the ball half-volley, hits it back so sharp in the fellow's face, knocks two teeth down his throat; did the same thing in the Eton match once, then followed it up with a sixer over the pavilion. Well, you know, Durford is several stations from Winchester. We got there at ten exactly; when I got on to the platform I counted my men. "One short," said I, "and blest if it is not our cover point, Snipe. Who knows anything of Snipe?'

'No one had seen him get into the train, so I knew he had missed it.

'"Pretty job," said I to the guard, as he came up to me, seeing I had missed something; "I have left my cover point behind."

'"Your what, sir?" asked the guard, thinking I meant some sort of carpet bag; "have you looked into the luggage van, and was it directed?"

'"No," said I, "it's a friend I have left, it isn't likely he should be in the van. When is the next train from Winchester?"

'"Express at 10·30 stops here; come by that, no doubt, sir."

'"I hope so," said I, as I watched the train start screaming off again. A drag was waiting at the station to take us and some of the Duffers to the ground, who had come by the same train as we had.

'"Harris," I said to our bowler, "you and the other fellows had better go on in the drag, as of course they won't wait. I shall wait for the express, and come on with Snipe. Toss up; if you win, take first innings; go in yourself with Whistles; if they get first innings, say they must wait till we come."

'I watched the fellows drive off, and then walked down into the village, where I engaged a yellow post-chaise to be at the station to meet the express.

'Never did an hour go slower. I tried to make out a cross-road journey to Birmingham on the bills on the station, read Thorley's advertisement over at least fifty times, looked into the box of yellow grease, and wished it was ices, asked the station master questions about the expense of removing a fictitious horse to London, pretending that I felt the greatest anxiety that he should not catch cold. Then I went and asked the porter to weigh me, and still the time seemed,

with all my varied amusements, as if it would never go.

'But if that hour was terrible to me, how infinitely more so was it to Snipe!

'A new pair of patent-leather boots which he could not force on, had made him too late for the bus. As he was coming up through the Close, some butcher's boy made a remark about his being sixpennorth of ha'pence too short for the bat which he was carrying on his shoulder, and which the pads tied round it made it look larger than it really was. Snipe, the most touchy fellow that ever lived, threw down his bat, and at once attacked the boy, whom he sent howling off with two black eyes in a very short time; but expeditious as he had been, his contest made him just too late; the train was off as he reached the station doors, which were barred against him.

'However, Snipe made himself comfortable at the station, where there was a refreshment room and bottled beer, advantages which the Durford station did not enjoy. When the express came thundering in, Snipe, always a bit of a swell, gets into an empty first-class carriage. After some time, it occurred to him that he would be preventing delay on the ground, if he was to put on his flannel trousers in the train, instead of waiting till he got to the pavilion, which had been his first intention. "Guard," said he, as he showed his ticket, "do you stop anywhere before you get to Durford?" "Yes, sir, at Maldon and Melvin, that is all, though." Now it seems that Snipe fancied Maldon was a station close to Durford; and so believing that there was no hurry, and that the train would not stop for at least half an hour, he set leisurely to work to arrange his cricketing toilet. After having removed his trousers, he proceeded quietly to fold them up. The carpet bag was very small, and Snipe being a neat fellow, tightly tied up the garments he had removed, before he undid the bag.

'Just as he was feeling for the key in his pocket, he became aware that the train was diminishing its speed; still, he felt so sure that it must be another twenty minutes before Maldon could be reached, that he did not feel uneasy.

'He had searched two pockets in vain for the key, when the fearful fact flashed upon him that the train was actually stopping. The side-pocket of his coat he had not tried; in desperation, he thrust his hand into it, but only succeeded in bringing out with the lining some pennies, which rolled in a vague, irresolute manner, as only pennies can roll, along the floor of the carriage. As he looked up he saw the engine-sheds of Maldon station, and heard the break screaming on the wheels, which had almost ceased to move.

Feeling that it was his only chance, he snatched at the trousers he had just removed, and tried to unfasten them, but the knots were tight, and refused to come undone; before he had unfastened the first, the train stopped. In his horror and desperation—for he declares it amounted to that—he clutched at his travelling rug, and wrapped it round his legs, feeling himself, at least for a time, safe. He was seated on a seat nearest the platform, facing the engine, and so had a view of all the passengers. His spirits began to revive as he saw there were no ladies on the platform, only an old woman and two mechanics, who soon took their seats in a second-class carriage.

'Just as the guard whistled for the engine-driver to start, the door of the booking-office flew open, and a stout elderly lady bearing in her arms a King Charles' spaniel, and followed by her two daughters, bustled on to the platform.

'"Now, ma'am, what class?—make haste—the train's off," said the guard.

'"First," gasped the old lady. "I've paid for the dog; see, here is the ticket. Come along, girls."

'"This way, ladies. No luggage, you say. Now, sir, would you mind moving for the ladies?"

'It was impossible for Snipe to move without betraying his secret. He had not had time even to replace his shoes; and as the stout

lady bustled past him, muttering something to her daughters about real gentlemen being obliging, she trod on his uncovered feet.

'It was as much as poor Snipe could do to conceal a cry of pain. One of the young ladies had noticed him wince as her mother entered, and whispered to her loud enough for him to hear, that she feared the poor young gentleman had something the matter that prevented him from moving.

'The old lady not having yet forgiven Snipe for not rising to allow her to pass, grunted indignantly, and placed the dog on the floor. What should the little beast do but make an incursion under the seat to where Snipe was seated. After having sniffed suspiciously round his feet, making an occasional dash at any place where he detected a portion of his red stockings visible, he turned all his attention to the boots which had been hastily kicked under the seat.

'Snipe says, and I can quite believe him, that he has hated the sight of a King Charles' ever since. Fancy the fellow's feelings when he knew the creature was biting to pieces his new patent leathers, within a few inches of his feet, which he dared not move for fear of the dog laying hold of them, much less attempt to kick him.

'In the course of another half-hour the train stopped at Melvin. Snipe was in hopes that the ladies might be going to get out, as it was evident, from their having no luggage, that they did not intend to go a very long journey. However, when the train stopped they made no move; so Snipe gave himself up to despair, as he knew that in a few minutes he must either get out at Durford, and betray the whole affair, or make up his mind to miss the match and keep in his seat till the ladies got out. When the train stopped, who should he see on the platform but Bunting, who had been in one eleven, and had just left. "Hallo! Snipe, old fellow," he said, referring to the Eton match when Snipe had got out first ball; "and how are you after your sad luck? How was it?"

'"A shooter shattered my leg stump," answered Snipe.

'As Snipe said this, the young ladies looked compassionately at him.

'"Oh, mamma," the youngest whispered, "how we must have hurt him getting into the carriage; his leg shattered, poor fellow; his leg stumps by a shooter! He must have been shot before. Don't you think it is the brave young officer we read of? Sharpshooters, I dare say. How sad and interesting!"

'Snipe could hear no more, as Bunting, who had gone to speak to a man in the next carriage, returned, and asked him if he expected to meet any one at Durford, as he was so late.

'"Baby is sure to be there," he said.

'"Eh? if the others go on, trust him not to leave you behind."

'"How young he looks to have a baby," whispered one sister to another.

'Just as the train was starting, an excursionist in a white hat and black band round it, who was waiting for the excursion train for the Southampton races, looked into the carriage, and having stared impudently at the ladies, turned to Snipe and asked him how his poor feet were?

'"Impudent, unfeeling wretch!' said the youngest lady, no longer able to restrain her feelings, her pretty face flushing with indignation. "Oh, sir! we are so sorry for you; indeed, indeed we are. And oh! why did you not tell us? I know we must have hurt you so, getting into the carriage."

'Then all three began talking at once, apologizing, questioning, and pitying, till Snipe said he could have cried with shame, he felt himself such an impostor. Still, as he said, it put him up to a dodge; for when he reached the station, I found him lying back in apparent exhaustion, with one of the fair ladies holding her scent-bottle to his nose, and the other, with tears running down her pretty cheeks, fanning him with a "Times" newspaper; as the little scamp, to avoid answering the questions which had grown rather searching about his accident, had pretended to faint.

'"For heaven's sake, Snipe," I said, opening the door, "what is the matter?"

'"Ah, my Baby," he said, pretending to wake up,—"I mean, my dear medical man,"—correcting himself and turning to the ladies, "bend down your ear,—I am too ill to speak almost."

'Thinking the fellow really dying, I bent over him.

'"For goodness' sake," he said, "pretend to be my medical man,—carry me out, and keep the cloth tight round me."

'"Now, sir," said the guard, "look sharp!"

'Without another word I caught hold of Snipe, and carried him to my yellow fly; but it was not till we were out of the station yard that he seemed to revive, when he said—

'"I say, old chap, got an extra pair of flannel trousers, eh? mine are under the seat." Then he told me the whole story; and if that fellow has not got cheek, I don't know who has.'

R. P.

## THE AMERICAN MARRIAGE MARKET.

MATRIMONIAL advertisements are becoming more and more common in England. One would suppose that they are found to succeed, otherwise their number would not increase as it does. In this, as in so many other respects, the Transatlantics go a head of the old country. Matrimony itself is not so comfortable a thing there as it is here, for the amount of domesticity to be secured by permanent residence in a huge hotel, containing 1000 or 1500 souls, cannot be very great. And if married life be thus wanting in the quiet and repose which constitute its earlier charms with us, the preliminary proceedings are arranged with at least a proportionate disregard for what us old-fashioned people look upon as comfort in such matters. A man who finds himself rich enough to marry will walk out some fine afternoon, and watch the entrance to one of the emporiums of fancy articles for ladies, and when he sees a girl with a face and manner which please him, he enters the store, and frankly tells her the state of the case. If she is already engaged, or does not like his looks, she tells him so, and no harm is done. He either goes away to his dinner with appetite unabated, or he remains on the watch till some more free or more willing maid is found. But this is rather an exception than the rule, and the columns of the 'daily' are the ordinary road to matrimony for a large class of Americans. Their matrimonial literature, however, will not compare with ours, for it has a smoke-dried absence of romance about it, which is not attractive to an English reader.

It is not always that advertisements succeed. The following is an instance of a contrary result:—

'The middle-aged widower, who advertised three weeks ago, is still a candidate for matrimony. Many letters are missing by not giving explicit and proper directions.'

How sad!—is *still* a candidate for matrimony! Did he, perhaps, confess to 'encumbrances' in his previous advertisement, or is it because he is middle-aged and a widower that he has not been appropriated in the course of three whole weeks? And he is evidently such an unsuspecting, simple-minded, trustful man. Some men would have thought that if no letter came, no letters had been written; but not so the middle-aged widower. He, on the contrary, is full of faith. He is sure that many ladies have written; they must have used a wrong address. Is it yet too late for us to point out to the fair sex how invaluable a husband with such ready

explanatory theories would be to ladies who love liberty?

The middle-aged widower does not deserve to be disappointed; but we can scarcely hold the same view of a middle-aged lady's case:—

'A lady, of middle age, with no gentlemen acquaintances, would like to form an acquaintance with a gentleman—from middle-age to sixty—with a view to matrimony.'

Now, in the first place, does this mean that the acquaintanceship is to last from middle-age to sixty, with a view to eventual matrimony? That sort of arrangement would certainly not suit an eager young fellow like the middle-aged widower, whom a delay of even three weeks could drive into that plaintive '*still* a candidate.' But, further than this, the lady makes two capital blunders, which will probably prove fatal to her wishes. She should have represented herself as surrounded by troops of ardent admirers, none of whom quite come up to her ideal standard; and she should have chosen some less offensive phrase than 'from middle-age to sixty,' supposing it to refer to the age of the gentleman, and not to the duration of the courtship. That phrase will infallibly offend all matrimonial men of sixty. We should imagine that the middle-aged widower is very close upon sixty, else he would describe himself as 'in the prime of life,' and yet the wording of the advertisement implies that sixty is old. On the other hand, men from forty to fifty will not allow that they are middle-aged, they leave that for fellows of sixty. A. B. Lenord will thus please no one. She will fall between two stools. We are ready to wager that she does not change her condition unless she changes the terms of her advertisement.

Here is a proposal, whose full beauties do not come out on a mere cursory glance:—

'A gentleman, of medium age, and in a good mercantile business, desires the acquaintance of a lady from twenty-five to forty years of age for a wife. His lady acquaintance in this city very limited is of a retiring, modest, disposition.

Observe the delicacy of the gentleman of medium age. He does not address himself to principals, but to friends of principals. He wants as a wife the acquaintance of a lady from twenty-five to forty years of age. How old the wished-for wife is to be, he does not say, nor yet why her friend should be from twenty-five to forty years of age. His second sentence, too, is ambiguous. 'His lady acquaintance in this city very limited; is of a retiring, modest disposition.' Possibly this embodies a complaint; and if so, it is unwise, for it casts a reflection upon his readers. It amounts to saying that he cannot get on with the retiring and modest limited ladies, and so seeks for a wife among that opposite class which advertises or answers advertisements.

What does a 'middle-aged gentleman' mean, who 'desires the acquaintance of a poor young lady,' and adds in parenthesis 'an orphan preferred?' Can it be that he objects to the idea of a mother-in-law? or is it that there is something wrong about him, which a natural protector would find out? On the other hand, it may be that he is so deficient in personal attractions—about which very little is said in these advertisements, and as compared with income—that he thinks he will have a better chance with the 'poor and helpless' class. 'A bashful young man' does not look for an orphan, he confesses that 'a pretty foot is his passion,' in connection with 'flaxen hair and blue eyes,' not knowing, perhaps, in his bashfulness that the combination of these three excellences is rare. 'A young soldier' is not so bashful as the 'bashful young man.' He wanders through involved sentences, with much confusion of first and third person, and at last, feeling that he has rather made a mess of it, bursts out, in plain king's English—

'I am quite anxious to marry, if I can find some one suited to my mind, in about one year hence, or at the close of the war if sooner terminated. None but those who are sincerely disposed to look this matter square in the face need reply.'

The military profession brings us

to two advertisements which appear next each other in the columns of an American paper, by that fatality which so much impressed the mind of a well-known character of modern fiction:—

'Three young gentlemen, now serving in the army of the Potomac, whose term of service will shortly expire, are desirous of opening a correspondence with a few young ladies, with a view to matrimony. Address in sincerity, with *carte de visite*, if agreeable, C.E.Z.'

'Three young ladies, with hearts beating responsive to the music of the Union, and deeply interested in the success of our gallant soldiers in their efforts to crush this unholy rebellion, wish to open correspondence with any who lack lady friends at home. We have albums in which to store such photographs as we may receive.'

'With *carte de visite*, if agreeable,' is ambiguous. Is it but to say, in other words, 'if you are ugly, don't send your picture?' But that little difficulty sinks into insignificance in presence of the awful idea what *would* the ladies have done if they had themselves been four, or the young gentlemen two? How could they ever have decided which of the sisterhood should retire from the competition?

In connection with matrimonial questions, the Transatlantic papers announce the most wonderful feats of clairvoyance and astrology, one lady, however, declaring that 'clairvoyance has nothing to do with astrology, and those professed astrologists who advertise as clairvoyants are arrant impostors,' an opinion we make haste to endorse. Here is a specimen:—

'Astonishing! Madame Morrow, seventh daughter, has foresight to tell how soon and how often you marry, and all you wish to know, even your thoughts, or no pay. 25 cents. Gentlemen not admitted.'

Now, 'gentlemen not admitted' is a libel on the fair sex. It means to say that it won't do to let men into the secrets of the future, which matrimony will reveal. Ladies can be told all about it, but for men—it is a lady's, and what is more, a seventh daughter's opinion—the *disciplina arcani* must be practised. Madame Morrow has a great pull upon other astrologists in this fact, that she is a seventh daughter; but even here she is cut out by Mad. Johannes (the abbreviation is her own), who is 'the great seventh daughter of a seventh daughter;' while Madame Starr, who cannot command such a weird pedigree, is nothing daunted by the claims of her rivals, and with national briskness opens fire as follows:—

'Caution.—Look out! Good news for all! $5,000 reward for any one who can equal Madame Starr!'

Let us hope that Madame Starr is clearer in her predictions than in her composition, as witness the following.—

'Drunkenness cured, and numbers free. Ladies, take notice, you that have been deceived by false lovers, you that have been unfortunate in life, call on this great European clairvoyant and astrologist—Mrs. Cora Duval would object to this combination of clairvoyance and astrology—for it is these facts which induce her to say that her equal is not to be found, which is tested by hundreds who daily and eagerly visit her that this is no humbug.'

Look here!—Another lady says, in a somewhat similar strain—Are you in trouble? have you been deceived or trifled with? have your fond hopes been blasted by false promises? If so, go to Madame Ross for advice and satisfaction. *Ring*—she concludes, with sublime pathos—*ring the basement bell.*

The frankest lady of all hails from 165, Bowery. Madame Widger, whose surname does not of itself suggest the Spanish origin she claims, honestly warns people what they are to expect if they go to her with valuable property on their persons.—

'Madame Widger, clairvoyant and gifted Spanish lady, unveils the mysteries of futurity, love, marriage, absent friends, sickness; tells lucky numbers, property lost or stolen.'

If Madame Widger is the frankest, Madame Byron, who honours Paris by coming from that city, is the most unkind of women. She is, of course, 'the greatest wonder in the world,' and probably the greatest nuisance, for her strong point is that she 'restores drunken and unfaithful husbands.' We should have said that the poor wives were much better without them.

## LOVE SICKNESS.

(An Oirish Malady.)

ME heart's with me Flora, how great is the pleasure
I feel whin I hear the sweet sound of her neem;
I'd soon teck a thrip, if I'd money an' leisure,
To London's great city to see my ould fleem.

That dee down at Richmond! I'll never forget it,
Ah! thin me affecshuns wer' youthfle and green;
Our gyarmints wer' certainly thoroughly wetted,
But *she* was the fairest I ever had seen.

Such throifles as reen an' wet clothes he who woise is
Neglects when the part of a shuthor he'd play,
He well knows that Kyoopid *all* gyarments dispoises,
And Vanus looks fairest just out o' the say.

Though the damp rather dims a young leedy's complexshun,
And rooins a best three-an'-tinpenny glov,
Can umbrellas ibscure the broight glance ov affecshun,
Or showers o' reen damp the ardour ov lov?

The 'Star and the Gyarther,' that hall o' symphozhia,
A refyidge afforded us all from the reen;
We ate our fawgrah as it had been ambrozhia,
An' quaffed the broight necthar ov sparklin' champeen.

The next time we meet, be it sunshine or torrence,
The question I'll pop while iscortin' her home;
Next winther, she tould me, she's goin' to Florence,
Who knows but she'd, maybe, go over to Rome!

*Temple*, 1865. T. W. S.

# THE MORALITY OF CARD-PLAYING.

By 'Cavendish,'

Author of 'The Laws and Principles of Whist'

CARD-PLAYING is associated in the minds of many excellent people with all kinds of wickedness. Gambling, cheating, quarrelling, swearing, and many other vicious doings are unsparingly attributed to the card-table. To our thinking, cards, properly used, are harmless instruments of social relaxation. It is no argument for *our* refraining from playing with cards that *others* have made a bad use of them. As well might we all turn teetotallers, because many people have suffered from *delirium tremens*. We believe that the unsatisfactory associations connected with card-playing have arisen solely from the abuse of cards, and not from any evil qualities necessarily inherent in them.

Before we proceed to our own views on the question of the morality of card-playing, we will briefly examine the ideas of some other writers who have recorded their opinions on this subject. Many authors—some of eminent virtue and piety—have come to the conclusion that cards may be played for amusement, and even for moderate stakes, without any sacrifice of expediency.

In the reign of James I. a singular theological controversy arose regarding the lawfulness of deciding matters by lot and of playing at games of chance. The most celebrated of the disputants was a bachelor of divinity, named Thomas Gataker. He wrote a treatise 'On the Nature and Use of Lots, 1619.' Gataker argues that games of chance are nowhere forbidden in the Scriptures; and he contends that they are not evil of themselves, though admitting that they are liable to great abuse. This abuse he earnestly condemns; but he denies that it is a necessary consequence of the admission of lots or chance into games and amusements.

Jean Barbeyrac, in his 'Traite du Jeu, 1710,' comes to the conclusion that games of chance are not immoral, whether the stakes are small or great! He states, that though man was not sent into the world to pass his whole time in merry-making, yet it was not intended that he should labour incessantly. He must take recreation in order to make progress with his work. Rest is the seasoning of labour; and man ought to combine the two, taking as his guide Nature, who marks the hours of labour and repose by alternations of light and darkness. Barbeyrac continues, 'There are, however, people who unreasonably suppose that use and abuse cannot be separated. They form a mystical notion of virtue and piety, and would persuade us that all diversions are unworthy of reasonable beings. . . . Such persons aspire to a state of perfection which is beyond the reach of human nature. . . . I maintain that, for the sake of relaxation, any amusements which are free from vice may be indulged in. This being admitted, if a person finds pleasure in playing at billiards, tennis, chess, cards, backgammon, and even dice, why may he not amuse himself with them as well as in promenading, with music, in the chase, in fishing, in drawing, and in a thousand similar ways? The question then remains, "Do you approve of playing for a stake?" If there is no stake, there is certainly no semblance of criminality; and if there is a stake, I do not see why there should be any evil in it, if we look at the matter in a proper light.' The light in which Barbeyrac looks at playing for money is, however, not defensible. He says that play is a sort of contract, and that a man has a right to make a contract to dispose of his property as he pleases. But Barbeyrac is mistaken; a man has not that right. Suppose, for instance, that one wealthy fool loses to another the whole of his property, the contract between them being that he was to be the winner who should stand the longest on one leg.

The law would not enforce the contract, and very properly so; for to hold the loser to the original bargain would cause a greater injury to society than allowing him to repudiate it.

Jeremy Taylor says that many fierce declamations have been uttered against cards and dice, but they are only applicable when our sports come to excess. Then we spoil the sport; it is no longer a recreation but a sin. With respect to playing for money he observes, 'When money is at stake, either the sum is trifling, or it is considerable. If trifling, it can be of no purpose, unless to serve the ends of some little entertainment or love-feast, and then there is nothing amiss; but if considerable, a wide door is opened to temptation, and a man cannot be indifferent to win or lose a great sum of money, though he can easily pretend it. . . . If without money he cannot mind his game, then the game is no divertisement, no recreation, but the money is all the sport, and therefore covetousness is all the design; but if he can be recreated by the game alone, the money does but change it from lawful to unlawful, and the man from being weary to become covetous, and from the trouble of labour or study remove him to the worse trouble of fear, or anger, or impatient desires. Here begins the mischief; here men begin for the money to use vile arts; here cards and dice begin to be diabolical; when players are witty to defraud and undo one another, when estates are ventured, and families are made sad by a poor and luckless chance. . . . "They who make a pastime of a neighbour's ruin are the worst of men," said the comedy. But concerning the loss of our money, let a man pretend what he will, that he plays for no more than he is willing to lose, it is certain that we ought not to believe him; for if that sum is so indifferent to him, why is not he easy to be tempted to give such a sum to the poor? Whenever this is the case, he sins that games for money beyond an inconsiderable sum. Let the stake be nothing, or almost nothing, and the cards or dice are innocent.'

There is only one objection to be made to this charming statement of the case. It is this: Taylor fails to perceive the distinction between the sum risked on each game and the expectation of gain or loss on a series of games. Many persons who can afford to play, say, penny points at whist, could not afford to give, say, sixpence, to the poor at the conclusion of every rubber, whether they won or lost it; the tax would be altogether out of proportion to the means of the individual. The player expects to win some rubbers and to lose others; and, at the end of a considerable number of rubbers, played during, say, a twelvemonth, he expects to be in or out of pocket but a few pence, a few shillings, or at the most a pound or so. If he has lost a pound he has paid very cheaply for a year's pleasure: if he has won a pound he may, like parson Dale, in 'My Novel,' treat himself to the additional gratification of distributing it in charity.

Nelson, the pious author of the 'Practice of True Devotion,' had no objection to cards, provided that 'persons do not make a business of what they should only use as a diversion'

The Rev. Augustus Toplady, well known for his high Calvinistic principles, thought that the clergy might innocently indulge in cards. He had a high opinion of Gataker's work, which he says was professedly written to prove the lawfulness of card-playing under due restrictions and limitations. Mr. Toplady proceeds, 'I cannot condemn the vicar of Broad Hembury (*i.e.*, himself) for relaxing himself now and then among a few friends with a rubber of sixpenny whist, a pool of penny quadrille, or a few rounds of twopenny Pope Joan. To my certain knowledge, the said vicar has been cured of headache by one or other of those games, after spending eight, ten, or twelve, and sometimes sixteen hours in his study. Nor will he ask any man's leave for so unbending himself, because another person's conscience is no rule to his, any more than another person's stature or complexion.'

Dr. Johnson regretted that he had

not learnt to play at cards, and for this reason, which is given in Boswell's 'Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides:' 'It is very useful in life; it generates kindness, and consolidates society.' Talleyrand's well-known *mot* respecting whist is to the same effect: 'Vous ne savez pas le whiste, jeune homme, qu'elle triste viellesse vous vous preparez.'

Chatte, in discussing the morality of card-playing, in his work on 'Playing Cards,' says that in cases where high stakes are played for, the money being risked more in the way of traffic than of amusement, gaming is a positive evil to society; and that it is utterly inexcusable and unjustifiable on any grounds whatever. 'When a victim is stripped, his individual loss is of but small moment to society; the true evil is a politico-economical one, viz., that portions of the national wealth, created by the industry of others, should be at the disposal of such a character, and that they should pass to one probably more worthless than himself.'

This view is just, and is very near the truth; but it leaves undetermined how far playing for money may be harmlessly indulged in. This question is of considerable importance.

All games, whether played with cards or with other instruments, may be classed as, 1, games of skill; 2, games of chance; and, 3, mixed games. This classification was dilated on in an article on whist, in 'London Society' for January last. The first and second classes were rejected in favour of the third; games of skill exciting too much interest, games of chance too little, unless large sums of money are at stake. It should be observed that popular games have almost always been mixed games. Such, in the case of cards, are ombre, quadrille, Boston, whist, piquet, and cribbage. In these chance and skill enter in such ratio that a considerable part of the time taken up by the game is a period of comparative rest; and the remainder is pleasantly occupied in watching the chances, and in endeavouring to turn them in our favour by the exercise of skill. Hence arises the interest felt in the game; and the best card-games are so well compounded that, without fatiguing the players, they afford materials for keen and healthy enjoyment.

Yet, it may be argued, these games are generally played for a stake. If they are so enjoyable for their own sake, why is a stake almost invariably added to them? It is true that they are generally played for a *small* stake. The use of the stake is to define the interest of the game. It is quite the exception that scientific games, such as whist, are played for any amount of consequence. It is not the amount that increases the pleasure of the players; indeed, most of those who play their quiet rubber would feel very uncomfortable if a large sum of money depended on the result. But there is just the difference between playing for something or for nothing, that there is between purpose or no purpose. Take any other occupation—riding or driving. We want an hour's horse or carriage exercise. We do not ride round and round in a circle. We at once propose some kind of object; 'let us go and see such and such a person or place.' We have no particular call in one direction more than in another; but we feel more interest in our ride or drive if we go somewhere or do something.

The question may be put, 'What do you mean by a *small* stake? what limit do you propose? Where does "defining interest" end and gambling begin?' This is a question not easy to answer. In the opinion of the writer the limit depends on the means of the players. As long as it is a matter of perfect indifference to the players whether they win or lose the sum staked, so long are they without the pale of gambling; the moment they begin to feel anxious on account of the amount depending on the result, then the sooner they reduce the stakes the better. It is clear that what would be gambling in a clerk at 100*l.* a year need not be gambling in a man of considerable fortune. The good sense of the community generally fixes the stakes at a rea-

sonable sum, in accordance with the definition just laid down. Thus, to take the case of whist, the domestic rubber is generally played for 'heads' or for 'silver threepennies;' among well-to-do professional men the regulation points are generally 'shillings,' with perhaps an extra half-crown on the rubber; while at clubs, where money flows more easily, half-crown points are common. At crack clubs, where the members are many of them men of wealth, higher points are to be met with.

No doubt there is the temptation to people of moderate income to play 'high' when they are introduced into circles where money is played for. Thus, De Smith is a man of family, and, as such, a member of the Coronet Club, where high stakes are played. But Smith is poor. If De Smith is so fond of a rubber that he must wander into the card-room, the sooner he retires from the club the better. He should avoid temptation by joining another club where the points are lower. Smith's position as a tempted man is by no means peculiar; there are temptations in every path of life. There is the temptation to the trader to overtrade his capital; to the banker or the broker to speculate in various securities; to the man of property to live expensively and beyond his income. But no one will argue hence that commercial pursuits and the possession of private means are in themselves evils: properly employed, they are blessings. And thus we return to the point from which we started, that card-playing, in common with almost all occupations and amusements, may be wisely and honestly used, or foolishly and wickedly abused.

# RECOLLECTIONS OF THE FIRST UNIVERSITY BOAT-RACE (1829).

By an Old Oxonian.

THE immense interest excited by the University Boat-race in March, 1864, and the fact that the 'Times' in its account of the race gave a list of all the previous contests between the two Universities on the water, induces the writer of this paper to offer his recollections to the present generation of boating men. A few memoranda from an eye-witness seem not to be out of place at this moment, when, after thirty-five years, showing a curious distribution of successes, the contest of April, 1865, is imminent.

I was in my freshman's year at Oxford. I was not a boating man, but I had the liveliest interest in the performances of those who were Everybody who recollects the day, will remember that it was as fine as our climate allows a June day to be. And certainly all advantage was taken of the splendour of the weather. No such race has ever been pulled at Henley since. Possibly the recklessness of the steamboats on the Thames near London may compel the Universities to find some less accessible waters again. But the choice of Henley as the place of the contest gave a picturesqueness to the events of the day which could only appear again with a race subject to the same conditions. One accidental condition is now impossible. There were no railways. All therefore had to find their way by road; and the interest attached to the race was such that every man who could go to Henley did go. I look back upon this event now with some feeling of surprise at the state of the University mind that day. The race between the crews of the two Universities was, one need hardly say, not at all what it is now. No one looked upon it then as a water Derby: such a thing had never been heard of till that year. And yet I can appeal to the memory of all my contemporaries whether they have ever, at any time since, seen the whole University turn itself out as it did that day. The gravest and most unexpected men were to be seen riding, or even driving, on some part or other of that three-and-twenty miles between Oxford and Henley. There were gigs, tandems, pairs; and one party of friends actually approached the scene, and I believe returned in safety, in a four-horse drag driven by one of themselves. At least I saw them safe, baiting at Benson on the way back. I went with three other men of my own college in a modest phaeton and pair. My friend who drove, afterwards member for his county for many years, now rests with his fathers; the other two, I believe, survive. We took with us a very considerable hamper packed in the most provident manner, with a view to the certain exhaustion of the local purveyors. We got to Henley after a pleasant drive, and found it looking very much as if the University had determined to transplant itself, a second time; still to the banks of its beloved Thames. There is no doubt that if all the men of all standings could have been impounded in Henley, we might have had, the next day, a very respectable show of lecture-rooms; quite enough Regents to have made a Convocation; and a Vice-Chancellor and Proctors only wanting—if indeed they were wanting—to confer degrees. How we would have voted for admitting all Cambridge men *ad eundem!* It certainly would have been necessary to introduce assizes of food, as my readers will soon perceive. We put up at an inn in the main street at Henley, the name of which shall not live in my Naumachia. Here we made up our party to ten or more, and obtained, by what I must consider to be a piece of good fortune, the use of a room for an hour or two. Our hamper being unpacked, the table was spread with our own good things, reinforced by a contribution from the larder of our excellent host. That contribution amounted, as well as I can recollect, to a

shoulder of mutton and a piece of cheese not in its first freshness. At the close of our entertainment we begged to see our little bill. On being presented, we found that it rated us at ten shillings a head. We made some faint remonstrance. But our host was impregnable; and, far from submitting to an attack, retorted upon us. He pointed out the obvious fact that this was an unusual occasion; and that he not only had charged us, with a proper moderation for the use of the room and the refreshments which he had furnished, but that he had actually behaved with generosity. He ought to have charged us for every cork of our own bottles that had been drawn in that room;—he had not done so. He drew himself up, and stood as a man of integrity whom it would indeed be impossible to convince, but whom, after his statement, we could not wish to defraud —justum et tenacem propositi virum.

The race was pulled as evening came on; and, as the time for it drew near, the whole crowd of Oxford and Cambridge men swelled down to the river-side and on the bridge; the Oxford men showing their blue favours, the Cambridge pink. I was fortunate enough to get a capital position for seeing the conclusion of the race, on the top of the little bridge-house at the Berkshire end of Henley bridge. The start was out of sight. The odds, it will be remembered, were offered and taken against Oxford. A defeat was confidently expected even by Oxford men; so that we who wore blue, on taking our stand as we could to see the end of the race, were not in the highest possible spirits. At last it was known that the boats were off. And here I will set down a story which was told at the time, and generally believed. Our friendly antagonists, at starting, were said to have complained that their oars fouled in the weeds. In consequence of this complaint the start was decided not to have been a fair one, and a second was made. Then the Oxford coxswain steered his men through the same water of which the Cambridge crew had complained, and pleasantly called out to them, 'Weeds, weeds!' I have made it my business to inquire into this story, and am able to say, on the best possible evidence—the evidence of some of the crew of the Oxford boat—that it is untrue. What really happened was this. The Cambridge men, having won the toss for choice of side, chose the Berkshire shore. Then, at the start, the Cambridge coxswain steered out into the stream. If the course so steered had been acquiesced in by the Oxford coxswain, the result would have been that the Oxford boat must have endured the serious disadvantage of standing over to the Oxfordshire shore. He therefore held on his own course, and the oars of the two boats fouled. This was a moment of great excitement. The umpires were called on to give directions: and their decision was, that, there being plenty of water on the Berkshire side, both boats should be allowed to pull over it. Nevertheless, after the second start, the Oxford boat did not pass the Cambridge quite so quickly as after the first. Very soon — but then the time seemed very long—the boats showed themselves rounding the bend of the river. All doubts were over. The first *corona navalis* was to come to Oxford. I see that the 'Times,' in describing the character of the races, has marked this as being won 'easily.' I doubt whether those who pulled in it would use that word. Certainly it was very cleanly done. The Cambridge boat had no chance at any time after it was seen from Henley bridge; but I think scarcely sufficient justice is rendered to the skill and resolution of the Cambridge crew by the use of the word 'easily.' However, the thing was settled; and in a few minutes the Oxford boat came up to an arch of Henley bridge, well ahead, and shot under to the landing-place. Never shall I forget the shout that rose among the hills. Any one who has been at Henley will recollect how well the valley lies for reverberating sound. Men who loved Horace must have thought of his lines to Mæcenas—

—— 'ut paterni
Fluminis ripæ, simul et jocosa
Redderet laudes tibi, Vaticani
Montis imago.'

Certainly the echo, image of the Berkshire hills, made itself heard. It has never fallen to my lot to hear such a shout since. There was fierce applause at the Installation of the Duke of Wellington a few years after, and there has been applause under a hundred roofs since; but applause that fills a valley is a different thing. I did not see the great pageant of the entry of the Princess Alexandra into London; but I had the good fortune to see her embark with the Prince of Wales, at Southampton, on the evening of their marriage. The quays, and the Southampton water, gave back no such answer to our cheers as the Henley valley gave on the 10th of June, 1829.

Last year, the 'Times' has usefully chronicled the dates and results of all the races, beginning with this. Let me take the opportunity of putting on record the names of both the crews of 1829. I give the names from a list furnished to me by one of themselves:—

OXFORD.

1. Mr. Carter, St. John's.
2. Mr. Arbuthnot, Balliol.
3. Mr. Bates, Ch. Ch.
4. Mr. Wordsworth, Ch. Ch.
5. Mr. Toogood, Balliol.
6. Mr. Garnier, Worcester.
7. Mr. Moore, Ch. Ch.
8. Mr. Staniforth, *Stroke*, Ch. Ch.

*Steerer*, Mr. Fremantle, Ch. Ch.

CAMBRIDGE.

1. Mr. Holdsworth.
2. Mr. Bayford.
3. Mr. Warren.
4. Mr. Merivale.
5. Mr. Entwistle.
6. Mr. Thompson.
7. Mr. Selwyn.
8. Mr. Snow, *Stroke*.

*Steerer*, Mr. Heath.

I will not attempt to annotate this list. Many readers of this magazine may easily swell the names which I have given them into biographies, from their own knowledge and friendships. You who read this description having been, like myself, eye-witnesses, will recollect the reception which awaited the Oxford crew as they stepped on shore from their boat. There was no doubt about their muscle; but really it seemed as if their friends thought their backs had been made by a boat-builder. The sententious statement of Sophocles,* that not the broad-backed men are those who enjoy most safety, received an interpretation of which that excellent dramatist probably never thought. We who had not pulled, and were not specially noticeable for immense development between the shoulders, stood in safety; but the thumps and claps on the back which that crew experienced from the unreflecting ardour of friendship and enthusiasm, must certainly have been trying. They were soon lost in the crowd; and have since taken their places among ordinary mortal men. But if, as the 'Times' prophecies, the University boat-race is hereafter to be 'looked forward to with an interest little short of that with which the Derby is now anticipated,' the memory of these eight and their coxswain will become fresher every year, and will remain in history long after the day when the last of the broad-backs, and the skilful coxswain, have ceased to be seen on earth or water. The race over, the Cambridge men added to the esteem that was felt for their gallantry in contesting it by a striking piece of modesty. Before the race, as I said, Henley swarmed with pink and blue favours; after it, pink was scarcely to be seen. The Cambridge men, I might say entirely, withdrew their colours, and appeared unmarked. I recollect being very much struck with this circumstance. In a most beautiful summer evening, such as summer evenings are to the eyes of nineteen and twenty, we drove back to Oxford, loaded with blue ribbons, and lustily cheered in the villages as we went through. We arrived in time to

* —— 'οὐ γὰρ οἱ πλατεῖς
οὐδ' εὐρύνωτοι φῶτες ἀσφαλέστατοι.'
SOPH. *Aj.*, 1250.

enter the college gates before midnight, though I have suspicions that not all our friends were equally fortunate I suppose, however, that due allowance was made for the necessity of the occasion and three-and-twenty miles of turnpike-road We were all covered with dust, for the roads lay inch deep in it. I had some difficulty in clearing it out of my hair, which in those days came out rather thick on each side, under a hat with a brim rolled up like a gutter It is a good deal thinner now, and shows something of what Horace calls the *cunities morosa* But I hope that no one of these pages will turn out to be morosa, and that the youngest of my readers will not be displeased to have read of the famous 1829, from the pen of an eye-witness,

AN OXFORD MAN.

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## THE COXSWAIN'S SONG

OVER your toes, Seven! over your toes!
Five! not so high on the feather!
Shoulders well back, Four and Six! now she goes!
Bow, Two, and Three! up together!

Gaily our boat past the sedge-fring'd bank flies
More shoulders back, Six and Four!
Cattle are gazing with placid surprise—
Three! keep your eyes off your oar!

Thames and the Severn, with Isis and Dee,
  Furnish two-thirds of our crew;
Witham, and Ouse, and the Trent give us three—
  Elbows past sides, number Two!

Brightly before us the smooth river beams,
  Amber and rose in the sun;
Ruffled in wavelets behind us it gleams—
  Pick her up, Two, Three, and One!

Past restless ripples that shallows o'erleap,
  Through circling eddies we bound;
Underneath trees where the still shadows sleep
  Loudly our rowlocks resound.

Four little whirlpools foam past either side
  When the quick feather is made,
Far down our wake in an avenue wide
  Marking the steps of each blade.

Time, Five! again along low meadows green—
  Time, number Seven!—we glide;
Stroke rushes past where Two's oar has just been,
  Swift and gigantic his stride.

Drag your weights, fore and aft! now into view
  Comes the last reach—here's the bend:
Hold of the water well forward, and through
  Sharp as you can to the end.

Now Seven, send her in! now Five and Four!
  Now then—Six, Three, Two, and One!
Give her another!—another! one more!
  Easy all! My song is done.

F. W. E.

# MUSCULAR SOCIETY.

## No. I.—Fencing and Gymnastics.

'WHERE does Freddy get his complexion?'

Such was the question that suggested itself to my mind as I was walking up St. James's Street, one afternoon last month. Not that it originated itself spontaneously either; for, being neither a Free-thinking bishop nor a Radical M.P., I am not in the way of originating difficult questions; and, in fact, I sometimes find over-much difficulty in solving those that other people originate for me. Such, for instance, as the difficulty of choosing between two equally-eligible invitations to dinner on the same day; the question why all the best shooting counties are only to be reached by such a railway as the Great Eastern; the formidable annual question of my tailor's bill, and others equally puzzling, which, had they waited for my origination, would have slept unvexed for ever.

The fact is, I saw Freddy coming down the street as I was going up. As usual, he was the very picture of happiness; his handsome smooth face (which the bearded Brown calls 'babyish') wreathed in gracious smiles, his hat giving just the idea (and no more) of being on one side, and his whole air breathing the consciousness that he was a general favourite, and knew it.

Now there are several unresolved questions about Freddy which the bearded Brown is never tired of putting. 'Where does he get his coats?'—'Why does he turn his collars two inches lower down than any other man in London?'—'Does he wear stays?'—'What is he good for besides waltzing and small-talk?' But the chief of all, and the one that Brown always asks as his final and crushing point is, 'Where *does* he get his complexion?' And as Freddy sauntered up to me, carelessly swinging the slender umbrella he always carries in fine weather, I could not resist the temptation to ask him myself.

He smiled in his languid way (Brown says there is a world of affectation in his smile), and daintily buttoned his glove.

'I suppose Nature gave it me,' said he.

'But even Nature can't stand the London season. How do you manage to keep it?'

He smiled again, and showed his teeth, which even Brown admits are good (adding, that 'they ought to be at the price').

'Come with me, and I'll show you how I keep it.'

So we turned down the street and into Cleveland Row, at the end of which stands a building of austere aspect, apparently built upon the old model of Little Bethel chapel. Into this Freddy led me. To my astonishment, I found myself in a large and lofty hall surrounded by a gallery, and lit up with gas (for it was already getting dark). From the roof hung ladders, trapèzes, and incomprehensible ropes of all sizes and lengths, while at the further end were single and parallel bars, many-handled machines for pulling at, and all the dreadful machinery of gymnastics. The scene in the centre of the room was striking, not to say alarming. Six couples of fencers, masked and padded, were there opposed, struggling in frantic desperation, advancing, retreating, lunging, stamping and shouting as though possessed. Most of the combatants, I noticed, were men I either knew personally, or by sight, and from meeting them in society. There were civil servants not a few. There were two Guardsmen helmeted and spurred, smoking by the fire, and a stray barrister was measuring himself round the chest. Nor was 'Honourable House' unrepresented; for two of the national legislators—one hereditary and the other elected—were contending with as much ardour, and certainly as much pleasure, as if they had been fighting over 'Reasons' in the Painted Chamber. Freddy informed me that I was in the 'London

Fencing Club,' the distinctive and saving feature of which (as he begged me to remark) is that it *is* a club, admitting members only after being regularly proposed, and through the ordeal of the ballot, and not a fencing shop where any unclubbable body may buy five shillings'-worth of science; and he maintained that such a distinction is especially important, because it is not pleasant to meet any but gentlemen upon such terms of intimacy as in fencing and gymnastics are unavoidable. As I agreed, he left me and disappeared upstairs into one of the many dressing-rooms ranged round the gallery, whence he shortly returned, dressed in an alarming suit of red and blue flannel, composed of knickerbockers and a scanty upper garment, in which costume he bore a striking resemblance to Miss Marie Wilton as attired (more or less) for a popular burlesque.

The first thing he did was to seat himself in one scale of a weighing-machine, and gravely to pile up weights on the other. The result of the operation seemed to afford him much concern, for his countenance fell considerably.

'This is serious,' said he.

'What is?' I asked; for the scale only showed 10 st. 4 lbs. I noticed, too, that he was as lean as a greyhound, and the idea of his being a victim to some frightful form of atrophy crossed my mind.

'I've gained two pounds and a half since last Wednesday,' said he. 'I see I must give up dining out.'

What a new light for me, who never knew what I weighed in my life, and dine out whenever I can!

'Look at those dumb-bells—beauties!—are they not?'

I looked at them, and was thinking in my own mind that they were very ugly and very immoveable, when he rolled out a huge specimen marked '90 lbs.,' and playfully asked if I would try to 'put it up.' I might as well have tried to put up the centre of the earth, and said so; when, to my amazement, Freddy stooped, and grasping the monster by the handle, raised it first to his shoulder and then above his head apparently with as much ease and pleasure as if it had been a glass of sherry.

'That's nothing at all,' said he, in answer to my looks. 'One of our men has got a pair of them, and carries them about when he travels. He always takes them into the railway carriage with him, wrapped up in brown paper as parcels; and there is a story of a civil old gentleman who offered to hold one for him, having dropped it through the floor of the carriage, and dislocated his shoulder besides.'

And then Freddy seized a pair little less in size, and laying them on the floor, lunged out at them, picked one up, recovered, lunged again and replaced it, picked both up, lifted them high in the air, and so went on tossing them about for the space of five minutes. Next, he took a pair of enormous wooden clubs, pear-shaped and nearly as big as himself (which, however, he declared were objectionable, as being 'rather light'), poised them delicately before him for an instant, then swinging them alternately round his head, at the risk, as it seemed to me, of dashing his own brains out, described large and frightful circles, crossed them behind his back, twisted them round by mere force of wrist, swung them up to the stars and down to the earth—and all as lightly and gracefully as M. Costa waves his wand. But it was evidently no light work. The veins of his neck swelled and throbbed, while the muscles of his bare arm worked phantly beneath the transparent skin and stood out hard and smooth as polished bronze. This arm was another new revelation to me. I had never known it to do harder work than to encircle a tiny waist in the waltz; and I now began to feel an astonished respect for its owner, not unmixed with awe. So that I was no longer surprised when, quitting the clubs, he playfully sprung on to a horizontal bar or pole some seven feet from the ground, and, as he termed it, 'turned over without touching;' which it appears, means making an alarming kind of catherine-wheel of oneself with the hands as a centre.

'A beautiful bar,' said he; 'look at it.'

I looked at it, and thought it a rather commonplace pole.

'Follow the grain, and you will see that it extends without a break the whole length of the stick—a most important condition in a bar, but very difficult to obtain. If ever you want one' (I thought I saw myself wanting one) 'go to a shaft-maker and choose an unbent shaft for yourself. There are very few good sticks; and I have looked over a hundred without finding a decent one. And when you've got it, don't fall into the mistake of having it made any other shape than round. Some gymnasts have their bars made oval, but that is only an ingenious device to render it impossible to get a hold.'

And, to show I suppose what he meant by 'a hold,' he volunteered to show me the 'hock swing.' jumped at the bar, and in an instant, without any apparent effort, was sitting on it. Then, suddenly leaving go with his hands and throwing his arms above his head, he flung himself backwards, holding only by his knees, swung himself completely round the bar, and suddenly unlocking his knees, alighted calmly and happily on his feet. I was now prepared for anything; and when he began to trifle with the flying trapèze, I confess I was rather disappointed to find that he was not quite so good as Léotard. For all that, he made me very nervous; for besides flying from one trapèze to another in the most easy and nonchalant manner with his hands, he seemed to derive a keen amusement from catching the second trapèze with his knees or his toes, and swinging head downwards.

'All these things,' said he, during an interval of rest, 'are much easier than they look. They mostly depend upon knack, and all they require is the pluck to go at them the first time; when once that is done, the rest is easy.'

Again applying it mentally to my own case, I thought I saw myself 'going at' such a performance as the 'hock swing;' and ventured to inquire what would become of you if you failed the first time.

'The only way to learn anything with safety,' said he, 'is to have somebody to catch you in the fall; but that is no easy matter; for catching is an art that requires as much education as gymnastics themselves. I only know one man in London who understands it, and he acquired it at Triat's, in Paris, and is, besides, the best gymnast in the club.'

Freddy now bade me remark the advantage of gymnastic exercise, namely, that it can be brought to bear upon any set of muscles in the human frame, and by developing those particular sets that need it, restore the muscular balance which all the habits of modern life tend to destroy. And he appealed to me whether I did not know fifty men capable of walking their thirty miles a day without distress, who yet could not go up a rope 'hand over hand' to save their lives. I thought of myself and assented, when I was asked triumphantly if it were not absurd that a man possessed of very good legs should have practically no arms or shoulders at all. Then to show the effects of a regular practice of gymnastics, Freddy produced the club weight-book, from which it appeared that in six months his arm had increased in circumference nearly an inch (it then stood at fourteen inches!), and that in the same time he had gained two inches round the chest and (which seemed to please him even more) lost one round the waist.

During this conversation he had arrayed himself in a leathern jacket and gauntlet, and now advanced to the fencing-master, a Frenchman, whose profession and nationality I had severally recognised already from his *plastron* and his accent.

The lesson was one of the few things I remembered from my Parisian school-days, and brought nothing new to the lively sense I still retained of the horrors and disappointments of which it is an epitome. Nothing I think so thoroughly brings home to the fencer the fact that he is human and nothing more—as compared with the *maître d'armes*, who is something

considerably more. In seeing Freddy undergo this mortification of the flesh and muscles, I remembered my own experience, and sympathized. He went through the salute, or *salut à la mur* (a baser imitation of which we have all seen on the stage), with a studied grace probably intended to captivate me (as it did), but, to his disgust, was at once told, 'It is well enough, but *il vous manque le vrai cachet*,' and, crossing his left foot in front of his right, with the toes turned out—a position common to all fencing-masters in the lecture—the *maître d'armes* proceeded to explain how the *Salut* was 'not a mere ornamental exhibition, nor even only a politeness to the adversary, but, above all, a means of judging of the strength of a fencer, so that the gallery should say at once, *c'est un beau tireur!*' Anxious to retrieve his credit, Freddy *prima l'épée*, and fell into an impregnable position on guard, when he was immediately shown, by demonstration, that nothing was more easy than to run him through the abdomen. Nor was that all. Before the lesson was over he was assured that he wanted quickness—that his legs were *molles* and idle—that he tightened his fingers ridiculously round the grip of the foil—and that his only object appeared to be to whip the air and to spit himself on his enemy's sword, or as the professor put it, *de se fendre sur le nôtre*. Then he was exhorted to cover himself, to preserve the command of the line of attack, to force his muscles, to have more *élan*, to play closer and lighter, *Tac! Tac! Tendez bien le jarret gauche! Fendez-vous à fond!* And then the master quietly lunged himself, doubled up his foil against Freddy's breast, and, with the remark, 'Je vous traverse les reins,' dismissed him.

Few things are so much affected by individual character as fencing; and while Freddy was resting himself by performing the 'back lift,' which is nothing more nor less than turning a break-neck summersault over the bar, I had an opportunity of noticing the different varieties of character present as shown in the different styles of play. There was the cautious fencer, who kept his guard and watched for an ill-judged lunge by the adversary, trusting rather to catch him by a judicious *riposte* than by a bold attack. There was the rash and eager fencer, lunging at all hazards and all times, parrying not at all, and ever leaving himself uncovered in order to seize an opening. Another and lower variety of the same character was 'the rusher,' whose left leg knew no hold on the ground; who threw his head, shoulders, and body, as well as his foil, at his opponent, drove him round the room, and generally ended the conflict by wrestling with him *corps à corps*. There was the eccentric fencer, given to describing figures in the air, and trying unhallowed and impossible attacks, to his own confusion. There was the unfortunate fencer, knowing nothing, persevering against fate, and getting mercilessly prodded at every movement. Then there was the strong fencer, whose wrist was a tower of safety, and who twisted the opponent's weapon out of his hand by mere brute force. The insincere fencer, who quarrelled over the hits, and believed in none but his own. Worst of all was the fencer who 'had a bad style'—the *bête noire* and horror of all the rest—who, from some original vice in his nature, persistently did everything the wrong way and never improved. Very fatal was he to beginners, whom he thought it right gratuitously to advise: very scornful, too, thinking himself too good to be pitted against any but the best, who did not appreciate him, so that he was left unto himself desolate. Then there was the really good fencer, he whom Nature had endowed with the rare and well-balanced mixture of opposite qualities that make an excellent swordsman. Such a one is Mr. George Chapman, counted the best amateur fencer in Europe.

Freddy's scolding in the lesson only showed that the club possessed an exacting, and therefore a good, master, for in the assault he proved by no means a despicable fencer. All men are equal before the small sword, and Freddy's adversary, a tall corporal-major of Lifeguards

(of whom there are two salaried by the club), did not appear to be an over-match for him. In fact, in a well-contested 'six,' when some four minutes' fight had brought them to 'five all,' Freddy proved the victor by making the last hit with a neat 'double disengage, and cut over.'

He was now what is precisely termed 'bathed in perspiration,' and presented the appearance of having been parboiled. He himself admitted that he was 'a little baked,' and left me to take a cold *douche* bath (the thermometer being at 34°) as being the most pleasant finish to the afternoon.

Meanwhile, I had made the *maître d'armes* my friend by a well-placed compliment, not upon his skill, which is rather a pupil's virtue than a master's, but upon his method of instruction, which he valued much more. He assured me that fencing was the king of exercises—the only one worthy of a gentleman—that all the great heroes of history had excelled in it (and, as he more than suggested, owed their greatness to it). That, unlike other amusements, it gave at the same time grace and strength to the body, and quickness to the intellect. That other exercises might be good for the workmen and the low people, but for a gentleman—No! What was *la boxe*? It was brutal and degrading. What were the gymnastics? what was the game of Tennis? They were *des saletés*, softening alike to the muscles and the brain. I could not help thinking of the fencing-master in the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and of his indignation at the comparison of philosophy with 'the most necessary of all the sciences.' But I said nothing and looked nothing, so that the professor went on to pour out the vials of his wrath on a schism, which he said had just broken out in England, as to the position of the body in the lunge, the schismatics allowing the head to be thrown forward, contrary to the opinion of all antiquity, and the express injunctions of Angelo, Grisier, and Cordelois. But the innovators had been *flambés*, for Mr. Chapman (or, as he called him, 'Monsieur Shapperman') had taken the defence of truth, and in a pamphlet had demolished all such opinions, and re-established the canon of the upright body. Finally, to keep the body upright was to be in the good principles, and to be in the good principles was to conquer. Again, I thought of Molière's *maître d'armes* who could kill his man by *raison démonstrative*, and I was about to make some cavil as to the worth of good principles generally, and the difficulty of being in them, when Freddy reappeared.

I expected to see him broken-down with fatigue. I expected, too, to behold some dreadful effects from the shock of his cold bath, a 'sudden chill' being a thing I had been taught by newspaper paragraphs and maiden aunts to connect with fatal consequences from my youth up. No such thing. His step was springy and elastic, the envied complexion was ruddier and more transparent than ever, and he was in the best of tempers evidently—for he asked me to dine with him. I accepted gladly (I knew Freddy for a *gourmet*), and we walked up to his club, where he gave me a long sermon on muscle, which began with the soup and only ended with the curaçoa.

It was strange, he said, that in England, where we are so constantly glorifying ourselves over our superiority in robust exercises, fencing and gymnastics should be so little cultivated; doubly strange that Paris, which we so seldom associate with anything more fatiguing than dominoes, should be the very home and cradle of both those noble arts, so that an Englishman who would excel in them might as reasonably expect to acquire either elsewhere as to learn rowing on the Seine, or the Parisian *accent traînant* in Piccadilly. And here he indulged in a digression (which, I may remark, was coincident with the opening of a second bottle of 'Périer-Jouet') asserting that a Frenchman would reason upon any question in heaven or earth without ever being either awed by his subject or ashamed of it, so that M. Cordelois would bring to the consideration of the *contre de*

*quarte* just the same process of reasoning as M. Arago to a new planet or a returning comet. 'But,' said he, 'we are improving. A great muscular revival is afoot, and after all that has been said about the cultivation of mental power, it is beginning to be thought that there may be some use in the cultivation of physical power. Of course it began with the enthusiasts, fellows who delight in any man's legs, whose one object in life is to keep down their weight, and whose one idea of entertainment is to exhibit their biceps to their friends. Then society at large discovered that exercise was good for the figure. It remarked that dumb-bells made it sleep at night, and that the clubs were superior to brandy and soda in the morning. It discovered that a rubber of racquets or an hour's fencing gave it an appetite for dinner which it had vainly sought in sherry-and-bitters. And finally there arose a sect bold enough to assert that an assault of arms was as amusing as a tea-fight, and to maintain that it was as possible to kill an hour at the gymnasium as by a morning call or a walk in the Park. Thus the movement has acquired strength, and manly exercise bids fair to become almost as fashionable as flirting or idling. At first, all this met with bitter opposition from the ladies, who saw some of their most devoted slaves lured from their sides by the appropriately-named "double disengage and cut," and found that some who had been wont to fall head over ears in love, were now much more given to turning heels over head in the "back lift." Thus war was on the point of being declared by the sex, when one of the governing spirits of the club had the happy idea of inviting the ladies to be spectators of the fun. It succeeded admirably. Indeed, the dear creatures proved quite bloodthirsty, and were much better pleased to see feats of lofty tumbling, in which there was a good fair chance of breaking one's neck, than a display of the greatest science in fencing, which involved no danger. It was whispered, that above all they admired the sparring bouts; were delighted to see a heavy "cross-counter;" and still more delighted if it resulted in "one on the nose, well home." Thus we won their gentle hearts, and sent them home with a profound contempt for all lovers who could not use their little hands to black a rival's eyes—a clear gain to every member of the club who could.'

Here I ventured to ask what Freddy himself had gained from his muscular studies.

'Three things,' said he. 'First of all—Figure, which my experience has taught me is more calculated than either family or fortune to advance a man in life;—secondly, Health, which is practically a gain of life itself, because it is a gain of all the time one would otherwise waste in swallowing and recovering from pills, and tallowing one's nose;—thirdly, Amusement, which I submit is the great end of life, to which the first two are the means, and which of course is therefore the most important of all three.'

By this time it was late, and as Freddy was going on to a dance, we parted. I walked home, feeling much humiliation at my own inferiority; and as I mentally compared my own arm with Freddy's, and thought of the garotters, I resolved that I would lose no time in developing my own ill balanced muscles, and so remedy the defects of which I was now for the first time conscious.

BLANC-BEC.

# BURNT CORK.

## An Acted Charade.

(With an Illustration by Adelaide Clayton.)

OH, there's nothing in England, or Scotland, or Wales,
Or the spot which 'his own native Im'rald Oisle' Patrick calls,
Which so much of delightful excitement entails
As an acted charade or some private theatricals.
I think the charade is the best of the two,
Charming actors and audience—success universal!
There's so much you've to suffer, to be, and to do—
To dress for effect, and to act sans rehearsal
Here you see Bella Smith—*de la belle on raffole*!—
Making-up Arthur Brown (who's a swell in the City)
With a piece of burnt cork, for the principal rôle
In an acted charade The word chosen's ——.

Scene the First In the Alps (over chairs and the horse
Sheets and table-cloths hung) with Mont Blanc in the distance -
(A loaf of white sugar) On each hand, of course,
A pine forest (brooms) a precarious existence
Maintains on the crest of the mountain, and hides
A Band of fierce robbers, who, hearth-broom to shoulder,
Springing out on a travelling party that rides
Through the valley, strike terror to every beholder
However, the chief, one fair traveller they've stopped,
Regards with a feeling that's warmer than pity—
Declares it at once—and gets snubbed, when he's popped
So ends the First Syllable Act of ——

Scene the Second. A garden (some plants ranged in pots)
The moon (moderator) in heaven is beaming
In the distance a sentinel—armed to take shots
R a casement (that's 'off') where the damsel is dreaming
L U E enter Brigand, who bears a guitar—
Soft music (in Greek, *γαληνῶς ἡ ὀρχηστρα*)—
With a Ditty to show what his sentiments are
Towards her, who of hope will not grant him the least ray
The sentinel, taking the chief for a cat,
With treacherous tone cries 'Puss, puss! kitty, kitty!'
Then fires—shoots the singer, exclaiming 'Take that!'
So ends Second Syllable Act of ——.

Scene the last Open Plazza. A large crowd (of four)
Two soldiers drawn up—each one bearing a rifle
The Brigand brought out from jail (drawing-room) door,
With his arm in a sling, looking damaged a trifle
'Make ready! Present!'—but before the word 'Fire!'
At a stamp from their chief—or a nod—or a less cue—
The Brigands rush in, and the soldiers retire.
The populace cheer at so timely a rescue
The chief, proved a lord in disguise, weds his love,
And so ends the charade, which the shrewd and the witty
Have found out, from the lucid description above,
No doubt long ago, to be simply ——.

T. H.

# POLITENESS, INSULAR AND CONTINENTAL.

## After-Dinnering.

'Balls are the paradise of daughters, the purgatory of chaperons, and the pandemonium of paterfamiliases. The requisites for an agreeable ball are good ventilation, good arrangement, a good floor, good music, a good supper, and good company. Conversaziones, Receptions, and "At Homes" have for their principal object conversation only; so that, in the selection of guests, youth and beauty are less considered than talent, distinction, and fashion. Private concerts and amateur theatricals ought to be very good to be successful. Professionals alone should be engaged for the former; none but real amateurs for the latter. Both ought to be, but rarely are, followed by a supper, since they are generally very fatiguing, if not positively trying. The tea-party is a much more sociable affair, and may vary in the number of guests from ten to thirty; but in London it does not come under the head of "gaieties."'—*The Habits of Good Society, passim.*

THE employment of the interval between dinner and going to bed is a problem which everybody solves according to his own lights and opportunities. Some people, living in the country, dine at seven, and retire to rest at ten, which is like cutting the Gordian knot, instead of untying it. In town, on the contrary, society who congregate by night will dine a little earlier than usual, and prolong their 'evening' into morning. Going to the theatre, and such like, is so obvious, self-suggestive, and matter-of-fact a way of disposing of your after-dinner hours, that it is needless to say anything further about it. Whether you go for the sake of the performance, like the virtuoso, or of the audience, like the fop and the coquette, your amusement is provided ready-made; your evening, exactly like your dinner, is prepared for you by other heads and hands; you simply defray the cost thereof, and then have only to sit still and be entertained without thought of others; or, if you prefer it, fall asleep. It is analogous to the Turkish practice of enjoying a dance by paying people to dance in your stead. We will only discuss such modes of after-dinnering as compel the pleasure-seeker to play some part, and to be himself an active agent.

First come evening parties, which present the grand difficulty of how to occupy the time. It requires great tact and talent on the part of the master or mistress of the house to keep up pleasant conversation in a small coterie. Hence the expediency, sometimes the necessity, of introducing cards. Another method of amusing your friends is to get together twice as many people as your house will hold. The crush in your rooms, the crowd on your staircase, the impossibility of getting in, and the equal impossibility of getting out again, afford continual entertainment, which never flags until your visitors take their final flight.

If, however, you hesitate to put in practice this desperate measure, a moderate-sized party will often go off well by allowing impromptu amusements to take their course. A dance is proposed. Some one volunteers to officiate as orchestra at the piano. It is not an affair of any pretension, nor of strict etiquette, nor of very full dress. With unaffected cheerfulness and a general determination to please and be pleased, such evenings are often the most agreeable of all. The games called Christmas may be sometimes resorted to, but their success is hazardous unless conducted with great delicacy and caution. The mistress of the house must preside over all, repressing the boisterous and encouraging the timid. As soon as the interest in any game begins to flag, it is time to change it instantly. On such occasions, it is needless to observe, the object should be to indulge in mirth without once forgetting propriety; and where that is duly observed, any one may take part in those amusements without any detriment to his dignity.

It is not polite for any member of the company to attempt to direct, dictate to, or domineer over the

others. A game may be modestly proposed, an opinion offered, a suggestion made; but nothing further. Good-breeding strictly forbids us to insist too strongly on our own ideas, or to carry out our own wishes with too much persistence. Still less is it polite to take advantage of the liberty allowed at such times to make cutting remarks, sarcastic observations, ambiguous compliments, or impose humiliating forfeits. To indulge in strongly-marked flirtation, to pass one's arm round a young lady's waist, to take forcible possession of a ribbon or a flower, or to select incessantly one and the same partner, are marks of defective social training which, if permitted to continue, would soon put an end to social mirth.

Acted charades form a charming drawing-room recreation, provided the actors who accept the parts are gifted with spirit, intelligence, and originality. But something depends on the host, who has to furnish the scenery, costume, and properties. For the first, a screen or two will often suffice; imagination must supply the rest. The efficiency of the latter varies with the adaptive talent of the wearer. For charade costume all is fish that comes to the net. Old hats, caps, flowers, ribbons, handkerchiefs, carpets even, serve for decoration. A gilt paper crown distinguishes a king; a wand denotes a fairy; an old-fashioned garment makes an aged personage. A lady becomes a gentleman by wearing a gentleman's hat; whilst a gentleman is converted into a lady by putting on a lady's shawl and carrying a parasol.

To act a charade, a word is first agreed on, each syllable or portion of which is to suggest an act or tableau, the final act representing 'The Whole.' At the beginning, the spectators are informed how many acts there are before The Whole. The word may be selected from any language known to the company. A French word, for instance, may be taken for those familiar with that language. It is not necessary to adhere to the strict orthography of the syllables; their similarity of sound when pronounced suffices. Charades may either be written and got by heart beforehand, like any other theatrical piece—by far the safest and most certain way to avoid any possibility of a break-down—or they may be improvised with more or less of preparation and previous arrangement.

Suppose we take the word 'Austerlitz,' dividing it into French syllables. First will come *Os*, a bone, affording a scene between a housekeeper and a butcher, who wants to give her too much bone to her meat. *Terre*, earth or land, may be represented either by sailors coming ashore after a long voyage, or by gardening, farming, and mining operations. *Litz* may be a caricature of the great German pianist performing one of his eccentric capriccios, or treating the audience to some 'Music of the Future.' The Whole will be Napoleon's well-known bivouac on the eve of the famous battle, of course given in burlesque style. The entire performance should be mixed up with jokes and humorous dialogue, to throw the audience off the right scent.

Again, let us take the word 'Château,' a castle or country [illegible]. Our first is *Chat*, a cat. A young gentleman returns from shooting, carrying a heavy game-bag, and tells his mother and sisters he has brought them a hare. On producing it, it proves to be a tortoiseshell, and a dispute arises whether it is really a cat or not. While they are debating the question, an old woman enters, bewailing the loss of her darling puss, and accusing the sportsman of the murder. He refuses to pay the value of the cat, and so she goes out to fetch a policeman. The policeman (who stammers) lays down the law. 'A ca-ca-cat is a do-do-domestic animal and you mu-mu-must not sh-sh-shoot do-do-domestic animals,' &c. The cat is paid for, and the old woman satisfied.

For our second, *Eau*, water, we may take a scene in the desert, where a caravan athirst discovers a spring. But water can be easily acted and indicated in half a dozen different ways, which the reader's ingenuity will readily imagine.

For our Whole two benighted travellers are proceeding to a château hard by, when a woodman warns them not to go, as it is empty, and tenanted only by ghosts. They do go, notwithstanding; and just as they are dropping off to sleep, phantoms appear, rattling chains and making other horrible noises. The travellers threaten to shoot the ghosts, who then confess that they are coiners in the flesh, wanting to keep the château to themselves. The travellers promise secrecy. On leaving, they meet the woodman, who expresses surprise at their escaping alive, and inquires what they think of the château. 'Oh,' they say, 'it is a terr[illegible]château. There is not such an[illegible]hâteau in the world. Advise [illegible]body to avoid the château.'

There is no scant of French words which lend themselves readily to charadic treatment. *Orange*, orange, is made up of *or*, gold, and *ange*, angel; *chien dent*, couchgrass, a troublesome weed in fields and gardens, of *chien*, dog, and *dent*, tooth; *corbeau*, a raven, of *cor*, a corn on the foot, and *beau*, handsome; &c. &c. *Verbum sap.*

As to balls. A fundamental difference exists between English balls and Continental (especially French) ones, which influences both the demeanour of the persons there, and the class of persons who frequent them. English balls are mainly got up for the introduction of young people to each other; they are the machinery for marrying daughters off, and providing sons with suitable brides. 'It was at one ball he met her, at another he flirted, at a third he courted, and at a fourth offered,' is a correct description of many a British match. Not so in France, where marriages of inclination are rarer, and *mariages de convenance* constitute the majority of unions. Not that people there marry persons whom they actually detest much more frequently than we do. But marriages are arranged by parents (sometimes by professional agents) at private colloquies amongst themselves, and not in consequence of young people having met, and been pleased with each other in society. It is not asserted, however, that this *never* occurs. But there are more marriages made, I believe, in France, by advertisement even, than by the offer of a hand at balls and parties. The truth of this fact will be familiar to every one conversant with contemporary French life and literature. An advertisement (in the 'Constitutionnel') now before me, coolly announces for the second time, 'A young man desires to marry. Write, post-paid, to the initials P. D., Poste Restante, Paris.' Note that, in familiar French, 'un *jeune* homme' means a *single* man. A *jeune homme* may be fifty years of age. No doubt, before this appears in print, P. D. will have received inquiries as to his views and pretensions from several and sundry matrimonial brokers; and, in due course, will get fitted with a wife, exactly as he would get fitted with a coat.

A clever French author, speaking of Denmark, says:—'For the painter, a woman is a model; for the doctor, a patient; for the working man, a housekeeper; for the invalid, a nurse; for the republican, a citizeness; for the schoolboy, an angel; for the poet, a flower; for the Huron, a beast of burden. For the Parisian, a woman is a sum of money to be pocketed on your wedding-day; while, for the Dane, a woman is a wife, the mistress of his heart, the counsellor of his reason, and the mother of his children.' It may be fairly said that, in that respect, Englishmen do not utterly differ from Danes.

The consequence is, that at Continental balls where the English element does not predominate, there is a smaller proportion of young people in general, and of young ladies in particular. Of course, by 'balls' are not understood any such places as the Bal Mabille or the Bal de l'Opera, which are not frequented by respectable women, but balls to which a decent man would care to take his sister or his daughter. Such balls, especially those given by official personages, are more stately, more splendid than our own, more brilliant with jewellery and embroidery, more magisterial in their

character, more business-like and serious. There is less dancing, and that more in the style of a stated solemnity. The refreshments and supper correspond in their degree of munificence and solidity. The belles of these balls are the young married women, not the girls; many a French girl scarcely knows what a ball is, except by hearsay, until she is married.

If, therefore, you are smitten with a French young lady, you may not, at a ball, manifest your inclination; on the contrary, you must completely conceal it. If your views are serious, the proper course is for your parents (or their nearest representatives) to communicate with your charmer's parents. If they approve, events march in their regular train; but balls have very little to do with it, until all is settled. At a French ball, you must not flirt with nor court a lady.

Such customs afford an explanation of many rules of French behaviour.

A young girl's best qualities are considered to be reserve, and a salutary mistrust of herself. A modest girl will wear a simple dress; her demeanour will be calm, utterly devoid of airs and affectation. She will perhaps manifest timidity on entering the room and saluting her hostess; but blushes are preferable to boldness. She will speak little, and not giggle at all, she will listen attentively to the music, and will dance quietly and modestly; she will not accept, still less will she lay herself out for, attentions on the part of young men; she will not give them her fan, her *carnet* (memorandum card), or her handkerchief to hold; she will partake of refreshments with great discretion. If she is remarked at all, it will solely be approvingly; for the serenity of her looks and manner will assure every beholder of the innocence of her thoughts.

A young lady, dancing, will not lift her dress too high, nor look her partner full in the face. If he utter a few ball-room commonplaces, she is to reply politely but briefly, without bluntness or embarrassment. When all is over, she is to thank him with a curtsey, avoiding everything which might establish any relation between herself and a stranger. If, by mistake, she has promised the same quadrille to two partners, she is bound to do her utmost to prevent any misunderstanding between them, by refraining from dancing with either of them, and perhaps even by renouncing dancing for the whole of the rest of the evening. Ball-room quarrels, in former times, used to be frequent occurrences; and they are still so far from rare on the Continent, that young ladies should be very careful not to do anything which may cause serious, perhaps fatal [redacted] either between two partners, or between her brother and a partner.

A young lady—'The Habits' tells us—must be very careful how she refuses to dance with a gentleman. Next to refusing an offer of marriage, few things are so likely to draw upon her the indignation of the rejected applicant; for, unless a good reason is given, he is apt to take it as evidence of personal dislike. If she reply very politely, asking to be excused, as she has a 'slight headache,' and does not wish to dance—'with you,' being probably her mental reservation—a man ought to be satisfied, if not pleased. At all events, he should never press her to dance after one refusal. The young lady who has refused one gentleman has no right to accept another for that dance.

The *carnet*, although somewhat pretentious, is useful for avoiding the annoyance and danger of a lady's accepting two partners for the same dance. Generally, each guest provides their own *carnet*; but the excellent hint given by 'The Habits,' is sometimes carried out both at home and abroad. 'The dances should be arranged beforehand; and for large balls, you should have printed a number of double cards, containing on the one side a list of the dances, and on the opposite page blank spaces, to be filled up by the names of partners. A small pencil should be attached to each card, which should be given to each guest in the cloak-room.'

Our French young lady, when she rises to the dignity of being herself a giver of *fêtes dansantes*, sends out her invitations lithographed either on a large card or on a small sheet of note-paper, announcing—

MONSIEUR AND MADAME OMEGA
have the honour to invite
MONSIEUR AND MADAME ALPHA
to the Ball which they will give
on the 1st of April.

A temporary portico, or marquee-entrance is placed before the door; the staircase is decorated with flowers; the cloak-room warmed, furnished with looking-glasses, pincushions, and pins. The ornamentation and lighting of the rooms is seen to—lamps are far preferable to candles of any sort—and the order of entrance of the refreshments settled. The hour of reception arrives. Madame Omega takes her place near the door of the principal *salon*; she salutes her guests as they enter, and begs them to be seated, or passes them on to inner apartments. During the evening, her energies never flag in amusing her company, in sending partners to 'wall-flowers,' and in making up card-tables for the staid and elderly. In truth, Madame O. enjoys no sinecure.

A French young gentleman asking a lady, will request not the *pleasure*, but the *honour* of dancing with her. If she is under the care of a chaperon, he will treat the chaperon with exactly the same respect as he would her mother. Dancers of *bon ton* never take off their gloves, nor venture to squeeze their partner's hand, nor press their own against her side in a galop, and especially a waltz. The moment she wishes to interrupt that dance, they drop their arm instantly. If they are dancing with a single lady, their respectful reserve becomes still more marked. The dance over, they offer their arm to conduct her to her place, where, bowing lowly, they thank her for the honour she has done them, and retire. A young lady should never be seen to converse intimately with her partner. It is uncivil, even blameable, on the part of the (French) gentleman, to attempt to establish anything like familiar intercourse. At a ball it is not allowable for the same partners to dance too frequently together.

At French balls, it *is* allowable to ask a lady to dance without being formally introduced to her—which has both more convenience and more common sense than our strict exigence of a presentation. In good society, *nobody* is supposed to be invited who is not fit company for the other guests. *Any* gentleman, therefore, present is supposed to be an eligible, or at least a permissible partner for any lady. At any rate—says 'The Habits'—if a gentleman in France comes up to a lady and asks her to dance, she must not reply, as a celebrated English beauty once did at the Tuileries: 'I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance,' by which she acquired the reputation of very bad breeding.

Invitations to a ball should be sent out at least a fortnight beforehand, to give time for the preparation of the ladies' dresses. Too brief an invitation looks as if the party invited were merely a stop-gap, an after-thought to fill up the vacancy caused by other refusals, or even as if they were not wished to come. When an invitation cannot be accepted, it should be declined with thanks and expressions of regret at the earliest possible opportunity.

The host and hostess ought to contrive that every lady, young or not young, plain or pretty, be asked to dance. Youngsters, ambitious of making their way in society, will render good service in the matter of wall-flowers.

Dance as other people dance; neither better nor worse.

After dancing, you may not lead a lady to any other seat than that which she occupied before.

Do not delay asking a lady to dance until the orchestra has already struck up.

Never remain at a ball till daylight, unless you wish to be painfully undeceived in respect to both good looks and dress.

You do not take leave of your hosts on quitting a ball, but call or

drop a card within a fortnight afterwards. It is quite enough for the entertainers to undergo the fatigue of receiving. The quietest way of quitting is the best. À propos to which, and what to avoid, take the following:

A German lady, who had been to Paris—what circles she frequented, I cannot specify—was making a call on a friend in Frankfort. Wishing to show that she had profited by her travels, when she rose to take leave, she hunted about the room for her pocket-handkerchief, without paying attention to anybody present, but upsetting tables and chairs, and smashing one or two China ornaments.

'Good heavens, Madame, what are you about?' cried the lady of the house.

'I am leaving the room, Madame, *à la Française*.'

* * * * *

What follows is merely an expression of opinion, with which the reader may agree, or not, as he chooses. It is a dangerous move to tell people *not* to do a thing; for—such is the perversity of human nature—it is almost sure to make them do it. We have, all of us, more or less, a spice of that porcine temper which urges us to push forwards, if any one pulls us by the coat-tails backwards. When Duncan Gray said, in a rage—

> 'Shall I for a haughty hizzie die?
> She may go to—— France, for me!'

it was, indeed, 'Ha! ha! the wooing o't!' The lassie then ran after the lad, whom she had sent about his business.

If a thief is caught with his hand in a neighbour's pocket, 'Don't hurt the poor man! Don't duck him! Don't put him under the pump!' is the most persuasive argument for the administration of summary justice. Marc Antony, when panting to avenge Cæsar's death, insidiously told the citizens of Rome:—

> 'Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
> To any sudden flood of mutiny.'

'Don't,' therefore, is frequently a synonym of 'Do.'

Thus, the syllabus appended to the Pope's last Encyclical is a learned list of heretical errors, which has the same effect on many minds as Luther's denunciations of Popish priestcraft. People who have never paid much attention to the right of private judgment, nor considered the value of civil and religious liberty, will find therein matter for reflection on the advantages of holding on to, and encouraging, what there are called 'pestiferous heresies.'

Again: When I was a little boy, my parents presented me with a picture-book, intended doubtless to keep me always 'good.' It was an illustrated encyclical of pretty behaviour, and ran thus:—

> 'I must not hurt or kill a fly,
> For it can feel as well as I'

[Picture of a naughty little boy killing flies on a window-pane.]

> 'I must not ugly figures scrawl
> With charcoal on a whitewashed wall.

[Picture of the same Little Pickle sketching a caricature of his dominie on fresh-blanched plaster.]

And so on. What was the consequence? I did not, certainly, like the imperial fly-catcher, Domitian, occupy my leisure moments with insect-murder, but the first whited wall I saw offered a *carte blanche* of irresistible temptation to adorn it with frescoes by the aid of burnt stick. I was becoming expert in wooden-poker drawings, when a flagellatory hint cut my progress short. The 'Manual of Proprieties' was cast to the flames

Notwithstanding which tendency in the popular temper to act exactly contrary to proffered advice, this syllabus of urbanity shall still be enriched with a short catalogue of social errors.

It is an error to stick to the culinary routine which makes to-day's dinner-party the echo of yesterday's, and the second-sighted foretaste of to-morrow's. Is there no fish in the sea, but turbot? None, besides salmon, in the stream? Are certain roasts and boils alone presentable, all the rest being unwholesome, if not poisonous? It is to avoid this monoto-

nous sameness that men betake themselves, in despair, to sundry town dining-places, and relish repasts at German *tables d'hôte*. They would accept a Chinese *chef de cuisine*, and taste hashed dog — though the cookery might be execrable and the hash still worse—for the sake of enjoying a little gastronomic variety. It is the same in other things. You shall see a man neglect a pleasing and pretty wife, to flirt with a stranger, who is coarse, plain, and twice her age. But there is a wide difference between matrimonial and culinary constancy. The one is a virtue, the other a weakness which may give rise to curious mistakes.

A German traveller, well received in London, went a round of dinner-parties. For about the twentieth time, he sat down to fowls at top and ham at bottom. 'Mein Gott!' he exclaimed, 'cock and bacon again! There is nothing to be had but cock and bacon.' And he forthwith entered in his note-book: 'The English live principally on cock and bacon.'

It is an error for people occupying country houses, reached by rail, to invite town friends to dinner at an inclement season of the year. You have half or three quarters of an hour's dreary ride, without even the pleasure of looking out of window. The 'Lodge' or 'Villa' is half a mile away from the station. You reach it by a labyrinth of rutty roads, and enter its wide-open gates with muddy boots and muddled cravat, not to mention a slight tendency to feel a little warm. The Lodge is an ice-house, after your snug London apartment. The dinner—a faultless 'set' entertainment —causes your mind to wander astray amidst last summer's pic-nics and peregrinations, when you dined on the grass in the genial sunshine, picked shrimps, and tippled pale ale, convinced that sandwiches were a wonderful invention, and deserved (as they have done) to immortalize their inventor.

To get back again—ay, there's the rub!—you have to choose between the 9.15 train and the 0.45. You miss the first, and await the second at the station. Next morning, you find yourself practising the various intonations of which the word 'Tchish-ho!' is capable; and all because Mrs. Montmorency Browne will be unseasonably hospitable.

A family tea-party is also an error—as far as regards those who don't belong to the family. You have crumpets, cakes, and a kiss of the baby. You witness worsted-work and crochet in the course of execution by three worthy women and a half—that is, by a young lady (not yet out) who may be considered as half a woman. You admire George's copy-books and John Josiah's pencil drawings. Mamma asks you to accompany them to-morrow to Kew Gardens, and improve their minds by a botanical lecture; or to get them orders for, and escort them to, the morning performance of the gorgeous pantomime; which—as you are hard pressed to finish a magazine article —is as if she asked you for the moon, or for a ten-pound note. The soirée is as lively and interesting as an evening in a 'lock-up,' when you are sure of being liberated on a friend's arrival. That friend is half-past ten of the clock, when your hostess requests you to see a lady home. The lady is always elderly, sometimes ugly, occasionally snappish. You offer your arm as bravely as you can, and on depositing your fair companion at her door—only eleven streets out of your way—you take a long breath, as you make straight for home, and relieve your mind with 'No more small family tea-parties for me!'

Bachelors' breakfasts, in England, are mainly confined to lads—to undergraduates, college men—and to sporting circles. Abroad, they are more generally and frequently indulged in by all ages and conditions of men. You sit down at noon to oysters, beefsteaks, truffled fowls, accompanied by sauterne, sherry, champagne, and finishing off with coffee and cognac, to be capped by a concluding glass of liqueur. You rise at three or four flushed and stupid. You have lost the morning, and are good for nothing in the afternoon. You have listened patiently to a considerable number of

pleasant amorous adventures, and have no adventures of the kind to tell in return—or, if you had, would not tell them. You are just beginning to recover yourself, when it is time to go to bed. Is a bachelor's breakfast a success or an error? What would become of the active and intelligent portion of society, if it had to take a bachelor's breakfast every day of its life?

It is quite an error—especially in town—to entertain your friends with home-made music. What with the musical theatres, and what with the organs, it is a great relief to pass an evening without music, in quiet chat, even where the music is tolerably good. But when, for sixpence or a shilling, you can hear better than the best amateur performances, a family concert after dinner is treating you to something for which you did not come. Believe me, the way to be a good musician is, to have to earn your bread by music. The few wealthy exceptions, like Meyerbeer, who have existed, devoting themselves entirely to the art, can scarcely be called non-professionals.

Everybody in France plays the piano, and everybody in France complains of the piano. A piano tax even has been talked of in a serio-comic, hysterical way, half-laughing and half-bewailing. Pianophobia breaks out in all sorts of ways.

'What a dear, delightful creature is Mademoiselle Honorine Longuebourse!' softly sighed young Monsieur Mabille.

'Delightful indeed!' echoed Charles Le Beau. 'Nineteen; clear complexion; black hair; blue eyes.'

'She has two hundred thousand francs down on her wedding-day.'

'An only daughter, too, with a rich bachelor uncle in failing health. Delightful!'

'And—most delightful!—she can't play the piano. By-the-way, I am looking out for an apartment.'

'With a south aspect, of course?'

'Oh, no, indeed!'

'You prefer the north?'

'Not the least in the world. I want an apartment, north or south, on the first floor or on the fifth, big or little, dear or cheap, if I can only get out of the way of pianos.'

'That is all? I only wish you may find it! Do you go to Madame Bellefleur's party to-night?'

'I should think not, indeed. Nobody goes there.'

'Why don't they go? Madame Bellefleur is charming, her house is perfect, and everything is done on the most liberal scale.'

'I should like to know how people *can* go, when her daughters do nothing but play duets on the piano.'

In the country, nevertheless, domestic music is a great resource—for the people who make it. And if knots of music-makers like to congregate and club their individual noises into one composite whole, there is no harm done. They have a perfect right to play the part of both performers and audience. They have no next-door neighbours to complain of the annoyance. If the invitation specifies, as it ought in such cases, that you are to have amateur music, you are forewarned and therefore forearmed, and can use your own discretion about going or staying away. There may, however, happen to be a balance of interests in the case—a nice equilibrium of attraction and repulsion. The supper may hold out a compensation for the infliction of discord and ill-kept time; one young lady's pleasant talking voice may make up for another's ballad sung touchingly out of tune. A gay little dance after the concert may dispel the gloom engendered by sonatas and symphonies. But generally speaking, there is a sentiment I would recommend to the purveyors of drawing-room music:—'May the evening's amusement bear the morning's criticism!'

But if you *will* deliberately throw yourself in the way of amateur music, or if you fall in with it by chance, you must take the consequences, and bear them manfully and politely. However discordant the sounds emitted, however incorrect the time, however much 'out' the tune, you must imitate Talleyrand's imperturbability—of whom it was said that, had he been kicked

behind, his face would have betrayed no symptom of the accident.

When one young lady accompanies her ballad by repeatedly striking the common[illegible] when another has erased fr[illegible] music be[illegible]her all the fla[illegible]d sharps which incommode her fingers; when the performers of a concerted piece come in at the end one after the other, like horses at a race, you may *not* relieve your sufferings by giving vent to them; your countenance must express gratification only. In theatres and public concert-rooms, you may disapprove of what is faulty, because you have paid for the right of doing so; although, even then, silence or faint applause is a sufficient punishment of the short-comer's defects. But in private, both good-nature and good manners require you to *look* pleased, even if you are not so, after members of the company have been doing their best to please you. Any token of disapproval is almost brutal, under the circumstances. When a performance is concluded, you may even breathe a grateful 'Thank you,' without very culpable hypocrisy—seeing that the meaning of those words is capable of sundry interpretations.

If you are asked to sing or play, either do it at once, without requiring to be pressed, or don't do it at all. Be very cautious about doing it. In the first place, be sure that you *can* do it. It is painful to see a young gentleman looking up to the ceiling for the remainder of the words of a song, or feeling for them in his hair, and not finding them; it is provoking to hear a pianist break down in a passage through defective memory or execution. Secondly, be sure of your style, especially in unaccustomed circles. What is considered very fine in one set, may be thought very commonplace in another. What is relished in London, may not suit Paris; what is applauded in Berlin, may be coldly listened to by Italian ears.

While music is being executed—whether in the good or the bad sense of the word—talking is not polite; humming the air is a nuisance to others; beating time absurd, because you will mostly beat it wrong; and exaggerated applause and admiration ridiculous. The last demonstration has been carried in Paris to a degree which it would be difficult to surpass. A certain pianist had ladies in his pay, at the rate of twenty-five francs per concert, whose duty was to faint with delight at his inimitable performance.

One evening, however, a lady, paid to faint, deserted her post by falling asleep. Reckoning on the fainting of this female to interrupt the finale of a concerto, the pianist started his allegro at a speed impossible for human fingers to continue. But no fainting came to his relief. What could he do in that calamity? He did what the lady ought to have done, and fainted himself; people crowded round him; they carried him out of the room. The fainteress, waking, really fainted through vexation at having forgotten to faint.

The above are errors occurring in respectable society, in The World, Le Monde; there are others to be warned against. The *Demi-Monde* is a bottomless pitfall.

However hard up a young man abroad—say in Paris—may be for means of amusing his after-dinner hours, it is an error for him to suppose that he will come to anything but grief by associating with the persons known as lorettes. It is impossible to ignore the existence of a class which has furnished a heroine to Her Majesty's and other musical theatres; better is it to speak the truth about them. The *Dame aux Camellias* of Dumas's novel, and the *Traviata* of Verdi's opera, are as unlike real nature as the mermaid or the sphynx. *Filles de Marbre*, Hearts of Stone, is the aptest title ever applied to them.

The author of 'La Nouvelle Babylon' informs us that there are not two lorettes in Paris. There is but one—her sketched by Gavarni—the same countenance, the same spirit. Of this type there are innumerable duplicates, as like to each other as the herrings in a barrel. The only way of distinguishing them, morally, would be

to ticket them No. 1, No. 2, up to No. 1001.

With the experience of age united to the audacity of youth, the lorette, ever greedy after her prey, is mistress of herself on the field of battle; on her forehead you read the word 'Defiance.' Woe be to the man who loves her; she will ruin him with the unsparing determination of the North devastating the Southern States. Woe be to him who offends her; she will not wait long for her revenge.

'Are you expert with the small sword?' a lorette inquired of a young man who was warmly attached to her.

'Tolerably. But why?'

'You must quarrel with the Marquis de C., and kill him.'

'But why should I quarrel with him? I don't even know him.'

'You will fight him; if not, adieu!'

Not long afterwards, a couple of hackney carriages, at daybreak, rolled silently over the snowy road, and stealthily entered the Bois de Boulogne.

Two men got out of them, each accompanied by a couple of friends. They [illegible] swords, at first with great circumspection, each studying his adversary's mode of fence. Suddenly, the arm of one darted out to its full length, like a projectile. The Marquis de C—— clapped his hand to his heart, and uttered a stifled cry. He tottered, set one step backwards, and fell with his whole weight into his second's arms. He gazed on his vanquisher with glassy eyes, and asked, 'I never saw you before last night; why have you killed me?'

'Because that woman would have it so.'

This is not an imaginary anecdote. Out of nine duels fought in Paris, eight are sure to be for a lorette; and she mostly has something to do with the ninth.

# CURIOSITIES OF FASHION:

## In the Matter of Love-Letters.

['Heaven first sent letters for some wretch's aid—
Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid·
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires.'—POPE.

OF course you have them now, dear madam, safely stored away in some treasure-casket, whose key is never at your husband's command. You would not wish him to know—men are so presuming!—how dearly you cherish those faded pages, where, in language not particularly logical, he poured out the strong affection of his manly soul. You would not—strange reserve of love!—no, you would not, for any bribe, permit him to see how valued is the least scrap and fragment which recalls to you the happy days of yore, when your cheek blushed and your heart beat just at a whisper in your ear and a pressure of your hand! Silly work are some—are most of those letters which you hoard up with such jealous care, and were they read by a clever counsel before twelve respectable householders, what shouts of laughter would peal through the amused court! and the next morning, what long and titillating extracts would they furnish for the daily papers! But you would not surrender them, nevertheless, for untold sums. Each blotted line, each time-stained page, is sacred in your eyes. Love takes no heed of sounding periods; love cares little for the rules of grammar or canons of criticism; and *you*, dear madam, *you* see no faulty sentences—detect no inharmonious phrases, for you read with the eyes of affection! It is the sweetest of all music which those blurred pages breathe; a strain of divinest inspiration, gliding through the long-lapsed years like the echo of a remembered song, and summoning before us, as if by a magician's spell, the bright and beautiful days of our young life, when first we felt the soul sway to and fro in the rushing current of the new love.

Swift, we are told—that heart of ice with deep fire seething in its centre—wrote upon the paper which enclosed a tress cut from poor Stella's wealth of auburn locks, 'Only a woman's hair.' And unthinking critics have pointed to this as an indication of his cold and cynical nature. But, ah, what a history underlies those few but pregnant words! 'Only a woman's hair!' Even as he wrote the words, a tear—I am sure of it—fell upon them; and in after-hours, as with dim eyes and shaking hand he would take up the precious packet, those words, '*Only a woman's hair!*' would enter, like the iron, into his very soul, and he would bethink him of all the hopes, and joys, and, alas! the agonies and the doubts which they had known together, he and the sad, beautiful woman whose golden tress recalled him to the past.

And so with the love-letters which you and I, dear reader, hide away so heedfully, all jealous, as we are, of curious eyes and mocking lips. They are landmarks which remind us of the various stages of our journey. Alas! too often they are like warning seers, who bid us remember our past innocence, our present self-abasement. Look! look! This is but a sheet of yellow note-paper, crossed with some twenty lines, now scarcely legible. Why, then, does my heart throb, and throb, each throb beating against my breast with a *thud* like the sudden sound of a death-bell? My hand shakes as I seize the paper, and—yes, it is even so—my eyes are warm with blinding tears. Do I not know that handwriting, though it is some eight or nine—but it matters not how many—years since first I saw it? How often have I gazed upon that name—that name, dearer to me, even now, than all others borne by the daughters of Eve! Have I not gazed upon it for hours, ay, for

still, solitary, happy hours, seated in my lonely chamber, and forming brighter visions than ever were born of a poet's fancy! *Marian!* I have taken my pen, I confess it, and written that one name, and nothing *but* that name, all over sheets of foolscap, in every variety of penmanship. I wonder whether she bears that name in heaven, for thither she was called away while yet her loveliness was ripe for earth!

Then, the *first* love-letter! Tell me, Mr. Frank, you splendid young fellow, so gay at the waltz, so knowing at the Adelphi, so victorious and irresistible everywhere, have you not that *first* mysterious missive safe under lock and key even now? And do you not, spite of your blithe boasts and pseudo-witticisms, set greater store by that little note than by all the curious collection of articles common to 'fast young men?' We have all of us in our hearts—deep down at times it is true, but nevertheless it is *there*—a consciousness of the holiness and beauty of love. We know it is too fair and blessed a thing to be bandied about from one to another with a coarse jest. No man ever associates the name of the woman he really loves with a loose witticism or a *double entendre*. We criticise the ankles of little Lucille, but are silent upon the charms of Kate, Caroline, or Louise.

And you, my dear Miss Helen, you, so crushing upon us poor men when you see us at your feet in the drawing-room; you, so triumphant in all the fascinations of high-heeled *bottines* and Ondina *jupon*, have you not in some secret hiding-place, or, mayhap, close to that gentle heart of yours, the few sprawling, hasty lines which you first received from your (then) dear Alfred? He is not *your* dear Alfred now. You danced three polkas this very evening with young George Vaughan of the Guards, while Alfred danced just as many valses with pretty Mabel Bird, the Kentish beauty; and I know you are now engaged to George, and a very happy couple, I doubt not, you will make. But the *first* love-letter is, as I think somebody else has observed, an era in a woman's existence. It is the first recognition of her power and influence. It opens the flood-gates at once of that tide of passion which is a woman's very life. She feels that, at last, she understands her destiny. She has something to live for—to love, and to be loved. No wonder that she treasures it! Better, in too many cases, to preserve the first, to burn the last!

Nor are love-letters unimportant as revelations of character. When the reserve of our nature is broken down by the strong force of passion we suffer something of our real *self* to escape us. Our thoughts are not impostures, our feelings are not pretences. We become for the moment *what we are*, and the haunted depth of the heart is revealed to the one we love. Away with the mask, the visor, which we wear in the conventional deceptions of society! Amanda must see us without disguise. She *will* see us without disguise, for if we sought to deceive her, love, like Ithuriel's spear, would reveal the falsehood.

Therefore, to the present writer, a certain interest has always attached to the love-letters of those whom the world calls eminent persons—famous beauties, heroes and heroines, men of letters, women of fashion, kings and demireps, poets and philosophers. I fancy that in these passionate missives I see something of the real character, something of the weaknesses and pettinesses of these illustrious men and women whom society has regarded with awe, astonishment, or admiration. Napoleon writes to Josephine, and see the stern impassible chief, who moved before men a man of iron, can burn with the intensest passion, has, though the world knows it not, a soul of fire, a heart of flame! So, too, burly King Hal, who spared no man in his anger, no woman in his lust, writes to Anne Boleyn; and behold how very a slave he becomes to beauty! How he humbles himself before the coy lady who 'would and who would not!' Equally so do we see the real self of Pope in his letters to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; of Dean Swift in his letters to Vanessa; and perhaps our children reading

Louis Napoleon's letters to Eugenie —if, indeed, that silent, phlegmatic nature could ever break loose from the chains of his self-reserve—shall know something more of his 'inner self' than their mystified forefathers could discover.

In one of Vanessa's pretty chiding letters to Swift occurs a passage which may be offered as an excuse, if any be needed, for the present paper. 'I am sorry,' she says, 'my jealousy should hinder you from writing any more love-letters.' Yes, for it is the very bloom and summer of our lives while we receive and write these precious missives. We are all sorry, men and women, when the bright hours have vanished into the irrevocable past; when we feel that no more shall the clasp of the hand, and the lip closing upon lip, and the arm wound about the throbbing heart, be for us what they have been; when we cease to be watchers beneath windows, and misers hoarding up old gloves and faded ribbons! Ah me! There is something infinitely respectable, and there is a calm happiness which I, God wot, am the last to underrate in married life. But now again comes the swift joy, comes the rare enchantment, the *purpureum lumen* which love sheds over the virgin years! Louisa and Frank, Arthur and Kate are heroes and heroines, gods and goddesses! Mr and Mrs. John Smith are excellent sober householders, and a credit to their parish.

But in the matter of love-letters, Fashion, as in so many other matters, has played its vagaries, and the billet of to-day differs very much, I believe, in form and colour, from the billet of yesterday. Judging from the specimens one occasionally sees in the newspapers, or from those submitted to one's criticism by confiding friends, one would conclude that the *laissez faire* tone which pervades all society —the air of free, easy, and undignified familiarity which prevails in too many circles—has seized upon our love-letters. Ladies are no longer beings to be worshipped, but 'girls' to be wooed, 'chaffed,' and poked fun at! We have poets now-a-days, and poets may possibly indite missives as sentimental and romantic as those which made the cheeks blush and the eyes glow of the daughters of the Jacobite chevaliers or Hanoverian squires. But looking only at the οι πολλοι—at the great mass of young men and maidens—who but must admit that there is lacking in their 'love-letters' the chivalry of tone, the high courtesy, and exalted feeling which were 'fashionable' in the days of old? There are love-letters in Mr. Addison's 'Spectator.' There are love-letters in some of Mr. Anthony Trollope's easy and agreeable novels. How wide the gulf between them! How complete the change from the high-bred courtesy of the times of furbelows, farthingales, and ruffles, to the light familiarity of the days of expansive crinolines and dainty Balmorals!

I have before me the 'Letters and Works of Lady Wortley Montagu' They shall supply my readers with some examples of the style in which a pair of lovers corresponded a century and a half ago. First, let us hear the lady: *Hommage aux dames!* Lady Mary Pierrepont thus addresses Mr. Wortley Montagu:—

'[April 25] 1710.

'I have this minute received your two letters. I know not how to direct to you, whether to London or the country, or if in the country, to Durham or Wortley. 'Tis very likely you'll never receive this. I hazard a great deal if it falls into other hands, and I write for all that. I wish, with all my soul, I thought as you do; I endeavour to convince myself by your arguments, and am sorry my reason is so obstinate, not to be deluded into an opinion, that 'tis impossible a man can esteem a woman. I suppose I should then be very easy at your thoughts of me; I should thank you for the wit and beauty you give me, and not be angry at the follies and weaknesses; but to my infinite affliction, I can believe neither one nor t'other. One part of my character is not so good, nor t'other so bad as you fancy it. Should we ever live together, you would be disappointed both ways; you would

find an easy equality of temper you do not expect, and a thousand faults you do not imagine. You think if you married me, I should be passionately fond of you one month, and of somebody else the next: neither would happen. I can esteem, I can be a friend, but I don't know whether I can love. Expect all that is complaisant and easy, but never what is fond, in me. You judge very wrong of my heart when you suppose me capable of views of interest, and that anything could oblige me to flatter anybody. Was I the most indigent creature in the world, I should answer you as I do now, without adding or diminishing. I am incapable of art, and 'tis because I will not be capable of it. Could I deceive one minute, I should never regain my own good opinion; and who could bear to live with one they despised?

'If you can resolve to live with a companion that will have all the deference due to your superiority of good sense, and that your proposals can be agreeable to those on whom I depend, I have nothing to say against them.

'As to travelling, 'tis what I should do with great pleasure, and could easily quit London upon your account; but a retirement in the country is not so disagreeable to me as I know a few months would make it tiresome to you. When people are tied for life, 'tis their mutual interest not to grow weary of one another. If I had all the personal c' arms that I want, a face is too slight a foundation for happiness. You would be soon tired with seeing every day the same thing. When you saw nothing else, you would have leisure to remark all the defects, which would increase in proportion as the novelty lessened, which is always a great charm. I should have the displeasure of seeing a coldness, which, though I could not reasonably blame you for, being involuntary, yet it would render me uneasy; and the more, because I know a love may be revived which absence, inconstancy, or even infidelity, has extinguished, but there is no returning from a *dégoût* given by satiety. * * *

'Make no answer to this, if you can like me on my own terms. 'Tis not to me you must make the proposals; if not, to what purpose is our correspondence?

'However, preserve me your friendship, which I think of with a great deal of pleasure, and some vanity. If ever you see me married, I flatter myself you'll see a conduct you would not be sorry your wife should imitate.'

Fancy the surprise of Mr. Charles Brown, of the Shrimpington Light Volunteers, at receiving such an epistle from Miss Arabella Jones, of Laurel Villa, Camberwell! How would he cudgel his brains to prepare an appropriate answer! How would he sink, overpowered, beneath its lofty condescension, its proud humility, its exalted candour! 'I can esteem, I can be a friend, but I don't know whether I can love.' 'Was ever woman in such humour wooed?' would be Mr. Brown's very natural interrogation. And the elegant self-appreciation of that concluding sentence:—'If ever you see me married, I flatter myself you'll see a conduct you would not be sorry your wife should imitate.' Brown, in a state of mental perturbation at the earlier part of the missive, would certainly collapse before this last and matchless stroke!

It is true that every lady is not a Mary Pierrepont; but Mary Pierrepont now-a-days would write, I fancy, in a very different strain. Fashion has modified the tone of Society, and Society intrudes even into the towers of Love and Venus.

But let us see how Lady Mary's *inamorato* sustained his share of the amatory correspondence:—

'Every time you see me you give me a fresh proof of your not caring for me, yet I beg you will meet me once more. How could you pay me that great compliment of your loving the country for life, when you would not stay with me a few minutes longer? Who is the happy man you went to? I agree with you, I am often so dull, I cannot explain my meaning; but will not own the expression was so very obscure, when I said if I had you,

I should act against my opinion. What need I add? I see what is best for me; I condemn what I do, and yet I fear I must do it. If you can't find it out that you are going to be unhappy, ask your sister, who agrees with you in everything else, and she will convince you of your rashness in this. She knows you don't care for me, and that you will like me less and less every year, perhaps every day of your life. You may, with a little care, please another as well, and make me less timorous. It is possible I too may please some of those that have but little acquaintance; and if I should be preferred by a woman for being the first among her companions, it would give me as much pleasure as if I were the first man in the world. Think again, and prevent a great misfortune from falling on both of us.

'When you are at leisure, I shall be as ready to end all as I was last night, when I disobliged one that will do me hurt, by crossing his desires, rather than fail of meeting you. Had I imagined you could have left me without finishing, I had not seen you. * * *

'I think a man or a woman is under no engagement till the writings are sealed; but it looks like indiscretion even to begin a treaty without a probability of concluding it. When you hear of all my objections to you, and to myself, you will resolve against me. Last night you were much upon the reserve; I see you can never be thoroughly intimate with me; 'tis because you have no pleasure in it. You can be easy and complaisant, as you have sometimes told me; but never think that enough to make me easy, unless you refuse me.

'Write a line this evening, or early to-morrow. If I don't speak plain, do you understand what I write? Tell me how to mend the style, if the fault is in that. If the characters are not plain, I can easily mend them. I always comprehend your expressions, but would give a great deal to know what passes in your heart.

'In you I might possess youth, beauty, and all things that charm. It is possible that they may strike me less, after a time; but I may then consider I have once enjoyed them in perfection, that they would have decayed as soon in any other. You see this is not your case. You will think you might have been happier. Never engage with a man unless you propose to yourself the highest satisfaction from him or none other.'

While turning over the lively pages of Lady Wortley Montagu, I light upon a Turkish love-letter, which may not inappropriately be included among the Curiosities of Fashion. 'I have got for you,' she writes to a female correspondent, 'a Turkish love-letter, which I have put in a little box, and ordered the captain of the "Smyrniote" to deliver it to you with this letter. The translation of it is literally as follows: The first piece you should pull out of the purse is a little pearl, which is in Turkish called *Ingi*, and should be understood in this manner:—

INGI. Sensin Guzelerin gingi.
PEARL. Fairest of the young.

CAREMFIL. Caremfilsen cararen yók,
CLOVE. Conge gulsum timarin yók,
Benseny chok than severim,
Senin benden, haberin yók.
You are as slender as this clove!
You are an unblown rose!
I have long loved you, and you have not known it!

PUL. Deidime derman bul.
SONQUIL. Have pity on my passion!

KIHAT Birlerum sahat sahat.
PAPER I faint every hour!

ERMUS. Ver bizo bir umut.
PEAR Give me some hope!

JABAN Derdinden oldum zabun.
SOAP. I am sick with love!

CHEMUR. Ben oligim size umur.
COAL. May I die, and all my years be yours!

GUL. Ben aglarum sen gul.
A ROSE. May you be pleased, and all your sorrows mine!

HASIR. Olim sana yazir
A STRAW. Suffer me to be your slave.

JO HA. Ustune bulunmaz pahu.
CLOTH. Your price is not to be found.

TARTSIN. Sen ghel ben chekeim senin hargin.
CINNAMON. But my fortune is yours.

GIRA. Esking-ilen oldum ghira,
A MATCH. I burn, I burn! my flame consumes me!

SIRINA. Uzunu benden a yirna ma.
GOLD THREAD. Don't turn away your face.

SATCH. Bazmazum latch.
HAIR. Crown of my head!

UZUM. Benim iki Guzum.
GRAPE. My eyes!

TEL. Ulugornim tez ghel.
GOLD WIRE. I die—come quickly!

'And, by way of postscript,

BIBER. Bizi bir gm haber
PEPPER Send me an answer.

'You see this letter,' continues Lady Mary, 'is all verses, and I can assure you there is as much fancy shown in the choice of them as in the most studied expressions of our letters; there being, I believe, a million of verses designed for this use. There is no colour, no flower, no weed, no fruit, herb, pebble, or feather that has not a verse belonging to it; and you may quarrel, reproach, or send letters of passion, friendship, or civility, or even of news, without ever inking your fingers.'

The knights of old and their lady-loves communicated their sentiments in a similar fashion. Stout Sir Roger and gallant Sir Galahad were ill able to handle a pen, or express their thoughts on paper; and a flower, a glove, a ring, were the interpreters of their passion. I am not sure but that in this year of enlightenment, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty Five, the introduction of a love-language in flowers and similar tokens would be a great convenience to London Society! It would tend to put the rough and hearty lover more on a level with the accomplished swain who has 'Murray's Grammar' and the 'Complete Letter-Writer' at his fingers' ends. Fancy the relief, mental and moral, of the man unaccustomed to 'Webster's Dictionary,' who would go into the fragrant arcades of Covent Garden, and there select a bouquet of the most passionate meaning—equal in delicacy of compliment and intensity of thought to the nosegay put together by Fitzplantagenet the poet!

Passing over four centuries and a half, let us see how a king addressed the lady of his love, and in what manner the proud and passionate Tudor expressed his royal passion. I am pleased to fancy that Anne Boleyn received the *billet* I am about to quote when seated one calm summer evening in the recess of the old oriel window at Hever Hall. I doubt not but that her cheek flushed, and her bosom heaved, and her eyes gleamed as she read the glowing lines—but with ambition, not with love—for we know that the volatile beauty was attracted, as far as might be, to the gallant Sir Thomas Wyatt. Truly, the bluff monarch who, not content with ladies' hearts, must needs have ladies' heads, could woo in most impassioned language, and 'roar like any nightingale.' Thus he writes:—

*'To my Mistress.*

'As the time seems very long since I heard from you, or concerning your health, the great love I have for you has constrained me to send this bearer, to be better informed both of your health and pleasure, particularly because since my last parting with you I have been told that you have entirely changed the mind in which I left you, and that you neither mean to come to court with your mother, nor any other way; which report, if true, I cannot enough marvel at, being persuaded in my own mind that I have never committed any offence against you. And it seems hard, in return for the great love I bear you, to be kept at a distance from the person and presence of the woman in the world that I value the most; and if you love me with as much affection as I hope you do, I am sure the distance of our two persons would be equally irksome to you, though this does not belong so much to the mistress as to the servant.

'Consider well, my mistress, how greatly your absence afflicts me. I hope it is not your will that it should be so; but if I heard for certain that you yourself desired it, I could but mourn my ill-fortune, and strive by degrees to abate my folly. And so, for lack of time, I make an end of this rude letter, beseeching you to give the bearer

evidence in all he will tell you from me.

'Written by the hand of
'Your entire Servant,
'HENRY R.'

Most of my readers will be familiar with the story of the loves of the Lady Arabella Stuart and Mr. William Seymour; a story that once excited a great emotion in the breast of London Society. Few of the tender letters that passed between the unfortunate lovers have been preserved, though in the dreary hours of Arabella's imprisonment she often consoled herself with committing her thoughts and feelings to paper.

'Where London's Tower its turrets show
So stately by the Thames's side,
Faire Arabella, child of woe!
For many a day had sat and sighed

'And as shee heard the waves arise,
And as shee heard the bleake windes roare,
As fast did heave her heartfelte sighes,
And still so fast her teares did poure!'

Over the following letter, which is preserved among the Harleian MSS., her tears may probably have poured. It breathes a spirit of very true and tender love:—

*'Lady Arabella to Mr. William Seymour.*

'SIR,

'I am exceeding sorry to hear you have not been well. I pray you let me know truly how you do, and what was the cause of it. I am not satisfied with the reason Smith gives for it; but if it be a cold, I will impute it to some sympathy betwixt us, having myself gotten a swollen cheek at the same time with a cold. For God's sake let not your grief of mind work upon your body. You may see by me what inconveniences it will bring one to; and no fortune, I assure you, daunts me so much as that weakness of body I find in myself; for *si nous vivons l'age d'un veau*, as Marot says, we may, by God's grace, be happier than we look for, in being supposed to enjoy ourself with his majesty's favour. But if we be not able to live to it, I, for my part, shall think myself a pattern of misfortune, in enjoying so great a blessing as you so little a while. No separation but that deprives me of the comfort of you; for wheresoever you be, or in what state soever you are, it sufficeth me you are mine! "Rachel wept, and would not be comforted, because her children were no more," and that indeed is the remediless sorrow, and none else! and therefore God bless us from that, and I will hope well of the rest, though I see no apparent hope. But I am sure God's book mentioneth many of his children in as great distress that have done well after, even in this world! I do assure you nothing the state can do with me can trouble me so much as this news of your being ill doth; and you see when I am troubled I trouble you too with tedious kindness, for so I think you will account so long a letter, yourself not having written to me this good while so much as how you do. But, sweet sir, I speak not this to trouble you with writing but when you please. Be well, and I shall account myself happy in being

'Your faithful loving Wife,
'ARABELLA STUART.'

It is not in this wise, I fancy, that ladies now-a-days address their 'own true loves.' It was not thus that the ladies of the Regency addressed the gay beaux who fluttered through the revels of the Carlton. A light and frivolous time begets a light and frivolous love. Fashion steps within the charmed circle of the affections, and at the bidding of her harlequin wand, the sober truth gives way to the meretricious falsehood, and passion becomes a thing for fools to sneer at. That chivalrous idolatry of woman—that delicate recognition of her claims as mother, wife, and sister—that idealization of her sweet qualities and attractive virtues, which shine conspicuous on every page of the elder poets, and infused a certain grace and tenderness into the spirit of the age, has pitifully decayed, and men too often speak of womanhood with irreverent freedom, while womanhood neglects to assert her own pure dignity. And as there can be no love where

there is no respect,* the relations between the sexes are daily growing less frank and genial, and a language of slang and persiflage is usurping the place of the courteous and decorous speech in which our ancestors greeted the maidens they wooed, or the wives they honoured. I do not think that this can be for the good of society. I think that manly virtues are nourished by womanly graces, and that the dignity of woman fosters the manliness and self-respect of man.

Let not fashion, then, sweep away the love-letters in which young and happy hearts express their happiness; in which fond and trusting spirits give utterance to their trust. Still continue, oh friend, to think thy Arabella a peerless lady, and thou, Arabella, to believe thy Frank to be a loyal and generous knight. Be not ashamed of thy love, but with the great singer of these later times exclaim,

> 'I hold it true, whate'er befall,
> I feel it, when I sorrow most;
> 'Tis better to have loved and lost
> Than never to have loved at all.'

In this, your 'golden prime,' cultivate all noble and tender feelings, all generous sentiments, all high and holy thoughts, so that, in after-years, if haply the tokens of a vanished love should once more fall into your hands, you may look at them with honest pride, not with bitter regret; not with tears and blushes, as reminding you of weakness, and folly, and human error, but with gaze unflinching if sorrowful, as recalling the bright love-dreams of your youth, when your hearts beat with the best impulses and purest affections, and Hope and Faith were the guardian angels of your souls.

* As the gay Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, most sagely sings—

> 'She that would raise a noble love, must find
> Ways to beget a passion for her mind:
> She must be *that* which she to *be* would seem,
> For all true love is grounded in esteem.'

# LONDON SHADOWS.

## No. I.—Bread made out of River Drift.

MACHINE-MADE bread is not a recent invention. Years before Mr. Stevens astonished the town, before Dr. Dauglish was born, while the good old times of alum and bone-dust still prevailed, and the British Lion was content so that 'some gave him white bread and some gave him brown'—it never occurring to that magnanimous and matter-of-fact beast to apply chemical conjuration to his staff of life—to French-polish it, as one may say, by aeration and non-fermentation, and so augment its gentility that the most dainty stomach might receive it without a shock—bread was made by machinery, and that of a much less complicated character than tends to the production of the patented loaf of modern times.

Nor has the new-fangled machine driven the old one out of the field. It is not likely that it will. No machine, even of American invention, can bear comparison with this old-fashioned one either for simplicity, efficacy, or durability. Its construction involves the use of neither iron, nor brass, nor steel: valves, cranks, and cogs are not material to its economy. Though composed of only flesh and blood and bone it is tougher than hammered iron; it seldom gets out of order, rarely blows up, and, more important than all, it consumes an amazing small amount of fuel. It has arms and hands, and is set up on two legs, usually, but can make shift with one leg and a wooden prop, indeed it is sometimes to be met stumping along on two wooden props and no legs at all, and apparently none the worse for the deprivation, as far as its bread-making qualities are concerned. Altogether it is a very admirable machine indeed, and would give universal satisfaction but for this single drawback—it produces no more than it consumes.

This, of course, is a very serious obstacle in the way of its favourable recognition in progressive times like the present, and fully accounts for the contempt in which these old-fashioned flesh-and-bone built machines are held. There is nothing at all to be got out of them—not even the comfortable consciousness of being entitled to their gratitude, which might ensue could they be persuaded how utterly useless they were, how ugly and out of place, and be induced to withdraw from the business paths of life and accept workhouse shelter.

But this they will never hear of. Even in the case of the utterly legless ones it would be dangerous to broach the subject—more dangerous, possibly, than with the rest, for this sort, to compensate for their imperfection, invariably carry sticks or crutches; and there is no saying to what lengths they might proceed in defence of their freedom and independence. This is the great weakness of the wrong-headed creatures. Like the Guards at Waterloo, 'they don't know when they are beaten;' but, unlike the Waterloo braves, a turn of the untoward tide is with them impossible. They—the wrong-headed ones—*are* beaten; the flood has receded, never to return, and left them sticking in the mud. And in the mud they stick. On such tender ground they take their stand, turning a deaf ear to those who would help them ashore, and dabbling in the ooze as a make-believe for swimming. Be good enough to mind your own business, will you? They are neither beggars, nor, thank God! paupers. They are as good as *you*, if it comes to that, for all your dandy clothes. They owe no man thanks for the grist from which their bread is made, and they claim right of way and a share of the pavement with the most respectable ratepayers, and care not how much the public ear is offended by the creaking of their rubbishing mills.

Nor is the law as it at present exists equal to the putting down these wretched machines. They

may not be indicted either on account of the small quantity or the inferior quality of the bread they produce. As to quality, good enough for them *is* good enough; and it would be scarcely polite to inquire the size of the crust they ate at breakfast-time. Besides, and as before observed, they will keep in working order on wonderfully little fuel; and if from miscalculation, or any little accident, the fire should die out and the machine stop, who is to blame? There were the workhouse doors continually ajar, there was the cheery porter kindly beckoning them to come in out of the cold and make themselves at home. If they didn't like to go in, there was a big new loaf for the fetching—a bigger loaf and a better one than any creaking, crazy machine of the number could hope to produce in a day's labour. But the obstinate things would neither go in and make themselves at home nor accept the big loaf. Vain even were the pleadings of the tender-hearted board of guardians. 'Why, what a silly fellow you are!' said they. 'Why will you insist on grinding your bones to make your bread when here is an asylum in which you may comfortably repose for the remainder of your days? See! here are warm clothes. To-day we dine off boiled mutton and caper sauce. Our bottled stout is highly approved by all whom it is our pleasant duty to entertain. Within there is such a jolly fire as will make your heart glad to see, with Bristol bird's-eye and straw pipes on the mantelshelf. Come, let us conduct you to the common hall, where our happy guests are now assembled!'

Was it meet that the cranky old flesh-and-bone machine should disdainfully reject an invitation so courteously conveyed? Was it right in him to revile the amiable guardians—to wag his head in scornful disbelief as to their boiled mutton, and to tell them flat to their heads that their bread he hated; that he would sooner go hungry than pollute his mouth with its bitterness—sooner potter along his own road, though he made but a dozen sweet and independent mouthfuls of bread a day—sooner starve outright, as such as he had already done, many and many a time? Was it right in him to use such language? Anyhow he *did* use it. But perhaps he didn't mean it! But he *did* mean it. He said it, and he stumped off radiant and erect as his failing limbs would allow, and renewed his old occupation of grinding his bones to make his bread like a free-born Briton. He doesn't pine for company. A thousand such as he may be found for the seeking in as many odd and out-of-the-way places in and about the great city, all grinding their bones; and they will go on grinding them till they have no longer a leg to stand on.

These crazy old bread-making machines are of all sorts and patterns. Sometimes you may meet them shaped like a woman, with a white thin face and round shoulders and sharp shoulder-blades, ill-concealed by the tattered shawl which covers them, and carrying a bundle—ever carrying a bundle. Her out-of-door existence is spent in carrying a bundle, and never was she yet seen without it. It is impossible to see her without it, because her life is bound up in it. It is the mill in which she grinds her bones to make her bread; and bread and breath being synonymous terms, when the mill stops, why there's an end of it. So she grinds her bones over shirts or trousers or military coats for good Mr. Shadrach, and he supplies her with just enough bread-stuff to keep the mill going. Knowing Mr. Shadrach, the reader may regard this as a contradiction of the previous assertion that these machines yield no man profit. Well, what is Mr. Shadrach's profit? True, he may gain a penny out of a bundle of work, but are his feelings of no account? Is he not touched to the quick of his soul every time the thin woman with the fat bundle approaches his warehouse? Does that wretched penny profit pay even for washing pocket-handkerchiefs tear-soiled in her behalf?

Sometimes the human bread-making machine appears in the

form of a vendor of children's toys —of trumpery little windmills, and tops and balls at the low price of a *farthing* each. This may seem very like exaggeration to grown-up boys and girls, who only know that London has an eastern as well as a western part as a geographical fact —to whom the 'New Cut' may, for all they know to the contrary, mean the projected Suez Canal, and Lambeth Marsh be a good place for wild-duck shooting; nevertheless it is quite true. In each of the places above mentioned, and in many more, in the midst of the roaring, marketing mob, there the farthing toy merchant is to be found, with the battered old tea-tray slung about his neck and piled up with goods, which, supposing him to sell them all—which is not likely—will not realize more than a single shilling. How on earth he makes bread enough out of his business to keep life in him is altogether a mystery. If he makes them—the dolls' bedsteads, the jumping jacks, and the cardboard clocks—himself he must keep something in the cupboard while he is at work (for the manufacture of *more* than forty-eight dolls' bedsteads in a single day is hardly possible); and then there is the cost of wood and glue! One day to make, one long evening—from six till twelve, probably—shivering in the cold to sell, for a profit of—ninepence! Six pounds of bread—the Lord of the harvest be thanked that it is as much—for eighteen hours' work! But he must not take it all out in bread; there is lodging to provide, and candle, and a bit of fire, or how will he keep his glue hot? and then how can he get on without a little coffee? and who is to pay——

But where is the use of diving into such fathomless mystery? It is all managed somehow. Without doubt such a life is preferable to one passed in the workhouse, or why don't the farthing-toy merchant avail himself of the hospitable invitation of the guardians? It is not *our* fault that he is not enjoying the boiled mutton and wearing the comfortable clothes. Thank heaven, we can lay our hands on our poor's-rate receipts in proof of *that* assertion.

The question naturally arises, What is the origin of these unlucky machines? They were not born to it; for if they ground their bones for bread as fast as they grew their arrival at man's estate would be impossible. On this point I have no positive information to lay before the reader; I only know that, having taken to grinding their bones, they are used up not nearly so expeditiously as might be expected. One variety of the species under consideration, and who grinds his bread out of that popular musical instrument the concertina, has haunted our neighbourhood periodically for the last six years. I think he could not have been long at the business when I first made his acquaintance, judging from the newness of his instrument, the glossiness of his hat, and the unkennelish cut of his boots. He had an ear for his own music, too, at that period, and would run over the notes gracefully before he essayed a tune. He would also scowlingly resent the noise made by passing vehicles, and was on one occasion observed to break off in the midst of the Last Rose of Summer, and cross the road for the purpose of rebuking and causing to move on a damsel of the neighbourhood, who, in charge of a squalling baby, had composed herself on a doorstep with the intention of availing herself of the concertina's soothing qualities. At that time too, as I recollect, he was somewhat fastidious as to the terms in which you conveyed to him your sense of his deservings. A penny thrown from the window he would pick up gingerly between his finger and thumb, and acknowledge by a supercilious nod directed towards the area railings, as though convinced beyond a doubt that the offering was that of some ill-mannered kitchen person—the cook or the knife-boy. His delight was to come up the front steps and take his earnings at the door. His special delight was to take them wrapped in paper. I remember that twopence was so put up for him on one occasion, and that, setting his gratitude to music, he nearly drove

me 'mad by playing under the window unceasingly for the space of thirty-five minutes by the clock. The more I think of him, with his spotless turn-down collar, and his blacked boots, and his oily hair, the more I am convinced that he was then new to the bone-grinding business. Maybe, however, it was his tremendous polish that prevented the teeth of the crusher biting so quickly as they otherwise would.

That was six years ago. You should see him now! His hair is no longer oily, but crispy and harsh and iron-grey, and his hat has given place to a cap with a peak that hides his eyes. He no longer walks on the pavement. I have a suspicion that what caused him to step into the gutter in the first instance was the increasing shabbiness of his boots, which were thus screened from view in the shadow of the kerb; but his boots never got mended, and so he lost his respectable footing. Grinding his bones to make his bread through a period of six years has quite used him up, nor has it fared better with his concertina. For several months past it has been unequal to such harassing labour as the performance of polkas and popular song tunes involves, and even the particularly sober hymn music, to which it is now invariably applied, it makes out only with the greatest difficulty. When last I heard it, it was attempting the Evening Hymn, and on arriving at 'the ills that I this day have done,' it emitted, in place of a high note, such an agonized gurgling as dismally foreboded its approaching dissolution. There is no use in shaking it, as the machine which works it has of late contracted the vicious habit of doing, or in trying to startle it to a sense of propriety by a sudden and vengeful tug, or in halting at the lamp-post to prick up the keys, failing at the knees, as one may say, and shrinking into their sockets as though yearning for burial and peace. Perhaps they have it by this time. Saturday was always his day for enlivening our district, but nothing has been heard of him since the February frost set in.

But it would be a heavy task—the heavier because it is so very melancholy—to particularize the cases of the various bone-grinders to be met with in the highways and byways of mighty London. Even then the list would not be exhausted. The banks of the river yield yet another variety of the species, and not the least curious, inasmuch as the flesh-and-bone machines there discovered make their bread out of ship-waste and river-drift, out of coal spilt from barges and discarded scraps of rope and bits of iron and black bones long buried in the mud. Though by no means handsome, the bread-makers of this class are not without their commendable qualities. They are brave to face the bleakest weather, to wait on the tides that fall before the sun is up on bitter November mornings, and this although the rags that cover them are so scanty and thin as to be at the mercy of the wind (how the wind comes piping through the bridge arches on a winter morning nobody but those who have experienced it can have a notion), and would probably be blown away only that they are saturated with river water and river fog, and cling tenaciously to the grimy skin they cover.

Of all sorts and sizes are these ingenious machines. Some there are no taller than a walking-stick, and of such childish strength that a cap-ful of coal, or old rope, or black bones, or any such other sort of bread-stuff, is a load they totter under. Some, again, are old and bent with age; and of young and old the sexes are about equal. A hundred times at least, on passing over Blackfriars Bridge in the early morning, have I seen one old lady in particular, who engages in this department of bread-making, and who is herself, from her odd boots to the stubbly hair sprouting through her abandoned-looking bonnet, as much like an item of drift as can be imagined. Where she obtained it it is hard to guess, but besides the odd boots and the bonnet, she wears—and always has worn, according to my observation—a black satin gown. Coals appear to be the chief object of her pursuit, and the lengths she will go

for them must be seen to be believed. With her black satin tucked up, I have seen her crawling between the barges where the mud was level with her knees, and, as she stooped, within an inch or so of her nose. At such times she wears her odd boots slung round her neck, that she may feel for lumps of coal under the mud with her naked toes. I am glad to add that the quantity she is thus enabled to collect is not inconsiderable. I have seen her toiling up the oozy steps with a sack containing little short of a hundred-weight at her back. I mean to say that since getting coals is her livelihood I am glad she gets so many, but no man with a mother can be glad to see her carry them. In the summer time it is bad enough, but in the winter, when the wharves, and the piles, and the barges are white with frost, and the black mud, by contrast, looks so very black, and the north wind is blowing, and the river is dotted over with lumps of ice, it is not a pleasant sight to see her toiling up these same steps, no longer oozy, but slippery as glass, so that the old lady is obliged to spare a hand from her reeking coal-sack that she may hold on by the iron railings, with her poor blue shanks, and her flip-flap shoes and icy tricklets from the muddy sack saturating the skirt of black satin and drenching her bent shoulders. Surely it would require all the heat that her load of coals will yield to dry her poor old rags and thaw her benumbed limbs. But the coals in the sack at her back are not to be burnt for her comfort. How is she to get bread to eat if that happens? No! the coals are for sale. She has her regular customers, for she is a fair-dealing old woman, and never adulterates her coals with stones or slates. When coals are cheap her bagful fetches her sixpence; when they are dear, ninepence. Now, to the shivering old soul's bitter misfortune, coals are cheap, so she will have to make shift with sixpence till the tide comes up and goes down again, and then she will be seen trudging off to the river shore again to try what luck it has brought her.

I lay down the pen, for I seem to hear an echo of that song which touched the heart of England:—

> 'It's oh that bread should be so dear,
> And human flesh so cheap!'

## HORATIAN ODE.

### Dedicated to the Queens of Comedy.

*(With a Portrait of Mdlle. Dorian.)*

COME, twine me a wreath of roses,
Sparkling with odorous dews;
Bring me the lyre,
With strings of fire,
Old Horace wont to use;
For the famous Queens of Comedy must be my theme to-day,
And Horatian verse will best rehearse
The list so bright and gay
Of the Queens of mirth and jollity,
And wit of rarest quality—
A glorious array!

Then fill me a sparkling beaker,
Fill it with beaded champagne,
The vintage of France;
For she whose glance
To celebrate I'm fain
Is one of the Queens of Comedy who rule by the rolling Seine;
To whom belong jest, laugh, and song
As tributes of their reign;
True Queens of mirth and jollity,
And wit of rarest quality,
With beauty to enchain!

Then strike up, pipe and tabor,
While the young Loves dance around;
Leap, joyous band,
All hand in hand,
To music's merry sound;
For the fairest Queen of Comedy we honour thus to-day
With song and dance is a child of France,
The sunny—*toujours gai!*
Where the Queens of mirth and jollity,
And wit of rarest quality,
Can boast their widest sway.

Then heap up rose and myrtle,
And scatter perfumed showers,
While Loves inspire
My willing lyre
With their mother's magic powers,
To hymn this Queen of Comedy, this joyous child of France,
Who hearts beguiles with nods and smiles,
And archly-cunning glance;
A Queen of mirth and jollity,
And wit of rarest quality,
Of folly and frivolity,
Of humour and romance!

# THE LADY IN MUSLIN.

## CHAPTER X.

### MARGARET'S TREASURES.

MARGARET'S singing and playing lasted but a short time. She grew as meditative as Gaunt; and leaning her arm on the piano, kept fingering the notes at intervals in a musing, restless manner. Once or twice she looked up hastily, and her eyes always sought Gaunt's face in a way very unflattering to myself, but which allowed me to watch her freely enough, secure of her inattention to my doings.

Suddenly she seemed to take a resolution. Drawing a deep sigh, she roused herself, gave another of those earnest and yet half-doubtful looks at Gaunt, and then rose up from her seat and left the room.

She was absent scarcely five minutes; and when she returned she resumed her seat, without saying a word to either of us, and again we remained silent and unsociable till supper was announced by the Indian.

Supper was a very light affair, consisting merely of sandwiches and wine, on a tray usually served in the room in which we were sitting. To-night, however, Miss Owenson rose, saying:—

'It is so chilly this evening, I have ordered supper in the next room, where there is a fire; let us go, I shall quite enjoy a good warming.'

The next room was Margaret's special and sacred favourite, dedicated to her easel, to couches, boxes, cabinets, and other personal property, that were too littery to be introduced into her more orthodox apartments. Here she passed most of her time, how, was a mystery, at any rate solitarily, for into this room no one was admitted.

A fire blazed cheerfully on the hearth, and before it was placed the supper-table, surrounded by very luxuriant arm-chairs, and a couple of shaded lamps on the mantelshelf shed a soft, pleasant light all over the large, rather desolate-looking room.

Margaret sat herself down in one of the chairs by the fire, and bending over it, began silently and musingly warming her hands. Gaunt, in true English fashion, unceremoniously tucked his coat tails under his arms and supported himself against the mantelshelf, while I took my seat opposite our hostess, and imitated her example.

'I must say,' Margaret exclaimed suddenly, breaking the silence, 'your English climate is most abominable; what a temperature for September!'

'Your!' Gaunt answered coldly (he was a little sulky still). 'Are we to understand by that very scornful *your*, that you decline any connection with it?'

Miss Owenson shivered slightly. 'Certainly I was born in India, and have never even set foot in England till within the last year.'

'I guessed you were born in some tropical country,' I said; 'but you are of English parentage, are you not?'

She answered simply 'Yes;' and as if wishing there to end the subject, turned to the supper-table and invited us to eat.

The conversation took a graver turn than usual. I don't know whether it was true that Miss Owenson was really unwell, as she alleged, but she was certainly less brilliant and a great deal more natural and womanly.

I could not help fancying, as she more than once leant back wearily in her chair, apparently too much engrossed in some train of thought to care whether either of us were thinking of, or regarding her, that it was like the utter weariness of an actor, forcing him to lay aside his *rôle*, if it were but for a moment. I don't know whether Gaunt noticed it: he ate his supper very silently

that night, and when he did address Miss Owenson, it was certainly in a graver, more studied manner than was habitual to him.

Towards the end of supper, our conversation, after continuing the subject of Margaret's parentage, turned on the distinguishing marks of children born in India of English parents, also on the difference of the characteristics of those born in the Western or Eastern Indies.

From that we passed on to discuss the possibility of detecting the mixture of races, even to many generations. Gaunt had passed some years in the West Indies, and could speak on the matter from actual observation, and he and Margaret grew eager in the discussion.

'I will show you two or three portraits,' Margaret exclaimed suddenly, 'and you shall tell me if, among them, you can detect the one who is of mixed blood.'

As she spoke she rose and went to one of the cabinets and brought out four or five little morocco cases, which she laid on the table before her. The first she opened and passed to us both, as we approached each other to look at the same time.

It was a soft fair face of a woman of apparently thirty years, remarkable more for the beauty of the painting than for the portrait itself.

'Not there, certainly,' we both said.

She passed us another, brightening up the glass lovingly, before she did so.

The picture was of a young girl, very like to Miss Owenson, though not so handsome and much younger.

We examined it with interest, and both exclaimed: 'A sister, surely.' Miss Owenson shook her head and smiled.

The third was of a middle-aged man; the fourth, a youth in a military uniform. Gaunt bent over them earnestly. If black blood were there, though many generations removed, it was certainly difficult to detect. Dick grew more intent; and meanwhile I looked anxiously for the fifth and last, which those fair hands seemed so loth to part with.

Miss Owenson turned the little case round and round, touched the spring, but did not open it, dusted it, looked at Gaunt earnestly, then dropped it back into her lap, and looked over Dick's shoulder at the two portraits he was examining. I saw, however, that she was thinking very little of what she was doing. Her cheek, hitherto pale, was flushing, and her eyes growing brighter and brighter, as from some mental excitement.

'Well,' Dick suddenly exclaimed, 'and the fifth?'

One instant, only one instant, she hesitated; then, touching the spring, she opened the case, and laid it before him.

He gave a glance at it—then—he did not start or exclaim—but he turned sharply and looked at her.

Margaret, perhaps, had expected that, for she was thrown back in her chair, her face so placed as to be quite shaded from the light.

Gaunt's look and gesture were so strange, that they would have struck the most careless looker-on, and I immediately arose and looked over his shoulder. I started back, exclaiming—'Cecile!'

The portrait was of a very young woman of the most perfect creole beauty that I had ever seen, but so exactly like little Cecile, that I could have imagined it hers, aged a few years by the artist's fancy.

'What a wonderful likeness!' I exclaimed, gazing at the lovely face. 'Has it never struck you before?' I added, turning to Miss Owenson.

She raised herself quietly, but I fancy it was with an effort she answered calmly: 'When I first saw Cecile, her face seemed familiar: it was only in turning over some old treasures yesterday that I lighted upon this portrait and found it was this that she resembled so much.'

Gaunt still silently examined the picture. He was frowning in a perplexed, thoughtful manner, and I could see there was a portion of annoyance mixed with the perplexity.

Suddenly he asked in a grave voice, but without looking up, 'Were you personally acquainted with this lady?'

'No. The picture was given me, among some other portraits, as a

model of creole beauty,' Miss Owenson answered slowly, and with almost an effort; and I noticed (for my eyes regarded her intently) that a flash of anger illumined her countenance for an instant.

Gaunt continued [redacted] his silent game.

'I was wondering this afternoon,' Margaret said presently very quietly, 'when I came so unexpectedly on that picture, if Cecile could be any relation, the likeness is so wonderful.'

Her eyes were fixed on Gaunt as she spoke, and mine also sought his face. What would he reply to that observation which seemed to touch so nearly on the question of Cecile's parentage?

He was silent for some instants, frowning more and more grimly every moment. Judging by his countenance, my poor friend was carrying on a momentous and difficult argument with himself which puzzled him not a little.

Presently he looked up and said slowly, evidently weighing carefully each word, 'The likeness is so striking that it puts relationship beyond a doubt. Have you any recollection of the person who gave you this portrait, and are you aware of how that person became possessed of it?'

These little formal sentences were additional proofs to my mind, knowing my friend's peculiarities, that he was embarrassed. If Miss Owenson were a skilful questioner she could, I felt sure, obtain without much difficulty the information she wanted.

She drew her hand meditatively across her forehead.

'I was in the habit of collecting portraits at that time,' she said, 'it was one of my whims. Probably I received it from some picture-dealer in Calcutta, where I was living in the years '60-61. Is there any date on the portrait?'

Dick turned it over hastily, passing his thumb along one of the sides. Margaret watched him anxiously.

'No,' he answered, suddenly laying it down; 'there is no mark or date whatsoever.'

'It is certainly wonderfully like your little niece,' Margaret again hazarded more boldly this time, and laying a certain stress on the word 'niece.'

'Yes,' Gaunt replied; 'but what puzzles me so is how it could have fallen into your hands, and in the East, too.'

'You recognize it as that of a relation,' Margaret said hurriedly.

'No,' he answered coldly. 'I only recognize its wonderful resemblance to Cecile. So wonderful, indeed, that if I dared I should ask you a great favour.'

'To give it you!' She drew it towards her, closed it carefully, shaking her head. 'The handsomest of all my collection. Mr. Gaunt, you ask too much.'

'I feared so,' Dick answered significantly, and rising as he spoke. 'Mark, do you know it is eleven o'clock?'

Miss Owenson lounged back in her chair, apparently heedless of our preparation for departure, but with her black, and, to-night, glittering eyes fixed on Gaunt. Dick, however, stood turned slightly from her, waiting for me to finish my search after hat, gloves, &c., and then instead of approaching, as usual, to give the warm shake of the hand, he merely bowed a good-night across the table.

Margaret arose, and drawing herself up proudly, held out her hand. 'Mr. Gaunt,' she exclaimed,—and Dick could not help turning and coming back—'is the picture to be the price of your civility?'

'Certainly not,' he replied, taking her hand.

'Your friendship, then?'

'I should consider it the greatest mark you could give me of yours,' he answered eagerly.

'Good-night, then,' she said coldly.

'Good-bye,' Gaunt replied.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### A QUIET TALK.

'Who is she? who can she be?' Gaunt exclaimed, as with his arm tucked through mine we sauntered slowly down the road towards the

inn. 'Did you observe her? Well, she gave me that portrait to look at with a purpose, I could swear.'

'No doubt,' I answered; 'but with what purpose you alone can guess.'

I don't know whether Dick understood my words as a delicate hint that he might profit by my sagacity if he would be confidential, but he certainly answered very gruffly, 'Oh, of course—of course.'

We walked on, Dick leaning heavily on my arm, and evidently very much engrossed with some unpleasant thoughts; I discussing with myself if gallantry and honour demanded silence on my part on that afternoon's adventure, and Margaret's private sign that evening more than friendship for Gaunt, claimed my good offices to warn him that the woman to whom he was, I feared, gradually attaching himself, had her own little mysteries and histories too, which she wished to guard from his eye especially.

I am not partial to the office of watchman; and had it not been for the latter part of the evening's occurrence, and Dick's evident annoyance, I should certainly have left my friend to steer himself safely through the rocks and shoals surrounding womankind, and only wished him *bon voyage*. As it was, however, in spite of Dick's unflattering reserve, I felt it a duty I owed to our long friendship, while I kept as far as I could my tacit engagement with Miss Owenson, to warn him that he was quite right to ask the question—Who is she? and also not to flatter himself he could guess the answer easily. I conveyed my warning in the very fewest words possible just before we separated for the night, and, as is the case in most instances of disinterested friendship, I had the pleasure of seeing that Dick took little notice of what I said, or rather regarded it as a superfluous exhibition of zeal on my part. Such is man!

* * * *

My damp ride gave me a feverish, uncomfortable night, and feeling anything but sentimentally inclined, I rose earlier than usual the next morning and descended to the garden.

It was a damp, heavy morning, and unusually cool; and I no sooner felt the chilly air come rushing to meet me through the open door than I most [redacted] repented of having left my bed at such an early hour. Repentance was, however, rather late, so lighting a cigar, I sauntered disconsolately down the still damp gravel walk to the road.

There were few persons out, and I continued my walk and my meditations, which were neither of them of the most cheering description, without interruption, till I arrived opposite the front entrance of the cottage. Every blind was down, and, to judge by the profound repose reigning round the house, its occupants, as regarded early rising, departed from their imitation of Eastern habits.

I passed on, and continued my walk slowly in the direction I had taken yesterday. I had scarcely passed the house twenty yards, when from a road branching off from that along which I was walking, came a closed carriage, with, to my surprise, Miss Owenson's Indian servant sitting on the coach-box. On the top of the fly was a small trunk, and in the inside I just caught sight of the outline of a female figure leaning as far back as possible. Was it going away or coming in?

I turned and gazed without any attempt to disguise my curiosity, and I saw the carriage drive quickly up to the gate of the cottage, the Indian descend from his seat, and then assist the lady to alight. There was no mistaking the tall figure and graceful deportment. Whether Miss Owenson had seen me from the carriage I know not, but directly she reached the ground she turned towards me, and advancing a few steps held out her hand.

She wore a thick blue shawl, her veil was thrown back, and as the flowers and ribbons of her bonnet, of the same bright blue, rested against her blonde hair and creamy cheek, I thought I had never seen her look to such advantage.

'What brings you out so early?'

she exclaimed; 'surely not the charms of the morning.'

'The discomforts of a bad night,' I replied; 'but I am sure the same reason has not sent you for your drive.'

'No; I slept remarkably well.' As she spoke she moved slowly towards the house. 'Come in,' she added, turning suddenly, 'chance has thrown a good opportunity in our way for a quiet talk.'

I followed her into the cottage, and was not sorry to find that our 'quiet talk' was to be carried on beside a bright fire that blazed in the room in which we had supped the previous evening.

'Where do you think I have been?' Margaret said, as, throwing aside her bonnet, she came and sat down opposite me by the fire.

'Perhaps to the cottage again,' I answered quietly.

'A very good guess—'tis even so,' she replied with a peculiar kind of frankness, more its imitation, I fancied, than the genuine article, however. 'I dare say,' she continued in the same tone, 'that my conduct puzzled you last night; thus morning shall I be able to explain it without puzzling you more?'

'Probably not,' I answered serenely. 'Miss Margaret Owenson delights in mysteries, I know.'

'And suppose that mystery and manœuvring are forced on Miss Margaret Owenson - that no choice is left her?'

'Mystery and manœuvring for what?'

Instead of answering my question, Margaret Owenson gave me a quick look, as much as to say, 'You are quite mistaken if you think to surprise me;' then, leaning back in a very becoming attitude, she played coquettishly with her chain.

'Suppose,' she said, suddenly looking up with the same coquettish air, 'suppose all the mystery and manœuvring were smoke—the prank of a wild girl who has too much freedom and boldness, and enough money at her command to gratify her every whim?'

'Suppose,' I answered in my turn, 'that I have my opinion in the matter, and wear such good spectacles that no one can throw dust in my eyes?'

'In that case Margaret Owenson bows to Mark Owen,' she replied, inclining her head, but with a quick colour mounting in her cheeks.

We were both silent for some moments, both evidently pursuing our own peculiar train of thought, till, tiring of the occupation, and fancying Margaret's silence was a delicate hint that our 'quiet talk' was over, I rose and put out my hand.

'Don't be in such a hurry,' she exclaimed, in an utterly different tone. 'I have not asked you to pay me this early visit to act a comedy. Mr. Owen,' she added, flushing, but speaking frankly, 'I think you are one of those men whom it is more easy for women of my stamp to turn into friends—true, earnest friends—than lovers.'

I was a little taken aback by this very candid address, and for once in my life I felt the blood rush hotly to my face, and even tingle my finger-ends. I remembered a dream or two I had had of that beautiful face before me, some very ugly feelings I had experienced towards Gaunt, when they retired to that horrid conservatory, leaving me to my solitary cigar; and I forgot in that moment all my philosophical reasoning, and the absurdity of love and love-making, also all my calm denunciations of unfeminine boldness and feminine coquetry. Words trembled on my lips that—that—well now I am glad I did not utter them. In the folly of that moment I believe I took that fair, pretty hand in mine, for it certainly clasped mine, when on the blood retreating to its proper place, I resumed my usual colour and reasonable tone of mind; and I remember I felt embarrassed what to do with it, as I tried to reply in a quiet, proper manner—

'Perhaps you are right.'

'If I did not feel sure of it,' Margaret answered, gravely, 'I should not dare ask what I am about to do.'

Some very insane jealousy was roused by her first words and the tone in which she spoke them. I said, sarcastically—

'You would not of Gaunt, for instance?'

Margaret looked up at me with a pained, surprised glance, and flushed crimson.

'No,' she said, 'certainly not—least of all him. Can you not see—have you not perceived?' she continued, after a slight pause, and in an anxious tone.

'Only too much,' I answered, still sarcastically.

Miss Owenson shook her head.

'If you wish to go,' she said, coldly, 'I will not detain you.'

I took up my hat.

'I may as well say good-bye now,' I said; 'probably I shall return to London at once. My friend is sufficiently well to be able to dispense with my assistance, and he, no doubt, will find amusement enough to make my departure rather acceptable than to be regretted.'

Margaret Owenson regarded me for a moment with a smile so intensely quizzical, that, angry as I was, I could not help feeling I was making a great fool of myself.

'You really are most provoking,' I muttered.

'And you most unreasonable,' she answered. 'Sit down and listen quietly to what I have to say, then go to London if you choose, and be as sulky and disagreeable to poor Mr. Gaunt as your manly dignity shall think proper.'

She half pushed me back in the arm-chair, and then, with the freedom that was at times as repulsive as at others it was winning and attractive, she drew a light chair beside me, and leaning carelessly on the arm of mine, she laid her fingers lightly on my hand.

'Answer me frankly. Have you told Mr. Gaunt anything of your seeing me in the cottage yesterday afternoon, or of my begging your silence last night?'

'Nothing. I keep honourably even unworded engagements, Miss Owenson.'

'I do not doubt it. One other question. Are you in the secret of Cecile's relationship to Mr. Gaunt?'

I started. 'Secret?' I exclaimed.

'Let us be frank for once,' she resumed, in a tired voice. 'I see as plainly as you do that there is a secret. Perhaps I may know more of it than you do—perhaps even more than Richard Gaunt himself. Answer me frankly. Are you in [redacted]fidence?'

'Such [redacted]estion——' I began, hesitating.

'Is very simple and easy to answer,' she interrupted; 'merely a Yes or No. I only ask a monosyllable of you.'

The eagerness with which she spoke flashed in her eyes, and witnessed to the truth of her words that she was acting no comedy.

'Of what consequence can it be?' I exclaimed.

'That I alone know,' she answered, still earnestly. 'Yes or no?'

'Well, then, No. I know nothing of this secret, if secret there is.'

'And yet you are his most intimate friend! He has told me himself that you were as brothers together,' Miss Owenson said, and as she spoke, she rose from her chair and stood before me in an unusually excited manner.

'All this,' she continued, 'confirms me in my opinion. Will you confer a great favour on me—one that aids the wronged at least to defend themselves? I only ask you to be silent on all that has passed between us, both concerning the cottage last night and our present interview.'

I hesitated. 'In binding myself to that I know not what wrong I may be doing Gaunt,' I said. 'Events may so occur that these very trivial circumstances may assume some importance.'

'I ask you as a favour,' she said, throwing herself again in her seat in the most pleading manner; 'or if you will not promise me definitely, only grant me this, that before you tell him you will let me know.'

'The very importance you attach to such trifles makes me more unwilling to promise,' I said. 'Only last night your conduct about the portrait made him anxious to penetrate the mystery with which you surround yourself. How do I know but that these circumstances might assist him materially in so doing; and if that is the case

'What man ever stood firm before a beautiful woman's tears.'—See p 361

am I acting fairly, or even honourably, to my friend?'

Miss Owenson followed with earnestness every word as I uttered it.

'And he is anxious, then, to penetrate the mystery? And it was my conduct concerning the portrait that aroused his suspicions,' she exclaimed, eagerly.

'I do not undertake to answer for Gaunt,' I replied.

Margaret looked at me earnestly, yet half doubtfully.

'Well, well: I do not wish to cross-examine either you or him; all I beg of you is to grant my request. It seems to me not a very difficult one to grant, in spite of your conscience. I ask you merely to let me know when you communicate these stories to your friend, and to delay it as long as possible. I am a stranger to you,' she added, 'and I know the manner in which I have made and carried on our short acquaintance cannot entitle me to your highest opinion Still, when I give you my word of honour that my object in coming here, and acting as I do, is to shield the wronged and the innocent, you may take it as that of a lady of no mean birth. All I want,' she added, passionately, 'is to defend the rights of natural justice.'

I looked at her, extremely puzzled; there was no acting in her manner—no assumed emotion in the anger that illumined her whole countenance; she continued in a softer tone. 'Were I to tell you the story I could tell, I mistake you greatly, Mr. Owen, if you would not be the first to aid the wronged. Richard Gaunt himself' — she paused, rose again to her feet, and then walked impatiently away. When she came back, there were large tears filling her beautiful eyes. 'Can you not promise me this?' she said in a low, tremulous voice.

What man ever stood firm before a beautiful woman's tears?

I took the hand she had laid on mine, and saying, 'You may trust me—I cannot refuse you, Margaret,' I bent down and kissed it earnestly. It was the first time I had ever done such a foolish thing; and I rushed away disgusted with my own folly and rashness.

## CHAPTER XII.

### SOME ONE IN THE BOUNDARY STREAM.

That day I had the largest dose of ennui that I think it has ever been my ill-luck to be forced to swallow.

The rain came down in one continuous sullen pour; so there being no possibility of venting the feverish, uncomfortable kind of excitement induced by Miss Owenson's early 'quiet talk' in out-door exercise, I had no resource but literature, smoke, or Gaunt—all three of which were particularly distasteful to me in my present humour.

My thoughts, too, were disagreeable, when I remembered the interview of the morning. The very interest which it awakened in me for Margaret Owenson was aggravated and embittered by the very unflattering frankness with which she had treated me. When I thought of the previous evening, it only confirmed me in my jealousy of Gaunt. More than once I made up my mind to carry out what had certainly been a very impromptu announcement to Miss Owenson, viz., a speedy departure for London.

With a bitter kind of satisfaction, I mused upon the hardworking but serene life I led in my quiet rooms, among my books and writings, content to know of love through the love-making of my friend, and able to regard with philosophical indifference all the occasional worries and annoyances it entailed.

After each ten minutes of such meditations, I had it on the tip of my tongue to repeat to my unsuspecting friend those sarcastic words I had uttered to Miss Owenson; but somehow the desire each time faded as soon as it arose.

I roused myself and looked at Gaunt.

Dick was sitting in front of the window, which, in spite of the rain and chilly air, he insisted on having open; his legs elevated to a level with his body by resting his feet on the sill of the window, his head

leaning on a cushion placed at the back of his chair—little clouds of blue smoke issuing from his mouth, which, as they cleared off, allowed his face to be seen, exhibiting a countenance with the eyes complacently regarding the opposite cottage, which was serenity itself.

As I regarded him, the words I had intended to utter vanished into thin air (figuratively speaking of course), and my thoughts galloping forward, drew scenes of the most (to me) desolating description. I felt that in taking leave of my friend in his present mood, I took leave also of all our pleasant bachelor friendship—our agreeable evenings and little dinners, our summer jaunts, our one thousand and one enjoyments; while in their stead came a tall, fascinating Mrs. Gaunt, family dinners, christenings, children's parties, &c., &c., &c.

Poor Dick! No; under such circumstances I could not, I ought not to leave him!

I was rather relieved in my apprehensions to find he sat there very quietly the whole afternoon, making no movement towards visiting the cottage; and after dinner—which, I noticed, he discussed with an appetite supposed to be incompatible with the *grande passion*—he took his wine and dessert very composedly—indeed more so than usual—and on my execrating wet weather in the country, merely observed, 'Certainly the evenings were deucedly long.' His humour puzzled me too. I argued, only a man in love, at Dick's age, and with his disposition, could manage to exist three weeks, as he had done, in a wretched place like Hazledean. Of course I knew that Cecile had something to do with his sudden passion for rural retirement. Still the serene and even contented manner in which he bore it, could only be accounted for by the hypothesis that he was somehow pleasantly occupied, *i.e.* in love-making; but such being the case, it seemed to me very odd that he could consent to pass a wearisome wet day alone, when merely a wet garden separated him from the agreeable society of the object of his supposed affections. Even supposing that the little scene of the portrait had left a lingering sulkiness, he would not have been in that serene temper. I knew Dick well; his countenance would not have worn that complacent expression, as he sat all the afternoon *vis-à-vis* the cottage.

In our flashes of conversation during the day, he had made no apparent effort to avoid mentioning either Miss Owenson or her conduct the preceding evening; neither had he alluded to them with the warmth and interest a man in the position of lover ought, and generally does. I was puzzled.

Could Margaret Owenson have been having a 'quiet talk' with him, and induced him to promise silence in my regard, as she had with myself? I had just asked this question of myself, and was trying to find an answer in the composed, pleasant manner in which Dick was regarding the colour of his wine, as he held up his glass to catch the faint, watery rays of the setting sun, which, with a strange perversity, was just beginning to pierce the rain-clouds, as the day was done, when we were both startled by hearing, down in the garden, a faint cry, followed by a loud, piercing shriek. Both of us jumped up, and cast an anxious glance round the room. Cecile had been reading in a chair, ten minutes ago:—she was gone!

'Where is she?' Gaunt exclaimed, in a startled tone. 'Mark! was that her voice?'

'Come!' I exclaimed, rushing out, a horrid idea seizing me. 'The stream, Dick,' I cried—'the boundary stream!'

We were on the verandah, leaping over it into the garden, and rushing down to the banks in less than a minute. There—there the water was rushing brown and bubbling, higher by two or three feet than yesterday when I had refused to cross the bridge, and there, on the wet, soaked planks lay a hat—Cecile's hat.

'Down the stream, Mark, down!' Dick roared, as I, swifter of foot than he, reached the bridge.

How I ran! how I tore! The

water did not go more swiftly—for ahead of me, only a couple of yards or so, but still just out of my reach and seeming ever to elude me like a phantom in a dreadful dream, I caught sight of something—something white. It was borne swiftly along—so swiftly that the struggles that agitated it faintly, when I first caught sight of it, soon ceased; and it must inevitably have been whirled along under those thick-tangled bushes into the recesses in the wood, had not a friendly briar struck far out into the water, catching in the child's frock, for two seconds checked her course.

Those two seconds were enough. I was in the water a yard lower down then, with all my strength striving to stem the current; and as the slender impediment gave way, and the water once more rushed along with its light burden, I managed, with a great effort, to catch the dress, and in another moment I had landed little Cecile, white and utterly motionless, on the bank.

Exhausted, alarmed as I was, I could not help, even in the excitement of the moment, looking up curiously in Gaunt's face as he came hurrying up, and found the child out of the water, but apparently inanimate.

He was very white, and an expression of utter horror rather than sorrow made his face quite painful to look at. He bent over the senseless little figure, exclaiming, 'Oh, Mark, Mark!' in a tone that seemed overwhelmed with regret, but at the same time so strange, that the idea of his being Cecile's father, was banished for ever from my mind.

'Don't waste time,' I said. 'Carry her to the house, and send for the doctor. Quick! I have hurt my arm, and can't help you.'

Gaunt, with still that horrified look on his face, bent down and lifted the poor child in his arms, fixing his eyes on her meanwhile with a look that I shall not easily forget.

'Hurry on,' he said, suddenly resuming his usual energy. 'There is life, Mark! She is only insensible. Hurry on, for God's sake!'

Hurry I did. That scream had frightened others as well as ourselves, and I met all the inhabitants of the inn rushing about in all directions along the banks of that guilty-looking stream.

Brunlow was among them; and he, with superior instinct, soon guessed the accident. With a long, deep howl, he bounded forward, and as he met Gaunt carrying his senseless burden, his sorrowful howlings and short barks soon directed every one to where assistance was required.

As I walked a little in advance, I was the first to reach the planks—cause of all this trouble—and to my horror, who should I see coming along, and with daring but steady foot crossing the slippery bridge, but Margaret Owenson.

'Is it Cecile?' she asked as she came up. Her face was as pale as Gaunt's, her countenance almost as horrified. I pointed back, exclaiming, 'There!' A quick, dark flush came into her cheeks as she looked. Gaunt was coming along, his hat off, his dress in disorder, bearing the dripping little form in his arms. The poor white face with its closed eyes, looked ghastly; the hands hung down lifelessly.

For an instant Miss Owenson stood gazing, then she advanced quickly, and the group separating unasked to let her pass, stood beside Gaunt.

She did not look at him, but bending over the child, peered closely into its face, touching, at the same time, the little cold hands. 'Go on,' she said in a calm voice, 'she is not dead;' then turning away with a look which I cannot describe, but which suited strangely the dispassionate tone in which she spoke, she herself ran forward towards the inn.

When we arrived there, the first person who stretched out her arms to receive poor Cecile, was Miss Owenson.

Already there was a fire burning, and blankets, warm bed, and restoratives near; and there stood Margaret, with her ready hands, and woman's calm sense, to direct their application.

Fortunate it was for the poor child that she was there; else, in the absence of all medical assistance, she would have fared badly among the kindhearted but ignorant persons who surrounded her.

With the quiet, but authoritative tone of one accustomed to command, and to have her commands obeyed, Margaret sent some here, others there, quickly dispersing the useless spectators, keeping only, as her assistant, the landlady.

As for Gaunt and myself, we required no second bidding from those smileless lips to take ourselves off, and leave the little sufferer to her. We should have been exceedingly grieved, but awkward and useless, spectators of her active exertions to restore Cecile to consciousness.

All that I have described passed so quickly, that I could scarcely believe, when I re-entered the parlour, that barely half an hour had elapsed since I had been sipping my still unfinished glass of wine, and considering Gaunt's countenance with such perplexed thoughts.

In spite of my wet clothes and wounded arm, I felt too much interested in watching Gaunt, and waiting for the re-appearance of Margaret Owenson, to retire to my own room, and attend to my personal comforts; so throwing myself in the arm-chair, I took up my post of observation.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### MARGERET O'ENSON AS SICK NURSE.

Gaunt placed himself in his favourite position against the mantelshelf, and commenced his favourite employment of stroking and pulling his mustaches, maintaining, meanwhile, a silence that was evidently more forced than meditative.

In the adjoining room we could distinctly hear the quick and constant movements of Miss Owenson and her assistants, but no sounds from Cecile; and as minute after minute passed, and we listened in vain for some sign, were it but a cry or a moan, our anxiety became intensely painful.

Gaunt moved about, changed constantly his position, and at length took to pacing the room with a stride that witnessed to his increasing anxiety.

Suddenly he paused, and grasping my arm in a manner that was anything but agreeable in its wounded state, he exclaimed in a low tone: 'I wish you would go in and see what they're all about, Mark.'

'To what use?' I replied, groaning. 'She told us before we were only in the way.'

'I know,' he said in the same low tone. 'Still, one of us ought, I think, and—and—you see I can't bear facing her. I'm a confounded coward, Mark, I know,' he added, beginning to bite his nails in the most schoolboy fashion; 'but she's got such a look about her—at least she had—and yet for all that, I can't help——'

Dick paused. Had I not thought of the poor little white face lying senseless under that 'look,' I should have been infinitely amused at my poor friend's address. As it was, the comic manner was lost in the painful doubt he conveyed, more by his manner than words, and so, in spite of feeling more than half-guilty of treason to Margaret, I rose answering, 'Perhaps one of us ought to take a look.'

'Just for the sake of—not that—' Dick stammered, as I walked across the room, and laid my hand on the door handle.

I turned it very gently and entered; but my courage failed me as Margaret, turning abruptly from her position by the bed, faced me angrily. 'You only embarrass us, and can do no good.'

Without even daring to ask how Cecile was, I backed out immediately.

'It's no use, Gaunt,' I said pettishly. 'If you want her watched, you must do it yourself. It's absurd; of course it's all right.'

'Of course it is,' Dick replied nervously. 'It is only my anxiety, you know.'

I threw myself on the sofa. Dick resumed his position by the mantelshelf, and another quarter of an hour passed silently by.

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I don't know what Gaunt thought; but I myself felt extremely guilty and uncomfortable, whenever I remembered Margaret Owenson. To repay her disinterested kindness to the child by such doubts, was cruel —ungentlemanly. What should we be doing, far away from medical aid, if it had not been for her?' Nevertheless, I could not help wondering what had caused that ugly look on the beautiful face, as she said so coldly, almost disappointedly, 'She is not dead.'

My unpleasant meditations were interrupted by hearing hurried footsteps, and then the deep tones of a man's voice mingling themselves with those of the women in the next room.

'The doctor at last!' I exclaimed.

Gaunt roused himself, and then with sudden energy, boldly opened the door of the sick-room and entered, leaving me alone.

I listened very attentively, but I could distinguish no words. I heard Dick's deep voice lowered to a kind of growl, mingling with the others, and I heard his step, heavier than the rest, move about; but from no sound could I discover how the little sufferer was progressing. More than once I felt inclined to risk Miss Owenson's fierce looks, and join Gaunt; but somehow, I scarcely know why, a feeling of delicacy restrained me.

There was some strange mystery binding Gaunt, Margaret, and Cecile together, which, though I was not certain each was aware of, each suspected more or less, and which Gaunt at least desired should remain a secret.

Half an hour passed, the daylight had faded, and I lounged there in the dusk listening, musing, and still too anxious to pay any attention to my own discomforts, when the door opened gently, and some one entered.

The footstep that approached me was much too light for Gaunt's, and yet I started and exclaimed with surprise, as Margaret Owenson said quietly—'Cecile is much better. I can attend to you now, Mr. Owen.' 'Thank God!' I exclaimed. She proceeded to light a candle, and then holding it up so as to throw the light full on my damp, and rather muddy person, she exclaimed, 'What! have you not changed yet?'

Miss Owenson was extremely pale, and her countenance bore the expression of one who had recently been intensely anxious. Even then it had a tinge of something—I know not what—on it that aged it considerably.

'Cecile is better then?' I said, taking no notice of her exclamation.

'Much,' Margaret replied in her quietest tone. 'Completely restored.'

'Thank heaven! I was getting fearfully anxious.'

'Her insensibility was caused by some blow she received in falling.' Miss Owenson went on in the same voice. 'She was not long enough in the water to do her much harm. The doctor assures us there is no cause for further alarm.'

She certainly seemed tolerably free from it. As if wishing to end the subject, she drew a chair towards me, and said in a softer tone, 'Now let me attend to you; your arm is hurt, is it not?'

'A slight bruise,' I replied, 'and a scratch. I fell against a stony part of the bank in my descent.'

'Then it was *you* who saved Cecile,' she exclaimed with interest, 'and not Richard Gaunt?'

'It was certainly I who took her from the water: I ran faster than Dick.'

'Ah!' Whether that sound was an exclamation or a sigh I knew not. At any rate it ended all Miss Owenson's questions concerning the accident. She applied herself to the examination of my hurts, and while she bound up and plastered my arm, confined herself entirely to remarks on that interesting occupation.

Miss Owenson was very kind indeed; I had never seen her in a more genial, womanly humour; and as her soft adroit fingers laboured away, now plastering, now binding up my wounds, while her pleasant voice uttered sympathetic nothings it is true, but still extremely consoling and delightful nothings spoken by her lips, I could not help thinking that under none other of her Protean-like changes was she so attractive or so winning.

Did she tend Cecile as she tended me? Wherever had our cruel doubts sprung from? Was it Gaunt's fancy or mine that had produced them?

'Now,' she said, as she finished the dressing operation, 'if you take my advice you will certainly go and change those damp clothes.'

I obeyed her, for the doctor departing she returned to Cecile, and the dark room in her absence was not sufficiently attractive to make the further neglect of my own comforts supportable.

When I came back I found the lamp lighted, the table cleared, and Gaunt sitting in his arm-chair with a very tolerably cheerful expression of countenance.

'It's all right, Mark,' he exclaimed as I entered. 'Hinks says she'll be well enough in a day or two. No harm done, thanks to the plucky way in which you pulled her out of the water. Thank you, old fellow!'

Dick's heavy hand clutched mine, and judging of the extent of his gratitude by the pain he inflicted on me, I had every reason to be satisfied with it.

It startled me a little, however, for truth to tell I never fancied Dick had noticed that *I* had taken Cecile from the water; or if he had, had considered it anything more than a slight advantage I had gained over him by my superior swiftness.

Having given vent to his feelings, and received my 'Oh yes—all right,' in acknowledgment, Mr. Richard Gaunt resumed his seat, and I suppose felt embarrassed, for he again took to biting his nails.

'Under all circumstances, you know, Mark,' he began suddenly, 'I can't help feeling particularly obliged to you. Many men,' he continued, struggling to express himself clearly, and at the same time not in direct terms, 'would have perhaps felt that—that the position—I mean want of confidence as you may fancy—you understand, Mark, don't you?' he added, winding up quickly, and looking up at me with his pleasant, honest eyes quite aglow with the excitement of his feelings.

'Oh yes! Of course I do,' I replied, wishing to end explanation as much for my own sake as his (I abominate anything approaching a scene), though the exact meaning of what he wished to convey found its way rather mistily to my mind.

'And you know, Mark,' he continued, very much with the air of a schoolboy who was forcing himself to have it out and make a clean breast of it, 'it isn't that'—(what? I wondered)—'but because honour forbids, and even your own words, that I don't even now——'

Again he paused, excessively embarrassed, and evidently annoyed at being so embarrassed.

I felt a little hurt. 'If you mean, Richard,' I said coldly, 'that after this evening's occurrence I think myself entitled to your confidence, and that you must still decline to give it me, all I reply is that your opinion of me is not very generous.'

'I don't mean that, either,' he answered, looking excessively pained; 'however, it's no use saying more; I only make a hash of explanations—I always did.'

I was rather amused, in spite of my annoyance, at Dick's imagining he had been explaining anything by his intense muddle and his broken sentences; however, I turned quietly away, and took pretty good care to end them by making, and encouraging no further remark from Gaunt on the matter.

Dick broke the silence in a few minutes by observing in a low voice—

'Miss Owenson is still with Cecile; she has offered to remain with her the night, in company with the landlady.'

'Very kind of her,' I answered, with another of those reproachful pangs at having ever suspected her of anything but the most disinterested kindness to Cecile.

'Very,' Gaunt said; 'particularly considering her former evident dislike to the child. Women certainly are incomprehensible,' he added.

He had scarcely finished speaking when the door opened, and in came the very subject of our remarks.

Whether she had heard or not was impossible to discover by her countenance; when she turned to the light, however, I fancied her eyes

regarded Gaunt with a slightly anxious look.

'Cecile is sleeping,' she said, 'so I came to beg you to lend me a book.'

Such a request was the most natural that could be made, and it was proffered in the most natural tone in the world.

We both rose, and Gaunt offering her his chair, begged her, though in a constrained voice, to sit down, adding that as Cecile was sleeping there was no occasion to hurry back to her. I did not quite understand why Gaunt's manner should have changed; certainly I had not seen them together since the portrait scene, and then they had not parted on the best terms, it might be a lingering sulkiness.

Margaret would not stay. She said briefly she had undertaken a duty, and she wished to fulfil it properly. Cecile was feverish and restless—she did not like to leave her; and again she requested Gaunt to lend her some light book that would not send her to sleep.

There was something very decided in her manner of refusing our invitation to stay. Perhaps she was offended at something she had overheard us say—or perhaps—but in spite of the respect I had for her real purity, I could not help feeling this 'perhaps' very vague—Miss Owenson's sense of propriety was shocked at the idea of sitting alone with two young men in their own apartment at that hour; at any rate she firmly refused the chair. At the furthest end of the room was Dick's closet of private valuables: here he kept his pet pipes, his choicest cigars, his writing-case of love relics, his few books, &c., &c, and thither he went to search for a novel. not a little puzzled, I guessed, as to the selection he should make among the works of light literature which he considered amusing reading.

He stood for so long, lamp in hand, before this receptacle of rubbish, that perhaps it was as much weariness as curiosity that suddenly inspired Miss Owenson to go and assist his choice.

'A various collection, I must say,' I heard Margaret exclaim, and turning round I saw her standing in front of the closet, her eyes eagerly regarding within. 'Pipes, canisters, books, bottles, and Heaven knows what!'

Gaunt made some rejoinder, and then they began searching among the books. The door was half closed upon them, and from where I sat I could scarcely distinguish what they said. They spoke in low tones—Margaret especially; from Gaunt now and then I heard the word 'Cecile,' and from his softened way of speaking I imagined he was thanking (probably in the same muddled manner he had thanked myself) Miss Owenson, and was making his peace with her. Suddenly the door was opened, and I heard Margaret exclaim, 'Ah! Mr. Gaunt, you have at least one curiosity among your treasures; that Indian box, there, how very pretty!'

'Oh! an old thing — nothing curious in it,' Gaunt replied. 'I can assure you my amber mouthpieces and this carved hookah are very much more valuable and curious'

'No doubt, in your estimation. Will you let me look at the box, though? I take a strange interest in anything Indian.'

Gaunt coughed. 'I should be very happy,' he answered hastily, 'only it's full of papers — family papers'

'Oh! I beg your pardon for being so indiscreet then I don't quarrel with you, Mr. Gaunt, you see,' and I heard Margaret's laugh come softly and pleasantly, 'as you did with me about the portrait.' As she spoke she came away from the closet. 'Mr. Owen, I must apply to you; your friend has nothing really readable,' she said, sitting down in Gaunt's arm-chair, apparently quite oblivious of her recent anxiety to fulfil the duty she had undertaken. A couple of hours passed before she did recollect it, and then it was brought to her remembrance by the landlady's voice observing, from (discreetly) behind the door, 'I think, ma'am, Miss Cecile ought to take her draught now.'

Miss Owenson disappeared in an instant.

# EASTWARD HO!

## Or, the Adventures of Dick Dewberry in Search of a Sinecure.

MY esteemed friend Jack Easel, who some time ago gave the readers of this journal a facetious account of our ascent to the summit of Snowdon, has persuaded me to put on paper the details of a very different expedition, not less arduous, perhaps, than the one he described, but decidedly wanting in the picturesque element and jovial incidents which characterised our adventure in Wales. Since Mr. Easel, however (who has a wonderful perception of the ludicrous), professes to see in my narrative an immense deal of fun—which, I admit, never became apparent to me, possibly because it chiefly concerns myself—I have yielded to his entreaties that it should appear in print, and now leave the public to laugh at or commiserate me as they please.

My profession is that of a barrister; for which I duly qualified myself by eating a series of dinners in the Temple, taking chambers in that cheerful locality, painting my name in white letters on a black door, buying a stuff gown and horsehair wig, and poring over endless volumes of legal lore, the greater portion of whose contents I have long forgotten. In due course of time I was called, as the phrase goes, to the bar, which fact I have chief reason to remember in consequence of a tremendous supper I gave on the occasion, to which my friend Jack was bidden, and acquitted himself admirably in the manufacture of lobster salad and claret cup.

At the period to which I allude I was waiting for practice; and having waited for a considerable time, I was beginning to look about for anything which might turn up in the way of employment, when I received, one morning, the following note from an acquaintance in the City, who knew my position and had more than once expressed his intention of 'doing something' for me when he could. He was a member of the Common Council and Master Warden of the Kettle-menders' Company:—

'*Kettle-menders' Hall, E.C., 3 April*, 185—.

'DEAR MR. DEWBERRY,

'I told you, when we last met, that I should be happy to serve you if ever an occasion offered. I have just heard that the post of Assistant Vice-Compter and High-Jinksman to the City of London has just become vacant. The appointment rests with the Lord Mayor and Corporation. The salary is worth from 300*l.* to 500*l.* a year; the duties are not very onerous, and, in fact, will not interfere with your professional work at all. If you care for the situation, let me know without delay, and I will use all the interest I can command for you this side of Temple Bar.

'Yours faithfully,

'SAMUEL SLOPER.

'P.S. I shall be happy to see you here at 11 A.M. to-morrow.'

Here then was an opening for me at last! 300*l.* a year and light duties. Just the thing I had an allowance of 200*l.*; and this, with my future professional receipts, might enable me to mar—— O rapturous thought! The vision of a fair-haired angel with blue eyes, whom I had left behind me in Devonshire, rose before my excited brain. I rushed to my writing desk, unlocked it with a trembling hand, touched a secret spring inside, and taking out a little packet of silver paper, seized a wisp of flossy silk and pressed it to my lips. This ceremony concluded, I endeavoured to calm my feelings with an eye to business; and having selected a sheet of cream-laid Bath post note-paper, with the Dewberry crest emblazoned thereon, wrote at once to Mr. Sloper, thanking him for his offer, and saying that I would be with him at the hour he had fixed.

After a light repast on the following morning I found myself trun-

dling towards Mr. Sloper's office in a Hansom cab. The Kettle-menders' Hall is an ancient and somewhat dingy-looking edifice of the last century, approached by a little alley from one of the principal thoroughfares in the ward of Billingsgate. A peculiar and somewhat fishy smell pervades the atmosphere of the place, which, under other circumstances, might have been disagreeable. As it was I felt in too good spirits to be annoyed at anything, and walked rapidly on through a crowd of ragged children who were playing at hop-scotch in the court, until I reached the door of my benefactor's office, which was opened by a red-haired clerk in a threadbare dress coat with very tight sleeves and a great dearth of buttons. He had a pen behind his ear and a slight defect in his sight, which gave him the appearance of keeping one eye on the goose-quill while the other looked steadfastly ahead.

Mr. Sloper received me with great affability, gave me to understand that he had already taken steps in my behalf, and mentioned the names of several influential members of the Right Worshipful Company of Kettle-menders who had promised their vote and interest.

'But no time is to be lost, my dear sir,' he added; 'there are two other candidates already in the field, and an active canvass is going on. Look here!' and he tossed me over a circular setting forth in bold type the claims of one of my opponents. 'We must get some of these things printed at once, you know, and sent round to the Aldermen and Common Council. Better order a few hundred neat cards at the same time, with your name, address, and occupation in full. When they are ready, you must go round to the different wards and call on the corporation—there are only two or three hundred of 'em—p'raps you'll find some of them out; never mind, leave a card, and say you'll call again. In short, keep on calling until you've seen them all. Nothing like a personal canvass, my dear sir. Tackle them individually yourself, and insist upon a vote from each. A little energy and perseverance, and the thing is done. The last High-Jinksman worked night and day for three weeks before he got the appointment, wrote his letters all night, and kept on calling all day. He was a little done up by the time the election came off, to be sure, but he won with flying colours, my dear sir—with *flying colours*.' And here Mr. Sloper waved a yellow silk bandanna pocket-handkerchief triumphantly, and blew his nose like a bugleman sounding victory.

I took advantage of this pause to make some inquiries as to the duties of the post, and hinted a doubt whether I might be duly qualified.

'Duties, my dear sir!' cried Mr. Sloper, energetically; 'pooh! that's an after consideration. Besides, it's a mere sinecure. I've no notion at present what you'll have to do, but I am quite sure you'll be able to do it. Qualified! of course you're qualified. Why, you were brought up at Eastminster, weren't you? and besides, you've been called to the bar: that's quite sufficient. Why, the last High-Jinksman hadn't half your advantages. First get the post, and then we'll talk about qualifications. Now, pray don't go saying anything of that kind to the Common Council, or you wont get a single vote; it would be horribly indiscreet, you know. Put a bold face on the matter, and say you can do anything; there's nothing like saying you can do anything.'

'Then you think I'd better order the cards and circulars at once?' I asked.

'Immediately, my dear sir—don't lose an instant. There's a capital printer in Eastcheap, round the corner, and do tell him to let the type be bold and legible; none of your small finicking stuff which nobody can read. Half the Common Council can't see without spectacles, and if they've any trouble in deciphering your testimonials, ten to one they'll throw them in the waste-paper basket. Why, the last High-Jinksman——'

'All right,' said I; 'I'll see to it at once. How many cards did you say?'

'Why, let me see; two hundred —three hundred and fif— better

say five hundred at once, for of course you'll have to send 'em round to all your friends as well. And the testimonials——'

'I must get the originals first, you know, before anything else is done,' I suggested.

'True; write for them to-day, and in the meantime put advertisements in the "Times" and "City Press," announcing your intention of competing for the post, and respectfully soliciting the votes and interest of, &c. &c. You know the sort of thing. Good-bye.'

Off I went to the newspaper offices, calling at the printer's on my way, where I ordered my cards, and composed the following paragraph, which appeared in the 'Times' next morning:—

'To the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of London.

'My Lord Mayor and Gentlemen,—The office of Assistant Vice-Compter and High-Jinksman of the City of London having recently become vacant in consequence of the resignation of Mr. John Harris, I beg respectfully to offer myself as a candidate for that post. I entered the legal profession in 185—, and was called to the bar last year. In the course of a few days I shall have the honour of submitting to your notice testimonials which will, I trust, be a sufficient guarantee of my ability and qualifications for the important office referred to. I shall also take the liberty of waiting in person on those members of the Corporation whose votes and interest I may venture to anticipate. I will only add that, in the event of my election, I shall use my utmost endeavours to discharge faithfully the duties with which I may be intrusted.

'I am, my Lord Mayor and Gentlemen,

'Your obedient servant,

'RICHARD DEWBERRY.

'*Temple, 4th April*, 185—.'

The whole of that afternoon I was busily employed in writing for testimonials, letters of introduction, and what not. By return of post I received answers of a most satisfactory nature to most of my letters. My old schoolfellow, Lord Stonehouse, whose father's name was well known in the City, promised to do what he could for me among the Aldermen. A wealthy stock-broker and member of the Kite-flyers' Company, promised me his influence in Cornhill and Cripplegate, while my invaluable friend Briggs, of Truro, whose good stories and hospitality have made him a favourite throughout the West of England, actually offered to come up and canvass for me among his acquaintances in town. I received no end of testimonials of every description, certifying to my excellent abilities, unexceptionable character, and general fitness for office. In short, no disinterested outsiders who read them could form any other conclusion than that if there was any one of her Majesty's subjects in the United Kingdom fitted to undertake the duties of Assistant Vice-Compter and High-Jinksman to the City of London, I was undoubtedly the man.

In course of time these certificates were printed, enveloped, addressed, and despatched to their proper destinations. The amount of specie which I disbursed in payment for stationery, postage-stamps, cabs, advertisements, and printing, was something tremendous; but after all, as Mr. Sloper justly remarked, 'nothing venture, nothing have,' and no enterprising young man should hesitate to bait with a herring if he wants to catch a whale. My small boy, Henry—a youthful retainer out of buttons, who had been accustomed to do for me at five shillings a week, and 'find' himself—took, I regret to say, a mean advantage of my position to strike for higher wages from that time, on account of the extra service required from him in the way of posting letters, &c. I cheerfully conceded the additional half-crown, but had my own opinion of the young rascal (who, I may here parenthetically mention, met with his deserts in the House of Correction at a later period of his career). In addition to his assist-

ance, I was obliged to get the help of a commissionaire, for I soon became aware that it was impossible to find out the various residences and offices of the Common Council unaided; after vainly endeavouring to explore the labyrinth between Bishopsgate and Aldersgate alone, and having traversed each of those thoroughfares about nineteen times before I could find half-a-dozen of the Council, out of about 250, I begun to appreciate the extent of the task which lay before me. My next idea was to charter a cab; but this I found worse than useless, for if I hired it by the hour I was driven at a funereal pace, and when I paid by the distance, my charioteer, who understood by my directions that I knew nothing of the City, drove round by circuitous routes of double the necessary length, or dashed madly into narrow thoroughfares where we were soon blocked in by heavy-laden carts, bales of merchandize, and Brobdignag vans, which kept us at a deadlock for periods varying from ten minutes to half an hour at a time.

It was in this extremity that I sought the assistance of a military-looking gentleman with one arm, and a somewhat ruddy face, whom I found loitering near Temple Bar. He wore a cap with the word Commissionaire embroidered plainly round the rim, and I congratulated myself on being able to avail myself of the sagacity and trustworthiness for which this corps is justly celebrated.

'Are you engaged?' I asked.

'Not a bhit of it, sir,' he answered eagerly; 'hwhat did yer honour plaize to want?'

I told him as briefly as I could that I wished to call in certain streets of an adjoining ward, and that he must plan out a route by which we could take them as they lay, without retracing our steps more than was absolutely necessary.

'But,' said I, 'first let me ask you, do you know the City well?'

'*Know* it, yer honour? why of course I do, every inch of it. Is Mike O'Shunter the bhoy to desave a gintleman loike yoursilf? Sure, haven't I lived here all my loife?'

'I thought you had been in the army,' I remarked, looking at his medals.

'That's thrue agin,' said my Hibernian friend, 'and a dale of action I've seen. But we was quarted so moighty long at the Tower before going on active service, that there's not a strate for moiles round Thrinity Square but Mike O'Shunter knows the ins and outs of it.'

'Well, come along,' said I;—'why, what's the matter?'

'Och, nothing, yer honour, but a dhuvvle of a tooth that's just plaguing the dear loife out of me.'

'P'raps you're not well enough to come?' I suggested.

'Sure I'd be as right as ninepence after a drap o' whiskey,' said Mr. O'Shunter, who after fumbling in his pocket to no purpose, borrowed a shilling of me, dived into a public-house, and came out like a giant refreshed.

The first few places where I had to call were easy enough to find; but the moment we left the principal thoroughfares, I found out that my gallant guide was quite as much at sea as myself. He made no end of blunders, forgot the names of streets and numbers of houses, and had continually to ask his way. He generally selected a gin-shop for that purpose, and came out on each occasion looking redder about the nose than ever. This fact, added to a peculiar change of his voice, which caused him to speak huskily of Aldersgate as 'Alshget,' and contract Bridgewater Square into 'Brishwrsquaw,' to say nothing of a generally unsteadiness in his gait, led me to the conclusion that Mr. O'Shunter was becoming rapidly drunk. I therefore seized the first opportunity of dismissing him. He was beginning a long harangue about the battle-field, green Erin, and his country's pride; how he had faced the foe with dauntless heart, &c. &c., when in the midst of these pretty sentiments he caught sight of a manly form in civil uniform coming round the corner, and forthwith disappeared. This was no other than X 22, an efficient member of the Force, who speedily

acquainted me with the fact that the supposed commissionaire was an impostor who had never belonged to the regular corps at all, but was known to the police as a tipsy scoundrel who was a scandal to the body which he professed to represent, and interfered by his conduct with their just profits.

Having secured, by the help of X 22, a real commissionaire, I forthwith proceeded on my way, and called on several of the Common Council. By some of these gentlemen I am bound to say I was treated with civility; but I observed a general disposition, on the part of those engaged in trade to look upon any one who entered their shops, except as a customer, with an eye of suspicion. Thus, Mr. Figges the grocer, who made me the politest of bows when I walked up to his counter in Little Chaffering Street, and who inquired, with a bland smile, what he could have the pleasure of doing for me, assumed a stern demeanour as soon as he saw my card, thrust his hands into his trousers-pockets, said he could make no promise, and resumed his ledger entries with the air of a man who was not to be trifled with.

The next name on my list was that of Mr. Jonathan Pluck, poultry salesman of Brazenhall Market. The intricate arrangement of lanes and alleys in that well-known emporium rendered it extremely difficult for even my experienced guide to find Mr. Pluck's establishment. I inquired my way of a burly youth in a blouse, who was lounging at his meat-stall.

'Which Mr. Pluck is is it you want?' asked the butcher; 'the Deppity?'

'The *what*?' said I.

'The Deppity or the other? There's two of 'em, you know,' replied my informant, 'and one of 'em's a Deppity.'

'I think his Christian name is Jonathan,' I said, referring to my list.

'Ah, Jonathan; that *is* the Deppity. Keep straight down that row till you come to them baskets, then turn sharp round the right, and the second stall on the left hand *is* Deppity Pluck's.'

Thus directed I found the place, and sent up my card by a boy, who looked as if he had been playing at hide and seek in a feather-bed, and had forgotten to brush himself when he came out of it.

Presently Mr. Deppity Pluck sent down a message to the effect that if I wanted to see him particular I might come up.

I made the best of my way through baskets and hampers, and the mortal remains of geese and turkeys, which were lying about in all directions, up a narrow staircase to the counting-house above. I found the Deppity sitting on a high stool at his desk. He did not take the slightest notice of my entry till I said:

'Mr. Pluck, I believe?'

'That's my name,' said the Deppity. 'What's your business?'

'I've taken the liberty of calling on you, Mr. Pluck, in fulfilment of the promise which I made in my circular, and for the purpose of soliciting your——'

'I tell you what it is, young man,' said the Deppity, 'I am't a going to give you no vote, and so you needn't ask for it. I've got your circ'lar, and I've got other circ'lars, and may be shall get some more still. Anyhow I shan't give no vote till the day of election; and then, when we have read the testimonials, we shall see who's who, and what you're all fit for. What I say is this: we want the best man we can get, and, in course, the best man ought to 'ave the place; that's *my* idea. Good-morning.'

'Good-morning, sir,' said I, and without further ado down I went.

My next visit was to a cornfactor, whose interest I had been especially recommended to secure. I was shown into his private room, and was beginning to explain my errand, when he interrupted me by sternly requesting that I would put on my hat.

'I beg your pardon,' said I, somewhat confused, 'I think you——'

'Put on your hat directly, sir, before you say a word further,' said the cornfactor, who from his dress appeared to belong to the Society of Friends.

I complied with his request, upon which he seemed pacified, and forthwith began a series of questions as to my age, experience, and qualifications; whether I was married, where I resided, and so forth. Having concluded this cross-examination, he paused for a few moments, and then informed me that he saw no reason to believe that I was not perfectly competent to discharge the duties of the office.

I thanked him for his courtesy, and, just as I was retiring, remarked that I was pleased to add his name to the list of my supporters.

'Eh?' said the cornfactor.

'I mean that I may reckon on your vote and interest?' I explained.

'I didn't say that,' said my farinaceous friend.

'I beg your pardon. Didn't I understand you to say that you thought I was quite eligible for the office of Assistant Vice-Compter and High Jinksman?'

'Certainly, sir,' said the cornfactor.

'And, under those circumstances, that your vote——'

'Ah! that's quite another matter,' coolly remarked the son of Ceres; '*I promised that to another candidate a week ago!*'

This was a little too provoking, and I must confess I rushed downstairs in a very bad temper.

'Who's next on the list?' I asked the commissionaire, who was striking off the names of those Common Councilmen on whom I had called with a thick cedar pencil, which, ever and anon, he placed between his lips to make the marks more emphatic.

''Ennery Rasper, Hold King Street, Cripplegit,' said the man. 'Three minutes' walk from here.'

In three minutes we were at Mr. Rasper's shop, which I found to be that of an ironmonger. Mr. Rasper's young man inside, who, from being cringingly servile on my entrance, of course became impertinently familiar when he found what I wanted, informed me that the Guv'nor was out, and I'd better call again.

I asked what was the best time to see him.

'Well, that's more than I can tell yer,' said Mr. Rasper's young man. 'Couldn't say esackly. When's the 'lection to come hon, and who's going to get it, him or t'other?' he continued, looking at the card.

'What do you mean by "*him*?"' I asked.

'Why, Dooberry,' said Mr. Rasper's young man.

'My name is Dewberry,' I said, with tremendous dignity.

'Is it really now?' said the young ironmonger, smiling. 'Why didn't you say so before? I dessay the Guv'nor's had his dinner by this time, and wouldn't mind seeing you since you've come yerself. Law bless me! I took you for one of them canvassing chaps a working by proxy, as they term it.'

'Have the goodness to present that card, with my compliments, to Mr. Rasper, and say that, if convenient, I should like to see him for a few minutes.'

The youth disappeared into a back room, and presently came back saying that the Guv'nor was agreeable and I might step in.

I found Mr. Rasper—a portly-looking person, somewhat over fifty—sitting at his table cracking nuts, with a bottle of sherry before him. I bowed to him on entering, and, as he did not rise or offer me a chair, I ventured to seat myself without invitation, for I had been on my feet all the morning, and, to say the truth, was ready to drop with fatigue.

'So you've come after this 'ere City bizness, I s'pose?' said Mr. R.

'I have,' said I, with as much patience as I could command.

'And what might your perfession be?' continued Mr. Rasper, carefully selecting one of the largest filberts in the dish.

'I am a conveyancing barrister, sir,' said I.

'Hah,' said my interrogator; 'that's a sort of lawyer, ain't it?'

I nodded.

'And a precious set of artful chaps you lawyers are.'

'Sir!' said I, rising.

'Keep your seat, Mr. Dooberry; there's no offence meant. I wasn't speaking of you in partic'lar, but of the profession in gen'ral.'

'It is a very honourable profession, sir,' said I 'Have you anything to say against it?'

'Well, my chief objection to lawyers, Mr. Dooberry, is that they aint no use,' said the ironmonger, pouring himself out another glass of wine.

'Indeed, sir!' said I. 'It is lucky for us that every one is not of your opinion.'

'And what's more,' continued Mr. Rasper, without noticing my remark, 'what's more and what's wuss, we have to pay 'em for doing nothink.'

'Really, Mr. Rasper, I must beg that——'

'It's a fact, and no mistake. Six-and-eightpence here, and six-and-eightpence there; and what's done for the money?—that's what I want to know. To attending you in conference on so and so, thirteen four; writing to Messrs. Thingummy on such a matter, five bob; carefully perusing and making copy of the same, three six. That's the style, I tell you; I know 'em well. And what's the good of it all? Why, you're wuss off at the end than you was at the beginning.'

'Your experience of solicitors appears to have been unfortunate,' I said; 'but, in the first place, allow me to remark that I am *not* a solicitor, and——'

'I don't care. It's all the same,' said Mr. Rasper. 'One's as bad as another, if not wuss. I tell you what it is, sir, I'm a man of few words, and I wouldn't give a dump for the whole profession—no, not a dump.'

'Mr. Rasper,' said I, rising, 'I didn't come here to ask you for a dump—whatever you may mean by that expression—but for your vote. Am I to understand that you refuse it?'

'Mr. Doobery,' replied the ironmonger, 'you're a lawyer, and that's quite enough for me. You may be one of the estimablest young men going; but, wearing the cloth you do, I wouldn't give you my vote—no, not if you was the Lord Chief Justice himself.'

I rushed back to Sloper in despair, and told him I couldn't endure this sort of thing much longer. I felt that my time was being wasted; that I had been bothering my friends to no purpose; for how could their interest possibly avail me in such quarters as these? I had some notion of retiring from the contest at once, but was dissuaded from doing so by Sloper, who protested that these little rebuffs were nothing when you were used to them; that many of the Common Council who had behaved in this way might vote for me at the election; that I had put my hand to the plough, and must not look back; with a variety of other encouraging remarks, of which I saw the fallacy, but which I found difficult to answer. Finally, Mr. Sloper produced two magnificent cards of invitation—one bidding me to dine with the Worshipful Company of Kettle-menders at their hall, that day week, and the other requesting the pleasure of my company, a few days later, on board the 'Sarah Jane,' a Thames barge, which was to be towed up the river under the charge of an 'Improvement Committee,' in a festive manner, *i. e.*, with a sumptuous déjeuner, music and dancing, &c. &c.

Mr. Sloper confided to me that these would be capital opportunities for me to make the acquaintance and secure the interest of his City friends Accordingly, I attended on both occasions. At the dinner I had the honour of being introduced to several distinguished Kettle-menders, as a candidate for the civic appointment to which I have already referred. If the amount of wine which I was invited to drink with each and all of these gentlemen (many of whom were members of the Common Council) could be regarded as an evidence of their good feeling towards me, I had every reason to hope for their support. After the banquet was removed, several eloquent speeches were made, in which certain facetious allusions to the ancient name of the Guild were received with rapture. Thus Mr. Blenkinsop, who remarked that, although generally diffident as a public speaker, he could never feel averse to *spout* on behalf of the Kettle-menders; that the duty of

every member of that respected body was to keep the *pot* boiling, and that as kettles never boiled without singing, he could not but feel grateful to the gifted vocalists who during dessert had charmed the present company with their music that evening, &c., &c.—Mr. Blenkinsop, I say, in uttering these genial sentiments, was vociferously cheered; and I, on my part, being suddenly called on to return thanks on behalf of the legal profession, found myself perpetrating an atrocious pun, in which kettles and the *Grate Bar* of England (so inadequately represented by a junior member like myself), were ingeniously associated, to the infinite delight of the company.

As for the Thames excursion, it was rendered doubly enjoyable by the presence of ladies who, if they danced more vigorously and imbibed more champagne on board the 'Sarah Jane' than is usual in aristocratic circles, were nevertheless very charming and agreeable. Indeed I think an 'Improvement Committee' is one of the most sensible institutions of municipal government—though what they improve, except themselves and the occasion of these festivities in the way of eating and drinking, I have yet to learn.

These, however, were but the *dies festi*—brief intervals of pleasure—in a long and weary period of bother and anxiety. I felt so much indebted to Sloper for the kind interest which he had shown in my behalf, that I thought myself bound to go on with my canvass, although I was convinced from the first that I had not a chance of success. Day by day I loaded my pockets with cards to leave on butchers, bakers, and, to complete the old triplet, for aught I know, on candlestick-makers too. Day by day I endured the same impertinences, until really it seemed to me that, to find a Common Councilman polite, was to find a very uncommon Councilman indeed. As for the Deppities (as they insisted on calling themselves), they were rather worse than the rest. I am writing of events, you see, which happened many years ago, since which time most communities have undergone a change. We have less fagging in our public schools; we have no bribery at parliamentary elections; and the custom of bullying young ensigns in the army has been voted snobbish. I make no doubt that, with this advanced state of things, the Civic Corporation of London has also learned better manners, and that when a gentleman presents himself as a candidate for a City appointment, they treat him with respect, or at least with civility. For nothing is more offensive than that sort of ill-breeding which presents itself 'drest in a little brief authority,' be it municipal or otherwise.

Well, I laboured on, threading my way through the perplexing labyrinths of Cripplegate Within and Without, exploring the remote regions of Portsoken, scouring the busy thoroughfares of Candlewick and Castle Baynard, traversing systematically the great ward of Farringdon, or diving down at haphazard on the coal wharves of Queenhithe, now descending into some basement office in Langbourn, now mounting up the flights of stairs into the attic chambers of Dowgate, ferreting out queer old counting-houses by the river-side, and dropping cards into mysterious letter-boxes which seemed never destined to be emptied. Such was my occupation for at least a fortnight, during which time I seemed to go over about ten miles of ground every day. Whenever I caught a Common Councilman I asked him for his vote (which he usually declined to promise). Whenever I didn't find him at home, I left a card. At last they were all distributed, and the day of election drew near.

It was an exciting moment, when one fine May morning I found myself in Guildhall, awaiting my fate in the presence of the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, and the august Corporation of this ancient city. The statue of George III. in tight pantaloons confronted me at one end of the room; behind me was a picture of the Siege of Gibraltar in 1781, with Lord Heath-

field, capering on horseback in the foreground; on the left was represented the atrocious murder of David Rizzio, which the Princess Charlotte calmly contemplated from her frame, over the way. These works of art, in addition to the portraits of Lord Denman, and Alderman Boydell in a fat white waistcoat, inspired me with an awe which I can never forget.

The ordinary business of the day had first to be transacted, after which, about two P.M., there was a good deal of hubbub, and I heard a whisper of 'election' running round the room. I at once detected my rival candidates by the nervous manner in which they were pulling out their watches every other minute, rubbing their hands together convulsively, and wiping their foreheads.

Perhaps I distinguished myself by similar symptoms. Perhaps I looked hot and flustered. Perhaps I showed a certain amount of indecision as to whether the lowest button of my waistcoat should or should not be buttoned. Jack Easel, who was present, says I did; but these are details concerning which I cannot tax my memory. All I know is, that at last an imposing-looking gentleman who sat immediately under the Lord Mayor, and whose costume seemed to convey the notion that he acted in the double capacity of state coachman and parish beadle, rapped loudly on the table with a wooden hammer, and forthwith up jumped one of my professional brethren from the opposite benches, and formally opened the proceedings by declaring the office of Assistant Vice-Compter and High-Jinksman vacant, and reading out the name of each candidate.

Then we all had to appear like culprits at the bar of the hall, and present our several petitions, 'humbly shewing that, &c. &c.'

This ceremony ended, the legal gentleman again arose, and announced that the office of Assistant Vice-Compter and High-Jinksman being vacant, three gentlemen had presented themselves as candidates in due and proper form, viz.:—Josiah Wentworth Gibbs, clerk, of No. 5, Upper Craven Street, Todbury Square; William Henry Hunter, solicitor, of 98, Adelphi Terrace, Strand; and Richard Dewberry, barrister-at-law, of Dumbleton Buildings, Temple. After some further formalities he went on to request that those members of the Corporation present who were of opinion that Josiah Wentworth Gibbs was a fit and proper person to fill the office aforesaid, would be pleased to signify their assent in the usual manner.

'Now for it, old boy,' whispered Jack; and up went about a hundred hands. The same formula was repeated in the case of Mr. Hunter, with a similar result.

Then came the awful words, 'Those who are for Richard Dewberry.'——

'Hullo,' said Jack, 'how's this?'

We counted thirteen hands in all. Of these, five were raised by Aldermen, and my good friend Sloper had held up *two* on his own account.

'By Jove, just a baker's dozen!' cried Jack. 'Never mind; better luck next time. And now it's all over, don't you think we'd better go out and get some beer?'

'By all means,' said I; and out we went.

It was a bitter draught—but wondrously refreshing.

DICK DEWBERRY.

## CAPTAIN BOB'S (H.M. 210TH, THE IMPECUNIOUS REGIMENT) FAREWELL TO HIS SWORD.

TOMKINS! hand me down the sabre
I have worn this many a year,
Reverently unhook the swivels,
Beltless place the weapon here.

Oh! Excalibur—my trusty,
Proved in many another clime,
Steel thyself for heavy tidings,
Steel thee for my heavier rhyme.

Though as yet no rust corrosive
Mar thy temper or thy shine;
Though as yet no dye Columbian
Tint these russet locks of mine;

Though no martial Cresswell Cresswell
Rule divorce betwixt us twain—
Never more in camp or quarters
Shall we company again.

Never more the morn of battle
Shall take back its youngest beam,
From the ardour of my war-glance,
From the hunger of thy gleam.

Never more, in doughty conflict,
Trenchant we, with cut and thrust
Shall example make of foemen—
Shall incarnadine the dust

With the blood of Russ or Maori,
Blood of Persia or Japan,
Never more from heaps of Pandies,
Spring on John, the Chinaman.

Not for us, in cosy quarters,
Clanking down the sea parade,
Copious draughts of admiration
From the sex of every grade;

Not for us these broken accents—
'Lor! Jemima!' 'Marianne!'
'Here he is!' 'Be quiet!' 'What whiskers!'
'Gracious!' '*Oh!*—you *naughty* man!'

Gone, too, days of mufti freedom,
And my only comfort springs
From the 'loved and lost' idea
Which the Poet Laureate sings;

## *Captain Bob's Farewell to his Sword.*

When I stalked the wily red deer
  On the Grampians, never dry—
Potted seals near Corryvrechan,
  Tigers in the dusk Terai;

Moose in deep Canadian forest,
  Cockatoos in far Rangoon,
'Cut them down' at grassy Melton,
  'Showed the way' at Deyrah Doon;

Quested in the Moorish desert
  Bristling boar and wilding sow,
Hobb'd and nobb'd with scowling Arabs,
  Milked the Ishmaelitish cow—

In the Vale of Sweetest Waters,
  Lounging, Franklike, up and down,
Sought the Odalisque's soft glances,
  Reckless of the Paynim's frown;

Rode the drunk and darkling Pasha,
  Caught near St. Sophia's tower,
Right across, though fierce and jibbing,
  To the quarter of the Giaour.

Fenced at Tattenham's sharp corner
  With the chaff of shrill Cockaigne,
Played the nephew to Aunt Sally,
  Played the man with Todd's champagne.

Played the devil for a season
  With the bank near Baden's spring—
When I pipped that duffer Brittles
  Underneath the liver wing.

And perhaps the flaccid Begum
  Of Belattee-pawnee-pore
Might supply a stirring passage
  In these memories of yore;

How my haughty Norman 'sang pur'
  Scorned to share barbaric state
With the bang and betel languor
  Of a copper-coloured mate.

But away these thoughts! Old comrade,
  Askest thou, 'Must this be so?
'All this terrible bouleversement?
  Is it "kismet"?—Must I go?'

'Must I go?' Yea, on the morrow,
Crawley Shrieker—odious snob!—
Shall exult in reading, 'Shrieker
To be Captain *vice* Bob!'

(Eight and twenty hundred sovereigns
Did the sordid wretch propose
As the price of my position,
But the duns said, 'Capting, close')

'Rode the drunk and darkling Pasha
Caught near St Sophia's tower—'

Is it kismet? Is it kismet
That an economic law
Calls for some remote proportion
'Twixt the credit and the 'draw?'

Is it kismet that the stipend
  Which the British captain wins,
Just can find him in potatoes
  (Not, of course, including skins)?

That the firm of Bell and Rennie
  Book the liquor that one sips?
That the primest weed of Hudson
  Turns to ashes on the lips?

That the tiny bit of paper
  Seedlike, sown in Chanc'ry Lane,
Shall spring up, a baleful upas,
  When this moon begins to wane?

Shade of Adam Smith! the Budget
  Hoodwinks us from year to year,
Mumbling rags and bones and paper,
  Sniffing at the poor man's beer;

Cheats us with that dreamy surplus
  I, for one, can never find,
Kicking up, with noisy jargon,
  Learned dust to make us blind.

Give me some great sweeping measure,
  Gladstone, thou art many-phrased—
Call it 'Everything-for-Nothing—
  And-all-ancient-scores-erased.'

Let us borrow from our brothers
  Of the whittle and the knife,
That grand thought, 'Repudiation,'
  And adapt to private life—

Burn the books of cheap Emmanuel,
  Let my compt with Cox be burned,
Oh! pervert Poole's awful figures—
  Oh! let Israel's heart be turned—

Let my 'kite' that pines imprisoned
  In the usurer's vile den,
Soar away to purest ether,
  Never to be caught again;

Take away that horrid vision
  Seen by day and felt by night,
Eagle-nosed, against the railings—
  Moses Nibbs—'Out, damnéd sight!'

Be thyself: do something, Gladstone,
Give me straw to make my bricks,
Or—(ha! not a bad idea)—!
Let the nation pay my tics!

How shall I bestow thee, Tulwar?
Shall I, by this blinding tear
Dwarf thee from the soldier's weapon
To the toy of Volunteer?

Prancing on a venal hackney,
Purchased with the grocer's gains,
Wave thee in the mimic warfare
Of the Wimbledonian plains?

Or shall owl-eyed Tomkins take thee,
Like Sir Bedivere of yore,
To the Serpentine's still river,
There upon the moonlit shore

Thrice, around his shaggy forehead
Whirl thee, naked of thy sheath,
Then bestow thee on the waters,
And the awful things beneath—

Whiles that I, a hansom chartered
At the solemn midnight hour,
Take my way to grey Westminster,
There, beneath the reverend tower,

Change my clothes, and leave them bundled
On the bridge's buttress near;
Then to Folkestone, by the railway,
And to calm Boulogne-sur-Mer?

Yes, I will—by Jove! I'll do it,
There, *perdu*, I'll lie content
Till Aunt Muff departs and leaves me
Something snug at five per cent.

Meanwhile, all the river dragsmen
Shall with zeal and vigour try
To discover the location
Where my guilty remnants lie.

Meanwhile all the city hawkers
Shall in accents hoarse relate
'ʼOw as debt have been 'is rewing,
'Sōw-i-cōīde 'is hoffle fate.'

And the press shall point a moral,
Whereat kindly souls shall sob;
And all Israel shall mourn the
Tragic end of Captain Bob!

L W M L.

"'Ow as debt have been is rewing'

# LONDON SOCIETY.

## MAY, 1865.


### A NEW PHASE OF THE OLD STORY.

WE have it on such high authority that 'there is nothing new under the sun,' that unless the subject was one on which I had thought a great deal, I should hesitate to own my conviction that the saying—if not utterly unfounded—is only to be interpreted in the most general way. Indeed, it has been a melancholy satisfaction to me in my very severe trial, to think that my own case is probably quite

without a precedent; and though it was at first an additional thorn that none, even of my most sympathizing friends, ever listened to my story without smiling, yet now I can watch their polite attempt to keep their features straight with a grim satisfaction, for I read in every curve of the mouth an additional evidence that I have not grieved as men grieve commonly, and that my love, like others in never running smooth, has at least chosen a new country, and led me along a rough road, which no one, perhaps, has ever explored before me.

My grandfather was an old-fashioned country squire, whose first wife had died at the birth of their second child—my mother. In his old age he took it into his head to marry a second time; and my cousin—of whom I knew little more than that he had been put into the Guards as heir to the property, and used to snub me when we met as boys—took upon himself to express so decided an opinion on the whole affair, that hardly a year afterwards a formal letter which I received in India, announcing my grandfather's death, went on to say that, in virtue of a will made immediately after an interview with his elder grandson, I was the owner of Surneaux Hall, and all his property; subject only to a few trifling deductions, including a legacy of 100*l.* for my cousin, and a jointure of 500*l.* a year to his young widow of twenty-two. When the news reached me I was at one of the best pig-sticking stations in Bengal; and as there was no immediate necessity for my return, I determined not to hurry, but enjoy as much as possible the change in my fortunes. The tiger-skin on which my feet are resting as I write, and the stuffed birds which stand on the top of the book-case opposite me, are some of the trophies which remind me of the many pleasant days I spent in the next few months. I did not leave India for more than six months after I had received the news of the old squire's death, when I joined a friend from England on a hunting expedition to the Carpathians, which proved a failure; for we saw nothing larger than a stray deer, and were more than once nearly starved. I left him as soon as we got into inhabited regions again, and after a very leisurely journey through Greece and Italy, stopping a week at one place and a month at another, found myself sitting one fine evening in October, 1858, in an easy chair on the balcony at the Hôtel Biron, Ville Neuve, looking out on the still waters of the lake of Geneva. I had had knocking about enough of late. Five days in the Carpathians, with nothing but a measly pig for the whole party to eat, had been a sickener; and beneath the soft influences of the setting sun, and gentle breeze from the lake, I was getting very sentimental, and found myself painting charming pictures of peaceful domestic evenings in the old drawing room at Surneaux, with a graceful wife on the opposite side of the fire, and model babies up-stairs, and my old school friend with the poor girl he had been hopelessly engaged to for the last six years in the snug rectory at the bottom of the park. There are, if what doctors tell us is true, certain conditions of the body which render a person more than usually liable to catch any infectious disorder which may be flying about; and no one can reasonably doubt that there are seasons in every man's life when he is even more helplessly predisposed to fall in love on the slightest provocation. A general benevolence, and unwonted appreciation of the beauties of nature, are probably two of the earliest symptoms of the state, and I can now see that my perfect enjoyment as I watched the changing colours on the mountains, as the sun set that evening, and the unusual anxiety I felt for the happiness and welfare of the world at large, would, had I been wise, have been enough to warn me that my frame of mind was very dangerous. I remember everything that night now, as if it was only yesterday; the very order in which the stars came out, as the darkness closed in. The blazing comet curving almost from the Alps on the left, to the distant mountains on the other side of the lake,

and the perfect reflections in the still black water below. If I shut my eyes, I can still see it all just as it was. I got up and wandered down to the pier, and as I leant over the railing, the third symptom, a longing melancholy, began to creep over me. It was a heavenly night. Presently the quiet reflection of the comet broke up, and spread into two broad dancing lines of light, as the red and green lamp of a steamer came in sight, and soon the vessel splashing up, woke me from my reverie.

There were not many passengers so late in the season. Three tourists in dirty coats with the regulation knapsacks and alpenstocks, a dozen working men carrying their own atmosphere of garlic with them, a few poor women, and a sprightly French maid, in bustling anxiety for a pile of boxes, and last, her slight young English mistress, dressed in black. One might as well try to paint the scent of a violet as to convey in words any notion of the charms of the sweet face I gazed into, as she stepped out of the boat. Comet, lake, mountains, all were forgotten in an instant in the presence of her higher beauty; and I slept that night—if sleep it were—with the 'thank you' which rewarded me as I stooped to pick up her shawl still sounding in my ears, and every nerve fluttering from the contact with her small hand.

It would be sacrilegious to tell all the incidents of the next few days. We met and talked at the table d'hôte. She was going to Old Chillon; I had been there twice, but could not leave without another visit. She was curious to explore the salt-mines at Bex; but could not go alone. Acquaintances formed under such circumstances soon ripen into friendships; and friendships easily grow into something more. She was a young widow (Mrs. Smith was her name): that was all I knew, or cared to know; but long before I left the dear hotel, there was no concealing it, I was over head and ears in love. But what of that? I was twenty-five (a year at least older than she), the owner of a fine estate; and with all my diffidence felt sure that my presence and attentions were not unpleasant to her.

Never was lover more happy than I, as I said 'Good bye!' and started off to meet a friend on business in Paris, with a warm invitation to call on her in the Rue ——, where she hoped to arrive very soon after me, on her way home.

* * * *

Madame was fatigued with the journey, and was lying down, I learned from Suzette when the tedious days were over, and the time had come for me to know my fate. The absence had decided me, and my mind was quite made up, that life without her would be worthless.

'Would monsieur sit down on the sofa, and madame should know who had called,' said the little woman, as she frisked out of the room, with an arch look over her shoulder, which made me feel hot.

The door opened, and she came softly in. I jumped up and kicked my hat over, blushed, and felt my hand get hot and damp as I held it out.

'Oh, Mr. Jones, it is very good of you to call. I thought you would have been sure to have gone to England, or forgotten all about us. Sit down here, and let me tell you all about those horrid railway people.'

I sympathised with her, and wished I had been there, of course, as I listened to the story of a trunk which was nearly being put on to the wrong train; and as the conversation flagged, felt my forehead getting hotter still (Paris was so close!). I think she guessed why I twiddled my hat and brushed it the wrong way; for she looked shy too, but more beautiful than ever. It was getting painful: I twiddled my hat harder than ever. I don't believe I should ever have spoken another word, but she recovered her presence of mind first, and began again.

'Oh! you must let me show you my photographs: they are so lovely; I got them in Geneva. Here is the dear old Dent de Midi. There is

one somewhere of the funny old convent we went together to see on the other side of the Rhone, on your last day. You remember my slipping as we were clambering up on to the marble rock behind the garden, to peep at the nuns? You don't know how bad my ankle was afterwards. I did not get out at all the day you went, and could not even come down to dinner. It is so horrid and lonely being laid up in an inn, with no one to care for you. I did get so low-spirited. I did not know a bit how lame I was, till I tried to go up stairs again after you had gone.'

I turned over the photographs, and stared blindly at them wrong way upwards, as she paused. It must come sooner or later, I thought. She dropped her eyes, and looked frightened, as I got up, and blurted out, 'Perhaps we may never see one another again.'

Her breath came quickly, and she looked up timidly, and smiled. I was reckless now, and ran on.

'I can't go to England without telling you what I—I—I * * * No, no! don't say anything yet. I never told you—I could not all that happy time—that I am on my way home to take possession of my place in Shropshire. I want—I—I.'

I could not say another word: all my courage was gone, and I stood there more sheepish than ever. She had come to the rescue again, and, looking up at me with her big eyes, said—

'You come from Shropshire? How extraordinary that I should never have found that out before! I'm Shropshire too. I wonder whether you are anywhere near my dear old home, Surneaux?'

* * *

'Oh dear, oh dear! what is the matter?—Are you ill?—Shall I ring? Oh, do speak! Don't look so!—for my sake. Oh!'

* * * *

What *was* the matter? Only my chest had been bulged in, and driven up into my mouth—that was all. What *was* the matter?

Her dear old home Surneaux! Good heavens! Yes, my mother's name — my grandfather's — was Smith!

Her dear old home Surneaux! Then my angel was the old man's baby wife I had heard so much of!

Her dear old home Surneaux! Good heavens! *And a man may not marry his grandmother!*

We were both calmer soon, and I said, 'Let me kiss you, grandmamma.'

I doubt whether grandmother was ever more touched at a grandson's affection than she was as I threw my arms round her; and (must it be told?) cried like a baby. It was not manly, I dare say; but no one saw it but *she* and Suzette, who came in without knocking, and was going to throw a jug of water over us; but I saw her in time.

My old tried friend has the rectory at the bottom of the park, and I go there every day; for it does me good to see his rosy wife, and romp with his little girl.

There is no nursery at Surneaux.

I am a deputy-lieutenant, and man of note in the county; but the chair opposite mine in the old drawing-room is never used except when grandmamma is with me.

She often comes; but we never speak of the happy days in Switzerland, and neither of us has been there since.

[P.S. Since writing this, grandmamma has come down with her younger sister. She is very agreeable; and, barring the weeds, reminds me much of what G. M. was when we first met.]

## HOW WE SAW CHERBOURG.

WE slept the night before at Quettehou. Now just as the name of Quettehou is not French, so neither is the place: indeed, but for the telegraph posts and wires, which were there, as they were along our whole route, and for a dull, big mairie, it might be planted almost anywhere along the coast from Ilfracombe west and round east again to Penzance, without exciting any remark. An iron-grey village: almost on the level, too; just where the hills sink to that long spit of land which runs out to La Hogue. No shops with big letters, no café, no sign of French life; quite like a Cornish village, but with this great difference: in Quettehou there are no tumble-down houses, no wretched cabins, like we have seen for many a weary mile in the neighbourhood of what Kingsley calls 'that long man-sty, Combe-Martin.' There were no roofless walls, no sign of decay; and we suppose, if the population hereabouts decreases (as it is said to do), the houses are pulled down and their foundations razed as soon as they become void. All here is neat and new-looking, the dark stone picked out with whitest mortar, and every gable finished off with some queer-looking bird, shaped, I think, of pottery, certainly not of granite. We had got to Quettehou from Bayeux. A very comfortable way of doing a 'walking tour' in a country where, as in Normandy, the distances are great, is to hire a 'tilbury' (gig, with wide seat holding three, without crinoline). I can recommend any future traveller to do as we did: go to Massieu, at the Hôtel du Nord, just up above St. Patrick's Church, at Bayeux. He, most kindly of horse-dealers, will, for seven francs a day, entrust you with a handsome tilbury, and a huge horse bound to go any distance if you give him time and food enough. I was quite touched by the confidence wherewith, no inquiries made, Massieu trusted us with his property. Our baggage at the Etoile du Nord was singularly scanty, even if he had gone to look; ourselves, travel-stained to a degree which would certainly have excited the suspicions of most English innkeepers; and we wished him 'Good-bye' with the vague words, 'We may be away a week, or we may be back in three days.' What was there to hinder our driving to the other end of Brittany, leaving the tilbury on some 'lande,' and selling the horse, or even going direct to Paris, and passing it off as our own in the Bois de Boulogne? Massieu was apparently quite easy in mind: he had unlimited confidence either in us—or in the police. I am not going to take you all along our route: it was very pretty, very English, as far as trees and hedges and grass-land could make it. Carentan was an exception: there was quite a foreign look about its stately houses with their stone-groined corridors. The church is very fine; one very English feature about it is the note, 'This church was whitewashed in 1823.' From Montebourg to Quettehou the road gets wilder; part of the way leads over the watershed of Cotentin: at one point the wide view south and east, over a level richly wooded, across the bay, and on to the cliffs of the Bessin, and then round to north-east, with St. Vaast and La Hogue and the St. Marcon isles, seemed to us the finest thing we had seen in France. Here and there a little church with low 'saddle-back tower,' and often an old stone cross, such as you see in Cornwall or Oxfordshire, but which I never saw elsewhere in France. In every hamlet we came upon a niche with the statue of the Virgin, often most plainly decorated: one had a pint black bottle full of flowers placed on each side of it. At last we came to Quettehou, and were soon hospitably entertained at the inn, eating with good appetite our soup, fowl, omelette, &c. Our bedrooms had no bells: a stout stick at the bed's foot supplied the deficiency. I ran my foot against mine in the dark, and remained a long time awake speculating as to

the use of the instrument: the towel was thin, the basin like a soup-plate, the quilt an 'Eidedron'—like a little feather-bed a-top of you; but what could be expected at Quettehou? In the early morning we walked to Fort La Hogue, situated at the top of the tongue of land running out into the bay. It seems very strong, in the old style, mostly above ground: we walked quietly in, unchallenged, over the drawbridge, talked a little with the sentry about the weather, and ran about among the grassy rocks and half-dismantled works inside. There certainly is nothing here for the alarmist. Along the beach were some half-dozen bathing-boxes—locked; so under the lee of them we made a shift to undress, and bathed as comfortably as gusts of wind and rain and fear of undercurrents would let us. Back to Quettehou to *déjeuner*, and then off in our tilbury to Barfleur. At this place there seemed to be something like fort-building; and the strong, squat tower of the church might be readily extemporized into a fort. Barfleur is all one long street, very ugly: the rocks covered with a yellow seaweed; everything, even to the big shell which stood for holy water, told of its being but a very poor little fishing town. A dull, hilly road brings us to St. Pierre l'église — such a church, indeed: square, with one large, plain domed vault inside, undivided by pillar or groining. A priest was catechizing children, or rather lecturing them on the life of Christ; while, outside, the market was in full activity. Soon after leaving St. Pierre we get our first sight of Cherbourg: it is very finely placed at the bottom of a little gorge, with cliffs and hills backing it, and its works stretching out far into the sea. The town itself is running away from its arsenals, moving eastwards at a great rate. After passing the Commercial dock we soon got to the Quai Napoléon, and saw the grand equestrian statue, inscribed with this magniloquent boast, 'I wish to repeat at Cherbourg the marvels of Egypt.' Leaving the quay we go at a foot's pace through streets thronged with artisans, for work is over at the dockyard, and out they come, swarm after swarm, each with his little tin canteen, just as at Woolwich or Plymouth. Along the quays the houses get tall enough, and there is one very fine broad street running inland parallel to the shore; but Cherbourg in general is not at all grandly built. The old church is curious, mostly in the flamboyant style; round the triforium are some quaint old bas-reliefs, coloured, representing mediæval towns and castles; at the east end a life-size group of Christ's baptism, in plaster, with the light let in behind in the usual way. Though every church in France has its usual tariff of seats, there was one strange announcement here which I did not see elsewhere: it was to the effect that 'No change can be given to those paying for seats.' We did not go much about the town, night seemed to fall earlier on this misty coast than in the warm Calvados, and we turned in; not without having seen, however, the learned barber's shop. Fancy being invited to shave by the announcement, in good Greek, 'I crop, I shave, I curl your hair,' backed by the poetical invitation, 'Si quos tangit honor capitis studiumque placendi, Hic juvenes ornate, senes reparate, capillos;' it would seem as if the Gallic midshipman must be a far more learned being than his British counterpart if all this is meant to attract his notice. Dinner: rain: a walk on the quay and along the jetty to see the harbour lights. To bed; and up betimes on a bright, fresh morning. We strolled up a long avenue, and soon found ourselves mounting the zigzag of the great land fort, a steep way cut out of the red granite rock. The view is very fine: we are 420 feet above the sea, and see the whole extent of forts and dyke and harbour, stretching from the lighthouse of Foulainville towards Barfleur almost to Querqueville off to the west. Our guide, the old soldier in charge, laughs at the idea of war; he points out a pretty property just behind as 'belonging to an English lady;' that is a sufficient *gage d'amitié* for him, at all events. He also bids us notice the

fine glass roof of the railway station, and near it the consul's house, the prettiest thing up that pretty glen: both these seem to him signs of peace. We pass out under a machicolated gate, rather for show than use, and drop down on the consul at rather an earlier hour than that officially mentioned for receiving visitors. I send in my card, on which I neatly pencil our apologies for troubling him at such an unofficial time, excusing ourselves on the plea of our very limited stay, and begging permission to see the dockyard. But the great man cannot be seen: his servant brings word that the thing is quite impossible; the fort-admiral is away ill, so that no strangers can see the dockyard. We go down (I secretly meaning to try whether I cannot prove that for a determined Briton that word 'impossible' does not exist). it is too early to apply elsewhere; we don't seem to care for museums of natural history; so we walk on the jetty, much besieged by boatmen, who want a preposterous number of francs for taking us over to the 'digue,' and round to the various sea-forts. We hold back, desiring to join some party later in the day, fearful, too, of losing any chance of the dockyard. There are very few people about. By-the-way, we could not but notice as we went north a change in this respect; in Rouen, or even Caen, you are awoke by four A.M., if you are in any thoroughfare: the folks are almost as sleepless as the Parisians, who keep open so late and then begin again so early that one does not wonder at their being so short-lived, they live out five English lives in three of their own: but at Bayeux, at Cherbourg, at Coutances, you may sleep undisturbed till seven. Climate has a good deal to do with this; the real Norseman, too, perhaps needs more sleep than the less carnivorous Gaul. By-and-by we 'assist' at the conversation of two French sailors, one of whom has a grievance: amusing is the strangely civil way in which they talk to each other, so deferential, so grave and earnest, beneath those most uncomfortable turn-up half-Chinese glazed hats—such a contrast every way to the traditional Jack tar. This is the case everywhere: last night, none of the roaring, rollicking fun abroad in the streets which I remember at Portsmouth when I was a boy; a stray fiddle in a cabaret, with a dance, of course; but of that rough, hearty play which we fancy to be a necessity for the sailor ashore, seemingly there was next to none. And yet we are in Normandy, where the people are certainly jollier-looking and more English in their type than in most other parts of France. The fact is that this most orderly and exact, the most mathematical nation in Europe—'nation of stampers,' as Sir F. Head calls them—has been grossly misrepresented. Volatile they may be; merry they are not; fun they can scarcely understand. Ask any one who has watched them in the 'Champs Elysées,' who has seen them at the Grandes Eaux at Versailles, at a village fair—why, the dullest of Leicestershire 'mops' on a dull, showery day is liveliness itself compared to any 'foire' I ever saw, and I have seen many: we may retort on them in old Froissart's oft-quoted words, 'They take their pleasure sadly.' But we must leave our grave, ceremonious sailors, or we shall never get into the dockyard. In the Rue du Chantier lives a banker named Le Cœur. I went in to change some money, and found one of those very civil clerks who are often to be met with in quiet country banking-houses: 'He would not let me change with him; he could only give me so much—at Rouen I should be sure to get more: Cherbourg was a place where very little foreign money came in.' I spoke of the dockyard: 'He would come with us—there was no difficulty; he had lately been all over it.' We declined his kind offer, and pushed on to the Majorité, passing the barracks 'de l'Equipage de la Flotte,' where 'awkward squads' of marines and sailors seemed incessantly drilling with pike and musket. We walked in unchallenged, and got up on the first floor to the office for tickets of admission;—but, alas! it was only natives who could get in on such

easy terms; we must bring an order from the Préfecture. Back to the Préfecture we went: they were all away at lunch, and not expected for nearly two hours; indeed, in the ante-chamber the porter and two seamen were playing some three-handed game of cards, as if business was over for the day. We now thought of our boatman, and fancied we could get over to the breakwater and back in time for the dockyard. As ill-luck would have it, in going to the quay we passed Le Cœur's, and I stepped in to tell my civil friend that he was wrong. In a moment he had spoken to his fellow-clerk, seized his hat, and insisted on going with us to the Préfecture, where, he said, he had a friend among the juniors. On our way I found he knew a little English: had been taught it at school, and deeply regretted his schoolboy idleness and bad masters: (how they all in both countries lay the blame on the innocent masters!). He was taking daily lessons now, having strong faith in the saying which we heard so often in Normandy, 'The man who knows two languages is as good as two men.' He had not attained to this yet; it seemed likely to take a good deal to complete his double humanity. 'Expect a short while, till I shall return,' most quaintly pronounced, was what he said as he ran up the staircase of the Préfecture to his friend's room. We judged from him what our French must be like, and how it came to pass, that, despite our rolling of the *r*'s and stuffing a sentence with 'phrases' till it was like an Arnold's exercise, our universal welcome was 'Monsieur est étranger.' When we had 'expected a short while,' our friend returned, unsuccessful, but radiant. 'There were formalities needful' (this was mysteriously uttered in the non-cuivis homini spirit; every Frenchman believes most devoutly that his government is mysterious, even in what the newspapers call its minutest ramifications); 'we must go the British consul, and he would give us a note to the préfet.' I hinted that we had been already repulsed at the consulate, but my sanguine friend said, 'Ah! of course you were before office hours; they require to be *ménagés*, those official personages;' and by mere force of will triumphing over down-heartedness (we had only fed lightly, and were beginning to despair of the whole thing), he led us off to the consulate. He took us round by the furthest road; our experience has often taught us that a Frenchman has no idea of short cuts; we, who knew the road, and had that day returned by the nearer way, expostulated in vain; his mind seemed slow to believe what the shape of the country enabled us ocularly to demonstrate, that our way was the one side of the triangle; at length, however, we got to the consul's door, and, passing under the verandah into the office, had leisure to study the maps of Cherbourg and of Europe, and also the consul's cellar-book, which was the most prominent piece of literature in the room. Soon the official personage appears, a thin, tall man, with long hempen-coloured beard reaching down low on his breast—altogether a get-up *en grand seigneur*—full of that stiffness and *morque* wherewith the Englishman so often seeks to fence himself in. The Frenchman opened our case. Without deigning to reply to him, Milor turned to me, as to some self-condemned criminal, and coldly remarked, 'I think you called here before this morning?' I said, 'Yes,' and again apologized for and explained our having come out of hours, at the same time hoping we might look for his kind help in obtaining an entry into the yard.

'No,' said he (and I could not help thinking he felt a grim satisfaction at being able to refuse). 'No, it cannot be done. You were told so this morning. It cannot be.'

I said we had come up so far out of our road from Bayeux to Coutances almost solely to see this, and it would be a great disappointment to go back without doing so.

'You should have inquired before you came up whether it was possible or not. The préfect has been a good deal annoyed lately by English coming to look all about, and I

shall certainly not send any unknown persons down to him.'

'Then do I understand,' said I, 'that the thing is not in itself impossible, but that you, by your refusal, make it so for us?'

'Quite so. I consider it a matter of private arrangement—of favour, if you please.'

Of course I felt very angry, for I was tired and hungry, and did not relish the utter want of hospitality which was being shown us; moreover, the Frenchman's being there troubled me. I confess I did not like his seeing an Englishman so treated by his country's representative. However, I smothered my resentment, and in cold polite French told the consul that, had it been impossible, I should have said nothing; but as he had confessed that he claimed the right of acting with partiality, I would take leave to tell him, that it seemed to me that one of the duties of his appointment was to help British subjects without favour or partiality, not to stand in the way of an innocent request; and that I much regretted being so treated, for the first time during many journeys abroad, by an Englishman. And with a freezing bow on either side we parted. Our French friend, however, did not appear to cool towards us; he offered to try again at the Préfecture, and on my declining, walked with us half round the town, and parted from us with many good wishes. We were too late for the boats, so we lunched, and with praiseworthy perseverance betook ourselves again to the Préfecture. Messieurs have also just returned from lunch. We are ushered into one of the luxuriously fauteuilled offices, and find ourselves before an alarmingly civil naval officer, with very little beard, no *morgue* at all, and a red ribbon at his buttonhole. We state our case as before. 'Impossible; most unfortunately no strangers admitted without a recommendation, not from the consul—not a word about him—but from their own foreign minister.' I state who and what we are; no fear of our running off with new ideas which may be used against their navy. My boys will be 'desolated' if they go away without seeing Cherbourg dockyard. Above all the trireme is there, and they do so want to see a trireme. This amuses our official dignitary. He explains that the trireme is not a success. I plead once more, I cannot remember in what terms, probably the same over again. At last he relents so far as to say, 'Unhappily he has no power, but he will speak about it to M. le Préfet.' He disappears into an inner room. Soon a bell is rung, card-playing porter comes in from the outer door, and at the same moment from the inner door appears a tall man, not in any decidedly naval dress, but a red knob, *à la mandarin*, at his button-hole, who, bowing slightly to us, gives some order about an umbrella to the porter. We feel we are being inspected, and are afraid to breathe, lest we should influence the decision. Off he goes, and very soon the naval officer returns beaming with kindness. He has the satisfaction to tell me that, 'although it is quite out of order, the préfet has seen fit to make an exception in our case, which must not be looked on as a precedent;' and he placed in our hands a permit to visit the dockyard. 'Ces personnes doivent être accompagnées,' printed upon it, showed that they are careful not to let spies go round taking notes. We thanked him, begged him to convey our thanks to M. le Préfet, and hastened to use our privilege, half fearing, as we went along, that our consul might pounce down on us from his eyrie on the Fauconnière and snatch away our hardly-gained permit. All we had to do now was to go to the office and get it stamped; then we passed in at the real dockyard gate, and presented our paper to the porter, who took it over to the guard-house, where three gens-d'armes were sitting; one of them at once took us in tow, and now we were fairly at work on the wonders of this 'den of fear,' as we English mostly take it to be.

The first feeling is one of disappointment; one set of docks is so like another; so much here to remind one of Havre, or even of Bristol; but a second glance shows us

where we are. That great hospital-ship, like a 'Dreadnought' in dock, gives a character of its own to the whole place; it is the first thing we see, and one of the most striking—a huge old liner, fitted up now for 1000 sick sailors. If we were to say they have no Greenwich in France, they would, I suppose, retort by telling us we have no Invalides. The hospital ship must be a bad place, one would think, in close damp weather, such as this Cotentin is often oppressed with. The next thing is the trireme; it is a strange-looking affair, with its red and green and white paint, and the tall carved stem and stern bent into swans necks, not half so pretty as that 'Swan of the Exe,' which Devonshire readers will remember; altogether very much more like the pictures than one can fancy a sea-going craft to have been. It was sent here because they could make nothing of it in the Seine. The 'banks of oars,' about which Dr. Arnold has so much to say in his 'Thucydides,' still present an unsolved difficulty in practice. Besides the trireme was so unsteady as to be pronounced utterly useless except in the smoothest water. How she was got from Havre here I could not well make out. Poor neglected toy! every one spoke of it with contempt. But it is time to turn to two large iron-plated ships, and very terrible-looking things they are, uglier in shape than one's ideal of a ship; but then such armour of proof may well injure symmetry. But a little further on we come upon another monster, almost more interesting to us, for she is not half built, and lets us see some of the secrets of her strength, the huge girders, the casing five inches thick, fastened on in plates with great bolts very much like those that hold the Menai tubular bridge together. I never had such a full sense of solidity borne in upon me as while I was looking at the work going on in this ship. It is not easy to tell the exact number of vessels in the place. We had three accounts, all different, and this not at all, I fancy, from a wish to deceive the Englishman, but from the usual continental ignorance of anything beyond the man's own immediate business. The warder at Fort de Roules, a decided Anglophile, spoke of four new liners and three or four old ones. Another account said six ships and seven frigates, and other craft, four gun-boats, six transports, and one very large one building for 1200 men and 600 horses. In addition to these, you have the three or four iron-cased frigates; and, as another informant told us, this list gives the full tale, if it does not even err on the side of excess. We did not take notes; I supposed it was not allowed, and felt that the préfet's kindness had put us on our honour, therefore I decline attempting to put down any of the measurements of ships, &c, which the courteous gen d'arme kept constantly giving us, for I have a bad head for remembering figures. Of course everything that is built now goes by steam; but it did not appear that much of the machinery is made in Cherbourg; it is only the fittings and smaller things which are turned out from the foundries here. The place where these dock-yards and arsenals are is a sort of peninsula, with the sea on its north and east, made by cutting off a piece of the western shore of Cherbourg harbour. A strong line of fortification, with moat on the land sides, runs round it all. At its north-east angle is the Fort du Hommet, which, being on the west of the harbour, matches the old Fort des Flamands at its eastern point. The town lies still further south-east, cut off from this 'arsenal,' as it is called, by a glacis and the large Fosse aux Mâts. There are several smaller docks, one, the Bassin Chantereyne, still reminds us how that Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror, vowed she would sing a hymn to the Virgin if saved from the storm which threatened to dash her on these rocks. They ran into a creek here, and the pilot, as soon as they were safe, reminded the queen of her vow by crying out 'Chante reyne.' But the three largest docks—the real wonders of the place, surpassing all triremes, iron-plated frigates, and new-pattern gun-boats—are the

'Avant-port Militaire,' opened by Marie Louise in 1813; the 'Grand-bassin,' opened by the Duke of Angoulême in 1829, and the 'Arrière-bassin,' which our Queen went to see opened in 1858. The respective sizes are 7½, 6, and 8 hectares. (I leave my readers to work out the sum, reminding them that a hectare is nearly 2½ acres.) In all, they profess to have accommodation for forty ships, and they are still at work blasting out another basin. The new basin is 18 mètres (about 20 yards) deep, nearly double the depth of the others. They all have attached to them 'cales de construction', *i. e.*, building docks, and also dry or graving docks, some of which are big enough for the largest ship to steam quietly into at high water without shifting a spar. When the ship has got in, they shut the sluices, pump out the water by steam, and then careen at leisure. The masting dock, with its cranes for lifting the masts up and fixing them at once, seemed very complete. All round there are, of course, warehouses, parks of coal, 'terre de dégradation' (a queer phrase for rubbish from the diggings), stored away in sheds, collections of shot and rifled cannon, besides the workshops, which we were not allowed to enter. There is also a barrack for marines, and a hospital. We tried to get into conversation with our guide. He told us he liked the English fairly, had been with them in the Crimea; disliked the Russians exceedingly, and thought them cowards, never fighting except when vastly superior in numbers and position. He had been at Solferino too. He deprecated the notion that all this work at Cherbourg meant war, and said they had much more right to be alarmed at the English works at Alderney. He mentioned that Joseph and William Locke were the engineers of the Cherbourg railway, of which they are all very proud, and he seemed to think this a great point in favour of peace and good understanding. One more fact for those who like calculations: the three great basins are more than two-thirds the size of the Tuileries gardens, and the biggest holds over one million cubic mètres of water.

There are from 28,000 to 29,000 people in Cherbourg: in the old streets the houses are high, and I dare say the inhabitants well packed, yet it spreads over a good deal of ground—French towns often do: the public buildings take up so much room. After a little further chat with our guide, he went back to his guard-house; and we thanked him heartily, with the triumphant feeling that if our consul was a second Jove, 'non tamen irritum quodcunque retro est efficiet,' and that all the mischief he had done was to rob some Cherbourg boatman of his fare to and from the dyke. But before we leave the dockyard, let us take one more walk round, and let us glean as we go a few facts from 'La France Illustrée,' a republication of Malte-Brun, made up to the present time, and which in a few pages manages to condense a great deal of valuable information. What a change for Cherbourg since the days when Philip Augustus granted to the town the privilege of trading with Ireland; or even since the time when Vauban came and traced the plan of a port and fortifications—never built, by the way; for the dark days of Louis XV. came, and the old feudal walls having been pulled down, no defence remained, so the poor town fell without a struggle into the hands of Lord Howe. When the great Vauban was sent to inspect this coast, he pronounced Cape La Hogue the best site for a strong harbour and arsenal; but nothing was done till Louis XVI.'s time;—strange that he should have been the foster-father of Cherbourg, sending his brother, the Count d'Artois, to see the dyke which had begun, going himself in 1786 and dining on one of the great coffer-dams, 'astonishing all the world,' says 'La France' 'by the extent of his scientific knowledge and the cleverness of his remarks.' Plans drawn and instructions written by him in '89, are to be found at Versailles, 'showing thorough good sense and great knowledge of the subject.' His

people went to work in a clumsy way; huge conical wooden frames, 60 feet high, 140 feet across at the base, and 60 above, were made at Havre, shipped off, filled with huge blocks of stone, and sunk in their appointed places; the plan was to have ninety of them chained together at the top, and it was thought they would act as a sufficient breakwater: but it was found that the work would take twenty years, and cost eighty millions of francs; so by degrees the cone system was abandoned; and all the result of Louis XVI.'s work was to have fixed the place of the breakwater. Napoleon, when First Consul, began the basins and docks. The breakwater still went on, slowly enough (the first cone had been sunk in 1784; the work was not finished till 1853), but still pretty uninterruptedly, little troubles and mishaps notwithstanding. At one time occurred a disaster on a Napoleonic scale. The work had risen to the surface, and Napoleon had ordered a battery to be erected on the middle of the breakwater, which was therefore enlarged to double its width: he insisted on all being finished within two years. 'Impossible' did not exist in Napoleon's vocabulary; so all was finished, guns mounted, men in bomb-proofs; when on the night of the 25th February, 1808, a wild storm came on, and by the morning nothing was to be seen of the battery, and not a soul was left of three hundred soldiers and workmen who had been inside, except a few culprits in the 'lock-up,' a sort of cellar sunk in the middle of the dyke. Three years after the Emperor came, and of course spoke as he is represented speaking from the back of the bronze horse on the quay. After all, the dyke is the greatest of their Cherbourg wonders; to see it stretching in a great curve across the harbour, and then to think of its being 3,800 mètres long (more than 4000 yards), 140 wide, and built at the cost of sixty-seven millions of francs, guarded too by three forts along itself and four others more or less near on shore, while the excavations out of the live rock seemed to be just the very place for a fleet of iron-clad 'Warriors' to nestle in.

And thus we had seen all that one is allowed to see of the famous dockyard; and with the help of our 'France Illustrée,' and a good map, had formed a fair notion of the place. We passed out by the Majorité, by the sailors' barrack railed off from that boulevard where the stream of sailor-officers is always passing among the weakly young trees, past the eternal drill of the marine awkward squad, past the préfecture and the sub-préfecture (they have such a number of official buildings in France, and all so large), and so back to our inn and our tilbury. It is certainly a very quiet town; that big, wide street with scarcely a wheel carriage in it; even the market seems, so to speak, subdued; the perpetual clatter of fruit and fish-women going on in a stealthy undertone.

There was little else to see; for Cherbourg is quite a business place, just fit for its work and nothing else; nothing picturesque about the hard granite streets; a good deal of it is as ugly as man can make it; he cannot mar the natural beauty of the situation: that tree-clad gorge, those rocks capped with furze and heather, form a background which Portsmouth and Chatham may well envy. In a trading port you get sailors from all parts of Europe, quaint dresses, new manners, jargon of mingled tongues, but you must not look for any of these at Cherbourg: all is French, and French of the most orthodox and highly disciplined kind.

Seated in our tilbury, we drove once more round the Quai Napoléon, and then up a very steep street out towards Bricquebec. We got varied peeps behind us; first, down the chimneys of the more inland houses; by-and-by, as we rose higher, over the roadstead and dyke and sea-forts; then, as we neared the top of the down, the road grew wild and heathy; and so we took our last look, and bidding farewell Cherbourg, started to finish our tour in Normandy.

## ON MEN AND WOMEN AS LETTER-WRITING ANIMALS.

LETTERS, as I understand the term, appear to have been practically unknown to the ancients. They wrote epistles instead, stately, elegant, serious deliverances of their minds, thought in full dress, solemn-faced news in the act of becoming history. They never trifled, for as yet humour was not; moreover, they took time about their correspondence. The dashing off of passing impressions, a slight sketch in profile of the Cynthia of the minute, was impossible at a time when writing materials were so scarce, cumbrous, and dear. Unlike us, they were in no hurry to be communicative, first thinking over things before they indited them. When they did indite them, it was generally, as the Psalmist says, a good matter. If they were slow they were sure, and gave you the clear liquor of their cogitations, not the first yeasty workings. I fancy, too, that when a man, in that far-away time, began to write, he wrote a good clerkly hand. He took pains over a very serious matter. A letter then lasted a generation. There were no waste-paper baskets in those days. A man was proud of his performance; he built up a stately edifice of caligraphy with majestic flourishes and Corinthian capitals. There was something to look at as well as to read; it was as good as a picture, pleasant to the eyes and elevating to the mind. You left it as a legacy to your sister's family or bequeathed it as an heirloom to your own.

But such tremendous feats of epistolary difficulty were not what you might call letters. Perhaps the national character of those old Greeks and Romans (and two-thirds of antiquity seem shared between them) was a too unkindly soil for these delicate productions: they could take no root in it; perhaps other causes were more adverse. To mention one—the absence from their social life of the element of female influence. There was no gallantry in the sterner sex, or intrigue in the weaker; knowledge was not diffused; public notions of what constituted society were very crude; gentility did not exist; ambition in the upper classes was coarse; content in the lower was sordid. Their ears never heard nor did their hearts ever vibrate to those multitudinous, complex undertones of the social harp of life which result from community of thought and knowledge, and reciprocation of interests. These, which make our own lives so full of business and entertainment, acting and reacting upon them with influences the most subtle and various, were then, for the most part, unknown; there was not much to talk about, and, therefore, little to write.

And yet what piquant scandals might have been chronicled in the court of Semiramis! what tales of the tender assignations made at Ninus' tomb! Fancy reading in the diary of some Egyptian Pepys, 'Went to-day to see the new Pyramid; not so large as the others, but mighty fine!'

I think it was the late Archbishop of Dublin who assigned even a higher value to the discovery of paper-making than to that of printing. And shall we not say that letter-writing was not a general accomplishment in old times because there was then no stationery? Your beggar, ignorant of the tattered value in which he stood encased, gave his rags with content to the four winds of dissolution. Oh that he had been wiser in his generation, so haply we had missed some classical inutilities and known a vast deal more of the inner life and social relations of our elders and ancestors! There is always a tendency in mankind to chronicle small beer; but who could have had the heart to do so on stone slabs, metal plates, wooden blocks, the bark of trees, flat rushes, and prepared skins? Who could have felt himself justified in inscribing on half a hundred waxen tablets the details of a banquet given by Lucullus—in using up the right bank of the Nile in making a topography of Thebes—or in running through

the last budget of news from Palmyra along half a mile of vellum? The thing is absurd. Fancy Mr. Tennyson's curled and oiled Assyrian bull, conscious of a bent towards satire, going out into the desert to cut his impressions of Esar-haddon on the rocks! Or do you suppose that dear old gossip, Herodotus, ever, on one fine morning, received a note to the following effect: My dear Herodotus, I have great pleasure in sending you my memoirs of King Cambyses, *on three waggons!*

We must come to modern times before we find specimens of the Letter Proper. I don't mean business letters, the dry algebra of commerce; or letters about law, science, or art. I don't means letters indited under the influence of excited feelings, revenge, indignation, snarling self-love, &c. And yet, gracious powers! what a wonderful command of language do these passions endow us with! How rapidly the vast word-floods rush along, bearing upon their bosom such figures of speech, such tropes, metaphors, audacities of rhetoric and sweeping impetuosities of style, that if we could only transfer the inspiration, maintain the glow after the original fire has gone out, our literary fortune would be made. Still these are not the letters present to my mind. Mine are *literæ humaniores*. Mild, mirthful, serious, grave or gay, lively or severe, calm, joyous, meditative or jolly, begetting a smile, a tear, a laugh. They are the births of the hour, the literary butterflies of society, the moths of the mind; they instruct, please, refine. Yet so to do is not their prime intention. They are the inspirations of mother-wit dealing with such materials as time, taste, men, women, fantastic manners and the general hurly-burly of events create. They are light and airy, yet need not be trifling. In the glitter of their smiles is often the trace of a tear, and the honest laugh will give birth to an echo very like a sigh. But the good letter is neither a sermon nor an essay, does not read like a comic paragraph or a bit of a smart review-paper; it is simply what it is, a good letter; is generally mor good-humoured than witty, more genial than clever. Friendship produces it, affection gossips in it, and civility, that exercise of a benevolence in small things, bestows upon it a delicate preservative aroma of good-breeding.

We owe most of the letters, which can be thus characterized, to the ladies. I have sometimes thought the turn of women for writing good and long letters is due to the fact that they sit down so much. From knitting, netting, sewing, darning, and other domestic employments, they can easily betake themselves to pen and ink. Nine hours out of the day they are literally in a position to write, and can turn to at any time.

But men, especially Englishmen, are by nature short-letter-writing animals. The business of most of us lies out of doors, or deals with such stern interests as make us both indisposed and leave us little time for a correspondence stimulated chiefly by desire to please a friend, evince a talent, or gratify a love of gossip. No man makes warmer friendships than the Englishman: friendships which he will vindicate through fire and water. But to write his friend long letters! it is not in the bond. He cannot gossip; to be sentimental he is ashamed. Nor, speaking generally, does he possess the art of letter-writing even if he were inclined to use it. He is but a poor hand at hitting off, lightly and effectively, the outward show of things, dancing, with elegance and humour, the straw of news on his pen's point, or gliding rapidly but gracefully along the surface of events, not without insight into their hidden causes: your true Briton is mostly incapable of this. He can be serious, profound, severe, pathetic, even poetical; but his talents are commonly too heavy, his character too sombre, for a species of composition requiring some wit, more humour, a great deal of social observation, a few touches of sentiment, and much liveliness of manner united to constant neatness of expression.

Yes, the ladies, bless them! cer-

tainly surpass us here. I dare say many of my readers have only to open their writing-desks to put their hand upon letters, intended solely for their private gratification, which in wit, sense, airiness of style, humour of narration, and good-nature in spirit, are no mean rivals of the best productions in this class of literature. Generally speaking, in every family or friendly circle there is some one person, mostly a woman, whose talent for letter-writing is well known and recognized, whose correspondence is sought for and valued as something *sui generis*, delightful, peculiar. To those whose unhappy lot it is to receive and answer many letters, a friend like this is invaluable. One such plum makes up for a vast amount of epistolary dough.

Of all agreeable letters let me recommend those of Madame de Sévigné, née de Rabutin-Chantal, 1627. Entertaining an affection for her daughter which almost amounted to a passion, this excellent woman and most charming letter-writer consoled herself for the void in her family circle, caused by that young lady's marriage, with an increasing correspondence, ranging over all things done below the sun—a Frenchwoman's sun to be sure. No infrequent or unhonoured attendant at the court of Louis the Magnificent (though in her heart preferring the quiet of the country), Madame de Sévigné found abundant opportunities for the exercise of her peculiar talent, and regularly dished up for the entertainment of her daughter a mess of news wherein one does not know which to admire most, the good spirits and amiability of the writer, or the clear lively style, the shrewd observations, the sweet feminine transitions of thought and unaffected prettiness of expression of the letters. The charm and hilarity of the lady's manner in telling a piece of news are unrivalled. But, then, seldom has there been a woman of such a thoroughly joyous disposition. When her daughter was staying with her no one could be happier. She loved gardens and a life out of doors. She went singing to herself as she wandered among her flower-beds. At her country retreat herself and friends, laic and cleric, young and old, handsome and ugly, were always dying of laughter. It needed but a look, a half-uttered jest, a plain girl's vanity, a pretty girl's fit of devotion Mdlle. du Plessis, that notorious fibber, Mons. de Pomenars, the ridiculous transgressor, to bring on attacks of mirth under which they all immediately expired. A thousand blessings on the genius which has prolonged the echoes of that joyous laughter to my nineteenth-century ears! As I sit in my quiet room, I fancy myself popping my post-natal face within that courtly circle, and grin with sympathetic muscle at the joke going round.

What a charming letter is that to her cousin, Bussy-Rabutin, on the birth of her boy! I wonder if the writer knew it was a good letter? Not she. The chief thing one sees in it is the figure of the proud and happy young mother, bending with shining limpid eyes over the cradle of her first-born.

'You are a pretty fellow, are you not? to have written nothing these two months. Have you forgotten who I am and the rank I hold in the family? 'Faith, little cadet, I will make you remember it. You knew I was about to be confined, and yet took no more trouble to ask after my health than if I had remained a spinster. Very well. Be informed, to your confusion, that I have got a boy who shall suck hatred of you into his veins with his mother's milk, and that I mean to have a great many more, purely to provide you with enemies. You have not the wit to do as much, you with your feminine productions.

'After all, my dear cousin, my regard for you is not to be concealed: Nature will proclaim it in spite of art. I thought to scold you for your laziness through all this letter; but I do my heart too great a violence, and must conclude with telling you that M. de Sévigné and myself love you very much, and often talk of the pleasure we have in your company.'

The boy whose birth is here announced so pleasantly, was that

Marquis de Sévigné of whom, so cold was his temperament, Ninon de l'Enclos affirmed, that he had a soul of pap and the heart of a cucumber fried in snow.

But to return to Madame la mère. Never was the art of exciting or sustaining expectation more cleverly and prettily shown than in her letter concerning the marriage of M. de Lauzun with Mademoiselle, granddaughter of Henry IV. Never was reader involved in such a whirl of suspicions, such a giddy dance of conjectures; never was such a maze of animated phrases. Curiosity is driven to its last gasp; titillation is carried to its extreme piquancy. The secret is ever on the tip of the growing sentence, but still it eludes us. It is the most fantastic, Puck-like, Ariel style of news-vending possible, but too long to be inserted here.

Do any of my fair readers wish to know how to make hay? If so, attend: 'Hay-making is the prettiest thing in the world. You play at turning over the grass in a meadow, and as soon as you can do that you know how to make hay.'

After the letters of Madame de Sévigné, I love but little those of Horace Walpole, Lord Hervey, or Lady Mary Wortley. They are witty, satirical, scandalous, brilliant, but the Frenchwoman equals them in their best qualities, and possesses, in addition, that infinite charm which only a good heart and an amiable character can bestow. Some of the letters of Cowper, to be sure, are likewise wonderfully pleasant, sensible, airy, humorous; but his cheerfulness is but an April sunshine in which we snatch a fearful joy, knowing that a cloud has gone before and a cloud is coming after.

Those letters of Addison which have been preserved, though few in number and for the most part written at an early period of his life, yet exhibit many evidences of that delightful humour, for the matured excellence of which we must look in the pages of the 'Spectator.' Here is one, a favourable specimen of the easy playful style of that admirable writer and sincere Christian.

'About three days ago Mr. Bocher put a very pretty snuff-box into my hand. I was not a little pleased to hear that it belonged to myself, and much more so when I found it was a present from a gentleman that I have so great an honour for. For my part, I can no more accept of a snuff-box without returning my acknowledgments, than I can take snuff without sneezing after it. This last, I must own to you, is so great an absurdity, that I should be ashamed to confess it were I not in hopes of correcting it very speedily. I am observed to have my box oftener in my hand than those who have been used to one these twenty years; for I can't forbear taking it out of my pocket whenever I think of Mr. Dashwood. You know Mr. Bayes recommends snuff as a great provocative of wit, but you may produce this letter as a standing evidence against him. I have since the beginning of it taken above a dozen pinches, and still find myself more inclined to sneeze than to jest. From whence I conclude that wit and tobacco are not inseparable, or, to make a pun of it, though a man be master of a snuff-box,

'Non cuicunque datum est habere Nasam.'

I should be afraid of being thought a pedant for my quotation, did I not know that the gentleman I am writing to always carries a Horace in his pocket.'

As a *bonne bouche* and wind-up of this very discursive paper, let me recommend my readers to peruse the following letter, written by a sailor to his brother. It is on business certainly, but in this case the business is so entirely subordinated to the personal anxiety of the writer that it becomes a perfect medium of characterizing *him* and delighting *us*. Remark too, that the severest training in logic could not have given him a greater tenacity in sticking to the point. I have preserved the original spelling; it is merely a roughness in the husk which does not affect the flavour of the kernel.

'Warren Hastings, East Indiaman, off Gravesend, 24 March.

'DEAR BRO' TOM,

'This cums hopein to find you

in good helth as it leaves me safe ankord here yesterday at 4 P.M. arter a plesent vyage tolerable short and few squalls. Dear Tom, hopes to find poor old father stout, am quite out of pigtail. Sights of pigtail at Gravesend but unfortinly not fit for a dog to chor. Dear Tom, captain's boy will bring you this and put pigtail in his pocket when bort. Best in London at the black boy 7 diles, where go, ax for best pigtail, pound a pigtail will do. And am short of shirts. Dear Tom, as for shirts onley took 2, whoreof 1 is quite wore out and tother most, but don't forget the pigtail as I arnt had nere a quid to chor never sins Thursday. Dear Tom as for the shirts your size will do only longer. I liks um long, got one at present, best at Tower hill and cheap, but be pertickler to go to 7 diles for the pigtail at the black boy and dear Tom ax for a pound of best pigtail and let it be good. Captains boy will put the pigtail in his pocket, *he likes pigtail so tie it up*. Dear Tom shall be up about Monday or thereabouts. Not so perticler for the shirts as the present can be washed, but dont forget the pigtail without fail, so am your lovein brother, 'JACK.

'P.S.—Dont forget the pigtail.'

## SOUVENIRS OF A MAN OF FASHION.

I AM not an old man. It is true my friends call me affectionately 'old fellow;' but they have done that any time these fifty years. It is true, also, that I fulfil one of Shakespeare's conditions of the sixth age—I wear glasses; but my niece, Matilda Fallecourt, has sported them since her twelfth year—so that proves nothing. Yet I must be pretty well advanced in life, for I seem to remember everything and everybody. Perhaps I am the Wandering Jew—possibly I am an illustration of the doctrine of metempsychosis—*quien sabe?* Anyhow, events and people for threescore years gone by live freshly in my memory.

Am I very wrong in calling myself a man of fashion? I grant that my ordinary costume is not scrupulously in accordance with the ultraism of the time, and that I have not retained the drawling affectation of delivery, and the repudiation of the letter 'r,' which characterize the modern Dundreary and was the attribute of the dandy of 1816. I do not think that I should part my hair in the centre of my forehead if I had any hair to part; and I am doubtful if long red whiskers or a beard would suit my physiognomy. Still, I venture to call myself a man of fashion of the Major Pendennis order. Two charming Countesses, a certain *spirituelle* Viscountess, who is at once an authoress (*sub rosa*), a musician, a painter, and a sculptor, and one of the proudest of England's marchionesses, send me cards to their *soirées*. I am a member of two first-class clubs, and the committee sometimes do me the honour to ask my advice respecting the arrangement of a *recherché* little banquet. Scarcely a month elapses in which I am not called upon to stand sponsor to some hopeful offspring of an upper-crust house, and I rarely miss the Opera. It is unnecessary to add that I pay my respects once a year at a royal levée. Am I or am I not 'a man of fashion?' Fifty years ago I dressed with scrupulous care. My creased Hessians (Hoby made them), my brass spurs and starched cravat, my blue frock coat delicately frogged (*confectionné par* Herr von Stultz), and my buckskin pantaloons would have compared favourably with Mr. Brummel's. Indeed I have been complimented more than once by that *arbiter elegantiarum* upon the success of my humble endeavours to do the correct thing. But I am proud to say I did not servilely

imitate the illustrious *chef* of the *beau monde*. You may adapt a man's principles to your own practice without becoming his *alter ego*. When the Four-in-Hand Club was started I had my team, and passed the Manchester 'Defiance,' on the race up hill to the Red Lion, Highgate. I once held the stakes for Tom Cribb, when pugilism was really 'the noble art.' Three times have I been judge at Newmarket, and, after the peace of 1814, I danced the first quadrille ever danced at Almack's with Lady Belle W—— for my partner. Have I not, I ask, a fair claim to be considered a man of fashion and a member of 'London Society?'

But why this preamble? To what does it tend? Simply this. Inasmuch as there are no books so sought after as memoirs, diaries, and correspondence; nothing so much relished as personal gossip, whether it comes in the form of Boswell, D'Arblay, Lumley, or Paul Bedford,—I have thought that my reminiscences of remarkable men and women would be acceptable. I have mingled with some of the most distinguished people; and were I of the same mind as Willis, the American, who visited, that he might abuse the rites of hospitality by 'taking notes' to 'prent them,' I might have offered a pile of curious MS. touching the sayings and doings of the *élite*. But I preserved nothing on paper—all that I can give will be fragmentary—mere *disjecta membra*, touching—whom shall I say? Byron, Heber, Mrs. Jordan, the Fitzclarences, Macaulay, Cotton, Mrs. Siddons, D'Orsay, Blessington, John Kemble, Bloomfield, Kean, Walter Scott, Peagreen Hayne, Fitzhardinge Berkeley, Romeo Coates, His Majesty George the Fourth, His Majesty King Louis Philippe, the Duke of Wellington, Fane, Sydney Beckwith, &c.

Loyalty commands that I should first make mention of my liege, George the Fourth. It was at the Prince Regent's table that I obtained my first lesson in economy. The talk was of the necessary income of a gentleman. Every man present, excepting the Duke of B—f—t, was deep in somebody's books. Not one had an income of more than 2,000*l.* a year, but lived at the rate of 15,000*l.* a year. Sir W. C——n, afterwards king's aide-de-camp, for fun's sake asked the royal host what *he* considered a fair annual stipend for a gentleman. His answer was princely—

'A man who cannot live with ease and comfort on 100,000*l.* a year ought to be ashamed of himself.'

Bloomfield lifted up his eyes and asked, as I have often thought since, in a covert satirical spirit and rather a dangerous tone, seeing how 'Wales, ring the bell,' had recently been rebuked—

'Will your Royal Highness be good enough to tell us how a man can possibly get through such an income?'

'My dear fellow,' rejoined the royal bird, 'nothing more easy' (he sipped his claret). 'In the first place, he must have his town house and his country house for the ordinary purposes of summer and winter existence. He hunts—with his own hounds, of course—no gentleman would follow another man's pack if he could afford to keep one himself. He must have his shooting-box in Norfolk; his villa and yacht at Cowes; his box at the Opera. He will of course' (here the Prince took a pinch of snuff) 'play a little, and, if he has a taste for horseflesh, he will train a colt or two. All these arrangements involve a large establishment of servants. Curse them! *they* are the caterpillars that devour a man's income. Then, there must be a good cellar at each temporary abode as well as in the regular dwellings. Once a year a trip to Paris, to see Talma and Mars, and a drop in at Frascati's, will be requisite. *Enfin*, what with new books, pictures, bijouterie, charitable subscriptions' (here again the Prince raised his glass to his lips), 'the education of children, the tailor and bootmaker, the stable, new carriages, gigs, tandems, and curricles, fresh horses, and madame's little outlay—the hundred thousand has melted away.'

We all sat still, amazed at the graceful fluency with which the

whole thing was summed up. M'Mahon who sat next to me, whispered—

'Man wants but little here below.'

'Just so,' said I, and from that moment I cogitated the possibility of living on 1,500*l.* a year without running into debt, and by Jove, sir, I have accomplished it!

How easy is the transition from a Prince to a Prince's favourite! I knew Mrs. Jordan the most charming *comédienne* our stage ever boasted. Nesbitt (Lady Boothby) came nearer to her in the ringing laugh than any other woman, but Mrs. Jordan's jollity and *espièglerie* were incomparable. She used to do the most daring things. I remember once being at Drury Lane when George III. went to the theatre in state. On either side of the royal box were two beefeaters as sentinels. One of them stood with his legs wide apart, as is the way with all very fat men. Mrs. Jordan played 'the Romp,' in 'Love in the City.' She had a doll in her hands, and wanting to be up to some other mischief, she was at a loss to know what to do with *la poupée*, so she popped it down between the yeoman's legs. The roar which followed induced the old king to look over the box, and when he saw the joke which the Thalia of the hour had perpetrated, he joined in the mirth of the audience. Her Majesty was shocked at the violation of etiquette, and looked, if possible, more starched than ever. She was a strange combination of goodness and severity—the very essence of propriety, and not wanting in the charities of life, but most exacting in relation to her suite. No one liked to win at whist better than Queen Ch——e did. My old friend, General W—lf—d, got his regiment through the adroit grace with which he managed to lose his money to the royal snufftaker.

Mrs. Jordan was the kindest of mothers. All her earnings were spent on those she loved. Her children—to their honour be it spoken—held her in affectionate remembrance. Not many years since I was hobbling down Pall Mall when I met Lord Frederick F——e. It was a day or two after the sale of the late Queen Dowager's property. We walked together to Marlborough House. His lordship wished to purchase a *souvenir* of the admirable wife of William IV. The lots had been cleared away and the house was nearly empty. As we came out we stopped in the porters' hall. There was a large clock face and some rubbish in a corner. 'Good heavens!' exclaimed Lord F——, 'John or James'—I forget the man's name—'are these sold?' 'No, my lord, no one would bid for them.' 'Then tell Mr. ——, (the auctioneer) to send them to my house. I'll buy them at any price.' Then turning to me he said, 'G——, those things were the property of my dear mother. That queer old wooden series of trays, (covered with ordinary wall papering) formed her plateau, and the ticking of the old clock is among my cherished memories. Poor dear mother!' And the tear dropped from his eye. Frederick Fitz——e was a good soldier. He it was, who, at fifteen years old, captured the Cato-street conspirators. The army owes to him the first impulse given to military education. I last saw him at Portsmouth when, as governor and commander of the district, he encouraged the Fusileers to study field fortification and reconnaissance. He has passed away, and so have all the boys of the family, Augustus, Adolphus, and the Earl. The latter was the first to go.

The reputed manner of the earl's death left on my mind grave doubts of the propriety of the very common verdict pronounced by coroners' inquests of 'Temporary Insanity.' I believe that it originated in the charitable conviction that no person in his or her right senses *would* violate the 'canon 'gainst self-slaughter,' to which was added an anxiety to spare the poor corpse the desecration of the stake and the four cross-roads. But surely it were better to treat the wretched remains of humanity after that or any other fashion than to transmit to the posterity of a suicide a sus-

picion that there is 'madness in the family?' I recollect a fine young fellow whose father, a captain in the Indian army, destroyed himself to avoid what, to his chivalrous mind, presented itself as a *probable* disgrace. The captain made all his arrangements beforehand—paid his debts (he had but few)—indited farewell letters to attached friends—made every requisite provision for the woman of his heart—wrote to the coroner to entreat that he would prevent the jury from returning a verdict of 'insanity'—changed his coat for a morning-gown—went into the bath-room that he might not soil the furniture of any other apartment (the gentlemanly principle strong to the last!)—and blew out his brains. But the jury—confound their dull perceptions!—only saw mental aberration in the system and prevision of the poor officer, and refused to find it a case of *felo de se*. What was the consequence? When my young friend indulged in any of the freaks common to youth, it was set down to eccentricity; and 'no wonder, for his poor father, &c.'—so said the charitable community. These things should make men ponder the propriety of seeking 'their own salvation,' as Shakespeare's gravedigger has it. Better bear any personal ills than bequeath to innocent children the dreadful inheritance decreed by crowners' quest law.

*Apropos* of coroners, I went one night to see an actor more celebrated for his *mises en scène* than his own personations play *Hamlet*, his best character. I met Wakley in the stalls. 'Holloa!' said I, 'what brings you here, old boy?' 'They are going to murder the "divine Williams,"' said the coroner, 'and I am here to preside at the inquest.' Not bad—for a coroner.

Mrs. Jordan once went into the country to play *Violante*, in 'The Wonder.' Edmund Kean was the *Don Felix*. He was then so poor, ragged, and dirty, and not over sober, that she insisted on leaving out all the passages which brought her into contact with the Don. Not many years afterwards Kean came to Drury Lane, and, when he had made his mark, Mrs. Jordan hastened to offer her apologies. I am not sure how he received them, but I know he was very grand when in his cups, or flushed with a new success. The first time I ever saw the mighty little man, whose genius saved Old Drury, was when he played *Richard the Third*, his second character. The house was crowded. Expectation was on tiptoe. The flats representing Crosby Hall closed upon the Temple Garden. A buzz and a murmur ran through the house. Kean came on rapidly, in something between an amble and a fast walk, rubbing his hands, his eyes glistening with joy. Then, in rapid tones, exultingly he began the famous soliloquy—

'Now is the winter of our discontent,' &c

Accustomed to hear Kemble and Cooke deliver that soliloquy in slow, measured tones, as Charles Kean and some others do now, I was a little taken back by the novel delivery, but I soon saw that it was the true interpretation of the author. Hazlitt, who went in with me, was delighted. 'See,' he exclaimed, 'how completely Kean has caught the idea! Gloucester has arrived from the country. He has just got rid of one obstacle to the possession of the crown;—he is come to get rid of another—he is full of ecstasy—yes, that's the right idea.' And we all see now that Hazlitt was right, and Edmund Kean was right, for every one who essays *Richard* (excepting Kean's son, who, I suppose, is afraid to be thought a copyist of his sire) plays the part in the same vehement and impassioned style. If they only had the genius of mighty Edmund as well as the faculty of imitation, how rich the stage would be!

I knew Byron very well; in fact, we were at Harrow together. I don't think I liked him. None of his schoolfellows liked him. Certain of his habits were offensive, and his manner was anything but genial. Kindly-judging contemporaries said that his mind ran upon great things, and that he felt a consciousness he was wasting upon

trivial topics the glorious faculties with which Nature had endowed him. Maybe; but if he thought of great things he often did very little things. When Forsyth and I were at the Gabinetta Segreta of the Borbonico Museum (Naples) some thirty years ago, F—— remarked that it was just the place that Byron would have delighted in. He did. I believe Lady Blessington ventured in there also. *Chacun à son goût*, but then she was a singularly strong-minded woman. Poor thing! what a wretched struggle she and D'Orsay had at Kensington Gore to support appearances! How much of wit and gaiety sparkled about their misery! Albert Smith, Charles Dickens—the gay and the grave—the flowers bedecking the skull! D'Orsay was very amusing, and very graceful in his drollery. His broken English seemed to impart a charm to his wit. I was accustomed to meet certain *divorcées* in his society—ladies with foreign titles and a pure English accent. Who were they? D'Orsay explained. 'When an Englishman separates from his wife through incompatibility of temper he is naturally anxious that the honoured name of Hogsflesh or Puddlekins shall not become a byword. He will not have people inquire, "Where is Monsieur? Who is Madame—maid, wife, or widow?" So he buys a small property in Italy or Germany, which carries a title with it; and thus Mistress Hogsflesh becomes La Contessa de Pulcinolle, and no questions are asked.' D'Orsay's taste was exquisite. He did not, like Brummel, assume a dictatorship in the world of fashion, but, nevertheless, he had countless imitators. His dominion was tacitly acknowledged in the manner most flattering to a man's vanity. The Iron Duke thought D'Orsay the finest gentleman in Europe, and was peculiarly pleased with D'Orsay's drawing of him in his evening dress. 'None but a gentleman artist,' said the Duke, 'can do justice to a gentleman. He carries the impress of his own mind into all his works.'

I had the honour of becoming personally acquainted with our immortal Wellington during the occupation of France by the allied troops. Inspired by the example of his Grace, the British officers studied to relieve the French of any sense of humiliation. There was, at first, unavoidably a little embarrassment on both sides when officers were quartered upon French families, but the *bienséances* and *politesses* of civilized life lubricated intercourse amazingly, and *les bêtes Anglais* soon became *les bons diables* in many a circle.

In long years after our evacuation of France the Duke of Wellington honoured me with an invitation to Apsley House, that I might see his pictures. Canova's figure of Napoleon holding Victory in his hand (which stood at the foot of the stairs) suggested to some one the sycophantic remark that Victory was out of place there. The Duke rebuked the offender against good taste. 'Bonaparte won more battles than either you or I, sir.' However earnest his Grace may have been in his denunciation of the wild ambition which kept Europe in a ferment, and deluged its fields with blood, he was annoyed when any reference was made to the hero of Lodi and Marengo in private society and in his presence. The late General Churchill, who was an aide-de-camp to his Grace, procured, on his way from India, a snuff-box made from the willow-tree which drooped over the ex-Emperor's tomb at St. Helena. He wished to present it to the Duke. The thing had to be very carefully managed. After dinner, the Duke liked a pinch of snuff. The Marchioness of Douro accordingly undertook to make this little *penchant* the medium of the offering. The box was placed before the old warrior. He was rather struck with it, and examined it with some care. 'Where did this come from?'—'Churchill, sir, has brought it from St. Helena. It is made from the wood of the willow——.' 'Oh!' interrupted the Duke; and he put the box aside. I had the anecdote from Churchill himself, who was slain at Maharajpore, in combat with a Mahratta.

Young Somerset, a beautiful fellow (son of the late Lord Raglan), rushed to the rescue. His left hand was severed from the arm, and dangled at his side. With his right he wrested the murderous sword from the Mahratta, and slew him. I think Lord Raglan had the incident perpetuated in gold. Cotterell modelled it for Garrard of the Haymarket.

To return to the Duke. I was rather surprised that there were no pictures in Apsley House illustrative of the great battles in the Peninsula—no Salamanca, no Vittoria, no Busaco. The 'Waterloo' of Sir W. Allen was purchased because it showed only the French side. The fact is, the Duke had a contempt for battle pictures. They could not be true, he said. A battle was all movement amidst smoke and carnage. As Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan has it, 'There's so much doing everywhere there's no knowing what's doing anywhere.' Military incidents, in general, were (his Grace affirmed) falsehoods on canvas. Barker's picture of the Duke and Blucher meeting at Waterloo was an absurdity. Maclise has come nearer the truth.—There was a painting and an engraving of Wellington showing the present Duchess over the field of Waterloo. He never did show her over the field. In the Gallery of Illustration ten years ago Lord Cardigan was shown leaping over a gun—a romantic drama in one scene. At the same place the Duke was represented contemplating the dead body of Craufurd after the taking of Ciudad Rodrigo. The Duke never saw the brave fellow after his death!

The Duke once told General Sebastiani and myself, at his own table in Paris, that the most anxious thought of his life was the retention of Hougomont at Waterloo. It was the key to his position. He sent Lord March (afterwards Duke of Richmond) continually to inquire if the Guards could hold it. Lord Saltoun, who commanded, at last got annoyed, and said, 'Don't be a d——d fool, March! Go back, and tell his Grace it's all right.' March went back, and, fired with admiration at the stubborness of the defence, reported, 'Your Grace needn't fear for Hougomont, for Saltoun is there!'

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## REFLECTIONS IN ROTTEN ROW;

OR,

### CALCULATION AT A CANTER.

IF Life were all Sunshine and Season,
If the world were all Ball-room and Row,
If mammas would but listen to reason,
And papas would not curious grow;
If one didn't get asked one's intention,—
How jolly for ever to go
With one—whom I don't choose to mention—
A-cantering down Rotten Row.

I like a nice girl just to talk to—
To ride with—to dance with—be near;
But, if one the altar must walk to
For that, why, the pleasure's too dear.
For, you know, since the 'Times' says no union
On three hundred a year's *comme il faut*,
One's restricted to friendly communion
While cantering down Rotten Row.

## A MAID OF ATHENS.

CROWNED with all thy country's splendour
And with all thy city's grace;
Draped with old heroic legend,
And far prestige of thy race;
Mightiest memories rush together,
Sweetest memories meet in thee—
Meteor fires of mythic story;
Mothers of the brave and free.

Lo! thy bloom of youth is reverend;
Lo! a glory round thee plays;
And thy night-black eyes are lustrous
With the light of fadeless days.
Heiress of historic beauty,
Shall we dare the spell to break;
And, though silence be thy tribute,
Lest we worship, shall we speak?

It were loss to think thee goddess:
Whether queenly bride of Jove;
Or lone Dian of the woodland,
Quenching all the darts of love.
Thine is nor the cup of Hebé,
Nor the zone of Venus fair;
Nor doth thine Athene's helmet
Crush thy raven wealth of hair.

Not a Muse art thou—the Muses
All express themselves in thee;
Nor a Grace; for then the Graces
Had been one alone—not three.
Not as Nereid nor as Dryad
Dost thou wood or ocean bless—
But as sweet full-blooded mortal,
Wearest well thy loveliness.

Such as thou when time was younger
Gave the edge to patriot blade,
And each youth in fight grew fiercer
That he fought for such a maid.
Names like thine went up with pæans
From the closing ranks of strife;
Every smile a warrior cherished
Cost a foeman's quivering life.

Rulers, from the cares of office
Solace sought from smiles like thine;
Sages, fresh from wordy conflict,
Learned a wisdom more divine.

'Twas for one like thee, Harmodius
  Pierced the heart of tyranny;
And when Pericles sobbed, tearless,
  'Twas for loss of one like thee.

Beauty of the land of beauty,
  Lo! we know thee who thou art;
Lo! we read it on thy forehead;
  In thy lips that fain would part;
In thine eyes thy name is fathomed,
  Eyes that all thy soul proclaim—
*Life* art thou to all thy lovers;
  *Zoé* is thy loveliest name.

If so fair be found in Athens,
  Shall there not be brave and true?
Shall the old grace still be youthful,
  And old freedom not be new?
Read such faces, sons of Hellas,
  They are books would doubly bless;
Love and self-control enforcing—
  Liberty and lawfulness.

A. H. G.

# HONOURS OF THE SHRIEVALTY.

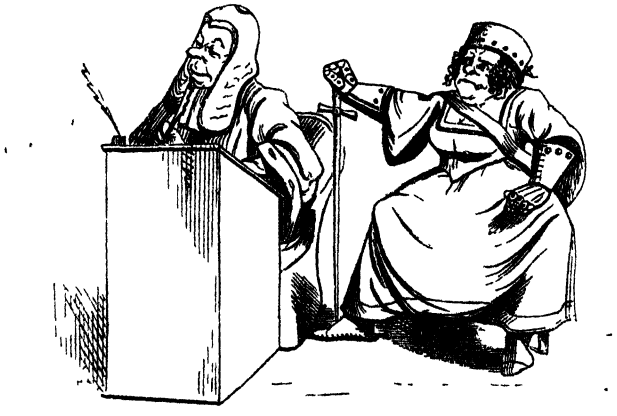
WHEN spring comes on, the swallows return, and her Majesty's representatives the Judges set off on their migrations; for it is a maxim of our old constitution that twice every year and at divers other times, if necessary, there shall be a general gaol-delivery, all inmates of prisons be released from suspense, and know their fate, and in some cases, suspended.

The duty of going on assize devolves on the judges of the Queen's Bench, Common Pleas, and the Barons of the Exchequer; the Equity Judges, the Chancellor and his Vice-Chancellors, with the Master of the Rolls are not required to go on circuit. In the present day communication with the assize towns is so easy, that a judge travels with little more pomp than an ordinary mortal; he is accompanied by his marshals, generally young gentlemen known in the clubs, and a footman who carries the wig and robes, without which wisdom is supposed to be wanting even to a judge. But when the train stops in the station of the county town, there is heard a peal of bells from church towers, flags wave on the summits of the ancient keep, once a royal residence, now a prison; the place looks more lively than usual, and on the platform stands a gentleman in uniform, cocked hat and sword, to receive and protect the persons of the judges as long as they remain in the county.

In former days this duty involved the high sheriff in more dangerous service than standing in a cold wind and thin clothing, waiting the judges' arrival; there were times when wild barons took execution upon the judge, if they had a spite against his liege, and unless effectually protected by the sheriffs, the judge shared the prison to which he had doomed the lord of the barony, and had for his food the parchment on which the said sentence was enrolled.

In all English counties the sheriff is appointed by the crown. It is an ambition with many country gentlemen to hold this office; there have been instances in the same feudal times of ladies discharging the duties of the shrievalty, and sitting belted and girt on the bench beside the judge; but now in these degenerate days, the honour is restricted to the male sex; and the unwilling squire who has been once nominated can only escape by payment of a fine.

Now when a gentleman is known to be the sheriff-elect, all the tradesmen of his neighbourhood are in a state of chronic excitement. Upholsterers, hatters, tailors, carriage-makers, saddlers, horse-jockeys, pos-



tilions, and all the tribe who furnish edibles and drinkables, send in their rose or mauve-coloured list of prices, with a special commendatory epistle to the sheriff. The sheriff, like a wise man, delegates many of these highly-important cares to his under-sheriff, a solicitor, who guarantees the expenses (if moderate) to be incurred, and takes his chance of remuneration and profit from fees.

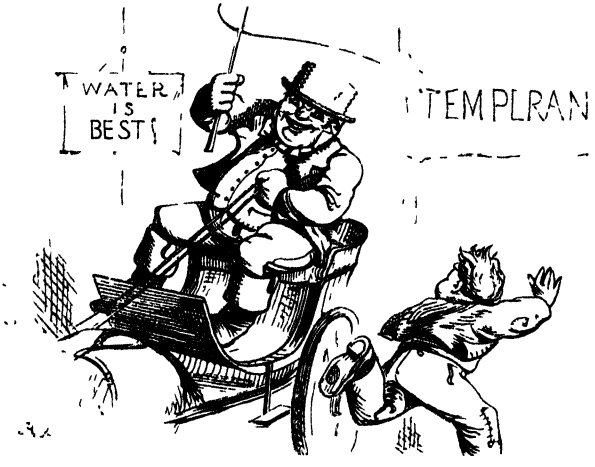
But there are many, many items of expense which the honour of the office alone must compensate. The park wall has to be rebuilt, the house new painted and papered, perhaps the drawing-room new furnished, the drives and walks got into faultless order, against the day which the sheriff from childhood has pictured as the most desirable, next to his wedding-day, of his life—the day of the sheriff's breakfast. What anxious forethought and going through, in anticipation, all the perplexities of that day, the hired waiters and extra servants to be drilled and kept sober amid the good cheer they help to dispense; the javelin-men to be reviewed in their new liveries; the young horses to be tried in the carriage; and, above all, the weather, if it should be a wet day, and a small gathering!

But at last the day arrives. It is a fine morning, rather cold and frosty — early March. By nine o'clock the park begins to swarm with visitors of the second and third classes—farmers and their wives and fine daughters, the latter generally accompanied with one or more admirers who sedulously choose and keep clear a space for their party to see the procession; then there are the labourers and the labourers' wives, and their children, and a host of idlers from the nearest towns, who have come over by a cheap train, and mean to enjoy the day, and if they have the opportunity, patronise the sheriff's good cheer. Good humour prevails with all; they joke, and chaff each other; the old trees ring with the noise, and high in the air wheel and caw the rooks, wondering at the unusual concourse, and proud of their own importance in having so many visitors.

Over the park-gate is a large arch of evergreens; two more down the road are decorated with flags adorned with the sheriff's coat of arms, or the words 'Welcome,' 'Live and let live.' Some present rather inappropriate mottoes for a sheriff's breakfast: 'Water is best,' 'Temperance,' 'Not too much;' which, however, were borrowed from the village teetotal society, and without these, the bare framework of the arches would be conspicuous.

'I say, governor,' says a little

ragged urchin, 'just you read that.' And the stout, portly, jolly red-nosed farmer, evidently no teetotaller, looks up, and the crowd rings with a rude laugh, as the farmer cracks his whip at the urchin, who levants among his fellows, and watches for another victim. About




eleven, another arrival; a large omnibus, inside and outside full; it is the celebrated brass band from Thunderam, playing as they go, the horses scared, plunging now and then, but the load they bear too heavy for such cantrips to do any damage; on the roof sit the drums, a big one and a small one: the players are a very fat man, full of importance, and a skinny youth, who manipulates his sticks to the admiration of the bystanders. The company won't be here for an hour, so the horses are unharnessed, and the music begins to pour its strain midway up the park, and little parties are formed on the sward for a dance. But signs of the day's grandeur are on the increase; the village schools, of which the sheriff and his lady are patrons, march up the broad drive, clean and neat, that is the girls, for the boys have, as was natural, discovered sources of dirt even on that fine morning: they file off into the coach-house, where buns and cakes are provided for them; and they are the first to feast on the Sheriff's Day.

Twelve o'clock; the tower bell strikes it slowly and deliberately, as if determined to be heard, amid all the rising uproar, and not to be hurried either: the large gates are now set wide open, and carriage No. 1 rolls in followed by others in rapid succession; and as the morning is fine, many visitors having paid their duty to the sheriff, come out and view the scene from the terrace.

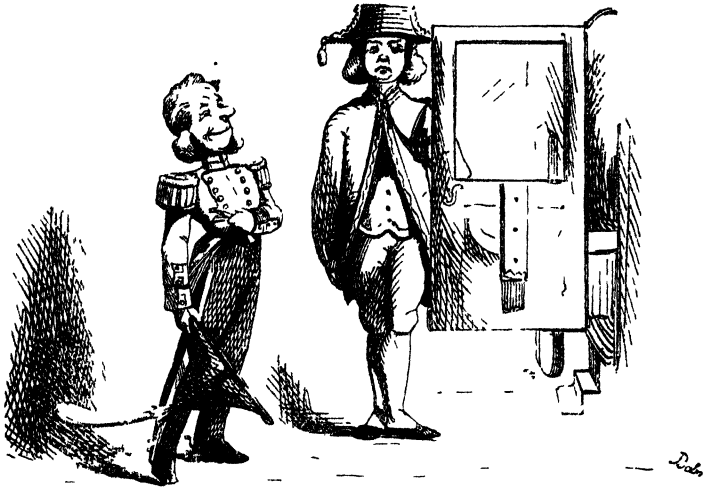
Enter the hall, and you find a throng of servants putting hats where they will never be found; a lady's maid on a message, of course, but stopping to have a look at the arrivals; the younger branches of the family peeping through the bannisters upon the hall, and making audible remarks on the peculiarities in dress and bearing of the visitors below, who all unconcerned, if not unwitting, follow the tall lacquey into the drawing-room, and well nigh startle, at the sonorous accents in which their name peals from his lips. The sheriff and his lady receive their guests, and are proud to hear each high and noble name come to do honour to their neighbour, the first commoner in the county, as the sheriff is.

High sheriffs and high sheriffs' guests eat as do other people, heartily; and quaff the champagne with

as much relish as if they tasted that beverage divine for the first instead of the ten-thousandth time; the scene of the dining-room is repeated in various parts of the house: in the housekeeper's room, in the butler's pantry, in the servants' hall, in the long gallery, in the billiard-room, and finally in the coach-houses, till each and all of the guests are satisfied. About half an hour before the procession sets out from the sheriff's gates, two trumpeters, clad in county liveries, make startling but not melodious noise; whereat the coachmen harness their horses, and a long line of carriages is formed; then the school children

range themselves in front of the hall entrance, ready for their performance. The sheriff now appears in costume, uniform coat (if he has a uniform), cocked-hat, and silver sword, gets into his carriage, the children begin to sing 'God bless the Prince of Wales, and the Queen, and the High Sheriff;' but their shrill notes are drowned in the loud

and hearty cheers which amply repay all the expense of the stamina which supplied the cheers. Next the chaplain in his robes, and the under-sheriff; then the bailiffs (the dread of debtors, yclept 'bums')



jump up behind, and off go the four horses and the bran-new carriage, had from town and painted specially for the sheriff's use; then comes the sheriff's lady with four horses, and then other carriages in order, most with pair horses, some few with four, and then, a long line of one-horsed chaises, drays, and pony-carriages, shandries, and spring-carts; but as they roll away from the house, a long line of horsemen form themselves at the head of the procession; young yeomen and tenants and others, who have come to display their horses and horsemanship, and flaunt their ribbons before the fair eyes that scan so closely.

With a few casualties, such as a kicking horse hindering the procession, or an unsteady rider tumbling off his steed, the procession winds along at a moderate pace, till the county-town is well-nigh reached; it then receives another addition in the body of javelin-men or lancers, who are oftentimes old soldiers hired for the occasion, dressed in the sheriff's liveries, and carrying antique halberds or javelins, on each of which glitters the sheriff's crest. This imposing body-guard falls in next the sheriff's carriage, and with prancing steeds, pealing bells, admiring crowds, winding through as much of the town as possible, the procession reaches the railway station; the judges are there received, taken to church, then to dinner, and so to their lodgings.

For the first day or two of the assizes, the sheriff is in his glory; every one looks at him; he is accompanied by a bevy of fair friends, for whom he finds chairs and the best position for hearing in the court; when he comes forth, all hie and make way, and his appearance even in the streets gathers a knot of gazers. But after a day or two (if the assizes go on), the sheriff is dreadfully bored: when the grand jury has been dismissed, and the grand dinners are over, and the monotony of regular work begins, there is no more unhappy being than the gentleman who guards the judges. He oscillates between the courts, finding little amusement in either. There sit the judges, grave, industrious, attentive, from the first hour of assize to its last; making notes as voluminous as the rejected contributions to a popular monthly; there lounge the barristers, some of

the unemployed talent of the land, making audible remarks, 'cute and cutting, on the style of Serjeant Frithem's cross-examination; others reading a novel, or sketching court and jury. The Clerk of the Crown —he is an old hand—takes no interest in trials: he busies himself with the 'Times' till the moment comes to ask the jury, 'How say you, gentlemen: is the prisoner guilty or not guilty?' The attorneys interested in the case before the court, or afraid theirs will come on unexpectedly, ostentatiously screw up little paper missives, and hand them on long white wands to counsel. And the jury sit, thoroughly tired of **the thing**—have made up *their* **minds** long since. Javelin-men in full glory look fiercely about the court, weapon in hand, and now and then cry out 'Silence!' in stentorian and prolonged notes, when not a breath of disturbance breaks the monotonous decorum.

The criminal cases are many but trifling. A truculent-looking rascal is indicted for snaring a hare, and when 'remonstrated' with by the keeper, battering said keeper's head, 'just to see if he had any brains.' Then there are interminable special-jury cases, and patent suits, and motions for injunctions; amid which it is a relief to find a breach of promise case uncompromised. All the vile verse and tender effusions of 'Vilham' and 'Mariar' are ruthlessly laughed at by an unsympathetic audience. Suits for assaults and battery in 'Nisi Prius' are not bad. An old gentleman stout and rotund, has been violently shaken by a little, thin, spare defendant. Old gentleman in the witness-box gives evidence indignantly: 'He seized *me* by the throat and shook me, and—and—damaged my black waistcoat, by tearing a button and a buttonhole away.'

This was the amount of the assault, for which the old gentleman's butler and footman seized the slim defendant, summoned the parish constable, and locked up the criminal in a cellar. The defendant pleads provocation for tearing the old gentleman's button-holes: old gentleman forbade his following Miss Mary; pleads the treatment inflicted, more suitable for a lunatic than a gentleman:—they searched his person, and finding no offensive weapon, deprived him (or 'took charge,' Bumble termed it) of his watch and watch-chain, for fear that when his excitement cooled, in remorse for laying hands on old gentleman, he should lay hands on himself, and be found hanging in the cellar by his watch-chain.

The sheriff comes to know the frequenters of both courts, down to the three grim old ladies who regularly sit near the judge from morn to eve, as if convinced justice *could* not be fairly doled out to her Majesty's liegos unless their vigilant eyes were ever on its administration.

But as soon as the criminal cases, involving capital punishment are over, the sheriff, if the judge is indulgent, may go; and he is as happy in his release as he was proud in contemplation of his 'entry.'

There are yet some drawbacks: the carriage and horses and men must remain exposed to spring wind and rain or autumn sun, so long as the judges remain. But the sheriff is not (as people suppose) amenable for a prisoner's escape, nor must he with his own hands hang a criminal, if the hangman refuses the office. The shrievalty has its pleasures and its pains. There will be yet another sheriff's breakfast, but its glory will be dim in comparison with the first. There will be fewer people; the gloss will be worn off the liveries, off the carriages, off the sheriff's own anticipations; he will with infinite satisfaction at the year's end, arrange the tarnished javelins in his hall, there to remain a memorial to posterity that the shrievalty honoured the ancient domain once more in the time of Ralph Eubray, of Eubray Hall, Esquire.

## A BACHELOR ON BACHELORHOOD.

A LIFE of celibacy is to a man far from being an unmitigated misfortune. It is, no doubt, on almost all the points in which it can be contrasted with wedded life, inferior to it; that is to say, it is less happy, less natural, and less conducive to the general and particular welfare. It more rarely calls upon the gentler, and perhaps diviner chords in a man's heart, and it certainly has a tendency to draw a man within the narrow folds of his own interest, rather than to make him enlarge the measure of his affection, so as to embrace the soft, sweet claims which are called out by the birth of children; 'he is good to make a severe inquisitor,' Lord Bacon says, 'because his tenderness is not so oft called upon;' and this indeed is true, but only in part. If a man have passed through many years of bachelorhood without experiencing some strong and lasting hold upon his affections, he will probably narrow the sphere in which his sympathies can play, and look at events from the side of justice rather than of feeling. He will cease to be, if he ever was one, a genial companion; he will be more and more unwilling, as time runs on, to make allowance for the frailties and shortcomings of poor human nature, and he will be apt to hate even himself, because he is clothed in that very humanity, which, regarded from his point of view, is so erring and so emotional. Walking about with his human nature pinned on to him, and eager to make it be believed that it is no part of himself, but only an accident as fortuitous as his being born in England instead of in Poland, he is ever protesting against himself and against all his Christian brethren; he is always looking at the world through a yellow glass, and passing atrabilious opinions upon the world's doings. His sentences will be perhaps strictly just, but untempered by the sweet quality of mercy, without which he himself cannot see salvation. He will suspect an act of kindness done to him as being the prelude to the asking of a favour, and where a good and a doubtful motive may be assigned to an action, the tone of his mind will lead him to select the doubtful as the true one. He becomes a weariness to himself, and an object of dread to others. He grows into a cynical, selfish man, an outcast from the communion of kindly spirits; he subsides into himself, and holds the existence of all, save the few whom he hires to minister to his wants, as an impertinence. Yet his opinion upon an abstract proposition will be accurate and fair; he will have no sympathy for either side to overcome; he will treat the facts before him as so many figures in an equation, and he will eliminate them one after the other, until he discusses the unknown quantity. If a poacher be brought before him, he will examine most thoroughly into the case, and should the weight of evidence be against the prisoner, he will mete to him the full measure of punishment the law awards, not allowing the fact that at the time of the offence being committed, the delinquent's family was starving, and that the deed was done in order to relieve a delicate wife from sufferings arising from hunger, which there were no other immediate means of allaying. The circumstance that it was a first trespass might weigh with the severe inquisitor, so much as to induce him to give a milder sentence than if against an old offender; but he would do so from a sense, that the justice of the case required it, not from a feeling that the man's circumstances were worthy of pity. These are a useful sort of men, handy at times of general excitement, able to stand between emotion and emotion, and also to stem the tide of feeling from overrunning the bounds which the lessons of experience have taught men to set to it. They do their work, and generally do it well; and the fact that from some cause or another, they are unable to sympathize in griefs or joys, ought not to shut

them out from the haven of human kindness. On the contrary, they are highly deserving of much humouring, and of being receivers of much forbearance. They are greatly to be pitied, for the very reason that they themselves cannot pity. Perhaps in the most marked specimen of this class, the sense of kindliness is not utterly dead; but if not, it takes some rather grotesque form—such as bestowing much attention on the comforts of a cat, while neglecting those of human beings to whom the cat is a source of reasonable alarm. It flies from the knowledge it has of the nature and quality of the highest creature, to seek the knowledge it has not and can never have, of one of a lower order. And so it smoulders, if it does not become extinct.

But while this may be true of some unwedded men, Lord Bacon's saying is, as I have written, only true in part. All unmarried men are not unfeeling men—are not the heartless, cold-blooded, 'severe inquisitors' he would make them out to be. Some are unmarried for the very reason that they are gifted with an excess of feeling over judgment; they have bound up their marital affection into one single bundle, and tied it with a knot which only one can loosen; and though circumstances, either of death or of position in life, may conspire to prevent that one untying the knot, yet the bundle must remain for ever as it was. Let Dr. Slop curse never so orthodoxly, let him hack his thumb never so much in cutting at the knot, neither he, nor Obadiah, nor all the doctors of the Sorbonne, shall avail to untie it. Fast it remains and will remain, because the owner cannot bear the idea of any but the one he appointed claiming the bundle. His love is not dead nor sleeping; it is simply passive, waiting quietly and patiently for the coming of its mate, and content to wait for her so long as earthly life shall last, or looking for the fulfilment in Eternity of that which was denied to it in Time.

In such a man, love for his fellows is far from extinct; it is perhaps intensified and enlarged by the force of his position, and his friends at large gain by the abstraction, or concretion, of this one element of marital love from him or in him. But of this more presently.

The case of such a man is widely different from that of the man first mentioned. Instead of cramping or stifling the efforts of his affection, he has given them full play, so far as he was able to feed them; he has learned to sound all the depths and shoals of love, and could he but speak his knowledge, would be an excellent pilot through the dangerous navigation which often intervenes in the voyage to matrimony. He would be able to exhort Strephon, whose long engagement, long frowned upon, has well-nigh tired him out, not to be weary in well doing, not to throw up his right to worship at the altar of pure, untainted love, by allowing himself to be borne away, for want of heart, by the tide of devotees who crowd to the service of Venus Anadyomene. When Strephon sighs because of matter-of-fact guardians, who refuse to let their ward be dependent on his scant means for a dinner; when their manner has vexed him through its harshness, and he is yet obliged in his heart of hearts to recognize the reasonableness of their objection; then when his spirit is faint, and the tempter is powerful, and whispers to him that 'all is vanity and vexation of spirit,' in the sense exactly opposite to that in which the wise king wrote the words, such a man as I have mentioned may throw a shield over Strephon, and read to him out of the book of his own experience, that it is not only much nobler, but more solidly satisfactory—

> 'To love one maiden only, cleave to her
> And worship her by years of noble deeds
> Until (he) win her,'

than to know to the uttermost 'madness and folly;' that all is *not* vanity—that continuance in doing right is not, and that there is more true pleasure in hoping for the realization of his ideal, than there is gratification in discovering how bald and barren a thing it is which

the world in general calls enjoyment.

But there is another feature about the feeling, unwedded man, which is a source of great gain to his friends, and one of high gratification to himself. It seems that as a man grows older without having any one on whom to bestow a monopoly of his affection, he becomes less and less capable of granting a monopoly of it at all. His love, which at one time he could have concentrated and given the largest share to whom he had chosen, is found by degrees to be extended over too wide a surface to allow of its being called in for the use of any one. Bit by bit the many have got possession of that which one might have fed upon. They have won by prescription a common of pasture in the affections of their friend, which they are noways disposed to yield up; and he has got to take so much delight in seeing them avail themselves of their privilege, that he would positively suffer loss by recovering possession. All have a hold upon him too large to be consistent with the hold a family must have, and too small not to admit of being easily given to another tenant, when death shall have removed the former. His love has become a love catholic, diffusing itself through many channels, and has a kindred quality with mercy, in that it blesseth giver and receiver. It cannot be collected and packed up again, and presented to any one person whatever. And this being so, the tenants in common receive a large benefit which they could not have from any married man. Is a widow anxious what best to do for the welfare of her boy in matters educational? This unattached friend is ready to serve her; he knows, or can get to know, the most accurate information about likely schools, can busy himself in making the arrangements which she would, through lack of knowledge, bungle in making, and he can, by taking an active personal interest in the lad's progress towards manhood, give him more real help in running the race set before him, than the boy's father could perhaps have given; for he can speak as an elder, and influence as a friend, without being clogged with that weapon of authority which so often makes paternal counsel unpalatable. And this he will do. Is a father at variance with his son? Who so able to set them at one again as this unattached friend? He can appeal to the father as to an equal, and counsel a course of action which heat and passion would prevent him from using, but at the suggestion of a mediator. To the son he can point out the disadvantages of his position in the eyes of all beholders, and by personal interference, without meddling, can find means for restoring the abruptest relations.

He is the warm friend of old maids; transacts their business for them at any amount of inconvenience to himself, and is never so happy as when busied about affairs which are helpful to the helpless. Having no children of his own, he adopts all children, and knows a joy peculiar to himself, when he sees at a feast in his own chambers a number of them about him. He enters into their excitements and their mirth.

> 'His jest among his friends is free,
> He takes the children on his knee,
> And winds their curls about his hand.'

He is more pleased than he can say to watch their gambols, and he has no instinctive promptings which fathers and mothers have to regard their own offspring with kindlier feelings than the rest. To him they are all equal in their claims upon his love; he makes no difference with them, unless it be to check an unruly child from being rude or selfish in its conduct towards the others, and in doing that he will manage to awaken the child's own sense of what is right, rather than issue a decree telling him that he is wrong.

He is in many ways useful as well as humanizing. Deprived of what he is told is highest bliss, he drinks freely of the many pleasant waters which are sent to him instead of it, and which he could not have while retaining the other. He gets to live out of himself, and he reaps the unselfish man's reward.

I have said that the hold which his friends have on him is too large to be consistent with the claims of a family, but light enough to admit of an easy change of tenants—and herein is his trouble. When the children have all gone home to bed, and are dreaming of what he has done to amuse them; when the widow is thinking how kind it was in Mr. —— to take so much trouble about her son; when Sir Anthony Absolute has, through his mediation, revoked the curse he denounced on his own soul if he ever called his son 'Jack' any more; when the disciple of Rochefoucauld is lost in wonder why —— takes so much disinterested interest in other folks' affairs; when ——'s oak is sported for the night, and —— has wished the world sweet repose; when —— finds himself alone, with no one to halve his griefs, and to double his joys, then comes the pinch. He stirs the fire, draws his chair in front of it, and wrapped in his dressing-gown, tries to fancy he is exceedingly comfortable. But he is not; he cannot be a hypocrite to himself; his thoughts run back along the groove in which they have so many times slided, and the finger of memory points as obstinately as a sign-post to bygone years, in which he measured his notions of happiness by a far different standard than he is now obliged to do. He rakes about till he finds the bundle which contains his buried love, and he rattles the bones of his skeleton with greater affection than ever Queen Joanna embraced the unhearsed body of her husband. He re-reads the words printed indelibly years ago within the book of his brain; all the waters of Marah, of which he has drank freely since then, cannot blot them out; and though she who uttered them be beyond the sound of his voice, either in the land of spirits or in the ranks of the world's society,—he is of stouter make than to wish them not there, of too chivalrous a spirit to shrink from being bound by them.

He thinks of those whom he makes glad, and feels that he could have made one happier than he can gladden all of them together. He sees that he would have had that *consortium vitæ* which cannot be split up into parts; that instead of one abiding love he has a number of fleeting kindlinesses given to him. He strikes the balance between that he hath and that he hath not, and finds the latter kick the beam.

Yet he does not despond. He traces the source of many blessings, the springs of many courses of action, to the withholding of that he desired so greatly. The discipline which has trained his mind, the principle on which his life has been guided, and the spirit which has led to the diffusion, not the dissipation of his love. He can trace to his so-called disappointment

> 'The shade by which his life was crossed,
> Has made him kindly with his kind.'

It has also made him divinely wiser. He now sees wherein lay the mercy of the life-long trial. He was one on whom the treasures of God had been poured out bountifully, and one on whom weariness was more likely to toss, than goodness to lead, to his Maker's breast.

> 'He was a strong man mail-clad, one whose part
> From childhood upwards it had been to bear;
> But the great God—Great God, how good thou art!—
> Knew where the weak spot was, and smote him there.'

The old bachelor, then, has, in some respects, an advantage over a married man. He can go about doing good instead of confining his sympathies to a narrow though beloved sphere. He can do services for those who need them more effectually and more conveniently than his wedded friend, and he can win the love of many grateful hearts, who regard him as an unimpassioned though genial man, faithful to them as he was faithful to his lost love. But he is liable to many more slips than the married. As his ambition is a wide one, so have those within it a looser grasp upon him than children have; they cannot drill him in the discipline children exact. He is exposed to temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil, which a married man is rarely assailed by, and he requires to ride his will, inclination, and temperament on a strong curb, which would

be unnecessary and galling upon a man who has no daily struggle to maintain with them. He lacks the ever-present sympathy in joy or pain, in weal or woe, which a tender wife can always afford. He is in danger of thinking too highly of himself, and of falling into selfishness and conceit, for he wants the divinely-appointed means of drawing the man out of a Narcissus-like regard for himself, and out of the slough of self, which constant isolation is so apt to engender. He cannot look for the comfort which children yield to old age, and must rest content to let strangers attend him in his sicknesses, and to let paid hands do the death-bed offices for him. He may have benefited thousands and gained their regard, have well served the state and won the esteem of his countrymen; he may have roamed the whole world, and acquainted himself with sciences which demanded an undistracted life to study them; but when the energy which prompted him to these has abated, and he finds the pulsations of life less strong in him, as he walks down the vale of years, when he is preparing for the wintry time of old age, he will miss more and more keenly the compensating attentions of a family. All the regard, esteem, world-knowledge, and science he has amassed are not then so valuable as the hand and voice of a beloved wife, or the dear devotion of affectionate children.

Thus much concerning celibacy for a man, let us now consider a little how it beseems a woman.

Whether celibacy is or is not an advantage to women depends, I think, very much on their social position in life. To a woman of the class from which domestic servants are taken, it is certainly an open question which admits of much being said upon it, whether, if she take service, she had not better remain single, that is, whether the supposed natural institution of marriage being put out of consideration, she would not lead a happier and more comfortable life than she would if married. Taken as a body, I suppose this class of women are never without some one or more admirers, or, as they are technically called, 'followers.' And no wonder; for besides that by living in contact with better-mannered people and more refined than their own class, they have generally got a polish which adds to their charms in the sight of their followers, for they have frequently managed to husband their incomes, which are not drawn upon necessarily for more than clothing, so as to be possessors of what to them and said followers has the appearance of wealth.

To the policeman with eighteen shillings a week and his living and clothing to provide for, the trim natty housemaid, with her decent manners and a few pounds in her pocket, is a very desirable prize. Policeman thinks how well she would look superintending the affairs of his small household, and how handy her little store of savings would be in setting said household on a respectable footing. He takes his opportunity, or makes it, of saying something civil to the girl, attacks her weak side by praising her finery and the person it is supposed to adorn; tells her stories more or less veracious, tending to exalt in her mind's eye the dignity of 'the force'; and if he be a policeman of only common 'nous,' he will be admitted on the roll of the housemaid's wooers. The courting goes on over area railings or at side gates, or, if the family are away from home, in the kitchen, until some cause of disagreement arises between mistress and maid, or, from some cause or other, one of the two commits the act which always seems to me to 'roar so loud and thunder i' the index' of terrible things to come; in other words, 'gives warning;' and then, unless a more eligible party appear in the shape of a small tradesman actually established in business, the girl quits the well-warmed, well-found house, where she has been part of the family—cared for in sickness and in health, and treated as she never will be treated again—for the ill-conditioned place where her husband has fixed his abode, there to assume, as he told her, the direction of his affairs, which, in plain English, means to be

a servant of servants, the unceasing drudge of a rough, hard man, the ill-tended mother of a litter of sickly children, and often the literally browbeaten wife of a coarse and drunken vagabond.

Now I don't mean to say that policemen are always of this stamp, far from it; I think them to be perhaps the most well-ordered men of any their class produces; and I am quite ready to believe that they may make their wives as comfortable and happy as it is in their power to do; but I am morally certain that power does not extend to making them so really well off as they were while they were in service. Of course I shall be told that it is a natural and right state of things to be married; that people of this class have as strong loves and affections as those in the grades above them; and that marriage is as laudable a thing in them as in any other people whatever. It may be so; but, whether or not, I have no mind to dispute it. All I wish to show is, that in many cases domestic servants who are comfortably off and well to do while acting through their own exertions, become miserable, hard-toiling drabs by changing a life of singleness for one of double blessedness. What has the trusted nurse, who has been in the family for years, who has earned the confidence of her mistress and the respect of her master, to say nothing of the love of the youngsters she has looked after, gained by throwing up her situation as nurse to other people's children for the sake of taking one as nurse to the children of a journeyman painter?

She may have gained fresh scope for the exercise of her instinctive feelings of attachment; she may have acquired a new field or the cultivation of self-denial and painful forbearance; but it is ten to one against her being a candidate for the Dunmow flitch at the end of the first year, and she will often think with regret of her lost comfortable home as she lies awake o' nights expecting the painter's return from his alehouse club, or hesitating whether to go forth and seek him among companions whom he finds more attractive than his family, and who have the power and the will to do him much harm, though neither power nor will to do him any good. Again I say, in anticipation of censure, that all journeymen painters do not, as this one I have written about may do; that the great body of mechanics are every way respectable men, and treat their wives accordingly; also I admit that my crooked ideas do not find an echo in the hearts of British nurses and housemaids; that it is also well for British artisans that they do not; but I am still inclined to maintain the position taken up at the beginning, that women of the class from whence domestic servants come, in quitting the service in which they are engaged in order to become the wives of the persons who often pick them up, do so, as regards their own personal advantage, for the worse, and not for the better.

The women in the class which employs domestic servants, but is not in the rank of the titled or landed aristocracy—the middle class—are not, to my thinking, generally so well off as their inferiors if they remain unmarried all their lives. Frequently it happens that the income of the family of which they are members is only equal to the expenditure which the head of it chooses to allow. There is but scant provision made against the possibility of a rainy day. It is but a slender partition which divides them from sufficiency without luxury on the one side, and distressful want on the other. The father hopes to make some lucky hit in his business which shall place his family beyond the reach of money troubles. He may make the hit, and so justify his expectations by success; but it is quite as likely he may miss his stroke, and bring ruin clattering about his own and his children's heads before they have shook off the lofty notion in which he has educated them. I say lofty notions, because this class of women is educated to a pitch that one cannot help thinking must often prove a source of sorrow rather than of satisfaction to them. They are taught and

trained with the avowed intention of making them equal in mental accomplishments with those in a social rank high above. By a very easy process of reasoning they get to see no reason why they should not gain admittance into that higher rank in consequence of this equality, if it in fact exist. They bear the port and carriage of their superiors, and while they can do so, require to be, and are, taken for ladies. This being so, they sometimes 'achieve greatness' exceeding even their most ardent longings; more frequently they marry in the same class to which they themselves belong. Sometimes they are enabled to live singly and independently as members of it, and sometimes they are thrown as incumbrances on the same, destitute of means to maintain the position in which their parents' vanity or ambition placed them. It not unfrequently happens that they are turned absolutely destitute upon the mercy of the world, with nothing but their 'accomplishments' to trust to for a living. They have not usually been taught any serviceable thing the knowledge of which will enable them to coin money out of it. They can 'play' and sing tolerably, use scraps of French spoken at Stratford-atte-Bowe, write their names in German characters, and translate the title of an Italian song. They have crude notions about the art of housekeeping, and have an indistinct idea that dressmaking is done by machinery, of which the lean creatures to whom they give their orders are the drivers. They are expert at working chair-backs, and excel in the production of embroidered slippers. They are very pundits in the laws of etiquette, and know precisely what to augur from the fact that Mr. A. has danced twice in the same two hours with Miss B. They know a great deal about the little nothings which go to make up much that is agreeable in society, and they are, for the most part, harmless and often very entertaining.

But should misfortune overtake their family, they are at once in an awkward and peculiarly painful position. They cannot dig; and at first—though they afterwards become bolder through necessity—they are ashamed to beg. They are thrown upon their own resources, and, poor maidens! they then too frequently find how narrow these are. With all the will and the pluck to help themselves, they find they are unable to do it. In their easy days they had had governesses to instruct them; why may they not turn governesses in their turn, and so gain an honest livelihood in an independent way? Of course they can teach—in the same way that every needy man, with ordinary brains, can write matter which all the magazines will catch at. Let them try. Suppose the difficulties precedent to getting a situation got over; the young lady, brimful of zeal, and overflowing with earnestness and high purpose, installed in office and seated at her task for the first time. How often does she find in the first half-hour, that she has undertaken something she is utterly incapable of performing. Although she may have worked her subject up, and although she may have a fair general knowledge of many things, she will find she lacks that thorough knowledge of any one, without which she cannot teach even the alphabet. Now, for the first time, she is required to speak in precise terms and clear language, so as to convey to her pupils the fact or idea she wishes them to learn. She has to answer the why and wherefore of things which before she took for granted, and to explain the meaning of phrases and words which hitherto she had 'trundled smoothly o'er her tongue, like mere abstractions.' She hesitates about the pronunciation of a word which she used to give the go-by, but now has to face and say out; and she finds—no fault of hers—that she has no standard by which to measure, no absolute knowledge on which to fall back. She has small, if any experience in the management of children—perhaps she may have had at one time a Sunday-school class under her charge, and she finds herself ignorant of how she should conduct herself towards her pupils, especially when the awe

which newness of acquaintance inspires in children has worn off, and she comes to meet and mould the natural dispositions of several proficients in worrying. It is ten to one she slaps one of them, and loses all chance she might have had of conquering their peculiarities. She is sadly out of her element. She can play brilliantly on the pianoforte; can delight you with sonatas, fugues, and all kinds of music; but so long a time has elapsed since she learned how she did it, that she is at a loss how to climb the first ladder again, and teach the young idea how to tumble over the keys. In short, to sum up the facts connected with her position, she finds herself unable, on the spur of the moment, to do that efficiently which in the other sex it requires long and careful training to do even moderately well; and the chances are, unless she be a woman of uncommon energy and perseverance, that in a short time she will have to try her luck elsewhere, with her self-confidence pitiably damaged, and with no other motive than necessity to spur her on to action.

Some women there are—but they are of a rare order—who could adapt themselves admirably to such circumstances as I have described, and discharge their duty honourably and well; but then they must have a certain natural predilection for the work, as well as the gifts to enable them to perform it: and in this case it is possible, for they are really happier in their altered position in life than they were when compelled to inactivity by the regulations of society. To these ladies it is a more pleasing task to 'rear the tender thought, and teach the young idea how to shoot,' than it would be to 'suckle fools and chronicle small beer,' for they are apt to take Iago's view of the functions of their married sisters. To such their loss is gain; but, as I have said, they are exceptions to the general run of their sex.

Teaching seems to be the one single office which distressed young ladyism can embrace. Some, if elderly, will look out for a companion's place, and consent to endure indefinitely, as the price of their bread, the whims and caprices of some one in whom they can have but a hired interest, and into whose imaginary woes they cannot by any possibility enter heartily. Other means of gaining a living there seem to be none. Several which might be open to them, had they the knowledge to adopt them, are closed by this want and by the veto of a foolish pride. Manual labour, far from menial, they could get in plenty in England and the colonies; but not only is it beneath their notice, while employments which will satisfy their notions of dignity are open to them, but they have so long been used to look down upon such occupations, that they would find them as hard for their pride to stomach as they found teaching children was beyond their ingenuity. Instead of getting their own living, it more generally happens with ladies of this class that they become dependent on their relations and friends, and eat the bread of charity falsely so called. In these cases it is a real misfortune for them that they are not married—the more so that, in nineteen cases out of twenty, they would have been so had not adversity overtaken their family; and she who is now a disappointed, spirit-crushed maiden, eking out a subsistence with groanings which cannot be uttered, would have been converted into a substantial middle-class matron, and have become a joyful mother of children.

So much for the distressed. Let us examine a little into the condition of the fairly-off in this world's goods, and see how they are affected by celibacy. In families where there are several daughters, it seldom happens that all are married. Illness, disappointment which cannot be remedied, absence of desire, or lack of opportunity—some cause or other has prevented their marriage, and they look forward with resignation, satisfaction, or the contrary of these, to spending an unwedded life. In some cases, especially if the circumstances be sufficiently affluent to allow of travel and change, and of the exercise of benevolence, this may be a very pleasurable prospect. Opportunities

are afforded of seeing the world, and of mixing with the people in it, which few married women enjoy. The qualities of kindness and benevolence have a scope for exercise second only to that afforded by a family, and occasion is given for the display of feminine kindness which could only be made by women in a single state. What stimulus can be given to good works by the personal attention of educated women to them! What life can be infused into the operations of charitable societies, when the unmonopolized affections of good women come to their aid! How can the work of civilization and religion be pushed briskly forward, when free lady-labour, with wealth to back it, can be bestowed upon it! What health to the many institutions for improving bodies and souls which exist in this land, when the sympathies of helpful women, unclaimed elsewhere, can be poured into them! Surely there is much room for such to be going about doing good!

Then at home, or rather within the circle of their own kindred, they can be of most valuable assistance. The elders may instruct, or cause to be instructed, the younger; they may supply, at needful times, some pressing want; they may occupy themselves, with propriety, about the relief of the poorer members; and in many ways, too numerous to specify, contribute to the general happiness, and win for themselves a large measure of esteem. Like their twin type, the confirmed bachelor, they may at times regret the absence of closer social ties, and in the hour of sickness may feel the want of the comforting society of their own children—nay, I doubt they ever forget, if they are true women, the desire they once had to cast in their lot with a rougher nature, and the manner in which they once looked forward to a happy married life. The instincts of women are usually so much more domestic than men's, that it follows they must suffer more by the withholding of those objects whereon to exercise them, and makes them feel more acutely than men the sense of desolation which comes upon them when they are quite alone. Some sisters there are who have been as mothers to their younger sisters—watched them grow up, and hung over them from infancy, almost supplying the place in which death made so great a gap. These have the secret joys which mothers feel when they see the young shoots growing up into healthy plants; and love to pilot them through the dangers and trials themselves have proved, and which their charges must inevitably go through. But when these have flitted, one by one, to form homes of their own, and to come again at long intervals—the same, yet altered; when the sister-mother finds her dear nestlings flown, and that she has now to look after a completely new charge—herself; when the evening of life is setting in, and her hold upon the world grows smaller and less, she cannot but feel, mingling with the approving whispers of a good conscience, some half-stifled regrets that she is only a looker-on upon the happiness she so largely contributed to build up. It certainly was a gain and a blessing to others that she was as she was; but she—she has lost by it. She will never say so, nor would she like to believe she thought so; but deep down in her heart of hearts will lie a wound which will ache at times, and which she will carry to her grave, although it be duly prevented from mortifying into gangrene by a covering of unfeigned and holy resignation to the lot awarded her.

Great as undoubtedly are the pleasures which spring from celibacy, necessary as it seems to be that numbers shall pass their lives in it, and high and noble as are the duties assigned to the unwedded, it seems to be a true dictum, applicable to the youth of both sexes, that

> 'Earthly happier is the rose distill'd,
> Than that which withering on the virgin thorn,
> Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness'

## WHY THE PIFFLERS LOST THEIR RETURN MATCH.

'WHAT on earth did you bring me here for?' my friend Charley Chetwynd said to me as we stood together in the drawing-room of Claverley Court, apart from the dancers, and listening to the 'Lurline Quadrilles.'

'You are an ungrateful duffer,' I rejoined, politely. 'You are also a gentlemanly-looking man, and a stranger in this neighbourhood, with nothing to do. And it was from these two latter reasons that I introduced you here.'

'But I want a pretty partner, and I can't find one,' said my friend, taking down his eyeglass, in despair. 'There's nothing in the room——

'If you will look in the direction of the doorway,' I rejoined quietly, 'you'll be reduced to proving your rule by an exception.'

Charley's eyes followed mine. 'By Jove!' he exclaimed—so loudly and suddenly that a nervous young gentleman in spectacles, who, by dint of a senior wrangler's concentration of mind, had almost piloted himself through a quadrille, was now startled, and losing his presence of mind in the moment of victory, ignominiously plunged 'La Poule' into confusion.

'Hush! Charley,' I remonstrated. 'Your sporting habits are a drawback, in many ways, to your otherwise duly-subdued and refined bearing and conversation.'

'You be hanged,' answered Charley. 'I don't think yonder bright "exception" looks as if she would like a man any the less for his being able to discriminate between Blair Athol and a butcher's screw.'

'Very likely not,' said I; 'the accomplishment, in itself she would admire, no doubt, to the extent that it deserves. But if I introduce and recommend you—I have known Maud since she was a girl—your attentions must be more refined than those of the hard-riding hero of a sporting novel.'

Chetwynd was quite indignant, and was commencing a retort; but his new divinity as, 'like a light, growing larger and clearer,' she approached, seemed to absorb anger in admiring worship.

With a foil in the person of a not over-young and very stout lady, who hung heavy on the other arm of her escort, himself, a man of aspect rather round than romantic, she seemed, my fancy told me as I gazed, a stately Olivia of the 'Twelfth Night' by the side of a Sir Toby Belch and an older but not less vivacious Maria.

I admired my own idea so much that I did not at first hear my friend eagerly questioning me, 'Who is she—and who is that smirking, fat fair and forty George the Fourth style of woman, and the boorish-looking fellow between them?'

'You ought to recognise the man,' I replied. 'He is Gumbleton—don't you recollect him at school—always talking about cricket, and couldn't play? The women are his *fiancée* and her aunt.'

'Well,' said Charley, 'I've left off being surprised at anything these twelve years—since I was fifteen.' Charley had a bad habit of applying to ordinary life the phraseology of the turf. 'But to think,' he went on, 'of that splendid figure and thoroughbred style of action being wasted on a man who's built like a bishop's cob! Why the aunt there—look how she's giggling—ought to be ashamed of herself, a woman of that age and size: she'd suit him to a T,' said Charley, carefully handicapping her, as he called it, with the aid of his eyeglass. 'What the deuce are you laughing at?'

'At your way of expressing yourself, I suppose, or at the frightful mess that mild party in spectacles got his set into in "La Poule," over there,' I rejoined.

'Well, I can console myself with a flirtation, perhaps. Look! she's sitting down, and the other two have left her,' exclaimed Chetwynd. 'Now's the time—introduce me.'

I complied with his wish, and saw little more of my friend that even-

ing. Charley — he's conceited enough about it—is a clever fellow. He seemed to insinuate himself into the good graces of Maud Marston with remarkable quickness; nor was his flirtation impeded by Gumbleton who, not being an adept at dancing, devoted himself chiefly, with intervals of attention to his other charge, to potations of sherry in the supper-room.

Beneath the stars, still shining, but with somewhat of the look of *passée* beauties, and while the world was waiting for the dawn, we drove home, Chetwynd and I; and all the way Charley poured into my ears a tale of sudden passion and concomitant difficulty and despair thwarting the course of true love, he wildly complained, with obstacles more difficult even than those usually thrown across that much-vexed current.

'Her eyes,' he rhapsodized, 'are like the sea in summer when the lights on it are always changing, and the changes are always lovely.'

I assented, and struck a vesuvian upon the splashboard.

'She's far away the finest filly I ever saw; and as for her marrying that fat, foolish, grovelling, guzzling, gormandizing Gambleton, why it's my firm belief that she detests the idea as much as I do. How she enjoyed my quizzing her aunt—Maud's Aunt as I would keep calling her relative, for the sake of repeating that exquisite name. She's full of humour. What the devil *are* you laughing at?'

'I—I was thinking of the ignominy of that mild party in spectacles. Certainly,' I added, 'Miss Marston has an infinite fund of—mischief.'

'Well,' said Chetwynd, 'the long and short of it is that I am desperately in love with her—the ideal, almost, of my dreams; and you may sneer, but love does, sometimes, come, not with the gradual growth of yonder, slow-brightening dawn;' —he pointed, tightening the reins as he spoke, to where the pale blue sky was beginning to hint of the coming daybreak—'but swift as its peer of the glowing tropics.' 'Well,' pursued Charley, returning to matter of fact, 'I tell you what, Jack, I shall write to her this very morning and propose to cut the Gordian knot of difficulty by an elopement. Of course, in requital for my honouring you with so important a confidence, you'll help me if need arises.'

'Of course,' I answered, smiling.

All the rest of the way home, while the world around us was waking to its summer day's life of light and flowers and shining wo[illegible] Chetwynd was silent, ever and a[illegible] taking from and replacing in his mouth, an extinct cigar.

He wrote his proposed letter from my lodgings, and, after despatching it, subsided into a state of nervous anxiety, an intense abhorrence for anything to eat, a decided partiality for anything to drink, and a most destructive fancy for a well-filled box of my particular Havana cigars.

I paid little attention to his proceedings, being engrossed myself with what I considered a very important task. This was no other than the getting up of an eleven to contend against the well-known cricketing-town of Battington, by which I, at the head of my club, the 'Peripatetic Pifflers,' had been, much to my chagrin, already worsted once this year.

The P. P.'s were determined upon revenge. Battington had been blatant upon the theme of its victory; and the main cause of Chetwynd's being now my visitor was the fact of my having desired to secure his assistance—he had been a ''Varsity' bat and bowler—in the second struggle. And now deep despair seized my soul, when I reflected that this sudden escapade of my friend's would probably be the cause of our second defeat, by depriving us of the aid of the famous Charley Cambridge, such was Chetwynd's *nom de guerre* in the cricketing world.

But Fortune, who is said to delight in overthrowing the proud, seemed about to prove herself a consistent goddess by her behaviour to those conceited Battingtonians. To do this no doubt, she so managed matters that Charley, within twenty-four hours from the despatch of his letter, received a reply which, to use his own expression, derived from a

reminiscence of one of poor Leech's pictures, 'hung a board round his neck and tickled him, thus disabled, with the straw of perverse misfortune.'

But he did not make this discovery until arriving at the end of the letter, of which, in his ecstacy during the first perusal, he favoured me with extracts.

'"It is like the strangeness of a dream,"' quoted Charley; '"so short has been our acquaintance, so sudden the growth of love between us,—('of love between us,' repeated my friend delightedly, and hurrying on), I fear, like Juliet, lest you should consider me too easily won, if I consent to an elopement. ('Bravo!' cried Chetwynd, jumping up from his chair.) I am like Lydia Languish—I long for the excitement of a runaway marriage, and hate the idea of the ordinary formal and ceremonious one. I should prefer abandoning my home by means of a rope-ladder.—('So you shall, and prettily your sylph's ankle will trip down it,' put in Chetwynd.) My niece knows that you have written to me ('niece—niece!' said my friend, pausing. 'She means aunt—she's agitated, poor thing!') She thinks we ought to see each other—best in some public place—to arrange matters. ('Quite like a mother to her,' remarked Chetwynd; romantic in her youth, no doubt, she looked, or rather smirked it.') I send you a kiss" (my friend raised the letter rapturously to his lips), "and sign myself by the name which your dear lips have so playfully conferred on me, "MAUD'S AUNT.

"P.S. You never would think we were in that relationship, would you?"'

I do not know which of us, my friend or myself, underwent, at the close of this letter, the most violent change of countenance from the respective causes of amazement and amusement.

'Why,' gasped Charley, 'they're the same name, and the aunt's got my letter. But it's absurd. Why, I dwelt throughout it upon her engagement to Gumbleton.'

I articulated an answer with some difficulty: 'It is the eldest who is engaged to Gumbleton.'

'What?' said Charley, scarcely comprehending me; and then he added, "Well, that explains all. But I remember distinctly, you said it was the niece who was engaged to him—I recollect your words—"Gumbleton, *fiancée*, and her aunt." One of your confounded pieces of chaff, I suppose, or a slip of the tongue, as you'll say. I see now how it was, you were always laughing at in that unreasonable fashion.'

'Do you?' I answered. But Charley was by this time reperusing the letter with disgust equal to his former delight.

'"Short acquaintance," "sudden love,"' he commented. 'Scarcely spoke a word to her; was introduced—didn't even catch the name; handed her a chicken at supper or part of one. "Easily won,"—should rather think so. "Elopement,"—not if I know it. "Lydia Languish,"—why she's five-and-thirty if she's a day—dare say forty. "Rope-ladder." That's the best thing yet;—fancy *me* waiting at the bottom of a rope-ladder for a woman of sixteen stone! "Have informed my niece of your letter." That's the unkindest cut of all. I think I see the fun in Maud's large eyes. What an utter fool she must think me!'

'Well,' he ended, breaking off, 'I see nothing for me but to run away from this Falstaffian female. I can't possibly have the face to meet her, especially as it's my mistake, and there is,' observed my friend rising and complacently looking at himself in the mirror over the mantelpiece —'there's some excuse for her proceedings.'

'Now, Jack, I'll tell you what—I'll write an explanatory letter to the real Maud; and you, in atonement for your sins, must manage to deliver it—can't trust the post; for I don't see how to prevent the letter falling into the hands of the other. Meantime, for the present, I'll make myself scarce.'

'On one condition I'll help you,' was my reply. 'You must play with us to-day against Battington; it's five miles away, and you can get

farther off to-morrow; it'll do you good too—distract your mind. It's nearly time to start now.'

'Well, you must do your best for me, then,' returned my friend. 'Five miles is far enough I suppose. Gumbleton's future aunt doesn't play cricket, I should think, and there's no danger of my meeting her.'

'No,' I said, 'but Gumbleton does—plays against us to-day. You can have the satisfaction of bowling at him.'

'That would have decided it, an hour ago,' said Charley. 'But, however, I will go.'

He went, and at the moment of his setting foot upon the Battington cricket-field, Charles Chetwynd the lover in difficulties, vanished from our sight, and cricketing Charley Cambridge took his place. Battington went in first—the match was a one innings affair—and when Gumbleton came to the wickets, I saw a little extra 'devil' in the eye of Charley, who was bowling from the other end. Gumbleton, before commencing operations, always spent five minutes in beating down imaginary hillocks between himself and the bowler, taking objectless constitutionals round his wicket, and staring at each fieldsman in turn, as if he wanted to identify him afterwards upon a criminal charge. I had, therefore, a good opportunity for obtaining moderate odds about his retiring in the first over, and, thereby, paid my travelling expenses.

Charley's first ball did not realize my expectations: it shot on the leg-side, and smiting poor Gumbleton on the ankle-bone just below a rather inefficient pad, caused him to limp during the remainder of the day. But the second whirled his leg-stump a yard into the air, and caused, of course, the adipose batsman to return, inglorious, to the tent. When the last of the Battingtonian wickets fell, the destruction of seven was credited to Charley, and the total score was little over a hundred, a very small one when we considered the run-favouring state of the ground and the strength of batting talent arrayed against us.

We—the Pifflers—began our innings with much hope of victory. But from the effects, perhaps, of dinner beverages, the P. P.'s, with one exception, came to the wickets, some but to remind us of the fate of Gumbleton, others to lead a precarious life with the reward of an occasional 'single,' and sooner or later retire without having attained any mastery over the bowling. Charley alone, having gone in first, remained. By elegant defence and forward play, by showy and almost inevitable cuts, by frequent leg hits long and low—as leg hits and hunters should be—by a six and a couple of fours, the result of an unluckily-tried over of slows, he rapidly brought up the score, till, with the tenth man at the opposite wicket, and Charley facing the beginning of the over, it was within one of that of our opponents. Even at this exciting moment it flashed upon my mind how thoroughly English was the scene, and how worth a painter's while to portray.

The horizon, at its most distant point, was ridged by a faint contrast of blue hills, (the waves, as it were, spellbound in their motion, of a giant's sea,) and nearer, more boldly countered by dark lines and masses of wood, that, except where they gave upon that distant range of summits, ran like a fringe round the prospect. Flowing down the sides and from the feet of those far eminences, came a stream of rich and shining acreage, which, at the gorge that broke the circle of the woods, debouched so as to suggest a comparison with a lake of green and golden waters. And these, where they undulated close around us, who were the centre-point of the scene, became waving wheat and bush-dotted grassland. Summer and sunshine had made everything their own; while distant hills and spires, and, clustering nearer round its wide church tower, the irregularly built village of Battington, told far and near of the life of the landscape; and we ourselves, a ring of sitting or standing groups amidst the white tents of the cricket-field—our faces riveted upon Chetwynd—gave the picture its finish of human interest.

The last fieldsman had just reached his place for the new over, when I heard the trampling of horses on the sward behind me, and looking round, saw the cup of triumph, so to speak, dashed from the expectant lips of the Peripatetic Piffiers. For at this moment there rode into the field, late spectators of Gumbleton's prowess, his *fiancée* and her aunt. I glanced back at Charley, and saw that they had caught his eye just as the opposing bowler started to deliver the first ball of the over. The ball came straight as an arrow, and Chetwynd, excited by the sudden appearance of his dreaded *bête noir*, did not wait to play it. Rushing out for a blind swipe, he hit, as I expected, 'over' the ball, and lost his middle stump, to the accompaniment of a shout of victory, to which every Battingtonian on the field contributed his longest and loudest.

By the device of dodging behind the tallest men, he attempted, amidst the subsequent confusion, to reach the tent unobserved by the object of his alarm. But Battington was generous, and insisted upon making him conspicuous by cheering him, and I saw, with an internal convulsion, the stouter of the two ladies on horseback beckon him with her hand to approach them.

Hastily donning an outer garment brought by an officious admirer, poor Charley obeyed the signal. I observed him approach, ruefully enough, the fair invader of his presence; I saw her greet him with wreathed smiles, while, ever and anon glancing at him from the other side of her relative, the real object of his passion gracefully reined in her impatient bay thoroughbred.

'You see after all it is *I* who am obliged to seek you. But you expected, of course, that we should be here. Would you like to kiss my hand?' and the elder lady half extended to him that member—not a very shapely one.

Charley shuddered. 'A little too public,' he faintly gasped, and encountered at this moment, to add to his confusion, the arch gaze of the owner's lovely companion.

'When is the elopement to take place,' continued his interlocutor, 'and have you brought a rope ladder?'

Charley was stammering some incoherent reply, when up came Gumbleton, still limping from the effects of his casualty.

'See, dear, this is Mr. Chetwynd's doing,' he said to the speaking lady.

'Mr. Chetwynd's!' returned the latter, suddenly changing her tone of address to the bewildered Charley. 'I'll Chetwynd him! O you cruel, heartless, ugly, malevolent creature!'

At this moment I stepped forward with my friend's last letter in my hand, and was in act to present it to Gumbleton's sympathizer.

'What *are* you about?' exclaimed Charley, rushing at me.

'All right, man,' I rejoined. 'This letter is for the niece, is it not?'

'Of course,' replied my friend.

'Then I'll give it to the niece,' I interrupted, handing it up to Charley's fat, fair, and forty tormentor.

Hereat, that lady's fairer companion let her horse have his way, and rode off to a more distant position.

'If Mr. Chetwynd,' said the recipient of the letter to Charley, who stood more confounded than ever—'if your second letter is meant to recall your first, you had better, since it has fallen into my hands, state the fact verbally to my aunt;' and she pointed with her whip to her friend, by this time distant from her side.

'What!' exclaimed Charley, a light breaking on him, 'you don't mean to say that *you* are the niece, after all, and she *not* the intended Mrs. Gumbleton.'

But amidst the laughter of us bystanders, he was off before the question could be answered.

This time, Charley Chetwynd evinced reluctance rather to depart from, than to approach Miss Marston. Long time they stood together, till the cessation of cricket practice, and the darkness that came over the wide landscape round them, gave warning of departure. Explanation was probably being given him of the series of mistakes in which, by, in the first instance, taking, naturally enough, the wrong

persons for aunt and niece, he had become involved. With the old look of mischief in her large, now loving eyes, his partner of the past and of the future told him how, in the first instance, she had amused herself carelessly enough with his error, and how, to punish him for some rude remarks upon her niece, she had carried on the delusion with the aid of her mirth-loving senior. Her father, she told him, had married very young, and she was the youngest daughter of his second wife, while Gumbleton's *destinée* was the eldest offspring of the eldest son of the above-named parent. 'Do you forgive me?' she ended.

'To you, of course,' was Charley's answer, 'I forgive anything: if you derive pleasure from teasing me, pray tease me again; my revenge for this will be wreaked elsewhere;' and he turned his eyes towards me.

My explanation, however, of having taken part in the joke only during the first blush of its absurdity, and afterwards doing nothing more than watch its course, must have been found satisfactory; for Chetwynd's claret and cigars have this very evening blended their influence with that of pretty Mrs. Chetwynd's mirthful reminiscences, and inspired me to tell the story of the unexpected defeat which, little more than a year ago, made smaller the prestige of the Perambulating Pifflers.

ARANEUS.

# THE LADY IN MUSLIN.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A LITTLE OLD LADY.

LITTLE Cecile passed a very weary night; and the next morning, instead of verifying the doctor's prophecy of finding her almost well, found her, instead, in a high fever.

Our position was rather embarrassing; and Gaunt and I held a very anxious consultation over the breakfast-table as to what was to be done. As far as the little invalid's comfort was concerned, there was no reason to be uneasy: a kinder nurse than the gay lady of the cottage, we were soon convinced, it would be impossible to find. Unweary, patient, soft of hand, and sweet-voiced, none were better fitted than she to soothe a sick couch.

Still, it was a rather awkward thing for two young men, living as we were, to have a sick child on our hands, and be obliged to trust to the kind offices of a stranger like Miss Owenson.

Margaret confined herself entirely to the sick-room: she never repeated her visits to ask for books; and even when we occasionally went to see the little invalid, the hostess was always present, and on no pretence did Margaret allow her to quit the room at such times. Still, the position was queer.

The day passed anxiously. Cecile continued ill. The doctor spoke hopefully; but nevertheless, the wonderful changes he was always predicting were very long in making their appearance; and at length, on the evening of the second day, in spite of my usual principle of non-interference on all that concerned the child, I could not help asking Gaunt if he had no female relation for whom he could send. Gaunt pish'd and pshaw'd, and said she could not be in better hands than she was; and he showed all his usual signs of disagreeableness and ill-humour when anything was mentioned that touched upon Cecile's relations or history; but I noticed with silent satisfaction, that the same evening he sat down and wrote a letter which he took care to post himself.

Who the letter was to, I knew not; whether he asked any one to come to his assistance, I knew not: he certainly did not seem to expect any one, for he engaged a young person as nurse to Cecile, and sent up for assistance from London.

Still I was not surprised, on the evening of the fourth day, when, just as we were sitting down to dinner, to hear the landlady announce that a lady wished to speak to Mr. Gaunt. Dick got up with a bound from his chair, and I never knew him make a quicker exit from the room. Now, thought I, surely this must be the 'sister' that visited him so unexpectedly in London; surely the mystery is about to be explained. Outside I heard them speaking in low tones; still I could distinguish that the lady's voice was soft and pleasant, and I turned with some curiosity as Gaunt pushed open the door and invited her to enter.

A small, thin, yellow-looking old lady came in—the grandmother of Cecile, perhaps, but certainly neither her mother nor Gaunt's sister.

'Mr. Mark Owen—Mrs. Marsh,' Dick said, solemnly, and the little old lady put out her hand exclaiming, 'Oh! the "Mark" Cecile has told me so much about in her letters.'

I tried to look pleased and flattered at this friendly address, and the warm shake of the hand that accompanied it, but my inward feelings were decidedly those of disapprobation. To confess the truth, I had had some dim expectation of the original of that beautiful picture making her appearance in reply to Gaunt's letter, and the soft voice had heightened very much such expectation.

The yellow old lady did not stay long with us; with a maternal smile to us both, she told us to sit down

again to our dinner, and not to be anxious; then laying her hand familiarly on Dick's arm, she added, 'It's my turn again, now, you know; cheer up.' Gaunt looked up at her far from cheerfully; but he only shrugged his great shoulders in reply; at which Mrs. Marsh nodded

back, and then disappeared with a queer whisking kind of way through the door into the next room.

Dick slowly rubbed his hands—'She's no beauty, Mark,' he said, in an apologetic tone; 'but that little woman's a jewel!—a rare creature!'

'I've no doubt of it,' I replied, obeying her injunction to go on dining. 'Shall I help you to some of this?'

'A little gravy,' Dick answered. We ate silently for some minutes.

'I feel intensely relieved,' Dick said, presently; 'and yet I could scarcely have expected her to come. Another pupil of hers is in the last stages of consumption; I scarcely expected she would leave her.'

'Another pupil?—then Cecile was her pupil?' I said.

'Of course she was—why, you don't think I've had the child always with me,' Dick exclaimed, testily; besides——' he stopped short.

At that moment a shadow came

falling across the lawn; a light foot mounted the wooden steps of the verandah, and then Margaret Owenson stood before the window. She was not smiling. Since the day of Cecile's accident, a shade had gathered over her face—a shade of anxiety—that recalled so much the expression of the lady at the railway station with whom, however, she denied identity.

'May I come in?' she said. 'Don't disturb yourselves, I only come to know how little Cecile is, and also to inquire how the nurse goes on?'

She took a chair, with her usual ease, at a little distance from the table, and sat down. We had no objection to her company, and we were so accustomed to her free ways that they in no way affected its charm.

Of course Gaunt told her of the new arrival: an old friend of his, he said, who had consented to come and nurse the child; probably they would be able to make some arrangement to have her removed. The place was so inconvenient for invalids, on account of the distance from all medical aid.

I was a little surprised Dick had never mentioned the idea to me, though certainly Mrs. Marsh had only arrived half an hour ago.

Miss Owenson listened anxiously. 'I suppose, then,' she said, quickly, 'you will also be on the move?'

Dick hesitated and looked at her. 'I was not thinking of that just yet,' he said.

Women are quick guessers.

Margaret understood the hesitation and the look. She flushed, in a manner that ought to have been very gratifying to Mr. Gaunt, and then rising suddenly and as if embarrassed, she said, 'I'll go now and have a peep at Cecile.'

Opening the door gently, she was just about to enter, when some one or something startled her; as if she had suddenly set her foot on a dangerous path, she recoiled, and I saw it was with difficulty she repressed the exclamation that her lips were already opened to make. Very quietly, scarcely making a sound, she closed the door again.

'Cecile is sleeping,' she said, in a hurried voice, 'so I must wait. In spite of her endeavours to appear calm, I saw how agitated she was.

'You did not expect to see a stranger?' I said; 'it startled you.'

'A little. I didn't understand that Mr. Gaunt's friend had arrived,' she answered.

Gaunt was occupied in selecting some cherries for our guest, and I suppose had not observed her agitation. He only said—

'There, Miss Owenson, they are not very fine, but I believe the rain has damaged the fruit-trees considerably.'

The interest with which Margaret examined the cherries, and the animated remarks she made on the disagreeableness of rain, storm, and wind, &c., convinced me that there was something wrong. Miss Owenson was not usually eloquent on small matters. Gaunt—the stupid fellow—in spite of his lover's eyes, apparently saw nothing strange. He talked and laughed, and picked out fruit for her, and poured out wine for her, and I think she was as grateful to him for his blindness as for his attentions.

Those cherries were very slow in disappearing though; and she rose before they were half finished, saying she must go, as she intended driving to —— that evening. 'Don't offer to come with me, though,' she added, laughing, as we both exclaimed, 'Oh!' 'I am going on very particular business.'

Gaunt and I sat some time talking after she left us; but it was only towards the end of our conversation, just as, with his cigar in his mouth, he was standing half in half out of the window on his way to the garden, that Dick took courage to say,

'If you don't find it unbearable, Mark, I should like to stay here another week, even supposing we do dispose of Cecile'

'On account of the lady at the cottage, I suppose, now,' I said, sarcastically.

'A little, perhaps,' he answered, drily.

After he had disappeared I indulged in a long soliloquy on the folly of the human race, and of Richard Gaunt in particular. I felt

irritated. Did he think it was amusement to a man of my stamp and education to stand by and do nothing but watch his foolish love-making? Or did he think that that weighty purse of his, and that great goth-like figure, made rivalry between us a mere farce? Another week! And yet I was not sorry to think I had still seven days to wonder at, to quarrel with, and admire Margaret Owenson.

* * * *

The night was very still and close —unusually close, it seemed, following those days of rain and chilly winds. I could not sleep—I was not feverish or restless — merely disinclined to sleep. I rose quietly, and throwing open the window, sat down beside it and lighted a cigar.

The night was moonless and dark; heavy clouds shut out the stars, but constant flashes of summer lightning supplied their place, and I sat watching the bright blue illuminations, smoking my cigar, and quietly enjoying the little air there was.

The night was so quiet, that the

gurgling of the stream at the bottom of the garden was to be heard distinctly; and that, indeed, was the only sound, except the faintest occasional rustling of the leaves, that broke the stillness.

Suddenly I fancied I heard the breaking of branches, and a quick rustling as of some agitation among the shrubs. Not a breath of air was stirring the leaves of the climbing roses by the window—it could not be the wind. The sound came from the direction of the planks crossing the boundary stream; and thither I turned my eyes. I was the more on the *qui vive* for midnight sounds by having heard our host complain of the depredations constantly committed on his poultry-yard; and knowing there were gipsies in the neighbourhood, I watched curiously, and was quite anxious to do him a good turn by finding out, and, if I could, securing the thief.

The darkness of the night closely concealed whoever the noise-maker was, and I could distinguish no form of either man or animal. The rustling, too, was not repeated, and I began to fancy that the intruder could only be some bird in the hedge, when a flash of lightning suddenly illumining the whole country, showed me something moving up the garden—what I could not tell.

I rose—listened; not a sound broke the stillness. Flash after flash again lighted up the scene; but the moving thing was gone. In vain I watched and listened, all was silent, nothing appeared.

Half an hour passed—an hour. I began to think of returning to bed, when, in another flash, I saw something standing almost beneath my window. For an instant I fancied the form was like a human figure—the Indian!

The idea was too absurd. Whatever could a grave, dignified person like Zemide—the descendant, as he once informed me, of a line of Indian princes — want with mine host's hens or eggs? My fancy had deceived me. I was getting sleepy; perhaps I was having a little preparatory dream.

Miss Owenson did not make her appearance the next morning; but she sent to Gaunt to ask how Cecile was, and invite us to join her in a walk to some ruins that she wished to sketch; we might bring our fishing apparatus, she wrote, as the river was close by.

The remembrance of that walk is still vivid in my mind. Margaret had resumed her high spirits; and the woods, as we passed through them, echoed with our mingled laughter. It was a bright sunny day, and our humour kept with the sun, unclouded. We were content to stoop to the enjoyment of a country walk; our mighty intellects deigned to wonder over flowers and bird's-nests; and if one of us attempted to get scientific and make clever remarks, the laughter and quizzing of the other two soon banished such attempts. What did we care about classes or species? or this system or that? It was the hand that held up the spray of flowers—the eyes that glowed over them—that constituted their beauty and their interest. The only drawback to our—at least, Gaunt's and my entire pleasure—was that we were one too many: but *who* should be banished?

We fished in the river, and Margaret took her sketch from the banks whilst we talked and flung our wit and repartees to our entire satisfaction and mutual admiration; and then we lunched. Margaret! Margaret! how could you have the conscience to laugh and talk as you did? How could you have the heart to listen, with downcast eyes and smiling lips, to those low-toned sentences Dick whispered so earnestly to you, when, as we got separated in one part of the wood, the stupid fellow thought I was out of sight and hearing?

Miss Owenson was very tired when we reached Hazeldean—so tired that she told us we should see her no more that evening; so tired that she grew quite impatient, as Dick would stand talking just beneath the verandah of the inn, instead of allowing her to rush away as she wished across the garden (we had come through the inn to shorten the distance); she meant to go to bed the instant she had dined. —'No, certainly Dick mustn't go to visit her to-night, to-morrow, if he chose, he might visit her in the day, though. Good-bye.'

As she spoke the words, I noticed she threw a hasty glance up at the curtained window of the sick-room. At the same moment a hand was slowly drawing back the curtain and then Mrs. Marsh's thin, yellow face looked smilingly down on us. Even through the closed window I could see that the little old lady was fixing on Miss Owenson a glance, with the action of the head, which reminded me of an ugly little ferret.

'Good-bye,' again Margaret said, abruptly this time, wrenching her hand from Dick's; and turning away, she walked swiftly down the garden, and was soon out of sight behind the shutters of the cottage.

We did not have the opportunity of seeing Mrs. Marsh again that day. There was a good piece to be acted

at the theatre, and we hurried off, intending to dine at ——, and probably pass the night there.

## CHAPTER XV.

### WHO SHE IS!!

L—— was rather attractive that evening. We met a couple of college friends, and made what Dick called a night of it; such a night, that the sun of the next morning was shining very wakefully before we went to bed.

The consequence was, that we breakfasted late, and our friends looking in on us during the meal, delayed us so long that it was six o'clock P.M. when we reached Hazeldean.

On our parlour-table lay one of those queerly twisted notes, which were always so well received by us both, and which Gaunt immediately seized.

He had not time, however, to open it, before we heard the whisking sound of Mrs. Marsh's approach, and in another moment in came the little yellow lady with the important determined air of one who has something to say, and is resolved to say it.

She stopped short our polite inquiries respecting herself and Cecile, with a wave of her dry hand, and began,

'I did not expect this of you, Richard Gaunt,' in a tone in which solemnity was ludicrously mixed with reproach.

I don't know whether Dick's memory was affected in the same way as mine, but this address, joined with the consciousness of last night's dissipation, transported me some ten years back, when I was a would-be fast young man, but still subject to the vigilance of an acute pair of maternal eyes.

Dick looked inquiringly at Mrs. Marsh, and then, as if dimly conscious of what she intended to reproach him with, turned pettishly away with a muttered naughty word.

'Pray,' continued the old lady, in the same solemn tone, 'will you kindly inform me of the reason of your intimacy with Mrs. Huntingdon, or rather the person who calls herself by that name?'

'Mrs. Huntingdon?' Gaunt almost shouted, 'what the deuce do you mean? I never saw the woman in my life!'

'Stuff and nonsense! Don't make such a noise, Richard Gaunt, and don't try to deny a plain fact,' answered Mrs. Marsh, rubbing her hands contemptuously.

A light seemed suddenly to break on Dick's mind; he started up, seized the astonished old woman rather roughly by the arm, exclaiming, 'Do you mean to say that that girl is Cecil Huntingdon's wife?'

Mrs. Marsh shrugged her shoulders. 'In her own eyes, probably she is; but not in those of the law,' she replied.

'But she—Margaret Owenson, is it the same?'

'What are you talking about with your Margaret Owenson? The lady dressed in blue who I saw with you yesterday shaking hands in that loving fashion—that is Mrs. Huntingdon. I recognized her at a glance. What does she want here?'

Gaunt did not reply; he stood as one petrified; then turning to me he said in a tone almost apologetic, 'Do you know, Mark, I never had the slightest suspicion of this; I never dreamt it was the wife herself! How she has deceived me!'

'Nicely, I've no doubt,' Mrs. Marsh exclaimed, smiling. 'Not a difficult thing for a pretty woman to do, Richard. But setting aside that, what does she want here?'

'To think,' Dick continued in a humble tone—'to think that I should never have seen through it. The portrait, the—a hundred things explain themselves.'

All this time I was standing a mute and bewildered listener. In his surprise, Dick forgot that this was adding mystery to mystery to me; while the old lady, too much absorbed with the startling communications she was making, scarcely noticed, or if she did observe my presence, took it as right and natural.

'So false—so utterly deceitful!' Dick went on muttering, declining

the chair Mrs. Marsh pushed towards him, preparatory to holding a consultation as to what Mrs. Huntingdon could want, and then with a kind of sudden passion he seized his hat, and before we could say a word, had rushed into the garden, and in another moment we saw him bounding over the planks crossing the stream, on his way to the cottage.

A wild-goose chase, my poor friend! Do you think a startled bird would wait to be caught?—that a woman of Margaret Owenson's daring cleverness would await quietly the discovery of her secret? Not she!

The old woman was a long time answering Dick's impatient summons. She was sleepy, for she had been up all night packing her mistress's valuables. 'Miss Owenson had left at five o'clock that morning; she did not know where she had gone—maybe to France.'

And that's all the news we heard of the gay lady of the cottage for many months, in spite of search and inquiry, both private and with the assistance of the police.

What Margaret Owenson wanted was, that curious Indian box, containing family papers, in Richard's private closet, and that she got. For that she consented to shut herself up in her quiet cottage, and make such dashing love to poor Gaunt and myself—for that she plotted, planned, and executed, not uncleverly either considering she attained her end, though whether she would have done so had Dick been a little more confidential and not so thick-sculled, is, in my opinion, rather doubtful.

How she got possession of her coveted treasure remained involved in mystery. I have my own theory about the matter, recollecting that that hot dark night when I kept such a friendly watch for the thief who stole mine host's hens and eggs, followed the very evening Margaret saw the curious Indian box in the closet. The Indians are expert thieves!

That strictly-guarded secret of Gaunt's was obliged to be told to the sacred ears of lawyers, and so Dick's conscience comforted itself with thinking that another pair of ears, in spite of their illegality, might safely be added to the number, without materially adding to the sin, and so at length I came to know Cecile's history.

* * * *

Years ago, when Dick was minus the wisdom and experience of his 'ties,' with a large capacity for 'larks' smoke and flirtation, and a very small one for application of any kind, he was suddenly despatched by his father on an expedition to Jamaica on some business concerning his estates there.

Dick's character being very little formed to act the surveillant, but very much so for seeking amusement and frolic wherever it was to be found, it was not surprising that he very soon removed the seat of government from the dreary mansion on the estate to the best hotel in Kingston, as affording him the means of a more congenial existence

Rich, young, gay, and high-spirited, he soon made his way into the best society the town could boast, and among this rather dissipated set, fell into company with a certain Cecil Huntingdon—a man of very much the same stamp as himself, as regarded love of pleasure and daring pursuit of it, but of principles the utter worthlessness of which time alone discovered to him. Cecil Huntingdon soon became Gaunt's chosen companion; they lodged in the same hotel, dined at the same table, rode, drove—in fact, were always together.

Such intimacy soon showed to Dick that his gay, handsome friend, was not altogether the angel he appeared at first sight, but at the same time, the vices he discovered in him were those only too readily pardoned among men.

If Cecil Huntingdon drank to an excess that generally obliged his friends to confide him in a state of insensibility to the care of his servant, and it was a subject rather of amusement than disgust to them—Gaunt was not more particular than the rest.

If, again, Mr. Huntingdon played high, and generally successfully, he did it with such gentlemanly good temper, such courteous regret at his success, that 'Huntingdon's luck' was wondered at and envied, but never openly questioned, and Gaunt lost with the rest, and laughed. These 'fashionable faults' Dick observed soon enough; a couple of years were necessary to teach him the utter dissoluteness of his 'dear' friend.

Huntingdon's family had been for generations large proprietors in the island. Since, however, the slave emancipation and the consequent depreciation of property, they had gradually sold off the estates, and at the time of Gaunt's visit to the island, Cecil, the then head of the family, was endeavouring to complete the sale of the last, with the intention of returning to England, where also he was possessed of a handsome property.

The Huntingdon estate happened to be contiguous to that of the Gaunts, and so it was very natural that the visits of surveillance that both gentlemen from time to time were forced to make, should be made in company; and the dwelling-house of the Gaunts being more commodious than Mr. Huntingdon's, the two always took up their abode there.

A part of this house had been allotted to the manager of the estate, and here he had lately brought from the island of St. Domingo, where she had been living with some friends, his only child, a girl of sixteen or seventeen, extremely handsome, and educated so far as the resources of the place permitted. It was not surprising that when the gentlemen came on their occasional visits they passed a great deal of their time with Marie, the manager's daughter; neither was it surprising that the girl, in all the first blush of her youthful beauty, welcomed eagerly such breaks on her wearisome solitude, and received with unfeigned pleasure the attentions and compliments of Gaunt and Huntingdon.

Dick was an honourable man, in spite of his flirting propensities; and not being sufficiently in love with the beautiful but ill-educated Marie to care to stoop from his position to marry her, no sooner did he perceive the eagerness with which his attentions were received, and preferred to those of Huntingdon, than he withdrew a little, came less frequently, and when he did come, lingered less in Marie's *salon*, and became chary of his sweet speeches.

Marie was not slow to perceive the change, and perhaps out of pique, perhaps, because in her burdensome solitude she preferred any company to none, she soon transferred her smiles to Mr Huntingdon.

How far the flirtation might have gone had the father's presence still protected his daughter it is impossible to say. He dying suddenly; Marie was left alone for a few days in the solitary house, subject to the constant visits of Huntingdon; and when Gaunt came next, he found the pretty *salon* deserted. Marie was nowhere to be found.

The matter concerned him personally very little; but the fact of the father (an old servant of the family) having, in a dying letter, requested protection for his orphaned daughter, made him interest himself in learning what had become of her, and, of course, the first person to whom he addressed himself was Mr. Huntingdon.

Cecil at first affected a careless indifference; but Dick was earnest and determined, and Huntingdon at length acknowledged that Marie was living very contentedly under his care a short distance from Kingston, but that he intended to permit no impertinent interference between her and himself.

Years passed on. Dick went backwards and forwards between England and the colonies some two or three times; and in the business of life the recollection of his brief acquaintance with Marie grew less vivid.

Cecil and he never patched up their friendship. Huntingdon was proud, and he never forgave Dick's interference, or his endeavours to find out Marie's retreat. Long before Gaunt's third and last visit to

Jamaica they had ceased all intercourse. On that visit he heard that Cecil Huntingdon had suddenly left Kingston, and had gone, it was supposed, to India. Of Marie no one knew anything. Huntingdon was well known for his libertine propensities, and the idea of his having taken her with him was laughed to scorn by the few friends amongst whom Gaunt made his inquiries. Cecil, they said, was not fond of unnecessarily encumbering himself.

His surmise that the unfortunate girl had been heartlessly deserted was soon verified.

A letter one day reached him, through the medium of one of Huntingdon's former friends, from Marie herself, and, to his surprise, signed 'Marie Huntingdon.'

Badly spelled, almost illegibly written, the few pathetic sentences telling of misery, utter destitution, and a broken heart, were quite sufficient to awaken all Dick's overflowing pity for the bright, beautiful, though ignorant girl, who had been recommended to his protection.

Dick was dressing for a large public dinner when he received that letter, a dinner at which his position as a rich man, in spite of the depreciation of plantation property, rendered him a distinguished guest. But he did not hesitate to mount his horse immediately, and ride off in the moonlight to the place from whence the note was dated.

He found his old acquaintance in a deplorable state. Broken-hearted, and evidently in the last stages of a decline, he scarcely recognized in the careworn death-struck woman the Marie of four years back.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### MARIE'S STORY.

Her story was soon told.

She had eloped with Huntingdon two days after her father's death, on the promise of being married to him within a week.

She declared that Cecil had kept his promise, and married her at Kingston four days after her quitting the Gaunts' house. They had then lived for a week together at some distance from Kingston, and Cecil was all that a bride could wish or expect. After that he ceased to stay with her constantly, being fearful, he always alleged to his unfortunate wife, that his marriage reaching the ears of a relative from whom he hoped to inherit property might lose him his favour.

For months Marie contented herself with this explanation, and tried not to feel aggrieved at being immured in a solitary house far out of reach of any one with visits from her husband of two or three days at fortnightly intervals.

The birth of a child, which however wailed away its life in a few months, brought her a little distraction, and two years were away before she began actually to rebel, and to demand a wife's rights of being publicly recognised.

Then began misery in real earnest. Cecil was nearly tired of his whim, and had no idea of appearing in public with a woman of whose mere beauty he had now grown careless, and of whose parentage and education he was ashamed. His visits grew less frequent, and when they occurred, were too often only scenes of anger and mutual reproach.

The husband was firm in his refusal, with what object the simple affrighted woman only too soon discovered, and then, refusing to submit longer to such treatment,' she threatened to force him to acknowledge her. She had her wedding-ring, her marriage certificate, and letters he had written to her as his wife, and with these weapons she threatened him.

It was the most unfortunate thing she could have done. From being the persecutor, she became the persecuted; for her husband, awakened to the consciousness that the ill-educated woman had spirit and energy enough to put her threat into execution, left no means untried to get possession of these valuable witnesses to her cause.

She was far from any town, without any means of getting assistance, and Huntingdon soon began his persecution, by stopping all the luxuries he had hitherto permitted her, limiting her to the bare neces-

sities of life. These, even, he soon curtailed, and all the cruelties her isolated position enabled him to inflict with impunity he did not hesitate to make use of, in hopes of bending her to his will. But the birth of another child—little Cecile—made her only firmer in her resolution to keep the precious documents at all hazards, and force her husband to acknowledge her.

Things went on in this way for another year, when suddenly she ceased to see or hear from her husband.

He never came—never sent; and after waiting and expecting till her fear that she was a deserted wife became a certainty, she summoned up all her energy, and with a resolution that overcame difficulties and hardships without number, managed to reach Kingston just at the period of Gaunt's third visit. There she soon learnt the news of her husband's departure, and found herself almost penniless—alone and ill, without knowing where to turn for relief.

It was with the desperation that a drowning man catches at a straw that she sent that letter to Gaunt.

Fortunately Dick was not one to be appealed to in vain: all that his kindness and money could do for her they did—but they could not recall her husband, nor prolong her life.

A few months after arriving at Kingston poor Marie died, though not before she had extracted a promise from Richard Gaunt, the singularity of which can only be accounted for by supposing that her intense hatred and fear of her husband, in her debilitated and nervous state, had become a kind of morbid insanity.

Placing all the papers necessary to prove her marriage in Gaunt's hands, she made him swear that he would hold them secretly and securely until the death of Mr. Huntingdon; that he would also place her child under the care of an old relation of her own in England, to whom he should communicate her parentage and history, but that to no one else should either the existence of the child or papers be made known. She further made him swear to protect Cecile as his ward, never allowing her for a day to be out of his own or Mrs. Marsh's surveillance. Besides this, she begged him to forward her portrait, with the intelligence of her death, to her husband.

The climax of peculiarity in her requests was reached in the last. At Cecil's death she required Gaunt to come forward, produce all the evidence of Cecile's being Mr. Huntingdon's legitimate child, and claim the property for her.

With the vehemence and terror, that mental and physical illness so often produce, she represented to Gaunt that her unprincipled husband would not hesitate to destroy the papers and disown the child. To her excited fancy, Cecil was a fiend in whose hands the very life of her little daughter was not safe, and her last words were a wild prayer to Richard to save the child from her father.

Under other circumstances Gaunt might have hesitated before entering into such an engagement. As it was, he was not blind to the fact that this terror of her husband was a great deal the result of her feverish imagination; still he knew so well the bad, cold heart of the man, and it was so heartrending to look upon the wreck his cruelty had made of his young beautiful wife, and listen to the wild pathetic outpourings of the misery she had gone through, as she piteously implored him to grant her dying prayer, that in spite of feeling he was acceding to the schemes of an almost disordered fancy, he gave the promise, and, as far as he could, honestly kept it.

A few months after Marie's death Gaunt contrived to discover Mr. Huntingdon's address, and to him he forwarded the portrait and a short note informing him of his wife's decease; then returning to England, and placing the child under Mrs. Marsh's care, he pursued his usual life.

Dick was not a man to be very much burdened with memory, nor very much oppressed by any obligation when not actually fulfilling it. After Cecile was safely located

at Blackheath, the papers sealed and securely locked in that pretty India box, and deposited in his private closet, he dismissed the subject very quietly from his mind.

I doubt if he ever gave a thought to Cecile, except when at the end of each quarter he forwarded a cheque to Mrs. Marsh.

He was a little surprised and very much annoyed when, at the end of a year, he received a letter from Cecil Huntingdon, inquiring what had been done with the papers and personal property of the person whose portrait he had received some twelve months past.

This letter was dated from Paris; and the writer requested an immediate reply. Gaunt had no idea of giving up the papers: the very fact of Mr. Huntingdon calling his wife 'the person,' strengthened him in his resolution to keep his promise; and he knew that Huntingdon could not demand them, unless he proclaimed his connection with Marie. So he allowed the letter to remain unanswered.

A second, however, following closely on the first, and more insolent and peremptory in its tone, made him determine to confront Cecil boldly, and end the matter.

He therefore sent Mrs. Marsh to Paris with a letter from himself, stating that Mrs. Marsh, as Marie's nearest relation, was willing to hear any claim he might choose to make to the property of her late niece.

Mr. Huntingdon received his visitor with a great deal more surprise and embarrassment than pleasure. He assured her he had no wish to interfere with Miss Marie Marsh's relations: all he desired was to know if Mr. Gaunt, who knew so well all his acquaintance with Marie, had her papers and letters in his possession. He did not claim them. He knew he had no right to them: he made no mention of the child.

The private interview that Mr. Huntingdon was conducting so courteously with his unwelcome guest happened to be suddenly broken in on by the entrance of a tall, fair-haired lady carrying a little boy of about two years in her arms The child called out, 'Papa!' and Mrs. Marsh's surprise at Mr. Huntingdon's courtesy vanished immediately.

Mrs. Marsh very sensibly made inquiries as to who this lady was; and she brought back to Gaunt the intelligence that Cecil Huntingdon had married on his arrival in India —that is about sixteen months prior to Marie's death—a young lady of good birth and large fortune, and that he had a son and heir of two years old. Of course poor Gaunt felt anything but happy at such news. He must do something; and Dick hated action in such a matter.

With some difficulty he persuaded himself to go to Paris, face Cecil, and denounce him as a bigamist.

He arrived in Paris, found the hotel, but Mr. Cecil Huntingdon and family had left four days before for India *viâ* Marseilles.

Richard was not altogether sorry for this interruption of his plan.

After that a considerable time passed, and he heard no further news of Mr. Huntingdon, till our summer visit was suddenly brought to a close by Mrs. Marsh's recognition of Mrs. Huntingdon, and we found ourselves the dupes of her wild but successful scheming to gain possession of those important papers.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### AN INVITATION ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

Time passed on. Gaunt went to the continent; I stayed in my rooms, and led my bachelor life among my books and writings; and if it had not been for the occasional visit to Blackheath, and the warm welcome I always received from pretty little Cecile, I should soon have ceased to remember much about our summer's adventure, and the serious results it was likely to have had.

We had been so completely duped by the fascinating lady of the cottage, that the subject was not one to be remembered with any pleasurable sensations. Even the lawyers had been amused at our expense; and I must confess that had it not been for my moral rectitude and affection for Cecile, I should very much have preferred that Mrs.

Huntingdon should have been allowed to remain quietly in possession of her stolen property, than that the world should get wind of the story.

I knew Gaunt had no great desire to appear in a court of justice against the lady, and I fancy there was a paradoxical satisfaction blended with his regret as months passed, and the beautiful thief still remained concealed, and the papers unrecovered.

It was a clear, quiet, proper Christmas Eve. On the ground the snow lay white and hard: above, the stars twinkled frostily in the dark heavens: so at least my landlady told me. I was sitting with the curtains drawn snugly over the windows close by my blazing fire, much too warm and comfortable to think of making such observations for myself.

I was mentally congratulating myself on the clever dodge by which I had avoided the necessity of passing my Christmas with a rich old aunt in a dull country village, without endangering the legacy I expected, while I looked complacently forward to the morrow's dinner with a party of choice friends at Gaunt's rooms (he had just come home), when my door was thrown open, and my landlady announced a gentleman 'as wanted to speak to me.'

A person dressed in black, and who kept his hat pressed over his eyes, entered with a solemn dignified manner and advanced, but stood silently before me till the door had been safely closed.

He stood rather in the shade, and his hat and beard so concealed his face, that I never noticed his oriental complexion and countenance, until he presented me, still without opening his lips, with a letter, and then the dark-skinned hand made me glance up curiously.

'Zemeide!' I exclaimed, startled; and then grasping his arm, I sprang up, determined to call assistance and have him secured. The Indian neither attempted to shake off my grasp nor to resent my treatment; he looked quietly up at me with his black deep eyes, and said in good English,

'Read the letter, sir, at once.'

'And give you time to escape?' I exclaimed. 'Thief that you are.'

'Escape!' he repeated in a tone, the utter scorn of which I cannot describe. 'Did I not come here of my own free will? Read the letter Mr. Owen,' he added, suddenly changing his tone to one of utter indifference.

I glanced at the envelope: there was no mistaking the clear handwriting; it had directed queerly twisted little notes to the White Horse Inn so often; then I glanced at the Indian. If I had detected the slightest indication in his expression, that he guessed at the foolish thoughts that were then passing through my mind, I believe I should have knocked him down without an instant's hesitation.

He stood calm and unresisting, so I released his arm, and went and locked the door, keeping, however my eye firmly fixed upon my guest.

'If this,' I said sternly to him, tapping the letter, 'does not contain information concerning those papers you have stolen, I shall not allow you to move from here but in the custody of a police constable.' Zemeide deigned no answer to this pleasant piece of news, but stood quietly before me, while I broke the seal and read the note. It was very short, merely containing these words:—

'Dear Mr Owen,

If you will accompany Zemeide to my lodgings, you shall hear some intelligence that may be of use to your friends. I am in great trouble: so pray come quite alone.

'Yours,

'M. O.'

The daring coolness, the almost impertinence of writing such an invitation to a person whom she must know had discovered that he had been her dupe, was sufficient guarantee as to the authenticity of the letter.

To come alone, too! Did she fancy I should invite Gaunt to accompany me, and that we should drop in on her, as we used to do at Hazeldean; or did she know that the affair was in other hands, and

that I might possibly bring a policeman with me, unless touched by the simple pathos of the sentence, 'I am in great trouble.'

I pondered a minute or two. After all, if Margaret Owenson did know that Gaunt was pursuing the recovery of the stolen papers with determination, she was not too daring in writing that note to me; I could no more have faced the bright lady of the cottage as 'Avenger,' than I could have flown.

'Gaunt's interest must be looked to,' I muttered to myself as I folded up the scented paper. 'I certainly must see this woman.'

I rose up. 'Does your mistress live far from here?' I said to the Indian.

'Half an hour's walk,' he answered, laconically.

'Let us go, then.'

I took the precaution of thrusting my arm through Zemeide's as we went down stairs, and he offered no resistance.

It was a freezingly cold night, too cold, much, for romantic musings as we walked along. The tiny spark of sentiment that had been kindled at the unexpected sight of that handwriting soon went out, and as I stamped along the icy pavement I felt almost sorry that I had not carried out my first impulse at the sight of the Indian, and immediately given him in charge to the police, stayed by my warm fire, and left them to hunt out the rest of the affair.

As we hurried on, and began to wind about the handsome streets and squares of the west, the regret increased, and I dreaded the idea of meeting Miss Owenson almost as much as when that broiling August morning I had to make my acquaintance with her by apologies for opening her letters.

Zemeide lead me on ruthlessly till we reached a house in —— Square, up the steps of which he condescended almost to bound, an action evidently induced by his satisfaction at having so far accomplished his mission.

The door was opened by a butler in deep mourning, while beyond stood a footman ready in orthodox fashion to conduct us up-stairs. Zemeide, however, with the air of a privileged person, passed them by, and saying in a low tone, 'Follow me, sir,' conducted me up-stairs.

The house was handsomely furnished and well lighted, and as we passed the drawing-room I saw two or three persons lounging on the sofas in that quiet lazy fashion which bespeaks 'at home.'

There was no romance about the house, nothing strange or mysterious; it was evidently occupied by a family in the well-to-do ranks of society, a commonplace set who would scout all connection with a lady of such ways and doings as our former friend of the cottage.

I thought of all this as I mounted the stairs behind the Indian, and at each step I took I grew more puzzled.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### RESTITUTION.

As we reached the third floor, the door just opposite opened, and a young lady came out holding a lamp in her hand, which as she held up to cast its light on us as we ascended, also illumined her own face.

It was a handsome, bright-looking countenance, and under other circumstances I should have been startled at observing its strong resemblance to Margaret Owenson. As it was, I went so expecting to see or hear from her, that it seemed the most natural thing in the world to find myself face to face with evidently her near relation.

'I am glad you have come,' she said, bowing slightly, as I reached the landing. 'My poor cousin is in great distress.'

As she spoke she opened a door close at hand, and, with an inclination of her head, invited me to enter.

After closing the door carefully, and setting the lamp down on the table, she moved a little away and coughed nervously. I noticed she was dressed in fresh deep mourning; and even to my stranger eye, her face looked worn and pale.

'I hope,' I began, anxious to help her to a commencement, 'that

Mrs.—I mean Miss Owenson—is not ill.'

'No,' she answered, quickly, 'not ill; but in great grief. She has asked me to see you, Mr. Owen, and tell you—indeed, I scarcely know how to begin this sad story.'

The girl came nearer to me and fixed her eyes, fast filling with tears, on me in a way that was quite trying.

'Margaret,' she continued in a shaky voice, 'has always been so dear to me, I can scarcely credit all this—scarcely believe that——. She has much to excuse her.' Again, the young lady paused.

'It's a very serious affair,' I said, gravely, beginning to understand to what she alluded.

'Very,' she answered, dropping her voice. 'You may imagine the shock it gave me when she told me all about it, only a week ago, when Geoffy was first taken ill.'

'Only a week ago! where has she been, then? Do you know what she has done with the papers?' I exclaimed eagerly.

'Wait a little,' the girl said, quietly. 'I have undertaken to tell you—let me arrange my story properly. She is so anxious for you to be the medium between Mr. Gaunt and herself; she has a great dread of meeting him. I suppose you know all about this sad story, as far as he is concerned.'

'You mean his acquaintance with Miss Owenson, and the loss of the papers,' I said.

'And little Cecile and the Huntingdons—must I begin it all from the very beginning?' The lady spoke wearily.

'I am aware of all that; indeed, I fancy nothing remains to be told, but *where* the papers are,' I replied.

'The papers are here in this house, and soon they shall be in your possession.'

I started, and my companion continued—

'You are surprised, perhaps, that Margaret should give them up, after risking so much, especially now.' Her eyes glowed. 'It is this,' she added, 'that I think will excuse her, if not justify her even in Mr. Gaunt's eyes. Hers was not the act of a common thief. It was no petty egotistical motive that influenced her.'

I could not share in my companion's enthusiasm, but my interest was keenly awakened.

'I tell the story very badly,' she said; 'let me begin again. When Margaret married Mr. Huntingdon, she had no idea that she was marrying the husband of another woman; and for months after her union he kept the secret from her. It was only after the visit of Mr. Gaunt's friend to Paris that Mr. Huntingdon, one day, after they had been quarrelling, informed her of it, and tauntingly told her she was not his wife. She might have forced him into another ceremony by threatening to denounce him as a bigamist; but that was not her desire. She had a son—a child born during the life of the first wife, consequently illegitimate. You know Margaret a little, and can perhaps imagine the agony such intelligence was to her proud spirit. It changed her completely. From that moment, as if daring the public scandal she so much dreaded, without any warning to her husband, she left him, carrying off her boy, and came to England. To us, she alleged disagreement with Mr. Huntingdon never giving us the slightest suspicion of the real cause. Cecil had taken care to impress on her the details of the story; he even assured her that the marriage certificate was in Gaunt's possession, and that the child of his first wife must be in existence somewhere.

Utterly reckless himself as to the results, he took a delight in torturing Margaret with all this; he even gave her the portrait of Marie.

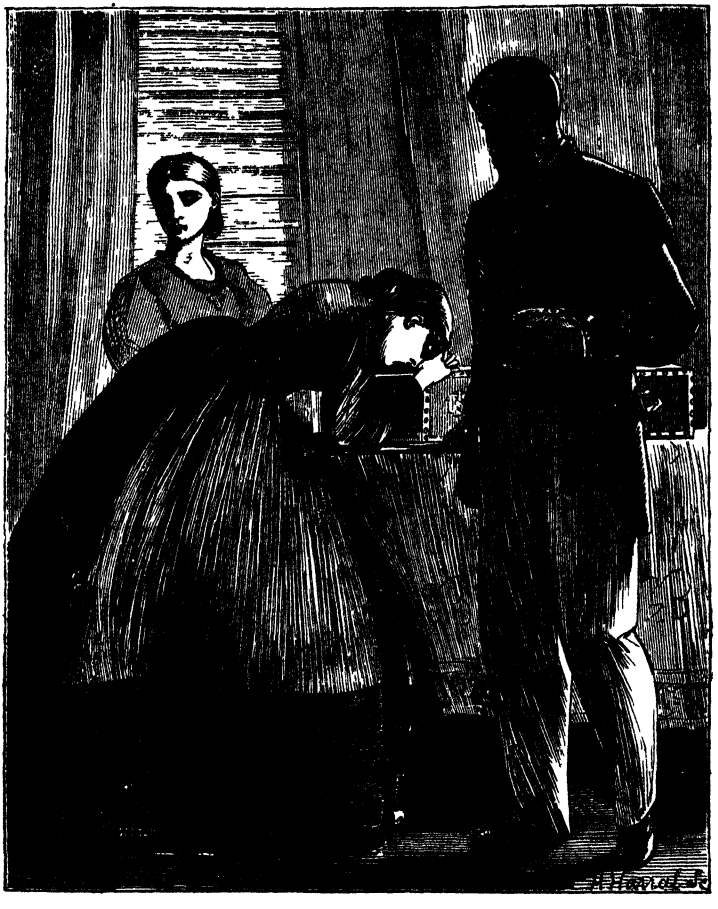
It was quite a chance meeting at the railway station, with a child resembling so strongly this portrait that, becoming convinced it was Huntingdon's child, especially as she happened to hear you mention the name of 'Gaunt' to her 'god-papa Gaunt' Margaret at length confided her secret to me, begging my assistance in the very wildest scheme that the most romantic girl ever planned. She determined to go to Hazeldean and make the acquaint-

ance of Mr. Gaunt, and then trust to chance or stratagem to get possession of that certificate, whose memory haunted her day and night.

'The manner in which she carried her plan into execution you know. I only heard of it a week ago. There was excuse, was there not?'

'And the husband,' I said, 'what did he say to it?'

'Cecil! Oh, he knew nothing of that. Margaret kept her secret closely; besides, she had no idea of communicating with him. She knew his health was dangerously impaired, and she waited patiently.



She swears to me that her only object in stealing the papers was, that when at his death Mr. Gaunt might dispute the property for Cecile, and illegitimatize her son, she holding the papers might be able to effect some compromise. She intended fairly to share the property with the first wife's child—even give up all to her. All she cared for was, to shield her son from shame. Was there no excuse?'

Again the kind eyes filled with tears.

I could not help saying, 'Yes,' in spite of stern morality.

'She is consistent, at any rate,' the girl went on; 'the news of Mr.

Huntingdon's death reached us only two days ago, and yesterday little Geoffy——.' The tears brimmed over, and she covered her face with her hands, sobbing.

'Come,' at length she exclaimed, brushing away her tears, 'Margaret will think us very long.'

She led me across the landing to an opposite room. 'It is no longer the gay lady of the cottage,' she said sadly, pausing for a moment before she opened the door. The room was lighted by two large wax candles, but there was no fire, and the air seemed to strike on one with a deathly chill.

As I entered, a tall figure clothed in deep mourning, but wearing no widow's cap on her bright hair, came forward to meet me—but between us there stood a small grey coffin.

Margaret came on quickly; her countenance, as white as the little dead face that lay there in its shroud, and which resembled hers as only child can resemble parent. She looked down on it, as with hurried hand she held across the coffin the Indian box

'It was for him,' she whispered, 'I did it; my son—my child.—He is gone!'

'If I have sinned,' she added, looking up pleadingly, 'Heaven has sufficiently punished me. Beg him—Richard Gaunt, I mean—to be merciful. Tell him,' and her lips quivered, 'that it was over my dead child's coffin I restored Cecile her birthright.' And then turning away, she sank down on her knees beside the coffin, and burst into such a passion of tears, as only her wild passionate nature was capable of.

* * * * *

Nearly a year and a half have passed away since then. I am packing up my portmanteau again for the long vacation, and again I am bound for the Isle of Wight.

This time I purpose spending my holiday at the 'cottage,' as Gaunt's place is called. Mrs. Gaunt has written me a most pleasing invitation, to which Cecile adds her postscript very lovingly, so of course, though I hate visiting young couples till they've been married at least a year, I could not well refuse.

Margaret has sobered down into a very steady, young English woman, since her marriage, and she and Cecile get on admirably together.

The only thing I disapprove in their household arrangement is, that Zemeide should fill the important office of butler. Considering his remarkable ability for appropriating other people's property, I regard him as decidedly the wrong man in the wrong place.

Gaunt fulfilled his promise to the letter. Directly Mr. Huntingdon's death was known he substantiated Cecile's claims to the property. The story of the two Mrs. Huntingdons was hushed up as much as possible, and the details of the case never became publicly known, so Margaret Owenson still passed as Mrs. Cecil Huntingdon until she became Mrs. Richard Gaunt.

As for Cecile, she gets prettier every day. In a few years, as I was saying to Gaunt ———

THE END.

## MAY THE FIRST.

### An Academy Day-Dream.

SHINES the sun in mid-day splendour
O'er Trafalgar's crowded square,
O'er the basins whence the slender
Crystal stream ascends the air,
From the stately fountains flinging
O'er the *pavés*, sheets of spray,
Through the carriages all bringing
Those who mark the First of May!

Come the reigning queens of Fashion
To the gala day of Art
(Pictures are a faultless passion)—
Their impressions to impart
To each other of the season—
Weather—artists—newest drums'—
Flirt—dictate and give no reason—
This as second nature comes.

Come the 'eligibles' stalking—
Coated all *à merveille* they—
Up the steps as if the walking
Through the rooms this First of May
Were a labour so gigantic
That those whiskers, waving long,
May become—the thought is frantic—
Limp and straggled in the throng.

Come the beauties in the glory
Of *the* toilettes of the spring—
Beauties such as in a story
(Fresh from Mudie's) glamour fling
Over ev'rybody—gliding
By the pictures murm'ring low,
*Tant peu soit* their faces hiding
By their veils as to and fro—

Smiling, criticising, teasing,
Statelily they sweep along,
While—too thickly to be pleasing—
Follow all the whiskered throng;
And I pause as by me streaming
Pass a tide of summer friends;
Pause, and idly fall a-dreaming
On their varied aims and ends.

Listlessly my eyes are resting
On the paintings on the wall;
Listlessly the idle jesting
Of the flâneurs seems to fall
On my ears—when slowly nearing,
Comes a form whose presence seems
Rolling back the mists appearing
In the cloudland of my dreams.

Shines the sun in mid-day splendour,
O'er the sapphire-tinted dress,
O'er the features sweetly tender,
O'er the lips whose smiles caress,
O'er the curls of chesnut-golden,
Falling past the jewell'd ears—
*Ehew*. hi! what remembrance olden
Wakes from be-out the home of tears!

So I watch, as in a vision
Of a dreamland—though the crowd
Sways around me; ah! Elysian
Are the accents speaking loud
In my heart, for they awaken
Such a music from its chords,
Time e'en seems as it had taken
No effect from those old words

Uttered twelve months back, [illegible] certain,
I had thought myself more wise
Deemed that I had dropped the curtain
On the drama. But those eyes,
Gleaming in their hazel glory,
Have resumed their ancient sway!
So I'll e'en re-tell the story
Told upon that First of May!

W. R.

# THE MERCHANT PRINCES OF ENGLAND.

## CHAPTER XII.

### WILLIAM PATERSON, OF DUMFRIES.

BY that title is generally designated a man who, if the scenes of his exploits and the places influenced by his labours were to be indicated, might just as well be said to be 'of Bristol,' 'of London,' 'of Edinburgh,' 'of the Old World and the New.' The history of William Paterson, the founder of the Bank of England, and the promoter of the Darien settlement, the great encourager of the union between England and Scotland, and the foremost propounder of modern views on trade and finance, touches all that is most interesting and instructive in the history of British commerce during the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and the first quarter of the eighteenth. A merchant prince he is hardly to be called, if worldly wealth and the honour of the contemporaries for whom he worked are necessary attendants upon such an one; but of rare intelligence and rarer honesty, native worth and the wisdom that comes of experience, are to be taken account of, few, indeed, among the worthies of England or any foreign country have better right to the distinction than this beggared adventurer and forgotten benefactor.

The whole of Paterson's career is as full of romance as that part of it which Eliot Warburton made the theme of his 'Darien,' the skilfullest of his novels, and not spoilt as an historical picture by more inaccuracies than one must expect to find in a work of fiction. The Patersons of Dumfriesshire were men of note in old Scottish history. One of the number, living at the beginning of the eighteenth century, son of a Bishop of Ross, was the last Archbishop of Glasgow; while another, a retired sea-captain of Edinburgh, attained unenviable distinction as a persecutor of the Covenanters, among whom others of his name were conspicuous. The Church historians of Scotland tell especially how John Paterson, of Penyvenie, defended himself and the faith that was dear to him during the troublous times amid which he lived. Once, we read, he was at breakfast, when three dragoons, sent to arrest him, came within sight. 'He instantly rose from the table,' says the word-heaping historian, 'and, grasping his trusty sword, presented himself in the attitude of self-defence at the door. His affectionate wife, whom solicitude for her husband's welfare prompted to expose herself to danger, followed close at his back. The soldiers, in order to overpower their victim, made a simultaneous onset; but Paterson, with undaunted breast and powerful arm, brandished his glittering glaive above his head, and dealt his blows so lustily, that he disabled two of his opponents, and laid them stunned, but not dead, at his feet. The third, a stalwart dragoon, yet unscathed, approached the valiant Covenanter, who so bravely maintained his position before the door, with a view to cut him down, and the more easily, as he was already exhausted by the stiffness of the conflict; but his wife, who, like a guardian angel, was hovering near him, hastily untied her apron and flung it over the soldier's sword-arm, by means of which the weapon was entangled, so that Paterson made his escape without injury to himself. It was some time before matters were adjusted on the battle ground, and before the prostrate soldiers recovered themselves, and by this time the fugitive was beyond their reach.'

From such adventures as those—and John Paterson had many of them during a lifetime of ninety years—his famous kinsman was removed. Born in April 1658, at Skipmyre, in Tinwald, a few miles

north-east of Dumfries, he is reported to have been from infancy trained by his pious mother in the doctrines of the Covenanters, and all through his life we find in him a simplicity and a devoutness that well accorded with that training; but he left home before he was old enough to share the persecutions of that time. At the age of sixteen, it is reported, he went to Bristol, where he lodged for a while with an old kinswoman, and at her death inherited from her money enough to start on the commercial career he had marked out for himself. From 1686, he said at a later date, he especially devoted himself 'abroad, as well as at home, to matters of general trade and public revenues;' but many years before then he appears to have left Bristol, either to get a few years' further exercise in European commerce at Amsterdam, or at once to go on a trading expedition to America and the West Indies.

Bristol was then, and had been for more than a hundred years, the great highway from England to the New World. The enterprising Bristol merchants who helped the Cabots to go on their early voyages of North American discovery, have in every subsequent generation had worthy followers. When, in 1574, Sir Humphrey Gilbert and his comrades petitioned Queen Elizabeth for leave to start an expedition of discovery and trade to the northern parts of America, as 'of all unfrequented places the only most fittest and most commodious for us to intermeddle withal,' we find that 'the city of Bristol very readily offered 1000*l.*' towards the 4000*l.* necessary for the undertaking; and though that project brought no immediate success, other and larger ventures were promptly and prosperously made. It was chiefly through the perseverance of Bristol men that Virginia, after the failure of Raleigh's experiment, became a nucleus for all the southern parts of the United States; and that in like manner the northern colonies, growing out of the New England settlement, were strengthened and extended. The New England patent was issued in 1620. Three years later James I. wrote to the cities of Bristol and Exeter, requesting them 'to move persons of quality to join in the advancement of that plantation, a work in which the public take great interest, and likely to bring good returns,' and the former town was specially willing to share in the work. Dated 1638 is a petition from 'Walter Barrett, Walter Sandy and Company, of Bristol, merchants,' setting forth that 'they have been many years settling a plantation in New England, which was begun long before such multitudes of people went over; all they intend to send are regular people, neither factious nor vicious in religion: their plantation is apart from all others, and they desire now to transport a hundred and eighty persons, to provide victuals for furnishing the ships employed in the fishing trade upon that coast, for which they have built and made ready two ships;' and there are a number of like documents showing the zeal with which the Bristol traders applied themselves to other branches of American commerce. In 1651, for instance, 'Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Yeomans, and other merchants of Bristol, and owners of the "Mary and Francis,"' obtained license from Cromwell's Council of State to accompany the fleet going to Barbadoes, 'upon giving security to the value of the ship and goods, that she does not depart from the fleet, or trade with any in defection from the Commonwealth;' while on the 1st of January, 1657, sanction was given to 'Mr. Ellis of Bristol, to transport 1000 dozen of shoes to the Barbadoes,' followed by authority to the same merchant for a like shipment on the 3rd of December. One other entry from the documents in the State Paper Office is too curious to be left unquoted, showing, as it does, how early began the great tide of Irish emigration, in Bristol ships, to the New World. By a Commonwealth order of 1652, 'liberty is given to Henry Hazard and Robert Immans, of the city of Bristol, merchants, to carry two hundred Irishmen from any port in Ireland to the Caribbee Islands.'

But New England was, in Pater-

son's time, the chief resort of Bristol merchants and enterprising colonists from Bristol; and thither the young Scotchman went at some time previous to 1686, probably in 1681, for a few years of wandering life in the American colonies. He married the widow of a Puritan minister at Boston, named Bridge; and he is said to have been a partner in Phipps's exploit for recovering the Spanish treasure lost off Bahamas. In later years some of his enemies said that his occupation in the West Indies had been that of a missionary; others, that he employed himself as a buccaneer. Ne[illegible] statement has any real foundation. His Presbyterian training, and the known piety of his character, may have led him to follow the practice of his fellow-thinkers, and preach or conduct prayer meetings, whenever occasion occurred to demand this service; and doubtless some of the commercial transactions in which he was engaged, like those of all his brother tradesmen in the American waters, would look piratical if strictly judged by modern rules. Englishmen in those days had not forgotten the old mode of warfare with their great Spanish enemies. They still fought and made prizes on their own account, as Drake, Frobisher, Raleigh, and Cavendish had done before them. But it is clear that Paterson was a merchant, and an honest and energetic one. Anderson, the historian of commerce, who, as a lad, must have known him in his old age, speaks of him as 'a merchant who had been much in foreign countries, and had entered far into speculations relating to commerce and colonies.' Trading voyages, chiefly, as it seems, between Bahamas and Boston, occupied him for the five or six years of his stay in the West Indies; and it was a desire to set in motion a much larger scheme of trade that brought him home before he had time to accumulate much wealth by his traffic. He must have been in England in 1681, as on the 16th of November in that year he obtained preliminary admission into the Merchant Taylors' Company; and the record of his full and final admission on the 21st of October, 1689, shows that he was in England again at that time. He had left the West Indies, indeed, about two years earlier than that. On his own showing, in a document addressed to William III., the first thought of a Darien colony occurred to him in 1684; and in 1687, according to the statement of one of his contemporary libellers, 'he returned to Europe with his head full of projects. He endeavoured to make a market of his wares in Holland and Hamburg, but without success. He went afterwards to Berlin, opened his pack there, and had almost caught the Elector of Brandenburgh in his noose, but that miscarried too. He likewise imparted the same project to Mr. Secretary Blathwayt, but still with the same success. Meeting thus with so many discouragements in these several countries, he let his project sleep for some years, and pitched his tent in London, where matter is never wanting to exercise plotting heads.'

These sentences are quoted from a pamphlet by Hodges, the professional traducer employed by the English ministry, in 1700, to write down the Darien scheme, for 300*l.* a year. But the facts are tolerably correct. Coming to England shortly before the deposition of James II., Paterson had laid before that sovereign a proposal for taking possession of the Isthmus of Darien, 'the keys of the Indies and doors of the world,' and there founding a settlement which would answer the treble purpose of providing a central post for operations against Spain, of securing an emporium for English trade in the West Indies and along the western shores of both North and South America, and of establishing a high-road for commerce with the more distant dependencies in India and other parts of Asia. 'There will be herein,' he said, in the conclusion of a long and learned treatise on the subject, published some years after this time, 'more than sufficient means for laying the foundation of our trade, and improvement as large and extensive as his Majesty's empire, and to order matters so that the designs of trade, navigation, and

industry, instead of being like bones of contention, as hitherto, may for the future become bonds of union to the British kingdoms; since here will not only certainly and visibly be room enough for these, but, if need were, for many more sister nations. Thus they will not only be effectually cemented, but, by means of these storehouses of the Indies, this island, as it seems by nature designed, will, of course, become the emporium of Europe. His Majesty will then be effectually enabled to hold the balance and preserve the peace among the best and most considerable, if not likewise amongst the greatest part of mankind, from which he hath hitherto principally been hindered and disabled by the mean and narrow conceptions of monopolists and hucksters, who have always been, and if not carefully prevented will still be, presuming to measure the progress of the industry and improvements of the very universe, not by the extent and nature of the thing, but by their own poor, mistaken, and narrow conceptions thereof.' But James II. was too busy with the troubles that his bigotry had brought upon him to listen to suggestions for the benefiting of his kingdom or the cementing of union between England and Scotland; least of all when those suggestions came from a Puritan merchant and a kinsman of Scottish Covenanters. As king of England he had no disposition to carry on the schemes of naval grandeur that had won honour for him when Duke of York; and the only merchants whom he cared to have intercourse with, or to keep under his protection, were those same 'monopolists and hucksters' who found it their interest to pay him largely for his friendship. Therefore Paterson obtained no hearing at the English court. Not yet disheartened, he took his Darien project abroad. In 1688, while matters were being arranged for the coming over of William of Orange, he was often to be seen in the coffee-houses of Amsterdam, conferring with the great Dutch merchants, and urging their participation in his views. Later in the same year he was at Hamburg, urging the establishment of a company for the carrying out of his pet scheme. But in both places he failed; and returning to London in 1689, he seems, not to have for a moment abandoned the idea, but to have postponed it for a more suitable occasion, when the nation, as well as himself, might be less oppressed with 'troubles, disappointments, and afflictions.'

Concerning his life in London during the next few years, we are told but little; but that little helps us to a fair understanding of his position. He was living for some time, long or short, at W[illegible]or; and there is a pleasant tradition that he bought a farm there, with the view of providing a comfortable home for his aged parents, robbed of all enjoyment in their native district by the persecutions then abounding. But the merchant himself in need to live nearer the centre of business. For some years his residence was in the parish of St. G[illegible]s-in-the-Fields, where in 1691 he took a leading part, in company with Sir John Trenchard, Paul Daranda, and other notable men, in a project for bringing water into the north of London from the Hampstead and Highgate hills, an idea suggested by the noble enterprise of Sir Hugh Myddelton in connection with the New River Company.

But he was also busy about matters much more commercially important. Late in this same year we find him giving evidence before the House of Commons, as a merchant of influence and repute, on the collection and management of public loans. He proposed that, in lieu of occasional and unsettled loans formerly made to Government, a fixed sum of 1,000,000*l.* should be advanced by the trading merchants, at six per cent. interest, as a perpetual fund, to be managed by trustees chosen from the subscribers, and used not only in supplying the pressing claims of Government, but also in forming a public bank, 'to exchange such current bills as should be brought to be exchanged, the better to give credit thereunto, and make the said bills the better to circulate.'

That, be it noted, was the first suggestion of the Bank of England. In old times the only bankers were pawnbrokers. The Italian merchants who in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had given its name to Lombard Street, set a fashion which men like Sir Richard Whittington and Sir Thomas Gresham were not slow in following. Kings and great men, in need of money, came to have their wants supplied, leaving either lands or substantial security for repayment. Edward I. once pawned his crown, and James I. and Charles I. many times pledged the crown-jewels. But whether the security was given in paper or in solid money's worth, bills and every other sort of paper currency, as we now understand the terms, were things unknown. Until the money was repaid, the security was locked up, and not allowed to come into the market. By this plan of tying up great quantities of capital the mercantile community was seriously damaged, although one class—especially since the days of George Heriot and Sir William Herrick—the class of goldsmiths, was greatly enriched and advanced in influence. In attempting to remedy this evil, the London merchants fell into another as great. The extravagancies of life under the gay rule of the Stuarts, and the risk which private individuals felt in keeping money in their own hands during the troublous times both of the Rebellion and of the Restoration, brought immense quantities of coin and bullion into the keeping of the goldsmiths and other rich men of Lombard Street. Having begun as mere money-lenders, they came to be money-keepers as well. They not only lent great sums of money in return for paper bonds, but they also took charge of vast quantities of wealth, for which, in like manner, they issued paper bonds. Thus it became natural and necessary for the paper to be used as money; and no sooner was the custom begun than its convenience, both to the honest and to the dishonest, led to its adoption to an unreasonable and dangerous extent. Half the gold in the kingdom came to be stowed away in the vaults of Lombard Street, and the buying and selling of ordinary merchants and tradesmen was carried on almost exclusively by means of paper. Both for giving and for receiving bullion the bankers or money-agents charged high rates of interest, and so enriched themselves to the disparagement of their neighbours; and the public, while paying dearly for these privileges, ran the risk of losing their wealth through the failure or defalcation of the men to whom they entrusted it.

It was to remedy this state of things that in 1691 William Paterson urged the establishment of a national bank, so as to provide a safe means of investment and a trustworthy machinery for lending and borrowing money at proper rates of interest. Many of the great London merchants supported his project, especially, as it seems, Michael Godfrey, one of the richest and most honest city men of that time, brother of the ill-fated and famous Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey; but others opposed it, and it was coldly entertained by the legislature Five or six gentlemen joined with Paterson, we read in the Parliamentary journals, in urging the project and giving evidence touching it before a Committee of the House of Commons. 'The Committee were of opinion not to receive any proposal which required making the bills of property current, so as to force them as payment on any without their consent. But they acquainted Mr. Paterson that they would receive any proposal to advance one million on a perpetual fund of interest, to be in the nature of a purchase, where they might assign their interest as they pleased, to any one who consented thereto.' To that proposal to do for the Government all that it needed, without according to the merchants what they chiefly desired, Paterson, eager for the interest and honour of the Commonwealth, was willing to agree But the more prudent merchants who had promised to assist in subscribing the capital thought otherwise. Therefore, after some further debating

and consideration, the proposal was thrown aside, to be carefully thought over by Paterson, and discussed with his friends in the City and the West End. It was also taken note of by some of the political and financial speculators for whom the ensuing years were famous, and made the basis of many absurd propositions. Chief of these were Hugh Chamberlayne and John Briscoe, who published pamphlets and tendered petitions to Parliament representing the advantages to be derived from a land bank, and the issuing of unlimited supplies of paper money, inconvertible into gold or silver. By this arrangement every one having land was to receive paper money equivalent to its value, besides remaining in possession of the land itself. The owner of an estate yielding 150*l.* a year—and therefore supposed to be worth 8,000*l.*—for instance, was to be enriched by a bonus of 8,000*l.* worth of paper. 'In consideration of the freeholders bringing their lands into the bank,' said Chamberlayne, 'for a fund of current credit, to be established by Act of Parliament, it is now proposed that for every 150*l.* per annum, secured for a hundred and fifty years, for but one hundred payments of 100*l.* per annum, free from all manner of taxes and deductions whatsoever, every such freeholder shall receive 4,000*l.* in the said current credit, and shall have 2,000*l.* more put into the fishery stock for his proper benefit; and there may be further 2,000*l.* reserved at the Parliament's disposal towards the carrying on this present war.' The nonsense of such talk is now apparent to every one, but in those days of hazy political economy and of financial difficulties, leading both men and nations to all sorts of preposterous hopes of money-making, it was accepted by thousands. It even found supporters enough in the House of Commons to get it referred to a committee at the Christmas time of 1693. But there it was left, the good sense of the House being too strong for its real adoption, and the commercial world generally being made aware of its folly through the eloquent pamphlets of William Paterson and others.

Chamberlayne's silly scheme had this good effect, at any rate, that, by the force of contrast, it brought favour upon Paterson's wise one. Paterson's proposal was abandoned in 1691, as we saw, because the Government objected to the legalizing of paper currency. That was the ostensible objection; a more real one arose from the fact that the financier's scheme also involved the doing away with the pernicious custom, adopted by needy governments during many generations, of debasing the coinage and pocketing the money thus gained. That was a policy that Paterson could not fail to denounce both on moral and on financial grounds. He also denounced the system of lotteries and annuities by which, for the receipt of money to be presently squandered in foreign wars, heavy additions were made to the national debt, 'that dangerous and consuming evil,' as he called it in the days of its commencement. 'Upon the whole,' he wrote in one of his many treatises, 'they so managed matters in these last three years, from the first proposition to the establishment of the Bank'—that is, from 1691 to 1694—'as that the before-mentioned debt of three millions was one way or other more than doubled. At last, with much ado, they ventured to try the proposition of the Bank, although not so as to affect the general credit for the better so much as at first designed, but only as a lame expedient.'

But Paterson's battle was won as soon as he had gained permission to establish the Bank anyhow. His chief helpers in the work were Michael Godfrey, who used his influence in the City, and Charles Montague, Earl of Halifax, Paterson's constant friend and supporter, who fought down the opposition of court and state. That was by no means a light task. The proposal had to be smuggled into Parliament under cover of a bill imposing a new duty on tonnage, for the benefit of the capitalists lending money towards carrying on the war with

France. A loan of 1,200,000*l.* was to be made to the crown, at the unusually low rate of eight per cent. interest, and, as a return for those moderate terms, the subscribers were to be incorporated as the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, with power to deal in bills of exchange, bullion, and forfeited lands, provided they carried on no other trade in their corporate capacity. This suggestion was sharply canvassed in the House of Commons, and only passed after many divisions and amendments. It was angrily denounced in the House of Lords, the final discussion, after many delays and repeated considerations, lasting from nine o'clock in the morning till four in the afternoon. Even then the opposition was not over. William III. was abroad when the bill went up for the royal signature, and the non-contents did their utmost to prejudice Queen Mary against it. 'She was detained in council from four in the afternoon until ten at night,' wrote Paterson; 'and had it not been for the queen, who insisted on the express orders from the king, then in Flanders, the commission had not passed; consequently, notwithstanding all the former pains and expense of private men about it, there had still been no Bank.' Fortunately there *was* to be a Bank. The bill was endorsed by the king on the 25th of April, 1694, and on the 27th of July the royal charter of incorporation was issued. Within ten days of the opening of the books the subscription was full. On the first day 300,000*l.* was paid or promised, 2,000*l.* being Paterson's own; and on the tenth John Locke had to hurry up to the temporary meeting-place of the Company at the old Mercers' Hall, that he might be in time to tender his contribution of 500*l.* to the required sum of 1,200,000*l.* 'The advantages that the king and all concerned in tallies had from the Bank,' said Bishop Burnet, no friend to Paterson, 'were so soon sensibly felt, that all people saw into the secret reasons that made the enemies of the constitution set themselves with so much earnestness against it.' Paterson himself, in a modest narrative of the business, telling nothing at all about his own share in it, remarked that 'the Bank not only relieved the managers'—that is, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his associates*—'from their frequent processions to the City to borrow money on the best and nearest public securities, at ten or twelve per cent. per annum interest, but likewise gave life and currency to double or treble the value of its capital, to other branches of the public credit, and so, under God, became the principal means of the success of the campaign in the following year, 1695, particularly in reducing the important city and fortress of Namur, the first material step to the peace concluded at Ryswick, two years after.'

But if the Bank of England did much to facilitate the reduction of Namur, the reduction of Namur wrought a cruel injury on the Bank of England. Hardly had the Company, consisting of a governor, a deputy-governor, and four-and-twenty directors, quitted their temporary home at the Mercers' Hall, to find a more permanent dwelling-place in the Grocers' Hall, where their business was conducted in one long room by fifty-four clerks, than it lost its two best members. Business took Michael Godfrey to the camp of William III. in the Netherlands, in the summer of 1695, and curiosity led him to be present at the siege of Namur. 'Mr. Godfrey,' said the king, when he caught sight of him among the officers of his staff, 'Mr. Godfrey, you ought not to run these hazards. You are not a soldier: you can be of no use to us here.' 'Sir,' answered the merchant, 'I run no more hazard than your Majesty.' 'Not so,' replied the king; 'I am where it is my duty to be, and I may without presumption

* 'Formerly,' says Macaulay, 'when the Treasury was empty, when the taxes came in slowly, and when the pay of the soldiers and sailors was in arrear, it had been necessary for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to go, hat in hand, up and down Cheapside and Cornhill, attended by the Lord Mayor and by the aldermen, to make up a sum by borrowing 100*l.* from this hosier, and 200*l.* from that ironmonger.'

commit my life to God's keeping. But you——.' Godfrey never heard the sentence finished. At that instant a cannon ball struck him, and he fell dead at King William's feet.

Godfrey had been deputy-governor of the Bank, and a stout champion of all the measures propounded by Paterson, who, from his inferior mercantile position, was only a director, marked out for special and ill-tempered resistance, just because of his fame and influence in the outside world. This opposition seems to have induced him, as soon as his friend's death left him alone, to abandon the work altogether. There is no warrant for the current assertion that he was expelled from the direction; but he does appear to have been, according to a contemporary statement, 'intrigued out of his post, and out of the honours he had earned.' At any rate, after the first year, his name is not found in the list of directors, and before long he repurchased his stock, to use it in other ways. Henceforth the memorable history of the Bank of England has nothing to do with Paterson. Having overcome the conservative opposition of many of his contemporaries, and the yet more dangerous love of novelties that characterized many others, and succeeded in the establishment of a noble institution, too full of vitality to be seriously harmed by the folly or selfishness of its members, he left it to do its work in the bringing about of an entire change in the financial policy of England, and to contribute vastly to its unparalleled commercial greatness.

But Paterson had no thought of being idle. He only left the institution, in which his presence seemed to excite jealousies, to do what seemed to him quite as useful work of another sort. Having withdrawn his 2,000*l.* from the Bank, we find him at this time investing double that sum in the City of London Orphans' Fund, and making important suggestions for the improved management and distribution of that charity. The suggestions, however, were not adopted; and the merchant straightway turned all his attention to a revival of his long-cherished Darien project.

Fully to tell the history of that project and its effects would require a volume, and then another volume would be wanted for disproof of the errors into which most previous writers have fallen respecting it. Prejudice against Scotland, and the personal abuse of Paterson that was heaped upon him, when misfortune left him many enemies and few friends, caused grievous misrepresentations to be published in his lifetime, and those misrepresentations have found ready adoption at the hands of later historians. 'The story is an exciting one,' said Lord Macaulay, 'and it has generally been told by writers whose judgment had been perverted by strong national partiality.' There are other partialities besides national ones; and as the most impartial are apt to make blunders, if they write without precise information, the careful student of Paterson's career will find much to dissent from, even in one of the most eloquent episodes* in the most eloquent of modern histories. We have already seen that Paterson was not 'a foreign adventurer, whose whole capital consisted in an inventive brain and a persuasive tongue.' The actual facts show him to have acted in this affair not always with worldly wisdom, but from first to last with rare disinterestedness. If there were errors in his scheme, they were errors of a generous mind, and such as a well-balanced judgment might fall into without reproach. The dangerous faults of the undertaking were clearly seen and boldly denounced by him, and for the ruin they brought upon it blame can attach only to the men who thwarted and superseded him.

For more than ten years the project had been taking shape and gaining force in his mind. He had already proposed it, without success, to James II. of England, to the merchants of Amsterdam and Hamburg, and to the Elector of Brandenburg. He now urged it upon his countrymen in Scotland, partly in a patriotic desire to increase their

* Macaulay's 'History,' ed. 1862, vol. viii., pp. 195–228.

slender foreign trade, and partly because among them he would be likely to meet with less opposition than among the long-established monopolists of London. Mainly due to his influence, doubtless, was the Act of Parliament encouraging Scottish trade, passed in 1693; and to him is attributed the very wording of the statute for the formation of a Scottish African and India Company, which received the royal sanction on the 26th of June, 1695. 'There are remarkable occurrences at this time,' he wrote, on the 9th of July following, to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, 'and our neighbours lie under many disadvantages. A considerable measure of the gains of trade and improvements seems to incline to Scotland, to give them a facility and inclination to gain some advantages for themselves and their posterity, all which seem to be harbingers of, and to portend, success. Above all, it's needful for us to make no distinction of parties in this great and noble undertaking; but of whatever nation or religion a member, if one of us, he ought to be looked upon to be of the same interest and inclination. We must not act apart in anything, but in a firm and united body, and distinct from all interest whatever; so hoping that Almighty God, who at this time seems to have fitted so many able instruments, both of our own nation and others, and given us such opportunities as perhaps others have not, will perfect the work begun, and make some use of Scotland also to visit those dark places of the earth whose habitations are full of cruelty.'

(*To be continued.*)

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## MAY MUSINGS.

BY A CITY POET.

BEAUTIFUL May! time of sunshine and cheerfulness,
Brightest and pleasantest month of the year,
Country and town lose the last of their dreariness,
Winter is dead when thy blossoms appear.
Hark! what a concert! now sing they how merrily,
Birds taking treble in melody gay,
Bees humming bass in the chorus, and verily
Grasshoppers chirping a welcome to May!

Down in green lanes now the hedges are eagerly
Donning fair robes of each delicate hue,
Threaded with sunbeams of gold, and not meagrely
Jewelled with glittering drops of dew.
May in the country affords in variety
Charms such as these—very well in their way;
But for the witching delights of society,
London out-London's itself in May.

Season when Amazons, hatted and habited,
Canter bewitchingly down Rotten Row;
Feathers and veils, black, white, blue, brown, and drab it had,
Conquered St Anthony's self—such a show!
Men in the Park o'er the rails stretch their necks to see
Beauties in carriages, dazzling array!
What dresses! and bonnets! and coiffures! oh, ecstasy!
No place on earth is like London in May!

Season for Opera-boxes, new carriages,
Everything costly, luxurious, and rare;
Season when daily are wonderful marriages
Seen at St. George's, near Hanover Square.
Folks from the country, o'er-brimming with loyalty,
Stand in the Mall on the Queen's birthday,
Patiently waiting for hours, until Royalty
Passes to hold the great Drawing-room in May.

Season when opens Her Majesty's Theatre;
Season for opera, concert, and rout;
Season when girls come to town 'just to see it,' or,
Like the new novels, to 'be brought out.'
Now is the Derby, great annual festival;
Think of its glories—they're always in May;
Think of the 'fun on the road,' and then, best of all,
Think of the headache you have next day.

Now is the 'Heath' in its glory at Ascot, too,
White gloves are betted and white hands are won;
Fortnum and Mason pack hamper and basket to
Crown our delight when the race is run.
Smiles and champagne, lobster-salad and laughter, are
Capital things on a sunshiny day;
These, and the balls that are sure to come after, are
Some of the pleasures of London in May.

Balls did I say? Oh! immortal Terpsichore,
This is the month when in London *you* reign;
'Pa' by 'the girls' and their dear little trickery
Vanquished, says, 'Well, this once, never again.'
Music, such music! the true Coote-and-Tinneyean,
Soft, streaming, measured, melodious, and gay,
Partners, so deeply bespoken, who'd win, he an
Early engagement must make in May.

Season when opens the Royal Academy;
Here may the visitor revel in art,
And though he needn't know Ruskin from Adam, he
Lingers with pleasure, and grieves to depart.
Genius there triumphs, and Landseer thou headest all
Other competitors in the R. A.
(Nelson, hard by, longs to see on his pedestal
Landseer's four lions, and long he may!)

Season when flower-shows tempt by their brilliancy
Smartly-dressed people to Chiswick and Kew,
Who, as they saunter through canvas pavilions, see
Rarest exotics in thousands on view.
Season when——but I must pause, for the Editor
Hints that my verses are 'stopping the way.'
Reader, farewell! I must end since he's said it, or
Yet I'd not done with the pleasures of May.

*Temple*, 1865. T. W. S.

# AN EXCURSION EXTRAORDINARY;

OR,

## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF AFRICA.

AT a crowded meeting of the Royal Geographical Society of London, held on the 14th of January, 1862, one of the speakers concluded thus:—

'England has always marched at the head of nations [Observe, nations universally march, one at the head of all the others], through the intrepidity of her travellers in pursuit of geographical discoveries [Hear, hear] Dr. Samuel Fergusson, one of her glorious sons, will not disgrace his origin [No, no] His attempt, if it succeed [It will, it will], will connect, by completing them, our scattered notions of African cartology [Hear, hear]; and, if it fail [Never, never], it will still remain one of the boldest conceptions of human genius' [Long-continued cheering, with loud calls for Dr. Fergusson].

The Doctor was, therefore, introduced to the meeting. His entrance was the signal for renewed applause, which he received without the slightest emotion. He was a man some forty years of age, of ordinary stature and constitution. A ruddiness of complexion betrayed his sanguine temperament. His countenance was calm, his features regular; but his nose was large, like the prow of a vessel, as became a man destined to make important discoveries. His soft eyes, intelligent rather than daring, gave a great charm to his physiognomy. His arms were long; his feet were planted on the ground with the decision of a sturdy pedestrian. Advancing to the chair that was placed for him, he stood still and steady, and raising the forefinger of his right hand to heaven, he uttered the single word, 'Excelsior!'

The expression was accepted with enthusiasm. It exactly described the situation, and that with the utmost brevity.

But who was the Doctor? and what was his enterprise?

Samuel Fergusson was the son of a captain in the navy, trained to follow his father's profession. His studies included, amongst other things, the narratives of Mungo Park, Bruce, Levaillant, and even 'Robinson Crusoe,' besides botany, astronomy, medicine, and natural philosophy in general. At the age of twenty-two, when he lost his father, he had already made the tour of the world. In 1845, he took part in Captain Sturt's expedition for the discovery of a Caspian Sea which was supposed to exist in the centre of Australia This little excursion was followed by other equally pleasant trips, during all which he was one of the most active of the 'Daily Telegraph's' correspondents. He was well known to the Geographical Societies of London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, as well as to the Travellers' Club and the Royal Polytechnic Institution, whence his friend Kokburn, the statician, one day sent him the following problem by way of an agreeable relaxation:—Given the number of miles travelled during your voyage round the world, how many miles has your head travelled more than your feet, in consequence of the different lengths of the radii? Or, Given the number of miles travelled by your head and your feet respectively, calculate the height of your own stature exactly to a line.

After the meeting the Doctor was entertained at dinner by the Travellers' Club, where the dimensions of the joints were in proportion to the celebrity of the guest. The sturgeon which figured at this splendid repast was only three inches shorter than Fergusson himself. Next morning the 'Daily Telegraph,' in a leader, announced, 'Africa, at last, is about to yield the secret of her vast solitudes. A modern Œdipus will solve the riddle which sixty centuries have failed to reveal. An intrepid discoverer proposes to traverse the whole of that continent, from east to west, in a balloon. If we are correctly informed, the start-

ing-point will be the Isle of Zanzibar, on the east coast. The spot at which the journey will end can be known only to Providence. The Geographical Society has generously contributed 2,500*l.* in aid of the expenses. Our readers shall be duly acquainted with the progress of this adventurous attempt, which is unprecedented in the annals of geography.'

Dr. Fergusson had a friend; but he was not another self, an *alter ego*. It is impossible for friendship to exist between two perfectly identical beings. Dick Kennedy was a thorough Scotchman, open, resolute, obstinate. He resided at Leith, near Edinburgh. He was a perfect sportsman, and so capital a shot, that not only did he split rifle-bullets on the edge of a knife, but he divided them into such equal halves, that, on weighing them afterwards, there was no perceptible difference between them. The young men first became acquainted in India, where they belonged to the same regiment. While Dick was hunting tigers and elephants, Samuel searched for plants and insects, and was rewarded by more than one specimen whose value was equal to a pair of ivory tusks. Neither of them ever had occasion to save the other's life, or to render any service whatsoever; whence arose an unalterable attachment. Destiny sometimes separated, but sympathy constantly reunited them.

As soon as Kennedy caught sight of the article in the 'Daily Telegraph,' he hastened in great excitement to the General Railway Station, and next day arrived in London. Three quarters of an hour afterwards a cab deposited him in front of the Doctor's modest mansion, Soho Square, Greek Street. He rapidly mounted the *perron*, or flight of steps, and announced his arrival by five loud knocks. The Doctor opened the door in person.

'You in London, my dear Dick, and during the shooting season too! What brings you here?'

'The newspapers' announcement of your insane project, which I am determined to prevent.'

'Indeed! *I* mean to take you with me; but we can breakfast while discussing that point.' So the friends took their opposite places before a little table laden with a pile of sandwiches and an enormous teapot.

'My dear Samuel, your scheme is impossible.'

'We shall see that after we have tried it.'

'And the obstacles, the dangers of every kind!'

'Obstacles were invented to be overcome. As to dangers, everything in life is dangerous. It may be dangerous to sit down, or to get out of bed.'

'Have you discovered any means of directing a balloon?'

'Not a bit of it; the idea is visionary. But I mean to go from east to west, by taking advantage of the trade-winds.'

'Really!' said Kennedy, reflecting. 'The trade-winds. Certainly—there may be something in that.'

Dr. Fergusson had also a servant who answered to the name of Joe; a capital fellow, devoted to his master—a faithful Caleb, of unfailing good-humour. Fergusson left to his management all the minor details of his existence, and with good reason. Rare and honest Joe! A servant who orders your dinner; whose taste is yours; who packs your trunk, without forgetting shirts or stockings; who keeps your keys and your secrets without betraying the trust—think of such a servant as that!

In Joe's opinion the Doctor was infallible. After he had spoken, might no man speak. Whatever he thought, was just; what he said, sensible; whatever he ordered and undertook was possible and practicable; consequently, when the Doctor broached his plan of crossing Africa in the air, for Joe it was a settled business. He felt assured of making one of the party.

But also he was certain to render great service by his intelligence and his marvellous agility. Had a professor of gymnastics been required for the monkeys in the Zoological Gardens, Joe was perfectly capable of undertaking the situation. Jumping, leaping, flying, impossible feats

for him were merely child's play. Amongst his other qualifications, he possessed an astonishing power and range of vision. Like Moestlin, Kepler's teacher, he enjoyed the rare faculty of distinguishing Jupiter's satellites without a telescope, and of counting fourteen stars in the group of the Pleiades, although some of them are of the ninth magnitude.

The Doctor hastened the preparations for his departure. He personally superintended the construction of his balloon, introducing certain modifications respecting which he kept absolute silence. His object was to be able to descend at will, and mount again without losing an atom of gas. For some time past he had been studying Arabic and other African dialects; and, thanks to his polyglot tendencies, he made rapid progress. On the 16th of February the screw steamer 'Resolute' was moored at Greenwich. Her hold had been prepared to receive the balloon; and on the 18th it was carefully got on board with all its accessories—the car and its tent-like covering, anchors, ropes, provisions, water-tanks, ballast, everything. A sufficient stock of sulphuric acid and old iron was laid in for the production of the hydrogen gas. On the 21st, at three in the morning, the 'Resolute' had got her steam up and was making for the mouth of the Thames.

On the 30th of March the Table Mountain came into view, and Cape Town, situated at its foot, could soon be made out with the telescope. One day's halt there sufficed to take in coals and fresh provisions. The run through the channel of Mozambique was particularly favoured by the weather; and on the 15th of April, at 11 A.M., the steamer cast anchor before the town of Zanzibar, on the island of that name. Zanzi-bar is separated from the African coast by a strait whose greatest breadth does not exceed thirty miles. It drives a brisk trade in ivory, gums, and especially in 'ebony,' for Zanzibar is *the* slave-market. There is concentrated, for exportation, all the human plunder taken by the chiefs in the interior in their intestine broils.

The balloon was landed under the protection of the British Consul, inflated in the usual way when ready-made gas is not to be had, and then christened the Victoria. Two hundred pounds of ballast, in fifty bags, were taken in; and at nine o'clock in the morning of the 18th every preparation was concluded. The trio took their places in the car. 'Let go all!' shouted the Doctor, and the Victoria proudly and steadily rose until she attained an elevation of two thousand feet.

The air was pure, with the wind blowing moderately from the south-west. The strait was safely and speedily crossed, and they were gliding over the continent. The fields were like a pattern-book of various colours; the natives were black insects crawling to and fro. For better observation, they descended to an altitude of three hundred feet above the ground. Passing near a village, which the map indicated to be Kaole, the whole population came out, shouting at them with fright and anger. Showers of arrows were bootlessly shot at the aerial monster which floated overhead. And then the scene changed to tufts of trees and more scattered negro villages.

'How beautiful!' said Joe, breaking silence. But he got no answer. The Doctor was busy taking notes and observing barometrical variations. Kennedy's eyes were too fully occupied to allow his tongue any employment. At last, with a unanimous explosion—

'A fig for postchaises!' Joe exclaimed.

'A fig for steamers!' the Doctor added.

'And a fig for railways!' rejoined Kennedy. 'They carry you through a country without showing you it. Our balloon is a paradise—an ecstatic dream in a luxurious hammock.'

'What magnificent trees!' Joe continued. 'They look quite real and natural, but they are very fine, nevertheless; a dozen of them would make a forest.'

'They are baobabs,' said the Doctor. 'That one, there, must be a hundred feet in girth.'

And so they gazed and glided on.

After supping heartily, they agreed to divide the night into three watches. As the Doctor had determined to take the first watch, Kennedy and Joe, well wrapped in their blankets, were very soon fast asleep.

About two o'clock in the afternoon of their third day's journey, the Victoria hovered over Kazeh, some three hundred and fifty miles away from the coast, with magnificent weather and a broiling sun, without the slightest perceptible breath of air.

'We left Zanzibar only two days ago,' said the Doctor, consulting his notes, 'and we have gone over a distance (including deviations and driftings) of nearly five hundred geographical miles It took Captains Burton and Speke four months to get so far.'

Kazeh, an important point in Central Africa, is scarcely a town. It is a collection of six large excavations, in which hovels, slaves' huts, little yards, and well-cultivated gardens are closely huddled together; onions, sweet batatas, egg-plants, gourds, and mushrooms thrive to perfection. Around the excavations picture to yourself numerous native cottages, vast market-places, hempfields, clumps of handsome trees, and you have Kazeh. Business, just then, was at its busiest. There was a mingled hubbub of neighing mules, singing women, squalling children, and shouting men, not to mention drums and trumpets. Honey, cotton, ivory, gaudy stuffs, were lying about in rich confusion. All at once the uproar ceased. The crowd had caught sight of the Victoria, which was gradually making a perfectly vertical descent. Men, women, children, slaves, merchants, Arabs, and negroes, suddenly disappeared, hiding themselves in holes and hovels.

'My dear Samuel,' said Kennedy, 'if this be the effect which we produce, we shall have some difficulty in establishing commercial relations with those good people down below.'

'They are frightened at first, but will soon return, out of either curiosity or superstition. Look! I catch a glimpse of some already.'

The Victoria approaching the ground, fixed one of her anchors in the top of the tree which was nearest to the market-place. Little by little, the population peeped out of their burrows and hiding-places. Several Wagangas, the sorcerers of the neighbourhood, known by their trappings of conical shells, advanced boldly. They wore at their girdle little black gourds covered with grease, and divers magical implements, all in a state of doctorial dirtiness. Soon, the crowd thronged round them, the women and children rejoined the party, the drums resumed their drumming, hands were clapped together and stretched towards the sky.

'That's their manner of praying,' observed the Doctor. 'If I am not mistaken, we are likely to play an important part. Even you, Joe, may be made a fetish—a sort of little god.'

'I have no objection, sir. I don't dislike incense'

'At that moment, one of the sorcerers, a Myanga, made a signal, and the whole multitude kept dead silence. He addressed a few words to the travellers, but in a tongue unknown to them. The Doctor therefore tried a sentence of Arabic, and was immediately answered in the same in a flowery harangue, which was listened to with great approval, to the effect that the Victoria (mistaken of the Moon in person) having deigned, with her three sons, to approach the city, the gracious compliment would never be forgotten in the land favoured by the Sun.'

The Doctor replied, with great gravity, that the Moon was accustomed, every thousand years, to gratify her worshippers with her immediate presence. If they had any petition to make, now was the time to express their wants and wishes.

The sorcerer answered that their sultan, the Mwani, who had been ill for several years, would be glad to see the Sons of the Moon at his palace.

'The Moon,' said Fergusson, 'pitying the sovereign beloved of the children of Ungamwezy, has

commissioned us to accomplish the cure of his most sable majesty. Let him prepare to receive us forthwith.'

The clamour, the cries, the chanting, and all the rest of their noisy demonstrations redoubled. The whole vast multitude of curly black heads set itself in motion in one direction.

'And now,' said the Doctor to his companions, 'we must be prepared for every contingency. At any moment we may be compelled to take ourselves off in double-quick time. Kennedy, therefore, will remain in the car, and maintain a sufficient ascensional power. The anchor is firmly fixed in the tree; there is nothing to fear in that respect. I will descend; Joe shall do the same, only he will remain at the foot of the rope-ladder. Be under no apprehension on my account; I am protected, for a time, by their superstition.'

Taking a small medicine-chest in his hand, he climbed down the ladder, preceded by Joe, who gravely seated himself at its foot, cross-legged, with oriental self-importance. A portion of the crowd formed a respectful circle round him. The Doctor, headed by the native band of music and escorted by a troop of dancing devotees, slowly proceeded to the royal 'tembé,' outside the town. It was then about three in the afternoon, and the sun shone brightly, as in duty bound. They were soon joined by the sultan's natural son, a well-made young fellow, who, according to the custom of the country, was the sole inheritor of the paternal goods, to the exclusion of the legitimate children. He prostrated himself before the Son of the Moon, who raised him with gracious gestures.

The palace, a sort of square edifice called Ititenya, was situated on the slope of a hill in the midst of tropical vegetation. A sort of verandah, formed by the projecting roof of thatch, surrounded the exterior, resting on a wooden post which assumed the pretension of being carved. The walls were decorated with long stripes of reddish clay, on which attempts had been made to represent the figures of men and serpents—the latter being the better likenesses. The roof did not repose immediately on the walls, but allowed the air to circulate freely throughout the habitation. Windows were an unknown luxury, and doors very nearly so.

The Doctor was received with great honours by the guards and the royal favourites. Notwithstanding the sultan's illness, the din redoubled when he entered the palace. He remarked, suspended from the lintel, hares' tails and zebras' manes, by way of talisman. He was welcomed by the assembled troop of his majesty's wives to the dulcet sound of the 'upatu,' a sort of cymbal made with the bottom of a copper pot, and the harmonious tones of the 'kilindo,' a drum, five feet long, hollowed out of a tree. Most of these ladies seemed very pretty. They laughed heartily as they smoked their tobacco in long black pipes. Half a dozen of them were not less cheerful than the others, although reserved for a cruel death. At the sultan's decease they were to be buried alive together with him, to keep him company in his eternal solitude.

The Doctor advanced to the ailing sovereign's wooden bed. There he beheld a man, some forty years of age, perfectly used-up and brutalised by orgies of every kind, and for whom nothing could be done. His illness, which had lasted some years, was one continued drunken fit. The royal sot was almost unconscious, and all the ammonia in the world would not have set him on his legs again.

The wives and favourites bent the knee and bowed themselves during this solemn interview. By means of a few drops of violent cordial, the Doctor roused this lethargic body for an instant. The sultan stirred, and, for a living corpse which for several hours had given no signs of life, the symptom was hailed with shouts of approbation; but being now six in the evening, it was time to get back to the Victoria.

Joe, meanwhile, was waiting at the foot of the ladder. The crowd paid him their best respects. As

became a veritable Son of the Moon, he accepted their humble duty. For a divinity he seemed a capital fellow, not proud in the least, but familiar rather with the jet-black lasses, who were never tired of staring at him. 'Adore me, young ladies,' he said, 'as much as you please; I'm a good sort of chap, though the son of a goddess.' They offered him the propitiatory gifts which are usually deposited in the fetish-huts—ears of barley and the strong liquor 'pombé.' Politeness obliged him to taste the latter; but, although broken in to whisky and gin, it was too much for his sensitive palate. He consequently grinned a horrible grin, which his admirers took for an amiable smile. And then the dark-complexioned nymphs, intoning a dreary song, began to perform a negro ballet.

'You dance, do you? Very well. I'll show you one of *my* country dances.'

So he started a stunning jig, twisting himself, twining, twirling, twizzling; dancing with his feet, with his knees, with his hands; developing his movements into extravagant contortions, incredible attitudes, impossible grimaces; conveying to the native mind a strange idea of the manner in which gods dance in the moon.

But the Africans, as much given to mimicry as monkeys, soon copied all his airs and graces. They did not forget a step or lose a gesture. St. Vitus took possession of the whole assembly. At the height of the fun, Joe perceived the Doctor, who was hurrying back, pursued by a howling and disorderly multitude. Singular change! What had happened? Had the sultan expired in his physician's hands?

Kennedy, at his post aloft, saw the danger without understanding the cause. The balloon, urged by its dilated gas, tugged at the rope, impatient to mount. The Doctor reached the foot of the ladder. A remnant of superstitious awe prevented the crowd from seizing his person. He quickly climbed it, and Joe followed in the twinkling of an eye.

'What is the matter?' Kennedy asked, seizing his rifle.

'Look there!' said the Doctor, pointing to the horizon. The moon was rising, red and splendid, a globe of fire on a ground of azure. It *was* the moon, and no mistake. Either, therefore, there were two moons in the sky, or the strangers were impostors, adventurers, false gods, such were the negroes' natural reflections.

Joe burst into a hearty laugh. The populace of Kazeh, seeing their prey about to escape, set up a prolonged hooting. Bows and arrows and muskets were levelled at the balloon. But one of the sorcerers made a sign. The arms were dropped. He climbed the tree, with the intention of seizing the anchor and rope, and so hauling the machine to the ground. Joe snatched a hatchet, and was going to cut the rope, when the sorcerer, by breaking the branches, managed to disengage the anchor, which, violently pulled by the balloon, caught him between the legs, and carried him astride into the regions of air. The crowd were stupefied at beholding one of their Wagangas starting on a journey to the skies.

'Huzza!' cried Joe, while the Victoria mounted rapidly. 'Shall I cut the rope, and let the nigger go?'

'Fie; for shame!' said the doctor; 'we will not wantonly kill him. A few miles ride, will do him no harm. He is a wizard; and the anchor serves as his broom stick.'

When the Victoria had risen about a thousand feet, a slight breeze wafted her away from the town. The negro grasped the rope with fearful energy. He did not utter a word; his eyes seemed starting from his head. Half an hour afterwards, the Doctor, perceiving a solitary spot, caused the balloon to descend slowly. Before the anchor touched the ground, the wizard had quickly made up his mind. He let go, alighted on his feet, and set off for Kazeh, as fast as his legs could carry him; while the Victoria, relieved of his weight, remounted towards the firmament.

On the 11th of May following, she was still pursuing her adventurous course. The travellers now felt the same confidence in her as a sailor feels in his well-tried vessel. Out

of terrible hurricanes, tropical heats, dangerous departures, and still more dangerous descents she had always come forth with triumphant success. Fergusson seemed almost to manage her with a wave of his hand. Consequently, without knowing *where* it would end, the Doctor had no doubt as to the issue of the voyage; only, in this country of barbarians and fanatics, prudence obliged him to take the strictest precautions. He therefore enjoined his companions always to keep their eyes open against any accident that might happen at any moment.

'You see,' he said, tracing their course on the map, 'that we are making straight for the district of Loggoum, and perhaps for its capital, Kernak, where poor Toole met his death. He was an ensign in the 80th regiment, only two-and-twenty years of age when he joined Major Denham in Africa. What a grave of Europeans this continent has been!' But the wind is dropping. Surely we are not going to be caught in a dead calm!'

'Look!' said Joe. 'There, to the north, lies something which resembles a town.'

'It *is* Kernak. The last puff of wind is wafting us thither.'

Half an hour afterwards, the Victoria was hovering over the town at an elevation of a couple of hundred feet.

'We are now as close to it,' the Doctor remarked, 'as you would be to London on the top of St. Paul's. We can examine the city at our ease. But what is that continual sound of tapping and hammering which we hear?'

Joe looked out attentively, and saw that the noise was produced by numerous weavers, who were beating cloth stretched from tree to tree in the open air. The entire capital of Loggoum displayed itself, like a plan stretched out between their feet. It was a veritable city, with houses in regular lines and broad streets. In the midst of a large square a slave-market was being held, with a great affluence of purchasers. At the sight of the Victoria, the usual effect was produced. At first shouts and cries were uttered; then followed profound stupefaction. Business was interrupted, work abandoned; the hum of traffic ceased. The travellers remained suspended in perfect immobility, and could watch every passing detail in that populous city. They even descended to within about sixty feet of the ground.

The Governor of Loggoum then rushed out of his dwelling, displaying his green standard, and accompanied by his musicians, who blew hard enough to crack anything except their own lungs, through hoarse-toned buffalo-horns. The crowd thronged round him. Dr. Fergusson tried to get a hearing without obtaining it.

The population, remarkable for their high foreheads, waving hair, and almost aquiline noses, appeared haughty and intelligent; but the presence of the Victoria troubled them strangely. Horsemen could be seen galloping in all directions. It soon became evident that the governor's troops were assembling to combat the extraordinary enemy. Joe made all sorts of signals to them, with handkerchiefs of all sorts of colours, but without effecting any result.

Meanwhile the sheik, surrounded by his court, made a speech, of which the Doctor understood nothing; but the universal language of gestures plainly requested the strangers to depart, which was impossible, for want of wind. Their immobility exasperated the governor, and the courtiers expressed their indignation by horrible cries. And curious personages those courtiers were, with their five or six parti-coloured shirts. They had enormous stomachs, some of which were evidently false, the size of the stomach being held to be a proof of devotion to the sovereign.

Night came; still not a breath of air. There was an oppressive silence. The apparent tranquillity might conceal a danger. The Doctor was more than usually vigilant on his watch. About midnight the town seemed to be in flames, or rather to be completely full of fireworks. Hundreds of moving lights crossed each other, flitting back-

wards and forwards, and then mounted towards the balloon. Before very long, however, Fergusson explained the phenomenon. Whole flocks of pigeons, with burning combustibles fastened to their tails, had been let loose to fire the balloon. They mounted, tracing fiery circles in the air. Kennedy loaded all his guns; but what could they do against such a multitude of enemies? Already some of them were approaching the car, when the Doctor no longer hesitated. Throwing out a large quantity of ballast, he caused the Victoria to rise in the air, far out of the reach of the incendiary pigeons.

Here we leave the travellers to pursue their transit of Africa alone For the authenticity of the events,* from which the above are selected as a specimen, we will not undertake to answer, but throw the whole responsibility (which he will not decline) on that clever, amusing, and instructive writer, M. Jules Verne.

* 'Cinq Semaines en Ballon, Voyages de Découvertes en Afrique, par Trois Anglais. Rédégé d'après les Notes du Docteur Fergusson.'

## OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE MEN BY LAND AND WATER.

THE arrival of Easter is every year fraught with much interest to that portion of the public which delights in the contemplation of manly trials of strength and skill, especially to those who have a son or a brother at Oxford or Cambridge, but more particularly to university men themselves, both past and present. The week preceding Easter has long been by them considered a gala week, owing to the contests which then take place in the metropolis or its vicinity between picked representatives from either Alma Mater: we refer to the boat-race, the billiard and the racket matches. But since the institution of the inter-university athletic sports in 1864, the interest centred in the Lent Term has been considerably augmented, although the new games are brought to an issue at the universities themselves in alternate years. Taking these several events in the order of their occurrence in the year of grace 1865, the athletic sports first claim our attention.

In consequence of the great success which attended the inauguration of the inter-university sports held last year at Oxford for that turn, and the unexpected victory of Cambridge in some of the more important events, it was felt that the gathering on Fenner's cricket-ground on the present occasion would, in all probability, exceed that of 1864 in the closeness of its competition no less than in the general interest to which it would give rise, as the precursor of the more time-honoured contests in the modern Babylon;—and these expectations did not fail of realization.

Preparatory to entering the lists against one another, each university held a gathering amongst its own members, by way of aiding in the selection of representatives to do battle in the following week for the dark and light blue respectively; but although the final results of the flat races were thereby clearly foreshadowed, yet in the other contests the upshot was for the most part the reverse of what was anticipated.

The events for decision consisted of flat races of one hundred yards, quarter-mile, one mile, and two miles respectively; besides putting the weight, throwing the cricket-ball, a long jump, a high jump, and a hurdle race of one hundred and twenty yards over ten flights of hurdles. The flat race over two miles was substituted for the steeple-chase of last season; and a walking match was also proposed, but in consequence of the length of time such an affair would necessarily occupy, and the

absence of excitement which would attend it, the two committees mutually agreed that it should be excluded from the card. These objections may be valid enough, but, as every one walks more or less, we cannot help thinking that so important a feature ought to form part of the programme. It was, however, not omitted from the Cambridge sports, and was productive of a first-rate performance on the part of Mr. John G. Chambers of Trinity, president of the Cambridge University Boat Club, who coached the Cambridge crew for their match at Putney. This gentleman covered seven miles in 59 min. 54 sec., his walking being pronounced by a celebrated ex-champion to be fair toe and heel, although exception was taken to it by many of the undergraduates. The official time was as follows: First mile, 8 min. 32 sec.; second, 17 min. 27 sec., third, 25 min. 56 sec; fourth, 33 min. 35 sec.; fifth, 42 min. 15 sec.; sixth, 50 min. 46 sec.; seventh, 59 min. 54 sec Some amusement was occasioned during Mr. Chambers' walking, by the constant application of cold water to the crown of his head by his attendant friends. But we have wandered afar from our track.

The weather on the morning of Saturday, the 25th of March—the day fixed for the inter-university sports—was dull and cheerless in the extreme; but towards eleven o'clock the sun appeared, raising hopes in the mind of every one that the day would eventually prove fine; but they were doomed to be disappointed, as a shower of rain fell shortly before twelve o'clock, an earnest of what was to follow. The sports were fixed for noon, long before which hour the ground was crowded with spectators from both universities, and from London also; amongst the latter we recognized several old university men. The stand erected for the occasion was well filled with ladies, who, in spite of the inclemency of the weather towards the close of the afternoon, courageously kept their seats until the end of the programme, notwithstanding the incessant falls of rain and snow. The ground was rather heavy in consequence of the downfall of the previous day, but after one o'clock it became very sticky, and towards the end of the sports resolved itself into mud.

It was thought that the 100 yards race, from the times in which the distances had been compassed at each university, would produce a close contest, and the result proved that the surmise was correct, although there was, unfortunately, some dispute as to the actual winner. The competitors were, for Oxford, Mr. Jollye of Merton, and Mr. Morgan, of Magdalen Hall, whilst the Hon. F. G. Pelham, of Trinity, and Mr. Hood, of Trinity Hall, represented Cambridge. On starting, Mr. Morgan made the running, but he was soon passed by Messrs. Pelham, Jollye, and Hood, who all ran home very close together, Mr. Pelham reaching the tape first, the other two nearly level, about a yard in the rear. It was scarcely thought possible that any mistake should have been made; but on being asked who had won, the referee conferred with the judges, one of whom, the Rev. W. F. Short, of Oxford, said that Mr. Pelham had won; the other judge, Rev. Leslie Stephen, declared he could not decide upon the winner; so the referee decreed it a dead heat between Mr Pelham and Mr. Jollye. The Cantabs were by no means pleased at this decision, but felt certain that Mr. Pelham must win. In the deciding heat Mr. Jollye made the best of a good start, and came away from Mr Pelham, beating him by a yard in 10¾ seconds.

Messrs. Pelham of Trinity and Cheetham, Trinity Hall, Cambridge, contended against Messrs. Tritton of Christchurch and Knight of Magdalen, who were the representatives of Oxford, in the Quarter Mile race. Mr. Pelham at the word 'go' made the running, closely followed by Knight and Tritton; at the far side of the course opposite the stand, Mr. Knight put on the pace, and obtained a lead of several yards, which he maintained until passing the pavilion, where Mr. Pelham, who had reserved himself, got on even terms with him and went ahead,

Knight falling through exhaustion. Mr. Pelham won with comparative ease in fifty-six seconds, Mr. Tritton, in consequence of Mr. Knight's mishap, coming in second. Messrs. Pelham and Knight had the heels of their opponents, and were to all intents and purposes the only two in the race.

The greatest interest was evinced in the Mile and Two Mile races, which were looked upon as the chief events of the meeting In the former race, Oxford had the Earl of Jersey of Balliol, and Messrs. Moor of Wadham, and Michell of Magdalen to fight for her; whilst Messrs Cheetham of Trinity Hall, and Webster of Trinity were the champions of the light-blue. We must not omit to mention the performances of the best of these runners, namely, the Earl of Jersey and Mr. Webster. The former won the mile race at the Oxford sports, in 4 min. 52¼ sec., beating Mr. Moor, who was second, by two or three yards, and as the young peer is a great favourite at Oxford, he was backed by many friends to win. Mr. Webster, on the other hand, had won the 'mile' at the Cambridge sports by fifty yards in the unprecedented time of 4 min. 36½ sec., fast enough to beat all but the best of the crack professionals: the Cantabs consequently booked the race a certainty. Mr. Cheetham at the start went away at a rattling pace, evidently to serve his fellow-competitor, closely followed by Messrs. Moor, Webster, Michell, and Lord Jersey; they maintained this order till the completion of the first lap (there being four in all). At the commencement of the second lap, Mr. Michell went to the front and remained in that place until its completion, when Mr. Webster put on the pace, and passed the leaders, Lord Jersey spurting as well. The two latter raced for some distance neck and neck, encouraged by cries of 'Jersey,' 'Webster,' but the Cambridge man was only trying his opponents' metal, and almost immediately fell back: Mr. Michell next assumed the lead, closely followed by Mr Moor and Lord Jersey. In the fourth lap the two latter went on with the running, Webster lying close up. At the turn towards the pavilion, Mr Webster passed the other two, amidst tremendous cheering from both Cantabs and Oxonians. There was scarcely anything to be heard except 'Webster,' 'Jersey,' the preponderance of voices being in favour of Webster, who answered gamely to the calls of his friends, and putting on a final spurt, came away from Lord Jersey, as if he had been standing still, and finished the mile in 4 min 43¼ sec., which is excellent time if the state of the ground is taken into consideration. The time occupied by Mr. Lawes last year, when he represented Cambridge at Oxford,' was 4 min. 56 sec., and he won with less ease than Webster this year.

Five competitors came to the post for the Two Mile race, in a regular snow-storm, and the ground was quite white before the word was given. Cambridge was represented by Messrs. Webster and Garnett of Trinity, and Oxford by Lord Jersey, Mr. Johnson of Exeter, and Mr. King of Merton. The last-named made the running at his best pace to serve his fellows, and continued leading for more than a lap, when Mr Garnett, thinking it his turn, raced level with him for the next lap, but they unfortunately came into collision, Mr. Garnett going down; Mr. Webster meanwhile running in the third place, closely followed by Mr. Johnson and Lord Jersey. Mr. Johnson now, on the retirement of Mr. King, gained the lead, closely attended by Mr. Garnett, who dogged the Oxford man's heels wherever he went, and raced with him shoulder to shoulder, for several laps. Mr. Webster kept within ten yards of the pair, and was followed at a considerable distance by Lord Jersey, who was thus early out of the race. Mr. Garnett, by his proximity to Mr. Johnson, earned another fall, but quickly picked himself up: he was, however, overcome by his exertions, and allowed the Oxford man to retain the lead. Opposite the stand, in the final lap, Mr. Webster gained rapidly on Johnson, and drew level with him at the old pavilion; but the Cambridge man

was too much for his opponent, and putting on a magnificent spurt, came away and won by thirty yards in 10 min. 38 secs. We had almost omitted to mention that Mr. Johnson won the Two Mile race at Oxford in 10 min. 38½ sec., the Earl of Jersey being second. Mr. Webster won the Two Mile race at the Cambridge sports in 10 min. 5 sec., Mr. Garnett being second. The first two men received a perfect ovation at the close of the race, not merely from their own but also from the rival university.

Cambridge was also first and second in weight putting, Mr. Elliot of Trinity sending the shot with one hand 31 ft. 2½ in; with two, 33 ft. 8½ in., Mr. Booth being next.

The cricket-ball throwing was looked upon as a certainty for Oxford, as their man, Mr. Gillett of Exeter, had thrown 109 yards, and the Cambridge representative, Mr. Gray of Trinity Hall, only 98 yards; but the tables were turned on this occasion and Mr. Gray won, throwing the ball 103 yds. 2 ft. 8 in.; Mr. Osborne, St. John's, Cambridge, being second with 100 yds. 2 ft. 11 in. Mr Gooch of Merton College, Oxford, proved successful in the long jump by clearing 18 ft. 5 in., Mr. Elliot of Trinity, Cambridge, being second. The high jump wa also won by Mr Gooch at 5 ft. 5 in., Mr. Osborn of Trinity, Cambridge, se . d. Mr. Gooch also won the long ju . last year, beating the same gentleman.

The hurdle race of a hundred and twenty yards over ten flights of hurdles, completed the programme; it fell to Mr. Milvain of Trinity Hall, Cambridge; Mr. Tiffany of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, second; Mr. Morgan, the best Oxford man, falling at the second hurdle. Cambridge thus won six out of the nine events of which the sports by land were composed.

From the other inter-university contests that have lately occupied public attention, the steeple-chase at Aylesbury must not be omitted. Four horses represented each university; the course to be run was three miles and a half, the weights twelve stone each, and the day of running, Friday, the 7th of April—the day preceding the boat-race. The Cambridge horses were the favourites; and we believe light blue expected to occupy the two foremost places at the finish. However, the fates were not propitious; for after an exciting race, accompanied by sundry falls, the issue was left to two Oxford horses—Mr. Leathes' Marchioness (Owner) defeating Mr. Douglas's Pantaloon (Mr. Johnson) by a neck; the Cambridge gelding, Proposition (Mr. Cecil) running a bad third.

The next contest with which we have to deal, and by far the most important, is the boat-race from Putney to Mortlake between the eight-oared crews sent up to represent the universities—a race which for the general interest it creates from high to low—for the honourable, gentlemanlike feeling which actuates all concerned in it, upon whom no one dare cast a breath of suspicion—and for the entire absence of all demoralizing concomitants, is without parallel.

On the present occasion excitement grew more and more intense as the 8th of April—the Saturday before Passion week being usually fixed upon for the race — approached, and to this feeling the accounts in the daily journals of the doings of the crews on the Putney water in no slight degree contributed — to which may be added a general wish and expressed hope that Cambridge would this year be recompensed for her defeats of the last four seasons, by success.

The Oxford crew, whose term ended first, made their appearance on the Thames on Monday, the 27th of March, and had the advantage of longer practice over the London water than their opponents, who took their first row on the evening of the 1st of April—a day of unusual excitement and bustle at Putney, on account of the opening procession of the rowing clubs of London,—in itself a brilliant spectacle and a novelty. During their preparation immediately preceding the day of the race the crews were daily accompanied by troops of

horsemen, industriously engaged in watching the performances of individual men, and in timing the crews, and the towing-path bore signs of an unwonted vitality, especially in the neighbourhood of the high ground extending from Putney to Hammersmith. Towards the last, the general opinion seemed to point to the Cambridge crew as the winners; but old boating men who knew something about form, shape, steadiness, and length of reach, pronounced in favour of the superior and less flashy rowing of Oxford.

The day of the race will long be remembered by all who had the good-fortune to witness the contest—certainly the most exciting for some years. As the hour of noon approached thousands upon thousands of spectators wended their way to the scene of action—by rail, by road, and by water; in fact there appeared to be a perfect exodus of the better classes of the dwellers in the metropolis. Every available spot which commanded a view of the race was covered with sight-seers—the largest number having congregated at Putney, Hammersmith, Barnes, and Mortlake. The sun shone down from a brazen and cloudless sky, and there being scarcely a breath of wind the heat was intense: in a word it seemed as if we had been all of a sudden transported from the depth of winter, with its frosts and snow, into mid-summer, with its glare and dust. The scene at Putney itself was more exciting than usual—small boats by the dozens dropping up with the flood through the rickety old wooden bridge and the still more unsightly aqueduct, and steamer after steamer, more or less laden with human beings, making its unwelcome appearance. Here and there darted a little screw yacht, remarkable at once for its speed and its insignificance when compared with its more lofty sisters. On shore were pedestrians wandering about anxious to catch a glimpse of the crews—the white necktie being as noticeable as the dark or light blue rosette of the undergraduate—as well as horsemen and horsewomen—some on their own well appointed park-hacks—others, apparently unaccustomed to the saddle, on screws which gave promise of being as productive of danger to the foot-people as to their riders.

About half-past twelve o'clock expectation was on tiptoe, and pulses beat faster as the crews slowly walked down from their head-quarters to the boat-yards—Cambridge to Simmons's and Oxford to the London Rowing Club boat-house, in which, we believe, their boat is always welcome to shelter. Very shortly afterwards the two rival crews were descried getting into their craft, and, amid long-continued cheering, paddling down to the starting-post—two skiffs, made fast to two barges moored off the Star and Garter, the hotel at which the Cambridge men put up. The Oxford men won the toss for station—a favourable omen—and of course chose the Fulham shore: and hereby hangs a coincidence. For five years running has Oxford won the toss for station, and for those identical five years has she won the race. When the two eights had taken up their positions, several of the steamboats either cast off from the craft to which they were made fast, or commenced slowly stealing up in front of the crews; the umpire's steamer consequently went ahead to fetch the offending parties back, and in the mean time the two eights left the starting-point and rowed towards their respective boat-houses. The steamers having at length been brought into subjection, and having returned to their proper places, the eights once more went to the post. After removing their coats, and settling themselves on their thwarts, they all reached forward, anxiously awaiting the word which should dismiss them on their journey.

At length it came. 'Go!' The first oars to touch the water were those of Cambridge, although the dark-blue blades were almost as quick in their descent. Immediately the nose of the Cambridge boat showed in front; faster and faster it went, as the crew outstarted the Oxonians, amidst a deafening cheer, which was prolonged and repeated again and again, as

they forged further and further ahead. Quarter of a length, half a length, three parts of a length, clear!—and a still more deafening shout rent the air. In the mean time the Oxford crew, who had set themselves down to row a long telling stroke from first to last, kept steadily on, it seemed almost too slowly ever to come up with their antagonists again. The latter, rowing a far quicker stroke, led by more than a length before half a mile had been completed, and continued to row away from Oxford until passing the Crab Tree, where they were three lengths in front. The excitement at this period of the contest, both on shore and afloat, was most boisterous; and 'Cambridge wins!' echoed and re-echoed on all sides. In crossing the water the Cambridge coxswain threw his backwash on to the bow of the Oxford boat, and bothered her not a little. The two contending crews then made for the point below Hammersmith Bridge, and thence for the centre arch of the bridge itself, through which, amidst ringing cheers, Cambridge led by about two lengths. Off Biffens' boat-building yard the Oxford crew were evidently no longer losing ground, and, in fact, seemed to be able to hold their own; the race once more promising to be most interesting. At the bend of the river below Chiswick Eyot, the Oxonians slowly—very slowly—reduced the gap between the boats, until, on arriving at the Eyot, about half a length separated them. In the course of three or four hundred yards more, the bow of the Oxford eight commenced to overlap the stern of their rival; but for some distance further they made very little progress towards wresting the lead from Cambridge. However, at the upper end of Chiswick Eyot they once more perceptibly gained, and, coming up gradually, drew level off Chiswick church, amidst shouts from their partisans of 'Oxford wins!' and in a painful silence on the part of the well-wishers of the light blue. They were alongside for the shortest space of time imaginable, as they rapidly went in front, being clear as they crossed the water in sight of Barnes railway-bridge. The rowing of the Cantabs fell off very much when they were passed; the quick stroke they had been rowing having told its tale: not so with Oxford, who, with the race in hand, rowed on to the winning boat just above the Ship, at the same steady stroke at which they commenced the race, and in that commanding, easy manner which had found such favour with the initiated during their practice over the course. They passed through Barnes Bridge three lengths ahead, and won a gallant race by four boats' lengths, in 21 minutes 24 seconds.

Twenty-two races have now been rowed, and Oxford have won twelve of the number: on another occasion, perhaps, we may have to record the victory of Cambridge, especially if wiser counsels and better judgment are displayed in the selection, coaching, and training of the oarsmen.

The contrast between the styles of the opposing crews on the present occasion was marked. In the Oxford boat was to be found a long, steady rowing, with a powerful swing fore and aft; Mr. Brown's style being one that must needs prove eminently valuable over such a long and trying course as that which extends from Putney to Mortlake. In the Cambridge boat the rowing was more lively and more rapid, but withal shorter, and, by consequence, less suitable for a course of four miles and upwards, than for a sharp spin of a mile or a mile and a half, although Mr. Lawes rowed in a most plucky and determined manner throughout.

The behaviour of the steamboats was as bad as usual, and the Oxford boat was much hampered by them immediately after starting. The tugs mustered in unwonted force; and one of the least careful ran into and stove the Cambridge boat, as she was being turned above the Ship after the conclusion of the race. It is a pity some means cannot be devised for abating—even if not of getting rid of this invariable drawback; and we should not be surprised if its ultimate result be the removal of the race to another

locality, where the beat of paddles is unknown. The afternoon being lovely, and the tide favourable, several of the steamers proceeded up the river to Richmond with their parties; and the quietness and picturesque appearance of the Thames in that locality was a great relief after the din and bustle of the race, and ample time was once more given for reflection upon the uncertainty of all things mundane.

After their return to Putney, the crews, in accordance with their annual custom, lunched at Mr. Phillips's at Mortlake, and at a later hour were entertained by the Thames Subscription Club at dinner at Wilis's Rooms, the Hon. George Denman, Q.C., M.P., occupying the chair. The usual speech-making followed; the chairman complimenting the crews upon their performances—the one for winning gallantly, and the other for doing the next best thing, viz., losing gallantly. This over, a move was made for Evans's, where jollity reigned supreme, and where the cheering and uproar were, if possible, greater than on the evening preceding the match.

The University billiard matches were brought to a conclusion on the afternoon and evening of 'the boat race day,' at St. James's Hall, where a new table had been put up for the purpose. The double-handed match, 500 up, was played in the afternoon; Mr. Stokes (Queen's), and Mr. Watts-Russell (Christchurch), representing Oxford, and Mr. Payne (St. Peter's) and Mr. Arthur Smith (Trinity), Cambridge; the former being the favourites at slight odds. Mr. Smith set the ball rolling by a miss, and his example was imitated by Mr. Stokes: the play that followed brought up the Oxford score to 12, and Mr. Smith then scored 8 for Cambridge; several small breaks succeeded on each side, Mr. Payne making the largest number. Mr. Watts-Russell next made a good break, but Messrs. Payne and Smith kept on adding to their score, and gained the first hundred more than 20 points ahead of their opponents. Mr. Stokes thereupon had a break of 24, and the Oxford score was augmented still further by *the* break of the game, 37, by Mr. Watts-Russell, for which he was loudly cheered. The Oxford total was again considerably increased by Mr. Stokes, and when 200 was called for Oxford, the Cambridge score was about 50 points less. Odds of 2 and 3 to 1 were laid on Oxford, and were as freely taken. The scores were increased little by little, until the Cantabs, playing steadily, reduced the gap a trifle, and drew up to within 40 of their opponents; but the Oxford total was again increased, and they reached the third hundred nearly 50 points ahead, as before. Mr. Stokes, after some slow play on both sides, made a good break; but the two Cambridge men gradually picked up until the numbers were, Oxford 384, Cambridge 364. The Oxford men once more widened the gap, and passed the fourth hundred at least 25 points ahead of Cambridge. The play then became very exciting, and after a first-rate contest, in which much skill was displayed on both sides, Mr. Stokes won the game for Oxford by 14 points, having been aided not a little by the nervousness of Mr. Smith Mr. Payne played as usual, exceedingly well, and his judgment was of great service to his partner. Mr Watts-Russell is, we believe, a comparative novice, and bids fair to make a first-rate player.

The single match between Mr. Payne of Cambridge, and Mr. Stokes of Oxford, was played in the evening, and the latter was the favourite at 6 to 4. After some very careful play on both sides, in which Mr. Payne had good breaks, consisting of 19, 24, and 15, and Mr. Stokes one of 15, the former passed the first hundred, and scored 101 to Mr. Stokes's 33. Mr. Payne thereupon quickly increased his score, notwithstanding the efforts of his opponent, until the latter made a break of 20, and soon afterwards one of 34, for which he was deservedly applauded. Mr. Payne, however, passed the second hundred some 40 points ahead of his antagonist. Mr. Stokes next had a good break, which pulled up his score

considerably, so that he was within 15 points of the Cambridge man; but the latter again increased the gap by cautious play, and was still more than 40 points ahead of the Oxford player. After some very good breaks on both sides, the third hundred was reached by Mr. Payne, 50 points ahead. Mr. Stokes now began to play steadily, after the manner of his opponent, and gradually gained, until he was within 20 of the Cantab's score. Mr. Payne then had some good breaks, and reached the fourth hundred about 30 points ahead. The play that ensued was first-rate, some of the difficult strokes being very skilfully performed, and each player did not attempt a stroke that he did not feel sure of accomplishing. The score stood—Cambridge 497, Oxford 459. Mr. Stokes soon had a good break, and Mr. Payne scoring 2, the numbers were, Cambridge 499, Oxford 474. Mr. Payne then sent his own ball into the pocket, and Mr. Stokes was forced to play at the red; the Cantab repeated his performance, and Mr. Stokes leaving the chance that Mr. Payne had been so coolly waiting for, the latter made a white hazard, and won the game for Cambridge by 20 points.

The four-handed racket match was played on Monday the 10th of April, at Prince's Club, Hans Place, Sloane Street. The players were, for Oxford Mr. Reid (Balliol), and Mr. Worsley (Magdalen); and Mr. Rudd (Trinity), and Mr. Parker (Trinity), for Cambridge. Seven games were to be played, and the side scoring most to win. There were a great number of Oxonians and Cantabs present, amongst whom were several who had lately represented their 'varsities in the other Easter contests. The Cantabs were the favourites at 6 to 4. Two o'clock was the hour fixed for play, and the game commenced a few minutes afterwards. Luck at first favoured Oxford; but the Cantabs soon scored 10, and then 2, until Mr. Reid brought the tale up to 11 for Oxford; the Cantabs, however, made the requisite number, and light-blue gained first game. The second game proved very exciting, as Mr. Reid's play, aided by the excellent serving of Mr. Worsley, increased the Oxford total; but Mr. Parker by his cleverness drew up the Cambridge score, and '14 all,' was called amidst tremendous cheering. After setting the tie, Cambridge scored the second game. The serving of Mr. Worsley, who is a left-handed player, in this game was received with loud applause; and had he been equally good at all points, the game on the whole might have had a different result. In the third game, Mr. Reid's fine tactics rapidly drew the Oxford score ahead, and notwithstanding the first-rate uphill work of the Cantabs, Oxford won their first game. The fourth game showed some even play at first, but Mr. Rudd and Mr. Parker gradually increased the Cambridge score, and again won. Cambridge once more took the lead; but Mr. Reid and Mr. Worsley soon brought up their score to the level of their opponents, the fifth game being evenly contested on both sides until the end, when Mr. Worsley's play fell off, and the Cantabs scored their fourth game, thus winning the match by four to one, and justifying the odds laid upon them.

The single-handed match for the best three out of five games, was played at the same place on the following day. Mr. Rudd represented Cambridge, and Mr. Reid, Oxford. The odds were 6 to 4 on the former. Mr. Reid served first, and also scored the first ace; after some tolerably even play, the score stood, Cambridge 5, Oxford 3. Mr. Reid then gained the hand in, and got 6 aces right off. Mr. Rudd obtained the court, and scored 6 aces also. Mr. Reid played again and made 5, raising the Oxford score to 14; Mr. Rudd then put him out, making it '14 all.' After the 'set,' the latter won by three to two. In the second game he also made 7 aces clean off, and Mr. Reid being put out after scoring 2, Mr Rudd brought the Cambridge total to 13. Mr. Reid then added 2 more, but Mr. Rudd again scored 2, and won the game for Cambridge. In the third game, to Mr. Rudd's serving, Mr. Reid scored

6 right off, and on his being put out, the former made the same number for Cambridge. Mr. Reid added 1 more, and Mr. Rudd 2 to their previous scores. The latter was then put out, and Mr. Reid increased his score to 11, Cambridge being 8. Mr. Rudd then won the third game right off, and so Cambridge were declared the victors.

From the foregoing it appears that of the athletic sports Cambridge won six out of nine events, and that they also proved successful in the single-handed billiard, and in both the racket matches. To the share of Oxford fell the steeple-chase, the boat-race, and the four-handed billiard match.

## THE RACE OF THE BLUES.

LAWES—C. B. Lawes of Trinity—
That slashing, quick stroke oar
Said the boat club of Cambridge
Should beaten be no more·
So named he a trusty eight,
And bade them into training go,
'Gainst Oxford in the race to row,
And so decide his fate.

East and west and south and north,
The news is flying fast;
And Freshmen, Dons, and Undergrads,
To Putney run with haste.
Shame on the lazy Cantab,
Who sports not his light-blue,
When C. B. Lawes of Trinity
Is trotting out his crew.

There is terror by the Isis—
There is terror by the Thames—
For Cambridge had the best of it
At the Olympic Games.
And maidens fair are weeping,
As they think of the defeat
That their pet dark-blues *may* suffer
When the Cambridge crew they meet.

But out spake Brown—loquacious—
The captain of the boat—
'My men, be not fainthearted;
Wait till we get afloat.
In yonder boat I'll guide ye—
My weight's eleven-four;
Let Cambridge boast their prowess,
And vaunt their great stroke-oar,

'But we will prove that Oxford
Can once more hold her own,
Although her noble athletes
Have somewhat "shady" grown.
Fear not for Oxford's honour,
But let your hearts be bold;
Remember how our men *have* pulled
In the bravest days of old'

Now, Father Thames looks smiling;
And, all along his banks,
The horsemen and the footmen
Are ranged in eager ranks.
There's many a gentle damsel—
There's many a noble peer—
There's many an old Aunt Sally—
And lots of bitter beer:

There's many an eager better,
Who's laying fearful odds
In favour of his "Varsity"
As through the crowd he plods.

Now reigns a breathless silence,
And strained is every eye
To where the boats in readiness,
Waiting the signal, lie.

See, when the word is given,
Like arrows from the bow
Shoot forth the boats—the race begins—
The crowds surge to and fro
Hark to the shouts that cleave the air—
'Hurrah! well done, light-blue!'
'Pull, Oxford, pull!' 'The light-blue wins!
All cheer the Cambridge crew.

Now row your best, brave Oxford—
Pull all together—pull!
Thousands of eyes are on you
Whose looks of doubt are full
Hark to that roaring, mighty cheer!
Now 'Cambridge!' is the cry
A sudden lull—another shout.
Oxford is going by.

Swiftly and surely on they come,
In earnest 'giving way;'
That long, strong, steady sweep of theirs
Has won for them the day.
They draw ahead past Chiswick church,
And Cambridge men are 'sold;'
For Oxford pull as they were wont
'In the bravest days of old'

And in the days of summer,
When the Long Vacation comes,
And men have left their colleges,
And settled in their homes—
When too at merry Christmas-tide
The snow without falls fast,
And round the blazing yule logs
They gossip o'er the past:

And when, in future term-times,
Men will together sit,
When the wine is flowing freely
And the fragrant weed is lit.
As they round the tables gather,
In noisy laughing crowds,
While some play at 'Unlimited,'
And some are blowing clouds:

When the Freshmen hear in wonder,
The Undergrads relate
How well they rowed from Putney,
Those valiant trusty eight:
From telling still the story,
Some pleasure they'll derive—
How Oxford won the boat-race
In eighteen-sixty-five.

## THE DERBY FORETOLD.

SAVE your money, most noble patrons. Turn a deaf ear to the 'Stable Mouse,' who from the grimy penny sporting paper calls on you to send him a guinea, and he will 'put you on to a good thing' for the forthcoming great event. Hold no communication with 'Picklock,' or 'The Man at the Keyhole,' who having once upon a time in the course of their prophetic career chanced to select the winner of the Snapdragon stakes, arrogate to themselves the titles of 'only' and 'true,' and invite you to forward the trifling sum of thirty shillings, (address Y. Z., Post office, Swindleton. It is a remarkable fact, that the majority of tipsters and racing prophets take up their abode at a post office,) and 'secure a handsome fortune.' Avoid all such quacks and pretenders; and if you are inclined for a peep into futurity—if you really would very much like to know what will be the distinguishing features of the Derby, 1865, correspond immediately with the only reliable prophet, whose address is, St. Bride's Avenue, Fleet Street, and whose charge for a full, true, and complete 'tip' of the Great Event, and all its belongings, is only one shilling. Let it not be supposed that what we offer is too cheap to be good, or that we are making a 'ruinous sacrifice.' Such powers of prophecy as we possess, cost us nothing; indeed, we were not aware of the gift, until by chance we came upon a collection of predictions by the most popular professors, and then our eyes were opened, and we saw at once that we were doing neither ourselves nor the public justice, in hiding our light under a bushel. Here ... light, then; not naked and flaming, as is the 'Picklock' torch, and the candle held by the 'Man at the Keyhole,' that silly moths may singe their wings, and be tumbled into the dust without a feather to fly with, but a moderate and steady light, secure as any 'Davy,' and warranted non-explosive even in the hands of the most reckless minor. If any one is ingenious enough to turn our hints to account and realize a fortune, or even as little as an odd thousand or so, no one will congratulate them more heartily than ourselves.

A bargain is a bargain. For the low charge of one shilling we contract to supply a full, true, and particular account of the forthcoming Derby. Now as all the world knows, it is not the racing alone that makes a 'Derby;' indeed, nothing is more common than to hear folks declare (they are fibbers as a rule, however) that their interest in the equine victor is as nothing compared with the enjoyment they derive from 'going down.' Anyhow, to predict of the race, and not of the road, would be to shirk the terms of our contract by half, at least. Let us then start fairly at that recognized beginning of the 'road,' the Elephant and Castle at Newington Butts.

Standing on the broad pavement which skirts this renowned southern castle, we wave our divining rod to the east, and to the west, and to the north, and straightway the humdrum of work-a-day vehicular traffic gives place to the enlivening helter-skelter and dash, which distinguish the Queen's highway on a 'Derby' morning. Heavy swelldom, Brummagem 'brass and gilt,' square-bottomed, old-fashioned affluence, upstart impudence, Heart's-of-Oak jollity, and monkey mischief, each will have its representative. Here they come! the magnificent landau with its high-bred greys and natty postilion, the jaunty waggonette, the dashing mail-phaeton with its silver horse harness, and silver boot beading, and silver buttons on John's blue livery, all blinking and winking in the sun in a manner maddening to stay-at-home beholders. Then there will be the 'hansom' cabman with his green veil wisped about his insolently cocked 'wide-awake,' sucking with affected ease—but with a lickerish appetite which hollows his cheeks at every pull—the choice havannah begged of his generous

fare, who is Epsom bound. Then comes a splendid vehicle of the ancient stage-coach pattern, with its capable team and its capable pilot, and its handsome freight of well-bred Englishmen. Close behind is Mr. and Mrs. Slummuk, and their eldest daughter, (in the greengrocery interest, and well known at Strutton Ground and other fashionable quarters of Westminster,) and Mr. S., who is anxious to display the fast-trotting powers of his piebald pony, is taunting the two livery-men occupying the back seat of the stage-coach, and offering to stand refreshment if they will 'get down and shove.' Then comes a priggish gig of the commercial travelling sort, with a commercial travelling horse who has an eye for the shops, and aggravatingly makes for the kerb whenever he sights a cheesemonger's. Following this, an under-duty chaise, occupied by man and wife, corpulent and comfortable, and drawn by a punchy horse, who takes kindly to stoppages. Fast dog-carts in full blow of muslin and parasol. Twopenny omnibuses in disguise, drawn by lank quadrupeds with lilac at their blinkers, and being altogether unused to beans for breakfast, and the music of post-horns, and lilac, and jolly company generally, evidently intoxicated. They are absolutely frisky; so much so, that the 'bus driver (who wears a white hat, and is frisky too) grins as he looks down from his perch—grins, and then wags his head, as though mentally contrasting their present demeanour with that which distinguishes them while dragging twelve-stone men at twopence per head up Holborn Hill. After the omnibus comes a pleasanter sight; a pleasure-van, drawn by three stout goods-removing horses, and well filled with jolly workmen and their wives, shouting and joking and smoking, and happy as kings, in contemplation of a fine day, and nine gallons of beer in a cask, and an entire round of beef, and a jar of mixed pickles, and plenty of new and crummy bread coolly slung to the axletree. Certain as sunshine will this motley procession troop past the Elephant and Castle at eleven of the clock on the morning of the ———. You may make your bets on it, most noble patrons. You may safely lay level on the hansom cabman, and give a little odds on the commercial horse. There is a horse you may bet against—the tall raw-boned brute, ridden by the cockney gentleman with his hat on the back of his head, and his legs hustled further through the legs of his unmentionables than is seemly. This horse won't run; it has ceased to exist years ago, being quite unable to survive his inventor, Mr. Seymour, the caricaturist, and never appears now-a-days, but as the ghost of his former laughter-moving self in the newspaper accounts of the 'fun of the road' on a Derby-day. Nothing can be safer than to lay against this animal. If you can't do business at a shorter price, lay fifty to one that he does not start.

There will be a stoppage at the 'Horns,' and a tremendous consumption of bitter beer, and another stoppage at Kennington toll-gate, and a corresponding outpouring of bitter invectives against pikes and pikemen generally. At or about Clapham common there will happen a smash. It is not more than twenty-five to one that it is not a costermonger's 'half-cart' come to grief through collision with the vehicle of our jaunty friend, the havannah-sucking hansom cabman. If so, you may lay seven to two that there will be a fight, and level that the cabman gets a thrashing; or you may invest two to one on the double event.

Between Clapham and Balham, the villa residences of the inhabitants, will afford prime opportunity for the monkeys and mongrels of the procession to disport themselves according to their most favourite manner. Maid-servants and boarding-school misses are fair monkey game, and you will presently be electrified by their brilliant flashes of wit. Unless you are a firm sitter you had better resign the 'ribbons,' to a friend that is, for of a surety you will be made to shake and writhe with laughter, and you might accidentally slip off the

box-seat and hurt yourself. Who is able to resist such humorous shafts, as 'where are you going on Sunday?' or, 'I say, Mary, my dear?' or, 'Hi! Polly, pop your bonnet on, and come along o' me,' addressed to Sarah Jane, who by some inexplicable decree of fate is invariably found cleaning the upper chamber windows on a Derby morning. A man of [illegible]gh sensibility might perhaps hold himself invulnerable to a single flight of these waggish darts; but when the enemy returns to the attack again and again, and hurls the self-same weapon at the self-same mark for the fortieth time, the strongest must succumb. At this stage of the journey, too, the local police on their beats will be found to suffer very severely from the onslaughts of these ruthless ones. They must endure withering sarcasm, skilfully concealed in seeming polite inquiry as to their welfare, or the welfare of their mother; in silence must they hear themselves tauntingly addressed as 'Robert,' and 'Mr. Peeler;' they must even listen without retort to insinuations against their probity in the matters of 'goose' and 'cold mutton,' and 'rabbit pie.' This pastime, which is popularly known as 'all the fun of the thing,' is maintained with more or less spirit till Sutton is reached, when it flags, but is refreshed at the 'Cock,' and then, pity be on any policeman, or maid-of-all-work, or old applewoman, that may happen to come within chaff-shot of these merciless jokers until Epsom town is reached. By which time, if I am a true prophet, it will be something more than one o'clock; and by the time the 'hill,' that brimmer of the weary nag's bitter cup, is topped, and the Grand Stand is reached, it is two o'clock and past, and the first race—that for the Epsom Town Plate—is just concluded. But nobody, except the professional betting-man, (who has high respect for the Scotch maxim, 'little by little makes mickle') cares twopence about the Epsom Town Plate. It is presumed that you care nothing for it, most noble patron. Your chief concern is for the Derby Stakes, 'of 50 sovs. each h. ft. for three-year old colts, 8 st. 7 lb., fillies, 8 st. 2 lb.; the owner of the second horse to receive 100 sovs., and the winner to pay 100 sovs. towards the police, and regulations of the course, and 50 sovs. to the judge.' (See c'rect card.) This is the Great Event, and here is the field on which it will be enacted. Placid and serene enough. The painters have decked the vast plank palace in its annually renewed suit of dazzling white; the 'downs' are green and new; at a window of the great refreshment-room of the Grand Stand sits a young woman humming a nursery ditty, while she adjusts the drawing-string of a tiny diaper pinafore, while two little girls and a small boy are picking the daisies which grow within the railed enclosure at the feet of the plank palace.

This is present reality. It seems almost sinful to disturb such peace and repose, but our bargain compels us. Once more is the conjuror's wand waved this way and that, and, *presto!* what a change! Aroynt little woman with the diaper and tape and bodkin, aroynt ye three toddling daisy-pickers; tapes and bodkins and nursery ditties are out of place where famished thousands gasp for bottled ale, and struggle like crusaders against the infidel for ham-sandwiches. Tom Tiddler's ground is no place for gathering buttercups; it is not for that purpose that the sacred space is so jealously railed in, but for picking up gold and silver. Flee, brats! flee! for here come the Tiddlers roaring in at the gate, and seeking whom they may devour. Babes and sucklings are of small account in the eyes of these ogres—they live on them—on the babes and wives and worldly substance of fools. From your place on the second tier look down, most noble patron, and see what you shall see early in the afternoon of the coming Derby day. Look down into this human rat-pit, and observe the terriers—the high-bred ratters, with their glossy coats and their build so sleek and slim, bred and fed on the daintiest horseflesh; the heavy-jowled bulldog, who is delighted to

live like his brother the terrier when he can, but rather than go hungry will pick up a meal in a billiard-room or a skittle-ground, and the crop-eared cur content to feed on such scraps as the sleek terrier, or even the bulldog disdains—to 'tout' for those superior animals, and lie and swear for them—to worry the heels of a victim while the bulldog throws dust in his eyes and empties his pockets. Hear how they bark and bay and bawl! 'I want to back Zambesi!' 'Three to two against the field, bar one!' 'I'll lay on the field!' 'Any odds against outsiders!' 'I'll lay against Breadalbane, Kangaroo, or The Duke!' Of course you will, you barefaced barker, you; and you will win. You *always* win. Bear that in mind, most noble patron: the barker of the betting-ring *always* wins. He doesn't risk a single penny. He wins much or he wins little, but he never *loses*. How should he? He does not visit Epsom races for pleasure sake. He takes train at London Bridge, as bent on going to work as the London carpenter who has a country job in hand. Don't be so foolish as to imagine when he bawls, 'I'll lay this, that, or the other,' that he is actuated by whim or sudden caprice or 'presentiment.' Nothing of the sort. He would no more think of trusting to such nonsense than the carpenter above mentioned would trust to a beam planted in sand. His mind is made up and his 'book' is made up before a single race is run; and he will be particularly glad to get hold of that 'just one odd sov' of yours. Therefore, don't let him have it. Don't throw your money to the dogs above described, and whom you will certainly find congregated to clamour for it in the Epsom betting-ring.

So much for the 'ring;' and now for the race. It is three o'clock, and the din from the host that crowd the Stand from basement to flag-staff, and from the host on the opposite hill, and from the crowd in the valley between, faints with feverish expectation, and grows less and less. The butterfly jockeys have one by one sat in the weighing-chair with their gay caps on their heads and their whip and saddle and reins across their knees. Owners and heavy betters have visited their pets in the paddock, and seen them saddled, and given them a parting benediction. They wind out of the paddock gate towards the starting-post, and then the bell-man by the judge's chair pulls the rope, and, clang, bang, clang, the bell warns the people to prepare, and the police, who since the run for the Town Plate have allowed the mob to invade the sacred strip of turf over which the racers run, now draw their staves, and shouting 'Clear the course!—clear the course!' charge the trespassers with a vigour worthy of a better cause, forcing them under the boundary-ropes and over them, till they, the blue-coated ones, hold sole possession of the field. Then ensues another brief uproar of betting-men anxious to book a pound or two more; then the bell tolls again more energetically than before; and responding as one man, 'They're off!' the multitude of two hundred thousand become deadly silent, as though their tongues were suddenly unhinged.

But this only for the space of less than a minute. Then a great soughing, as of an approaching wind-storm, will arise from the mob, whose impatience has carried it to the extreme of the bend of the horseshoe-shaped course, and round which they can see the racers winding. The soughing is heard by the host on the Grand Stand and in the betting-ring, and thickly studding the low-lying parts; and as trees moan and move at the distant voice of the hurricane, so do these, each man nudging his neighbour, and nervously asking, 'What's that!—what's that?' Then, sudden as great rain-drops, will be heard brief, sharp utterances from the favoured ones who, armed with race-glasses, occupy high places, 'B. wins!' and the crowd below, or at least such portion of it as has an interest in B.'s victory, turn grateful eyes to the high-perched one, and at once take up his warning-note, 'B. wins!'—'B. wins!'—'He's lengths ahead!'

—'Ha! ha! he walks in!' and then clap hands and shoulders, and, as well as the limited space permits, beat a devil's tattoo with their gleeful feet on the turf. In an instant, however, will their joy be turned to lamentation, for other high-perched watchers are on the alert, and, perceiving that 'B.' is headed by 'C.,' deliver the news with all the heartiness of winners. Whereon the disciples of 'C.' take up the triumphant shout, which has fallen, flagging, from the dismayed 'B.'s,' who can only despairingly shriek 'No!—no!—no!' and wring their hands in place of clapping them, and dolefully wriggle instead of caper. Now, however, ensues a further change. The horses have fairly turned Tattenham Corner, and got into the 'straight,' and every horse-backer may judge of his probable fate. Even the barkers in the 'ring,' by dint of tiptoeing, or unceremoniously making ladders of their neighbours' calves and hips, may get a fair view of the race; and as every one sets up a shout according to his heart's desire, the result is somewhat astonishing. 'Kangaroo wins! Kangaroo! — Kangaroo!' 'No, no! Broadalbane!—Broadalbane! He walks in!' 'Ha! ha! Now where's Broadalbane? Zambesi!—Zambesi!—Zambesi!' 'No, no! Kangaroo, I tell you.' 'No, no! Bedminster!—Bedminster!—Bed!'——'Zambesi!'—'Kangaroo!'——'Zam!'——'Kan!'——'Bedminster!'—Bed!——'

And now it is all over; and here comes the winner with a host of adorers treading in his hoofsteps, and ready to kiss the fringe of his tail out of sheer gratitude. He is not a very big horse, and his colour is brownish, and his name is——.

But we dare not tell his name: it would look too much like sorcery. Besides, the exercise of ingenuity is healthful. The initial letter of the name should be sufficient, and for this THE READER HAS ONLY TO LOOK FROM B. TO Z.

All over. The holiday is at an end. The grassy hills and dales, which just now sprouted human sight-seers thickly almost as hairs in a horse-hide, have as suddenly grown bald; the Grand Stand is empty as an egg-shell; and the men of the betting-ring, gorged with forbidden fruit, have been every one turned out of their paradise. You, however, most noble patron, and I, have not yet quitted the battle-field. Together have we witnessed—through the spectacles of futurity—the spreading of the feast and its discussion; and now we will give ourselves for a little time to the contemplation of its deserted ruins.

It is midnight when we knock at the door of the ghostly plank palace, and are admitted: not without a considerable amount of questioning, however, for the Grand Stand on a Derby night is a temptation to burglars, and, as is well known to the officials on guard, the great strong-room below would not be large enough to contain half the ruffians abroad on the Downs at this season.

Up the broad stairs, which but a little while ago swarmed with eager wagerers hurrying up and hurrying down, and hustling and bustling and flourishing little books and slips of paper, and tapping people on the shoulder like a pack of sheriffs' officers running a muck among a flock of debtors; and pushing and elbowing in their agonized pursuit of odds and evens, and growing so redhot in the face, that one is as thankful to observe their copious perspiration as to note the advent of rain in the sultry summer time when the air is a-quiver with lightning. Up these stairs, then teeming with life as an ant-hill, but now blank and wide and dark, up, up, higher and higher, our obliging guide going before with a lantern, and ingeniously beguiling the tedium of the ascent by narrating pleasant and *apropos* stories, each so nicely adjusted to the length of a flight of stairs that the landing was reached a little before the climax, and we took breath while he finished. So, on until the summit of the Grand Stand is reached; and there is the flag-staff, which from below seemed slender as a spear-haft, but is really a stout pole; and the great flag,

which all the afternoon, mazed, as it were, by the din and swelter of which the air was full, had hung quite still, or wavered feeble and irresolute, but now fluttered and snapped freely, as a banner should, disenchanted by the breeze that came blowing over the Downs from the sea.

It is a starry night, but dark, and from our high perch the plain below looms misty and unsubstantial as water. It is easy enough to imagine it water—a great, gloomy lake—nor is the image spoiled by the twinkling lights of carried torches and booth-door lanterns, for these might well be the reflection of the stars overhead. And on this great lake, once in every year, is launched thirty or more gay ships —thirty ships all laden as heavily as they will bear, and all with cargoes equally rich; at least, so it seems—so it is made to seem—but it is very far otherwise. Out of every ten of the ships nine are filled with dirt and stones, and can by no possibility weather the voyage; whereas the others—the remaining three—are most richly freighted. Most variously, too. There are among the cargo bags of gold heavy enough to outweigh a light conscience and cause it to kick the honest beam, and great estates, and vast tracts of green pasturage, and trees by the thousand, ripe and ready for the woodman, and heavy chests of plate, and rich jewel-cases, and fine carriages and horses; and besides all this considerable wealth there are vast quantities of shabby little dabs and scraps of treasure—packets containing no more than four or five half-crowns and single sovereigns that have grown out of penny profits. Also the stock in trade of the oil and colourman, and of the butterman, and of the greengrocer, including the celebrated 'cob' of the light-green cart; also, countless articles of long-treasured jewellery, including old-fashioned brooches and mourning-rings and heavy-cased watches, and enough of 'trust-money' to fill several bushels—comprehending that which grandmother invested for little Bob, and that which properly belongs to confiding butchers and bakers and landlords. Hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands of pounds snugly stored in the three leading ships. Which three? All thirty, as they weigh anchor on a sunshiny afternoon and glide out on a smooth green sea look likely enough; and the colours of all are equally gay, and the thirty pilots are jaunty and confident, as though shoals and quicksands were unknown. But, despite the sunshine and the smoothness of the sea and the gay bunting and the confident pilots, the adventurers on the beach and on the cliffs are not at ease. How can they be? They very well know—indeed it was this arrangement that induced them to embark in the venture—that of the fleet of thirty nine-tenths are certainly doomed to wreck—that only three can by any possibility make the voyage, the remaining twenty and seven striking on unsuspecting rocks and sand-bars, and sinking in sight of land, carrying with them the hearts of nine-tenths of the two hundred thousand venturers, who, turning their backs on the treacherous sea, will grind their teeth and curse their evil luck, while the fortunate few whose three ships have breasted the tide are radiant with delight, and stab the great host of ruined ones and beggars with shouts of exultation. Foreseeing this, no wonder that the two hundred thousand speculators are very uncomfortable.

# LONDON SOCIETY.

## JUNE, 1865.

### OUR BRILLIANT FAILURE.

A Sketch in Ultramarine.

READER, my name is Coodler. Having unbosomed myself to this extent, I need have no compunction in adding that I have a wife, a family of two interesting children, a snug business, and have been recommended to try Banting. By this you must not imagine that I am fat: I am only comfortable; my angles are pleasantly rounded, and I haven't a wrinkle on my chubby countenance. I am of a good temper—my wife once termed it seraphic, but since my recent visit to the seaside I am afraid she has not been able to apply that extravagant term with the same consciousness of its correct significancy as before we——but there, I mustn't anticipate.

Immersed in business from ten till five, it is not to be wondered at that I look forward to my annual holiday with, if I may be allowed the expression, my mental mouth watering. I am quite aware that there is no such thing as a mental mouth, though why there should not be when we have Shakespeare's authority for the existence of a 'mind's eye,' I can't say. But I never had a very great opinion of poets. I

have had one or two on my books before now, and they are not punctual in their payments; far from it. Well, as I was saying, when the weather begins to grow warm I find my place of business insupportable. I soon begin to grow warm myself, and a very small amount of sunshine and exertion overcomes me. My wife is something of the same temperament, and she also longs annually for the seaside; for we don't consider a mere visit to the country an 'out.' We like fields, and hedges, and cows, and all that sort of thing; but we can have all that if we drive to Richmond or Epping Forest. What we want is a sniff of the briny, the bracing salt air, the clammy, sticky atmosphere, that makes you feel uncomfortable and happy. I am vulgar in my tastes and delight in Margate. Some people say they like to go to the seaside for quiet. Very good; let 'em go. I prefer noise. I hate quiet. I like niggers. I like Punch. I like the Jetty; and as for your Esplanades and dulness at your fashionable places, they're not in my way, and that's the honest truth. Now in her heart my wife delights in Margate too. Why, we went there when we were courting, and so the place has a sort of charm for both of us.

But when I suggested Margate this year you should have seen the expression on my wife's face. It was grand. I knew what it meant. We've lately grown acquainted with Mrs. Mackintosh of —— Square, and a very genteel lady she is, and mighty grand notions she's imbued my wife with—horror of Margate being one of them.

'Mrs. Mackintosh tells me that Margate is unbearable this season; such a set of people!' said Mrs. Coodler to me when I mentioned my favourite haunt.

'Bother the people,' I replied; 'I suppose you want Brighton with the sun in your eyes all day, and everybody dressed as if they were going into the Parks.'

'Oh, dear no!' said my wife, with a toss of the head; 'it's not the season at Brighton yet.'

Pretty changes had taken place in my wife's notions since Mrs. Mackintosh made her acquaintance. She never used to lay such a stress on its being the season; in fact, she was rather partial to the earlier portion of the summer or the autumn, lodgings being cheaper at those times. Well, from Brighton I went through all the seaside places I could think of, but Mrs. Coodler had an objection to them all. I began at last to have serious fears that we should miss our seaside out altogether, for Mrs Mackintosh had something to say against every place. My wife determined to go nowhere 'out of the season,' so really our choice was limited, as those places whose seasons fell late in the year were out of the question. I must take my six weeks in the summer, you see, and so the Isle of Thanet being shut against us (for Ramsgate shared the Mackintosh denunciation, and Broadstairs I kicked at myself), I began to feel uncomfortable. I at one time imagined Mrs. Coodler was about to propose Boulogne in order to come back with a foreign flavour; but she can't even go to Kew by the boat without being ill for the day; and as to my opinion of Frenchmen —well, there, if you want to get my back up mention 'em, that's all.

As luck would have it, Mrs. Mackintosh's mother fell very ill about this time, and the genteel friend had to go abroad, which was a great relief to me, for of all the women I ever knew she——but there, I say nothing, she's in a foreign land, poor thing, and I can only pity her.

She had gone, it is true, but the genteel viper we had been nourishing in the family bosom had left its sting.

She had recommended Mudville. At present you are, of course, by no means impressed by the enormity of recommending Mudville. You don't know Mudville, never heard of Mudville, and will probably not find Mudville in the map. But wait. Hear more, and, I was going to add, avoid Mudville, but that advice would be superfluous for a description of my visit to and my treatment at that den of ——

but there, again, you'll excuse me, I'm sure, when you have read a few pages further.

We were sitting at tea—a social meal in which I delight—nobody ever quarrels over tea; it's far beyond dinner in my opinion We were seated at tea, Mrs. Coodler, myself, and Grimley, an old friend. Grimley has a disagreeable knack of making himself universally unpleasant Were it not for this he would be a very nice fellow. He is what they call a rough diamond, and takes a pleasure in being rude; but, as I say, it's his only drawback. 'Pass the buttered toast, Grimley,' I said with a smile, for I was in a good temper, and was eating more than was prudent.

'Sooner keep you for a day than a week,' replied the rough diamond, with his mouth full of muffin.

My wife threw a glance at Grimley that would have annihilated many men, but he didn't notice it.

'You go in for tea as if you were at the seaside,' remarked Grimley, after a pause

Disagreeable as was the remark, I was grateful to my friend for making it, for I had been longing to touch upon the subject of our summer tour and hadn't known how to approach it. My wife brightened up too, and left off looking black, a thing she always does when Grimley comes I can't say why, but women are queer creatures, and Mrs. Coodler is no exception to the rule.

'Wish I was at the seaside,' I exclaimed, throwing a side glance at my wife.

'Ah! indeed,' sighed Mrs. C.

'Why don't you go, then?' grunted our agreeable friend.

'That's just it,' I replied, hurriedly; 'why don't we, eh, Jane?'

Jane didn't know she was sure. For her part she was ready to go to-morrow.

'Margate again, I suppose,' sneered Grimley: he had a dreadful habit of sneering—all rough diamonds have.

'Margate indeed!' said my wife, with a toss of her head. 'Oh dear, no! no more of your Margates;' then, after a pause, she added with most irritating emphasis, '*nor* your Ramsgates.'

Now this was quite uncalled-for, as we had never stayed at Ramsgate, nor had I suggested that we should.

Grimley had always abused Margate. Now, however, he espoused the cause of that charming place and praised it beyond measure.

'Got too grand for Margate, I suppose, Coodler,' he observed, taking another cup of tea—his third.

'No, I haven't,' I replied, indignantly. 'Give me Margate before all the watering-places in England, ay or Wales either if you come to that,' and I brushed the crumbs off my shirt front with an indignant sweep of my hand, for I was (though seraphic) beginning to get a little put out.

'Margate's low,' jerked out my wife, with a scowl at Grimley.

'Too many tradespeople, I suppose,' sneered the rough diamond, with a maddening grin.

'Well, I won't go,' said my wife, bringing down her fist (positively her fist) upon the table, and making the cups and saucers rattle again.

'Go abroad, ma'am,' put in Grimley; 'there's lots of pretty places in Switzerland.'

The puppy! because he had once been down the Rhine with Mr. Cook's party.

'Or America,' he continued with that horrid smile of his; 'there's all sorts of goings on there now, notwithstanding the war. Saratoga, for instance.'

'And whose *she*, I should like to know?' asked my wife, whose geography is limited, and, poor thing, she thought it was a female's name.

'Oh, rubbish!' I exclaimed, wishing to cover her ignorance, 'none of your chaff, Grimley, for it's not required. I shall stay at home unless it's settled very soon'

This frightened Mrs. Coodler, I can tell you. She turned pale. I saw the change distinctly—she turned *very* pale, and gasped out rather than spoke the following:

'Mrs. Mackintosh has told me of a delightful place on the —— coast; a lovely spot which is hardly known yet; a wonderful place for children, and very, *very* genteel.'

Reader, a word in your ear. Whenever you hear of a spot being described as a 'wonderful place for children,' avoid it. Remember you are not a child, and go somewhere else.

'And what's the name of it, my dear?' I asked.

'Mudville,' replied my wife, with a side look at Grimley, for she suspected he would make one of his vulgar satirical remarks upon it.

'Well,' he said (as I knew he would), 'it sounds very pretty; quite inviting, I may say;' and he chuckled. He had a peculiar chuckle, something like the laugh of the hyæna, only more horrible.

I felt bound to rush to the rescue.

'I have no doubt that if Mrs. Mackintosh says it's nice, it *is* nice,' I observed.

My wife gave me a grateful squeeze of the hand under the table, which brought the tears into my eyes; for she is a muscular woman, though short of stature.

'Has she ever been there, Mum?' asked Grimley.

'No, she hasn't,' replied Mrs. C., snappishly; 'but she's friends who have, and I can trust her.'

'Ah! can Coodler? that's the thing,' said Grimley, with a twinkle in his evil eye. This was a sly dig at my business, a subject upon which I allow no man to joke. I drew myself up. I am not tall, but even my enemies admit that I am dignified. I drew myself up, and placing my thumbs in my waistcoat holes, and my head back —my favourite position when desirous of being impressive—I thus addressed the satirical Grimley.

'Grimley, you are an old friend. As the poet says, 'We were boys together;' but I will not allow you, Grimley, to throw my shop in my teeth in the presence of the gentler sex. Don't do it again, Grimley, because I don't like it.' Then turning to my wife, I said, with a sudden transition of manner from the imperially severe to the domestically gentle, 'My love, we go to Mudville on Monday.'

Going to Mudville, and getting there, are, I beg to state, two very different matters. The spirit may be willing, but the railway arrangements are worse than weak, the train putting you down at a very considerable distance from your destination.

We started—self and wife, my son Christopher, aged nine, my nurse, Sarah Naggles (estimable, but warm-tempered), and my infant, Roderick—from the station after breakfast, and the train put us down at Muffborough, and left us looking disconsolately at our boxes on the platform, and wondering whether we should get a fly, for we were some miles from Mudville, and we'd a good deal of luggage—we always have. We didn't wonder long. The Interesting Stranger soon ferreted out a fly, and a pretty specimen of a fly it was.

But first, touching the Interesting Stranger. He was a remarkably good-looking person, that is for those who admire tall people—*I* don't; little and good's my motto. He had a slight tendency of blood to the nose, but, as my wife remarked, that might have been constitutional; he had very large, and certainly very bushy whiskers, though they were not things I ever admired much, looking a good deal like blacking brushes, I think; and though I've not the slightest symptom of 'em myself, I don't envy those who have 'em, not I. He parted his hair down the middle (an idiotic fashion, only fit for women; but that's neither here nor there), and he wore his seaside hat in a jaunty manner, and was altogether rollicking, and perhaps a trifle vagabondish-looking. However, I never judge a man by his appearance, and I must admit he was very polite. He talked politics to me, for he got into the same carriage with us as we were starting, hoping he didn't inconvenience us, and not shying the least bit at the baby; he handed my wife the paper; he snapped his fingers at Roderick; and he threw Christopher into convulsions by showing him some tricks with halfpence, and imitating the man who came round for the tickets. We were quite delighted to hear he was going to Mudville;

we were sure of one pleasant acquaintance there, at all events. I never saw my wife so pleased with anybody in my life, for she generally puts on a haughty way with strangers, which I have heard before [redacted] day described as 'queenly;' for she is chary of making acquaintances, and never forgets her family, who, between ourselves, were against her marrying me, especially her Uncle Benjamin, who was a something or other under Government in foreign parts, and came home with a pension, and no liver to speak of. Aristocratic in a small way was Mrs. C. before she condescended to smile on Christopher Coodler, I can tell you; and she had refused a half-pay officer, a young man high up in the Customs, and a distiller with a beautiful house at Brixton, previous to my popping the question. So considering all things, I was surprised to see how affable she was with the Interesting Stranger bound for Mudville. When the Interesting Stranger —who, to save trouble, I will, if you don't mind, denominate I. S.— found us ruefully eyeing our luggage at the station, he smilingly came to our assistance, and pounced upon a fly like—like a spider. Then he helped to pile our luggage on to the roof, and bullied and cajoled the stupid driver into an almost wakeful condition, and so at last we found ourselves on the road to Mudville, and later on *at* that retired spot.

Mudville was one of those places that beggar description. It was small and melancholy, a wretched little——but there, I won't attempt it. We had been recommended to the apartments of Mrs. Grogrum, and thither we drove.

Mrs. Grogrum's front apartments looked out on to the sea, and by an ingenious arrangement the builder had contrived that the back windows also gave you a fine view of the ocean. Mrs. Grogrum's house was built diagonally (I think that's the word), and it seemed to me to catch every wind that blew. It was plentifully supplied with windows too, and they rattled delightfully without ceasing.

Mrs. Grogrum was a fiery-faced female, with the most obtrusive black 'front' I ever saw. I believe that front to have been made of horsehair, it was so shiny, stiff, and undeceptive. From a casual glance at the rubicund features of Mrs. G., I came to a hasty conclusion that she was addicted to ardent liquors. I was not surprised at this, as it is not altogether uncommon with brandy and watering-place landladies. Pardon my humble joke, it shall be my last. The instant we were settled (though we were a long time coming to terms with the one-eyed fly driver, who was pertinacious, insolent, and apparently in a chronic state of inebriety), my wife went out to see what we could have to eat; for she is a good manager, is Mrs. Coodler, and I don't know a better judge of butchers' meat or fish. So she started off with the view to seeing the tradespeople, whilst I remained to settle myself. Settle myself, indeed! I hadn't got through the first half of my police reports (a part of the paper for which I have a weakness, I admit,) when a loud tap was heard at my door, and before I had time to say come in, the form of Mrs. Grogrum blocked up the entrance, and stood quivering with some strong emotion. I have before observed that I am beneath the middle height—a good deal beneath it—I am also a peaceable man, prone to let things take their own way, and with a sublime respect for 'peace and quiet.' Consequently, I will admit that the quivering frame of Mrs. Grogrum flustered me, and I felt a sudden palpitation, and a general trembling, which was not lost upon the landlady, whose quivering increased, and whose features became, if possible, more fiery, as she saw me quail beneath her luminous eye.

'Oh sir,' she blurted forth, making a sharp bob, 'asking your parding, but is Mrs. Coodler to cook your mealses, or am I to do 'em? I merely wish to know to save confusion for the futur.'

I stared. It was the only thing I could do at the moment, and I did it.

'I repeat, sir, which is to do 'em?'

'Why, Mrs. Groggins——'

'Grogrum, sir, if *you* please,' was the lofty reply; for I'd called the woman by a wrong name in the agitation of the moment.

'Rum, by all means,' I responded with a touch of humour.

She looked daggers at me, but luckily, like the gentleman in the play, 'used none.'

'For Mrs. Coodler, she come into my kitching and made remarks. Now I'm missis in my own 'ouse, I do 'ope, and I am *not* a going to have strange ladies a coming and a poking their noses, and a prying into *my* kitching, and a making remarks about my domestic. Mrs. Coodler comes into *my* kitching, she does, and requestes to look at my frying-pan, and speaks sharp to my domestic as doesn't bring the frying-pan instantaneous; me being missis in my own 'ouse and not lodgers, nor never will as long as my name's Maria Grogrum. No. Imperent curiosity is what I won't stand, because it flusters me; and one as wishes to do her dooty to parties as takes her apartments, can't be flustered and do her dooty at the same time. So what I says, sir, is, if your good lady is a going to cook, let's know at once, and the sooner we parts the best for all concerned; but if *I'm* to do the cooking, why then let Mrs. Coodler keep herself *to* herself, a making her complaints when proper, *of* course, but not a coming a prying about in parties' kitchings and a asking to see frying-pans.'

I believe that if a violent fit of coughing had not taken Mrs Grogrum, she would have been speaking still. However, she coughed and curtseyed and quivered herself gradually out of the room; and mentally determining to look for fresh lodgings as soon as possible, I again attacked the great embezzlement case at Bow Street. But I was not to get beyond the third paragraph uninterrupted. Again the door opened, and again a form quivered with passion upon the mat.

This time it was not Mrs. Grogrum, but her servant of all-work, Susan, or as she called herself, 'Shoozan.'

Shoozan had a round rosy face, and round rosy elbows; she had red hair, and was freckled in reckless profusion. She could [illegible], even by her most ardent admirers, have been considered 'neat-handed Phillis.' The number of grates she black-leaded weekly was evidently overwhelming, when compared to the ablutionary exercises she indulged in. In short, she was 'grimy' to the last degree; and she wore black stockings, and a black cap, both of which articles I would abolish by act of parliament, if I could. Shoozan was bursting with some strong grievance, so I laid down my newspaper and waited to hear her story.

'Please, sir,' she gushed out after an inward struggle, 'would you like to be called a "nuzzy?"'

Now I don't think I *should* like to be called a nuzzy. I have no notion what it means, but it sounds insolent. Before I could reply, however, the girl burst forth again, 'And if she expects as I'm going to take the children's dinner up to the top of the 'ouse, she's mistook.'

Here Shoozan waggled her head about defiantly.

'My good girl,' I said, for I always feel for servants in lodging-houses, poor wretches! but the kindly tone of my voice was too much for her; she burst into a vehement boo-hoo, and wept loudly. Beauty in tears is all rubbish. Those poets again! Beauty blubbering looks frightful, with a red nose and swollen eyes. Even the plain domestic looked plainer after wiping her eyes with her apron.

'It's very hard to be called names, a poor girl as never see her parents.' Here she burst out again.

'There, go along,' I said; 'Sarah shall see to the children's dinner;' and with a parting howl Shoozan retired.

What a time my wife seemed away! Again I attacked the embezzlement case, and this time I got as far as the magistrate's request if the prisoner had anything to say. But no further.

The door again burst open, and Sarah Naggles stood before me. Sarah Naggles, than whom there is not a better nurse and a more abominable temper in Britain, stood there, shaking a thousand times more than Grogrum. In a tremulous point of view the landlady was a mere blancmange compared to Sarah, who was a downright 'shivering mountain.' For some seconds she could not speak: at length she did—loudly.

'Mr. Coodler, sir, I wish to leave your service at once, sir, on the spot.' Here she selected a stain on the drugget to stand upon, thereby adding, as she evidently imagined, force to her remark

'Good gracious, Sarah!——'

'It's no use your trying to look dignified, sir. When Sarah Naggles says a thing Sarah Naggles means it; and I'm off by the next conveyance.'

I looked round helplessly; but my wife was out still, and until she came back I could say nothing. Sarah could. She was apt to stick on a good many superfluous h's when excited, and she gave it as her 'hopinion that the landlady was honly a helderly hignoramus.'

She would have continued in the same strain, but, luckily, my youngest child, with intelligence beyond its years—or, rather, months—took advantage of her absence to fall off a high chair. This necessitated the presence of Sarah upstairs, and a temporary cessation of hostilities.

I was getting tired of being bullied, and I seized my hat with the intention of going out to find Mrs. Coodler. Chancing to look out of window, I saw Mrs. Coodler. Mrs. Coodler was in conversation with the Interesting Stranger. Mrs. C. was smiling, the I. S. was smiling. Apparently Mrs. C. was enjoying herself, whilst I—but the contrast was too much, and I admit I was injudicious enough to dash my hat down over my brows. As it stuck tight, and wouldn't come up again, I immediately repented my rashness, and felt about for the door with a crab-like action which was appropriate to the locality, but ungraceful.

Suddenly I found myself in somebody's arms. With a convulsive effort I raised my hat; terror had endowed me with increased strength, and I had a dreadful suspicion it might be Mrs. Grogrum.

It was not It was the one-eyed fly-driver The one-eyed fly-driver had been drinking, and swayed backwards and forwards, occasionally hiccuping. I asked him his business.

'Business,' replied the man, looking round, as if undecided as to how he should continue, then jumping to an indisputable conclusion, 'ain't pleasure. What is pleasure to some folks is pain to others.'

The combination of annoyances was getting too much for me. I drew myself up, and assumed a frown.

'When I clapt my eyes,' continued the driver.

'Your *eye*, sir,' I replied, loftily. 'Stick to facts.'

'On *you*,' said the one-eyed incubus, not noticing my interruption, 'I said that's a gent as 'll stand a glass of summut. But you didn't, now, did you?' and the fellow put his head on one side, and leered hideously.

'Most decidedly I did *not*,' I replied, proudly.

'Nor ain't going to?' he continued

'Nor ain't going to,' I replied, clenchingly, if I may be allowed the expression.

'Werry good,' said he; 'then *my* mouth's sealed. I had a thing to say' (unintentionally quoting Mr. William Shakspeare, who *was* a poet, rather) 'but I won't. I'm not a-going to put my finger in no one else's pie.'

If you could have seen his finger! I did, and have not eaten pie since.

He vanished. I turned my head away shudderingly, and when I recovered myself he had gone.

I was becoming rabid. I was also awfully hungry. My wife came in. I should have received her with an air of sarcastic politeness (any friends of mine who read this will know the style of thing I mean—*my* playfully severe air, you know), but I was broken-spirited by recent trials.

'It's so annoying,' she said, coming to the point at once; 'there ain't a piece of meat to be got in the place; not even a chop to be procured for love or money before to-morrow.'

'Sweet spot!' I murmured.

'And I've been to every shop in the place to get change for a five-pound note; but they say there isn't as much money in the town.'

I smiled sardonically, but didn't speak.

'Then the fishmonger only comes over from Shellborough on Mondays and Fridays, and to-day's Wednesday; and Mrs. Grogrum says her fireplace isn't big enough to roast joints, so we must have all our meat baked; and there's no draught ale that's drinkable to be got here, because there's so little demand for it; and the poulterer's only got one very small rabbit, which is not at all good; and Mrs. Grogrum said she understood we found our own plate—she's only got two-pronged steel forks; and there's a dog next door but one, they tell me, that howls all night; and the windows in our room rattle so dreadfully, that we shan't get much sleep, I'm afraid; and there's no lock to the door; and the pillows are like dummies, they're so hard. And so you must put up with an egg and a slice of bacon for your tea.'

The volubility of my wife, culminating in a decided *non sequitur*, was more than I could bear. I seized a chair in my agitation, and the back rails came off in my hand. This calmed me. I propped it against the wall with the determination of declaring I hadn't done it, and smiled once more.

'Mrs. Coodler,' I observed (I never address my wife thus except under very peculiar circumstances), —'Mrs. Coodler, I have taken these apartments for a month, and we must try and make the best of them. Fortified by the cheering society of the Interesting Stranger, no doubt you will be able to bear up.'

Mrs. Coodler coloured, and would have replied, but I waved her aside, and went out into the street to see the lions!

The lions! I was not long in seeing them all. There were the six bathing-machines, the 'principal' hotel, the post-office, the library, and—nothing else. The library was an imposing edifice; that is to say, it was a dead take-in. There were no new books whatever, and I refused to be comforted by the 'Adventures of a Guinea;' neither could I be brought to properly appreciate the charms of 'Pamela;' so I went home again. I walked upstairs, and entering the apartment, found—no, reader, you're wrong for once—*not* the Interesting Stranger, but a policeman—a regular rural peeler. He eyed me with professional distrust and a calm smile. I swelled with indignation, and tried to awe him, but he was not to be awed.

'Good morning,' said the policeman, familiarly. 'I presume——'

'You *do*, sir,' I replied sharply, in my imperious manner; 'you presume very considerably in entering a gentleman's apartments in this way, sir. Let me tell you an Englishman's first floor is his castle, sir. What do you want?'

'You!' replied the constable, in a deep tone.

I was becoming accustomed to this sort of thing, and smiled.

'Your name is Dumpton,' said the fellow.

'All right,' I replied; 'have it so, if you like; you must know best.' I was tickled by the atrocity of the whole thing. 'What's the charge? Burglary? Garotting? Murder? What is it?'

'You come from town by the half arter ten train?'

'I did.'

'Good! A telegram informs me I'm to arrest a party of your description; at least you're near enough the description for me to arrest you. So, without more ado, come on.'

My wife is an excellent woman, and at times her feelings get too many for her. She heard the final speech of the policeman, and was with difficulty dissuaded from flying at him. Such was also the case with Sarah Naggles, who has highly-developed nails, and (in consequence of blighted hopes) nourishes an abnormal hatred of 'the force.' Be-

tween these two desperate women the one policeman of Mudville would, I am afraid, have come to the most unmitigated grief. He saw his peril, and produced a pair of handcuffs. I confess the sight unmanned me, and I sank into a chair. I produced my card; I pointed to the direction on my boxes; I threatened to write to the 'Times;' I explained how ridiculous it would be in a felon travelling about with a family; I pleaded and stormed alternately, but to no object. The policeman had received his instructions; had been directed to us by the malevolent one-eyed fly-driver; had executed his orders, and was deaf to reason, blind to a bribe, and generally stupid and unswervingly upright.

Mrs. Grogrum coming in suddenly upon the scene did not improve the tone of the meeting, as may be supposed. She had settled that we 'was no good' the instant Mrs. C. had made rude remarks about her frying-pan, 'a article as a *reel* lady would despise to worrit herself about.' And as for that sylph in the black stockings, Shoozan, she had long ago learnt to place the blindest confidence in the Mudville policeman, who was the model of manly beauty in the eyes of the neighbouring maid-servants.

We were at our wits' end. My wife was frantic, the nurse furious, the children fractious. Wrapped in his panoply of authority and pig-headedness, the policeman alone was calm.

To us (at this juncture) entered blithely the Interesting Stranger. A smile was on his lip, a tear was *not* in his eye. I was about to appeal to him to clear up the mystery when I observed a remarkable change come over his features. At the same time a change as remarkable came over the countenance of the aggressive constable. He clapped his eye on the figure of the Interesting Stranger, and almost instantly clapped his professional handcuffs on the wrists of the same individual.

The Interesting Stranger answered to the description in the telegram in every particular, and to this day I cannot comprehend the reason for arresting me, for we were not in the least alike. The I. S. was tall, I am—well, under the middle height. The I. S. was good-looking (at least Mrs. Coodler declares so, spite of everything; and he was described by the police reporter as a 'person of fashionable appearance'), and I am, I admit, not striking to look at, though dignified for a short person. The I. S. was not dressed like me either; so, altogether, it was a muddle at Mudville, and I might have kicked up a great row about it.

*Did* I stop to have any arguments, to receive the grovelling apologies of Mrs. Grogrum, the trembling beseechings of the obtuse policeman, the solemn assurances of attention and cleanliness from Shoozan, the universal sympathy of the excited populace—did I wait for all this?

*Did* I?

Did I fetch the one-eyed fly-driver from his favourite haunt, and bundle self and family back to town that afternoon?

*Didn't* I!

H. J. Byron.

## FLOWERS AND FOREIGN FLOWER-FASHIONS.

It is the time of year to begin to talk of flowers; and not only of the flowers but of all bright things. After six months abroad how far from bright things look to one! It is not that foreign climates have quite all the sunshine. This winter abroad, I have seen fogs that were quite as thick, though not exactly as yellow as most of those in London. It is that English tastes are so essentially colourless. Greys and browns and ash tints are really the English livery. Who else would colour walls dust colour, or dress themselves all in snuff colour? A Frenchwoman wears a brown dress, but then it has just

the touches of clear bright tint about it that prevent the dinginess so dear to English hearts. French walls may be grey, but then the grey is a clear one.

It feels rather a hopeless task to talk about colours now, when before one's mind's eye come the hills with the silvery olive trees, terrace above terrace, waving those leafy clouds, and when amidst them come the rosy, soft, plume-like almond trees; and when on the outer slopes these fair pink plumes are rising like rose-clouds in blue skies; and underneath that blue sky, and out across the plain, the sunny Mediterranean is spreading out broad and tranquil. That wonderful clear air which draws the scent from the flowers—that air through which the voices sound, and through which the far-off footsteps seem close to you on the hill—gives there a wonderful charm that elsewhere one misses. But yet let us think of England and its summer and autumn mornings. Who would not change the olive trees for the deep-green lawns of England; and who does not love the dewiness and the freshness of her green woods? Can any air be sweeter than that of our June mornings; and can any perfumes match with those of our heaths and woods, our violet-banks in the spring, and our clover-fields in the summer, and with the fresh aroma of frost-touched flowers in autumn? The scents abroad are delightful, but they are all *too hard*. They are too aromatic; they have not the sweetness ours have. The clearness of the air, the hardness of those sweet scents; they form the contrast to the softness of English summers with their faint haze of blue, and to the wafts of perfume that reach us from trees in the dew.

It is very rare abroad to see really pretty gardens. People have not the notion of finishing things that we have; and though a royal palace is wonderful in effect when its gardens lose themselves insensibly in the woods, yet to English eyes, and in the many gardens, there is a great want of completeness—you want to know where the thing ends; and you have a strong feeling that if that space were defined the inside would be much tidier. You rarely see well-trimmed hedges or nicely-kept sunk fences; and walls with roses growing on them are an English institution. The turf is not English turf, and the soil is ill kept and rough; pieces of straw sticking up sometimes, and stones thought of no account. No; it is a certain fact that no gardens compare with the English. Just as our hothouse fruits excel many native productions because of their high culture and the careful selection of sorts, so our flowers and gardens may have to contend with many difficulties, and yet may grow to a wonderful height of beauty.

There are, however, few French women who care about their gardens. Their view is to have flowers, and I confess they deserve them; for never did I see more lovely use than they make of them.

One of the great things that struck me in the Parisian houses was the way in which the flowers came into the furniture. They were as much a part of it as a chair or a table-cloth. And another striking thing was the material used. I know nothing effective that would be despised for commonness. There is *an idea* in the thing. You don't see merely stray flowerpots or a rose in a glass, uncomfortably, that looks wondering how it got there, and that sets you speculating how soon it will be drawn out by the brush of some passing sleeve or the flinging down of a newspaper.

Dahlias and sunflowers, golden rod and Michaelmas daisies, all are perfectly welcome; and, what is more, quite beautiful and entirely in their place. But I must give some instances of definite arrangement. A thing that struck exceedingly was the clear idea of place there was. You did not see a flowerstand looking disconsolate somewhere; but just in the window framing the light as it were, there would be a long flower-box, just an edging of flowers inside. People in a room turn so naturally to a window, that there is no describing the bright effect that this has. The windows opening down

have simply a low box along them, and the plants at the sides, perhaps, are now and then rather higher.

I wonder if people have noticed the great objection that there appears to be to clear white in English gardens — in flower-boxes — everywhere. Think only in what boxes have you seen white conspicuous? And yet there is simply nothing that gives such [illegible] and lightness. It sounds, perhaps, paradoxical to say that white gives colour. But take a pot of pink hyacinths and another of red tulips, and put in between them a plant of the large white primrose, and you can then decide whether colour is lost or gained. The time when white weakens colour is, when in a vase or in anything you have a perpetual breakage, a little dab of one colour and then an atom of white. There can be no real colour, nothing but muddiness there And muddiness and grubbiness are two things that abroad are avoided. I don't speak of cleanliness. I am writing of looks.

These boxes of which I am writing are always the brightest things. In winter they have primroses, in summer they have Queen Margarets, the white single China aster, and, in fact, any clean white flower, from large corn-daisies upwards, are 'good enough' to be used, if only they are wanted.

There certainly is abroad sad want of conventionality. Asparagus leaves are beautiful; but a Belgravian drawing-room would merely blush to admit them I confess, when in Paris, to my shame, having asked what that lovely leaf was. The long foliage is cut quite low down, tied carefully into a bunch made up with moss or other stalks exactly to fit the size; and then being tightly tied the bunch is forced firmly into a hyacinth-glass full of water. The air is nearly excluded, and the branches last long and well. This method applies, moreover, to many things more, in glasses. These tufts of leaves must be light; they then have a ferny look, and ferns and grasses also are charming in these boxes. One place in which the boxes appear especially to advantage, is when there are large mirrors that come down to the floor. In great lobbies, for instance, where the furniture is not too hall-like, and where, in consequence, gilded mirrors themselves are well in place, I have seen these long boxes give an indescribable brightness and look of habitation and homelikeness to a house. The flowers in them, too, are strikingly few in number. In all French things it seems to me want of crowding is very conspicuous. A couple of pots of white primroses—a plant or two of crimson, and perhaps a little blue flower, or a plant of violets; these amongst the green leaves would be thought, and would be, quite sufficient.

In summer, the artemesia is very much used abroad. Its tall growth and starry white flowers are most effective in gardens. The Tuileries last autumn owed half their brightness to them—contrasting with the rose and blue of the German asters—alternating with dahlias, and here and there backed with roses.

It is a mistake to have too many blossoms on one plant, especially in white flowers. In the case of primroses, for instance, and of the white asters, if they are 'full of blossom,' the plant is a confused mass. It seems to me that the flowers should be kept fairly few. And all gardeners will know how much cutting off some buds and all the too full-blown flowers will always prolong the time of each plant's lasting or blossoming

The heaths in Paris are very gay and lovely. When one leaves the hills in the south, with all their white scented bruyère, one can hardly recognize the plants of the same family. The heaths are ten times the gayest, and yet one likes best the white bruyère, with its tiny bell-blossoms and its slightly fragrant atmosphere. All the grand plants of the heath family have no scent at all: but I believe Parisians prefer rather scentless flowers; there is such a general feeling abroad of the unwholesomeness of those which we think so delightful. The azaleas, are, however, loveliest of all in spring. They are not tortured to

shapes, but are let grow wildly, and then they take their own form of low spreading trees, with flowers that spread themselves out upon the branches, and that are sometimes half-hidden amongst the leaves.

But I must go on to others of the flower-fashions. Another thing that struck me was the great use made of green in everything, and the immense effect thus produced. A stand of flowers would really have very few plants indeed. There would be green and moss—and perhaps two plants in flower. Setting off one gem is far more the fashion than collecting a crowd that detract from each other's beauty. Each flower is thus allowed to be distinct. And then things are on a large scale. I have passed under a flower vase often in going to dinner—a tall vase on a side-table, with really gigantic flowers—sunflowers and dahlias, with great roses and gladioli, and with such large green leaves, and the flowers cut with such long stalks, that each seemed well detached—and the strange selection was Oriental, and beautiful in its strangeness. Of course all things of this kind must suit the rooms they are in; but in immense lofty rooms, and with the large massive style of most of the French furniture, nothing can be in better taste than some of these brilliant vases. Then the beautiful feathery grasses are very much used in Paris; and nothing can be more graceful, on a large scale, than are these white plumes.

I must record, too, the trellises that are covered with growing ivy, and that stand all summer-time in front of the empty hearth. In winter, I have seen them moved merely to the window. These long boxes have a trellis attached at the back and ends. A plant or two of ivy is enough to twine over the trellis, and then, through all the season, a succession of flowers is kept up, in a way that is most effective,—and, to me, the most *un*satisfactory. But, then, I never can bear to think that things have no roots when they look to be growing. A range of hyacinth-glasses, however, are in the box. The glasses are, of course, completely concealed by the moss; and in each of these said glasses is a tightly-bound bunch of something—it may be asparagus-leaves, as I have described just now, or it may be Japan lilies, or, still oftener, gladioli. Either of these flowers is perfect for such uses. The tall white lily, also, is exquisite in this way; only, of course, for a drawing-room its perfume is far too powerful. Though, when such things are used in Paris, to place at the side of altars, nothing can be more lovely than these tall and most pure white lilies.

The blue Michaelmas daisy comes in well for these stands too, but as it is always well to describe one definite pattern that is known to answer, I made a special note of one both good and attainable. A common green-painted box, like our mignonette boxes (of course this should be lined with zinc, or at least made without holes, the former plan being desirable for the drawing-room carpet), about eight inches deep, and say ten wide, a slight cane trellis, looking like rods for basket-work, merely stained dark green on the back and ends, coming about as high as an ordinary chimney-piece; ivy trained over the trellis, to cover it a good deal, but by no means thickly, simply to wreath about it, especially at the edges; then the only flowers in this really effective stand were alternate hyacinth-glasses of blue Michaelmas daisies and of scarlet gladioli, with, between them, some pots of fern or grass, or of asparagus-leaves. The ivy itself, I was told, had, upon emergences, been cut from the woods too, and brought in and put in glasses, and trained to look all natural. And, after all, it is well to know this for any quickly got-up decoration, or for a screen to shut off some unused doorway or ugly view, at short notice.

By-the-by, too, at this season, all the trees in fresh leaf may be used just like holly in winter, by way of decoration, only by putting the cut end of the branch in a jar with water and charcoal, and then closing the mouth with a lump of the potter's clay. What can be more lovely than horse-chesnut or acacia?

But, in a stand like that which I have described, observe the good management—the tall flowers, not over *recherché*, being filled up with shrubbery sort of things in perfect keeping with their style.

Bunches of holly, also, are remarkably good and effective in all such cases. In fact, for the use of holly, one must go to France for a lesson. It comes in at any time, and is used as a brilliant flower—and, indeed, the bright leaves and red berries are such as few flowers can deaden.

I have seen the boxes just described filled up entirely with the ivy-grown trellis, branches like small shrubs of holly, some tall and tapering, others low and spreading, and with some one white flower, generally the single, large-fringed Chinese primroses, these being, however, comparatively few—perhaps three pots only put in amidst the holly; and the effect was perfect—warm, and green, and graceful and *distingué*—for somehow the holly is very aristocratic, and adapts itself to all circumstances with most perfect ease and grace.

Much green with a little colour is a rule that has a wide reign; and also it is remarkable how rarely one sees *one* colour; but crimson and buff roses, violet and pink, pale sea-green and rose-colour, or any of these, with white. This seems the prevailing thing as much in dress as in flowers, and as much in rooms as anywhere. But then, Parisians do compose room, and toilette, and flowers, all as a sort of picture.

But to go on to vases and to flowers in general. If our South Kensington shows of dinner-table decorations only were held in Paris, how different things would be!

The great idea now in arranging them, is to show each flower separately (not in that horrid way, of all others most objectionable, when, having a crowd of flowers, each flower tries to be seen, thus making up a result of a mass of excited petals, like faces turned up in a crowd)—but where the view is to let each flower repose quietly and calmly upon a bed of green. That is, after all, the natural view of flowers; but I never saw it done perfectly till a few days ago, at Paris.

Single flowers in glasses are very pretty, no doubt—just as a beautiful rose must be beautiful anywhere; and some people like very much the 'prettiness' of the fashion of having a little glass by each lady's place containing a tiny bouquet, and having by each gentleman's one flower for the button-hole. I don't admire it, as I think it breaks up the table and makes it dotty; but, when it is done, one lily-of-the-valley with its leaf attached, or a carnation and a spray of fern, and a small piece of mignonette, are very respectable modes of fulfilling the fashion. Thick-petalled, lasting flowers should of course be chosen, as it is such a bore when geraniums drop all about.

Bouquets for the hand abroad are not made up like 'the run' of English ones. The prettiest mode this year is to have a kind of fern-shaped spray of green going down the bouquet between each little group of flowers. It seems to me that in composing a bouquet, there are five or six separate bunches of green arranged first separately—some fern, for example, or sprays of rose-leaves (to mention things, as usual, that every one has at hand), and then these sprays are fastened to the centre, formed, one after each little group of azaleas or geraniums. The effect is exceedingly good; and all delicate foliage comes in exquisitely for this; and now we really have such varieties in our greenhouses. The flowers would not be mixed much—perhaps red and white in one place, and only pink in another; or perhaps blue would be alone here, and next door to it buff. The art is, not to seem to think the flowers unsuited to each other. Where an English milliner accepts imperious orders, but, to relieve her mind, puts in a wall of black lace, an English lady is a great deal too apt, following in the same line, only a little modified, to put a stout fence of green, and say that 'it softens the contrast;' the truth in the matter being, that that division alone makes any contrast at all. The proper

effect, if well done, would be harmony. Flowers for hair and dress are now very rarely mixed. You have some one flower and its own buds for all. Then, if more green is wanted, there are always sprays of ivy, drooping fronds of fern, long ribbons of delicate grass. As a general thing, however, one flower with its own leaves is enough for one person's ambition; and the result is once more, much grace and little heaviness. How awful 'corn-flowers' look when worn, in the spring, in bonnets!—red and yellow and blue! The light flower-tufts on the hair are excessively pretty, and so is the plan of having a drooping tuft on one shoulder. I never very much like seeing a head dressed with flowers, unless there are also flowers somewhere about the dress. To me there always is the feeling that some blossoms should have fallen, or been kept in the hand, or stuck into the band. It is too hard, and complete, and finished, when every scrap of flower is collected and put in the hair.

For actual use on dinner-tables, the prettiest fashion I ever have seen by far, is that of the large open vase supported on gilt branches, always so arranged as to look wide and low in proportion to its height.

Of course, in the centre of the table there must be something high; but there it seems so much more natural to have lights—a tall branch, for instance, with candles, and only at the feet two or three groups of flowers; three groups of flowers or fruit, forming a natural ornament round the foot of some high centre Much green is again especially desirable in this place, because there is always a certain glare of light and plate, and table-cloth and dress, and a mass of green is therefore more than ever welcome to eyes that feel slightly weary, as most eyes do in London before it comes to dinner-time. I should suggest then having, if for a large or long table, some centrepiece of this kind, and placing the vase I describe at the top or bottom. But for a small table, especially a round one, the said vase itself is charming, when used for the centre ornament —and, indeed, in such cases no other flowers are necessary, and if other flowers are used, it is all the worse for the users, who pay an increased florist's bill, and have a less pretty table.

For the flowers appropriate for filling such a vase, I will simply copy a list I took down in Paris, which seemed to me to combine all colour, and grace, and lightness, in the most charming manner

The dish or vase, I should mention, was of plain frosted glass, shallow and wide, and rested on twisted supports of bright and frosted gilding.

The dish was itself filled up with bright dark-green moss—one of the beautiful greenhouse lycopods might well be used here. *Lycopodium denticulatum* is, perhaps, best of all for the purpose, and is easily grown anywhere, in a shady corner of the greenhouse, or in a window that will not suit many flowering plants because of want of sun The moss was raised in the centre—not a heap, but curved upwards The flowers were as follow: one deep-red rose, one of the palest blush white, a spray of white convolvulus, just touched with pink, a cluster of red drooping flowers (I thought of the rose acacia), one spray of pale wild-rose, one bright pink rose, a cluster of white acacia, and a drooping branch of the pink convolvulus.

It is to be remarked, the colours were *all* shades of rose and white. The whole thing was most perfectly bright, and fresh, and beautiful. Each flower was simply laid down on the green, fairly round the vase, no attempt being made to fill up the centre at all. The flowers just touched, and had each its own green leaves; the stems, of course, were just hidden slightly in the moss. I give this to show the style of thing, but, of course, other flowers can be used for any of those named. The great thing is, it seems to me, to have *some* idea to work to; and there certainly are such ideas to be picked up, sown broadcast abroad, where nobody is ashamed of trying to make themselves and everything else look their prettiest!

# THE INTRODUCTORY PROCESS.

(Illustrated by George Du Maurier.)

To write a preface is, we take it, a work of some little difficulty. Not having time at present to consider *why* it should be a matter of *any* difficulty at all, we will, if you please, allow it to be so, and admit that, however easily and rapidly a subject may be treated, yet the introduction to it will probably require greater care and a more delicate handling. And this becomes eminently true in the case of almost all 'social introductions,' by which term we mean the ordinary introduction of number one to number three, by the intervention of number two.

Now, unless number one has requested number two for the favour of an introduction to number three, (in which case the first mentioned person can *not* be offended, save by a refusal), number two should weigh well the responsibilities that he is about voluntarily to incur, by the reckless bringing together of two bodies who may already be antagonistic, or may hereafter become antagonistic to one another. Let this be your canon, that you have no right to introduce two persons to one another, without the sanction of one, or both of them, or, perhaps of their undoubtedly best friends and well-wishers.

Let us consider, 1st. *Of the person*; *i.e.* who should be introduced, and to whom.

2ndly. *Of the Modus*; *i.e.*, whether the introduction should be performed by us, or by any one better qualified for the office, by reason of his rank, station, or personal knowledge.

3rdly. *The Tempus.* As to the 'when' of an introduction. *i.e.*, whether you have chosen the fittest possible moment, or the most seasonable time for the ceremony.

4thly. *The Locus in Quo.* As to the 'where,' *i.e.*, whether the place in which the contemplated introduction is to happen, is the most convenient, most advantageous spot that can possibly be selected.

5thly. *The Modus Operandi.* As to the manner of proceeding with the rite; as to the order of names; as to their correct pronunciation; as to the number of times each is to be uttered; and upon whom devolves the duty of first speaking after the ceremony is at an end.

Surely the above considerations are sufficient to deter any fellow from rashly making known one fellow to another fellow, without previously ascertaining the wishes of either fellow on the matter in question.

Let us commence with an instance in point, where none of the considerations above enumerated enter into the operator's calculations. This we will call 'The Careless Introduction.'

Great care should be taken, previous to any unnecessary introduction, to ascertain the antecedent histories of the parties about to be made personally known to one another for the first time.

For instance, if A, walking with B., meets C, and if C, having stopped A., or A. having stopped C, commences some street-conversation of the ordinarily vapid character, which, from a stagnation of ideas in the heads of both A. and C., comes to an abrupt conclusion, then it may occur to A., just by way of doing and saying something, to introduce his friend B. to C.

The inductive process to this rash headlong act of introduction, is somewhat as follows.—

A., with B. on his arm, meets C. As neither C. nor A. have anything particular to do, they stop one another.

*A.* (*as if surprised.*) Hallo!

*C.* (*without any meaning whatever*). Hallo! (*Both smile and shake hands*)

B., who has not left A.'s arm, clings to him, as if fearing lest his friend should be taken away by C.; howbeit he looks another way, and wishes that some one would come and say, 'How d'ye do' to *him*, so as to put him on an equal footing, as it were, with A.

*A.* (*cheerily*). Well—and—how are you? Eh?

*C.* (*with equal cheeriness*). Oh! *I'm* all right. (*He emphasises 'I'm' pretty strongly, as much as to say that there are some people who are not all right.*)

*A.* (*as if much relieved*). Ah! Well, that's well. (*Smiles patronisingly on C.*)

B., who has been resting himself on his right leg, changes to his left leg, and begins to wish more than ever that he had somebody to talk to

*A.* (*trying to keep up the spirited dialogue*). And—er—so—you're—(*He is just going to say 'very well, eh?' but pulls up short.*)

*C.* (*feeling the onus of conversation thrown upon him*). You're all right, of course?

*A.* (*resenting the idea that he must 'of course' be all right*) Well—er—pretty well.

There has been nothing the matter with him, but still he does not like to feel the importance of his existence thus lowered before his friend B. B. smiles as if he'd like to join in the conversation, and begins to think that he'd better walk on, and leave A. to follow.

*C.* Well—er—(*looks at B. as if to ask what the deuce he means by it. B. pretends to be abstracted in contemplation of things in general, and shifts back from his left to his right leg*). Oh, I say, old fellow. (*This is said confidentially to A., to show B. on what intimate terms of friendship they are. B. begins to be jealous, and gives up the notion of quitting A.'s arm.*) I saw your cousin the other day.

*A.* (*who has about fifty or sixty cousins, pretends great interest*). Oh! did you really?

A. throws in 'really' to balance the sentence, as, of course, C. either *did* see his cousin *really*, or he did not *at all*.

*C.* (*who has nothing else to say on the subject*). Yes, I did.

*A.* (*without the smallest curiosity*). Oh!

B. shifts from his right to his left leg, and slightly presses A.'s arm. It suddenly occurs to A., that B. and C. ought to know one another. C. is just about to say 'good-bye,' but hesitates, seeing that A. looks as if he had got something to say.

*A.* (*to C.*) You know my friend B., don't you?

Rather a weak question, as, if he *had* known him, he would of course have spoken to him, unless there were reasons for silence.

*C.* (*trying to appear interested in removing any such impression from A.'s mind*). No—I—er—

B. smiles slightly, then suddenly becomes very grave, and looks steadily at C., as if waiting for a signal to jump on him.

*A.* Oh! (*Affably.*) Then let me introduce you.

Here A suddenly becomes bothered as to which of the two ought to be mentioned first: whether he shall introduce B. to C. or C. to B.; and feels an inclination to pull them forcibly together, or to double them backwards and forwards, as 'Mr. B. Mr. C., Mr. C. Mr. B., now you know one another!' after the fashion supposed to be genteel and correct on the stage. C. and B. get him out of the difficulty, by taking off their hats to one another, with grim politeness, during which ceremony A. says quietly, as if to himself, and having no sort of reference to the action, 'C., B.'—and then, as if he had just wound up a couple of wax-work figures, waits to see what will happen next.

*B.* (*glad to get a chance of saying something*). I think we've met before at—(*forgets where*).

*C.* (*who hasn't the slightest recollection of it*).—Ah—at—er—yes, yes—

*B.* (*quite agrees with him, and A. is delighted*). Yes. I thought I knew your face.

*C.* (*not particularly pleased, smiles*). Ah! Yes—I—(*wants to say, 'thought I knew your face,' but remembering that B. has just made that observation, alters the form*). Yes, I thought I'd seen you somewhere.

N.B. This is a very safe remark.

*A.* (*stultifying himself on the spot*). Oh! I didn't know you knew one another.

*C.* (*pleasantly*). Oh, dear yes—and—er—(*conclusively.*) Oh, dear yes—(*feeling that he has had quite enough of B., says suddenly to A.*) Good-bye.

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B. wonders whether he'll say good-bye to *him*.

*C.* (*being doubtful as to whether he ought to shake hands with B., gives up the point altogether, and shakes hands with neither. Then, going, says to B., with a nervous sort of laugh, as if there was some kind of a joke in saying it*). Good-bye. Delighted to have made your—er—(*hurries off*).

*B.* (*speaking at the same moment*). Delighted to have—er—(*goes in the opposite direction with A.*)

*C.* (*to himself, going down the street*). I wonder what the deuce that fellow's name was?

*B.* (*to A.*) Who was that to whom you introduced me? Eh?

Of course they won't speak when they meet again, but of this matter more anon.

This is what we have called The Careless Introduction, though, luckily, in this instance, unattended by any awkward circumstances.

But supposing that the following scene had occurred —

*A* (*to C.*) You know my friend B., don't you?

*C.* (*sarcastically*). Oh! is that B.? ha! ha! (*laughing unpleasantly*) and your *friend* (*horribly emphasised*) too? ha! ha!

*A.* (*bewildered*). Eh! why—I (*takes off his hat, and puts it on again for no particular reason*).

*B.* (*who, having disengaged himself from A's arm, approaches C. viciously*). So, sir, we *do* meet, do we? (*fumbling in his pocket*). You may remember what I promised you—(*fumbling harder than ever in his coat tails*) a horse—(*fumbling in his breast pocket*) a horse-whipping (*discovers that this is the only day for the last six weeks that he has come out without the horsewhip*).

*C.* (*sneeringly*). If you dare—

*B.* (*furiously*). Dare!!—I'll—

*A.* But can't—won't—(*words fail him; he is pushed aside by B.*)

*B.* (*to A. violently*). I beg, sir, you'll not meddle.

*Crowd* (*who have quickly collected, addressing A.*) You get out, will yer? (*A. regards them indignantly.*)

*C.* (*trembling with suppressed rage*). I have no wish for a street row. (*About to move off.*)

*Crowd* (*disappointed*). Yah! (*to B.*) Give it him, little 'un.

*A.* Quite right, (*to C.*) You'd better go, we can settle it quietly.

*C.* (*vociferating*). Quietly! It's through *you*, sir, (*to A.*) that—

*B.* You're a coward, sir! (*to C.*)

*C.* (*saying something fierce indistinctly*). Thro-o-o-o-o—

*A.* (*addressing both*). But look here, you know—

*Crowd* (*delighted*). Hooray! don't stand none of his nonsense. (*Alluding to A.*)

} *Together.*

*Policeman* (*suddenly appearing on the scene*). Now what's all this here?

*Crowd* (*giving A. into custody*). That's him, Peeler!

*Little boy* (*gratuitously*). I seed him do it.

*Policeman* (*in an off-hand manner*) Here, I can't have any of this 'ere obstruction no longer, (*to C.*) Now, sir, do you give this person in charge? (*alluding to A.*)

*C.* (*who would like to do it very much, but is withheld by a stern sense of justice*). No.

*Policeman.* Well, then (*in a conciliatory tone*), don't go a loitering any longer. Come (*to the crowd*), you move on now, there ain't nothing move on, or I'll have some on you in two two's, I will. (*Exeunt little boys hastily, and the party breaks up, B. having vanished some time since.*)

B. and C. will henceforth always speak of A. as a meddling fellow. And A will have learnt the lesson that no introduction must be entered upon without due care, and conscientious observance of all the precautions hereinbefore set down. We will renew this most important subject at some future, but no very distant, time

## ON FURNISHING.

'HOW shall we furnish our drawing-room? What shall be the colour of its walls? Of what material shall we have the curtains? And what about the library?' These and a host of similar questions, which lead to endless discussion and speculation, suggest themselves to every newly-married couple who have just bought a new house or inherited an old one, and who look forward with a considerable amount of pleasure to the idea of furnishing it. Patterns of chintz, reps, and silk are scattered over the tables and chairs, while rolls of various stuffs occupy the sofas. The walls, too, are covered with sundry stripes of paper, tacked on to test the different shades of colour and the effect of the designs. There is nothing so disagreeable or amusing, according to the mood you are in, as the house where the matter of furnishing is under discussion. You hear of little else from morning to night; you are carried off from one shop to another; you are called upon to listen to various suggestions, and to weigh pros and cons again and again, and if you do not happen to be in the humour for it, the trial to temper and patience is considerable.

But it is really a very important question, and one which is not confined to the newly married. People who have lived for years in a large town, and have by patient industry acquired a sufficient independence to enable them to buy or rent a place in the country; or who have to begin life in a small two-windowed house in some dull street, like Portugal Street or the neighbourhood of Ebury Street; or those who cannot aspire beyond unfurnished lodgings in Sloane Street, have one and all an interest in furnishing. They wish, both naturally and wisely, to make their house or rooms as pretty as their means will allow; and as tables and chairs must be got, and the walls must be papered or coloured, they must take some trouble about these things if they wish for comfort. It is a great mistake to throw cold water upon the efforts which people make to render their rooms cheerful and gay. It is a great mistake not to take trouble about it ourselves; and even they who cry out against making so much fuss about a few tables and chairs are oftentimes the very people who are most attached to their own corner, their own pet sofa, and their own creature comforts; only they like to have these things without even trouble or forethought on their part, preferring to sit still unmolested, engaged in needlework, or absorbed in a book, while the work is being carried on which is eventually to administer to their comfort. But independent of this, what a history a room can tell! what a revelation it often is of the mind and habits of the owner!

There is a story told of a lady who is said to have the faculty of seeing the world of spirits by which we are surrounded, and who affirms that we are, each one of us, encompassed by an atmosphere peculiar to ourselves; so that she can detect in what part of the room we have been standing, or in what chair we have been sitting. So in a similar manner we can ourselves form a shrewd guess as to the mind and habits of those whose rooms we enter, for their stamp is on them. When we call upon persons whom we have never met, and are 'shown in' to the library or morning room, our eye quickly travels over it, and, almost at a glance, we take in the character, and taste, and inclination of our hostess. We each have our own peculiarities, which we impress upon everything which belongs to us. No matter where we go, we leave their tokens everywhere. If we take a lodging by the seaside the chances are that we turn the furniture about in such a way as to change the whole appearance of the room. Some have this knack more than others; and in their hands the dreariest lodging puts on an air of comfort. The simplest things acquire, under their auspices, a touch of refinement, which is often want

ing where wealth abounds. But apart from this there is real moral good in furnishing your rooms well. By *well* we do not mean expensively, but in good taste. The more comfortable and bright you make your house, the more your husband and children will gather round it; finding there, and not elsewhere, their rest and enjoyment after the fatigues and business of the day. They look forward to their evenings at home, and learn to grudge the time that is spent out of it. They find it so clean, so fresh and quiet; so full of refinement and good taste · everything in its place without formality or stiffness.

Who has not a tender recollection of his mother's room, where all the family gathered together in the long twilight of the winter evenings before dinner? Perhaps the walls were partly hung with chintz, enlivened by pictures set in panels here and there; or it may be that they were only coloured, in distemper, a soft pearly grey with quaint old picture-frames and looking-glasses reflecting the odd bits of china which she had collected together at little or no expense. At all events, the young wife may, by a judicious selection and arrangement of the furniture of her rooms, make her house the very type of all that is pleasant, and so wean her husband from his bachelor ways, and draw him off from his clubs and smoking-rooms to be her companion

In giving a few hints upon furnishing, we crave the indulgence of our readers, and beg an immunity from the snubs of those who are, by way of despising anything so mundane, maintaining as we do, *en passant*, that it is a study which is not so contemptible as it seems, but which has a beneficial influence upon the mind and life.

It is a very difficult subject to write about, because there is such a diversity of tastes. There is what may be called 'good taste,' 'bad taste,' and 'no taste at all,' and of these the third is better than the second, for it may avoid the mistakes into which 'bad taste,' must inevitably fall.

Some people have a horror of good taste, because it is, they say, so ruinously expensive; and they bless their stars that they have none of it. It is possible that they may have suffered through its indulgence, because it is too true that a desire to gratify it at every cost has often accompanied it. But we maintain that it need not be ruinous. In the hands of the unprincipled many good things become bad. Of course the poorer we are the more difficult it will be to realize the effect we wish to produce; but it does not at all follow that everything that is cheap must be ugly.

We remember to have heard it said by one who had great experience in furnishing, and wh was by no means rich when she began life, that it was so pleasant to be obliged to contrive; that the necessity for doing so added greatly to its interest and amusement. We know so well what she meant. To go with a well-filled purse where we like and buy what we please is pleasant enough; but to contrive a good and pleasing effect out of scanty materials needs the eye, mind, and hand of an artist, and is infinitely more satisfactory. We are reminded of a room we saw in France which was beautifully decorated. The walls were painted in panels, the larger ones representing the elements and the smaller ones the seasons. The painting was admirable, and the ideas evidently suggested by a well-directed imagination. It was all the handiwork of the lady of the house, who said that she could not afford to employ any one to do it, and that the alternative lay between doing it herself or shutting up the room altogether.

In these days, people of all classes are wise enough to use their talents, if they have any, and not to despise those who have. But this kind of decoration is scarcely what we mean by furnishing, which we consider to have more especial reference to tables and chairs, to curtains and carpets. Such a gift as that which our French friend possessed is rare. Sir Coutts Lindsay, Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford, the Duchess of Cleveland, and Mr. John Pollen, are among the few who are

similarly gifted. Happily, not so rare is the faculty of well selecting well assorting, and well arranging the furniture of a room.

In entering more fully into this subject, it will be necessary to classify the various styles of furnishing, so far as we can do so.

There are what we will call, for the sake of distinction, the dull style, the upholstery style, the rich, the architectural, the antiquarian, the luxurious, and the meretricious styles.

In the first place, we would lay down as a fundamental principle in furnishing, that the end in view should be to make a house or a room cheerful, comfortable, and liveable We say liveable, because there are so many which, though handsomely furnished, are dreary in the extreme, and the very thought of living in them makes one shudder. Others captivate us by their picturesque appearance, and we are inclined towards them; but one moment's peep inside dispels every wish of the kind. They are so dismal, the rooms are low, dark, and small, and an atmosphere of dankness pervades the whole.

The dull style of furnishing is, like every other form of dulness, very common. The prevailing tints are drab, oak, and a dingy red. There is much neatness about it. The highly-polished round table stands universally in the middle of the room, with perhaps some wax flowers—generally water-lilies, under a glass shade—in the centre; or, it may be, a bit of needlework and beads for a lamp-stand at night, and a tall lanky glass vase for flowers by day. A few well-bound books are placed upon the table at equal distances, all radiating from the centre. The carpet is a flowery pattern on a red ground, a few shades darker than the curtains, which are also red with stripes, or flowers of brown and drab. The sofa and arm-chairs have the same dull covering. There is usually a card-table; and red silk banner-screens are placed, like mutes, on each side of the fire. One never goes into the room without feeling inclined to yawn, and a sense of depression comes over one after a few minutes. It is essentially dull and drab—respectable,—certainly, but painfully dull.

The upholstery style is generally found where riches predominate over both mind or taste. There are people who have no idea how to set about furnishing. They think that it must be quite right if they trust it to the upholsterer, whose *métier* they consider it to be to do the thing in right and proper style. So they go to some, perhaps first-rate, upholsterer, and tell him the sum they intend to spend, and give him *carte blanche* to do as he likes, providing he makes a good show and keeps within the specified amount. The upholsterer goes down with rule and tape, and takes all the dimensions, and he stamps himself and his shop upon the whole house. He has but one idea. The drawing-room must be white and gold, the dining-room red and mahogany; and the library, oak and leather. In every corner you see the upholsterer's mind, in the damask ottomans and curtains, and heavy gilded cornice of the drawing-room; in the elaborate oak bookcases and table, and leather sofas and chairs of the library, and in the handsome (?) sideboard of the dining-room. We remember being taken over a newly-furnished house which had given employment to a whole army of London upholsterers, and we were asked how we liked 'this' and 'that,' and before we could devise a suitable reply, we were assured that *carte blanche* had been given; that it had been all put into "So-and-so's" hands because they had done all the furnishing for the Earl of Q——. In short, the house was simply a sample of what an upholsterer's ware-rooms can supply. There was no stint. There was plenty of *luxe;* but it all lacked a master-mind directing and overruling the whole. It smelt of the shop.

The rich style is perhaps the worst of all, because it is so insolent in its pride. It has the same defect as the upholstery style, for it is that style gilded *à l'outrance.* Wealth is stamped on every corner. Heavy

massive wealth overpowers it all, and the furniture is chosen not so much for its utility, as for the opportunity it affords of displaying the unbounded riches of its owner. There is a surfeit of money about it all.

The architectural style of furnishing has its charms for those who have a monomania for everything that is Gothic. To us, it is especially disagreeable. The chairs are so uncomfortable and straight-backed; everything is angular and hard, suggestive of stiff discomfort. We remember a house where this style was carried to a great excess. The very bedposts were Gothic: they were made of brass, with a ribbon running round them, on which was painted the family motto in red letters. The curtains had the arms and motto woven in them, and the papers bore the same device. When we saw it, we thanked Heaven we were not going to sleep in those beds. Imagine the horrors of a nightmare of griffins impaled, or lions rampant, or the ceaselessness of the motto from which one could never escape, turn which way one would. In another house, an heraldic tree sprung from the centre of one of the chimneypieces, and occupied the whole of one side of the room, the ceiling resembling that of a cloister. One would gladly escape from such a room to the furthest attic, where this architectural monomania had not reached. In another, the bed was hung with heavy crimson stuff, which was supported by iron rods of curious device, terminating in an exaggerated form of a bishop's pastoral staff; and the Gothic bathing-machine which was meant for a wardrobe, was suggestive of reminiscences of one's childhood that were anything but pleasant. Oh no! let us eschew this style, and be thankful that we have been preserved from it hitherto.

The antiquarian style is far more pleasing. The picturesque quaintness is most amusing, and the odd things one stumbles upon here and there take one quite by surprise. But it has its dreary side. The dark panelling, the uncomfortable chairs, whose only recommendation is their antiquity; the comfortless settee, in which it was supposed, some great man had sat a century or two ago; the table with its multitude of legs preventing one's ever getting near it; the scornful contempt for all the improvements of the nineteenth century, makes the house very uncomfortable, very unsuited to daily life; more adapted for lionizing than for living in.

Not so the artistic style, which has great recommendations, but is objectionable, inasmuch as there is often a certain amount of eccentricity about it, which shelters itself behind the idea that it is artistic. Odd things are done, doubtful theories are carried out as to colour and form, and the rooms themselves are often arranged more like 'studios' than living rooms for ordinary mortals.

The luxurious style speaks for itself, and the infinite variety of easy lounging-chairs and sofas, the soft carpets, and beautiful fabrics used for curtains, make it peculiarly inviting; but it, too, has its faults. There is generally no solidity about it, nothing practical or suggestive of occupation and work; no table at which you can write a letter. The whole speaks of idleness and ease, and is suited to the life of a Sybarite. 'The *dolce far niente* is stamped upon it too plainly. It wants force, strength of character, and without great care it will drift away into the meretricious style, which is luxury in its enervating form.

This style abounds in white and gold, and beautifully-tinted walls half darkened by rose-coloured blinds, and surrounded by balconies filled with evergreens and bright flowers, and ornamented with arches of creepers. Every landing has its groups of flowers and its divans; and the rooms abound in corners which are shut off by means of velvet screens or trellis-work of cane covered with creepers. In the meretricious style the study is to consider the personal appearance of the occupants. There is a great amount of looking-glass; a profusion of drapery in the shape of *portières* and curtains. The effect is pretty, but it is all more or less

a sham. The lace is not real, the gilding and decoration inferior, the whole of the ornamentation not even second-rate. It is pretentious, and attempts to pass itself off for something that it is not; and there is no other name for it but meretricious.

Rose-coloured blinds especially belong to this style; and, strange to say, this peculiar kind of furnishing has found its way to unwonted places. We have been told that a reverend divine who has a prebendal stall, and lives under the shadow of one of our ancient cathedrals, has adopted these meretricious blinds. They must contrast strangely with the ancient walls which surround them, and more strangely still with the lives of the founders of that venerable edifice. Imagine for a moment one of the old monks coming back to his former haunts, and finding his refectory or dormitory not only converted into a dwelling-house for the family man who now occupies his place, but the very canon himself, his wife, and bevy of fair daughters blushing to the very tips of their ears under the influence of rose-coloured blinds!

It is time we should broach our own theory upon furnishing—for we, too, have one.

But we will preface the few remarks we shall make by saying that in all the various styles we have mentioned there is a mixture of good, if we except the rich and upholstery styles, which are, in our opinion, wholly bad. The danger in adopting any one particular style lies in forcing its peculiarities where they are inappropriate. For instance, who would ever dream of furnishing a palace such as Chatsworth, Arundel Castle, Burleigh, or Longleat, like a cottage in Surrey or a villa at Putney? The antiquarian, architectural, artistic, and luxurious styles can all suggest useful hints. But if any attempt is made to make the place subservient to any one of them, instead of their being subservient to the place, we fear that the result will be a failure. Just as certain landscape-gardeners set their faces against studying the peculiar features of the situation, and cut down everything that interferes with their preconceived ideas. They simply repeat themselves again and again to the injury of what might be really beautiful.

The great point in furnishing is to study well the aspect, the general style of the house, and to make all our efforts harmonize with it, for incongruity is a great offence against good taste. There is a fitness in things which should never be lost sight of if we desire success. We know of an instance where, in an old-fashioned house abounding in mullioned windows which run high up into the ceiling, the present possessor has hung all the rooms with Chinese papers, and fitted them up with light-coloured ultra-modern furniture, as inconsistently as if you were to decorate Westminster Abbey like the Italian Opera-House.

It would not be difficult to multiply instances where furniture has been transplanted from one house to another without the smallest reference to its appropriateness.

Our theory is that no one thing should catch the eye. There should be harmony throughout; and we would recommend that great attention be paid to the colour of the walls. If they, the ceiling, and the carpet are well selected, all other points of detail are like the finishing touches of a picture. The right tone having been attained the rest is comparatively easy.

We have found greys, light greens, and pale mauve to work up well; and the less pattern there is in the paper the better, unless, for some special reason, a chintz paper is desired. If the room faces the south a cool grey or mauve is good; and for a north room we have seen a yellowish-green answer admirably, imparting to the room the appearance of sunshine.

As a rule, we have found it best to avoid reds, especially a dark-red, which is offensively dingy.

Blue is a dangerous colour to use. It is so apt to make a room either gaudy or cold; though we have seen it effectively used with pink to give a Pompadour look.

For carpets we incline to small inoffensive patterns, and generally

avoid those which are flowery, as being in theory and in effect bad.

As to the arrangement of the furniture it is difficult to say much, as everything depends upon what it consists of. But we have generally found it desirable to keep the centre of the room and the space before the fire quite free, and to eschew a round table. If we must have one we prefer pushing it into some corner of the room—anywhere but in the middle.

We once asked a lady, who was conspicuous for the excellent taste she displayed in furnishing her rooms, wherein her secret lay, and she said that she invariably made it a rule never to employ any one person exclusively. She bought what she wanted wherever she could find it; and certainly the result was perfect. There was a harmony and a variety that was most pleasing.

We will, before we bring this paper to an end, describe two or three rooms which have appeared to us as singularly perfect.

One was the room of a gentleman who was more of a man of business and less of an idle man than any we know. The walls were a pale but warm stone colour; on them hung some beautiful pictures in curious old Florentine frames, through the interstices of which the colour of the walls might be seen. Opposite the fireplace were two buhl cabinets filled with rare bronzes. On one side of the fire was the large and massive buhl writing-table, which seemed made for business. The carpet was crimson, and the curtains were of chintz, with a pattern of well-drawn and well-coloured carnations. Book-cases of ebony and tortoiseshell occupied either side of the fireplace. There certainly never was a more inviting or a less dull room.

Another was quite different. It was the drawing-room of a small house near Grosvenor Square. The walls were a pearly French grey—of that peculiar shade which suggests mother-of-pearl. The curtains were of turquoise blue silk, lined with white silk. The carpet was a shade of crimson, and the prevailing colours of the chintz coverings of the chairs, sofas, and ottomans were pink and blue on a white ground.

Another small room, which we thought at the time was very successful, was papered with a dark-blue flock-paper without any pattern on it, which gave it the appearance of velvet. The walls were covered with pictures, quaint looking-glasses, curious china on gilt brackets, arranged with and without method. A small three-cornered writing-table filled up one angle, and a sofa and two arm-chairs completed the furniture of this tiny room. The curtains were of muslin, edged with pink calico and lace. This was a small unfurnished lodging which our friend had taken and had fitted up at a small expense.

When we speak of silk curtains and gilding, and describe rooms of that class, we do not by any means think that anything less than that is to be despised Far from it. One of the most cheerful rooms we ever remember was a small morning-room papered with a light-green moiré paper finished with a simple moulding The curtains were of chintz—a small Persian pattern, with a border, and the carpet was red moss. The tables and chairs were small, and in keeping with the room—all of good form, but made of American birch, and French-polished. It was the gayest, most liveable room we ever saw. It raised one's spirits to go into it; and the well-filled book-cases which occupied two small recesses opposite the fireplace gave sufficient proof that no one need be dull in this small, simply-furnished room.

It would seem almost invidious to name any one upholsterer or decorator when there are so many that are good. But, in every case, we would again and again repeat that in furnishing it is necessary that there should be a master-mind directing every detail. It is quite possible that this may involve a considerable amount of trouble; and where the purse is not well filled, it is not only unavoidable, but absolutely indispensable; for it is only by taking trouble that we can hope to obtain a good result at a small cost.

## HUMAN PICKLES.

WHEN the First Gentleman in Europe ruled the land; when certain ladies were 'toasted' at dinner-parties throughout the kingdom; when gentlemen wore huge white cravats, and tight short-waisted coats were in vogue; when Bond Street was the fashionable London promenade; when stage-coaches rattled through the streets, and the shrill railway whistle was unheard, it behoved every one who made any pretence of mixing in the *beau monde* to leave the grimy metropolis some time during the year for one of the English watering-places. The little village of Brighthelmstone was fast growing into the fashionable town of Brighton, and was yearly visited by many besides the fine gentleman who, with his chosen friends, held nightly orgies in the dismal tea-garden mockery of semi-Moorish, semi-Turkish architecture; but as yet, with few exceptions, the mass of Londoners fled inland. The London and Brighton Railway was not thought of, and 'Eight hours at the sea-side for half a crown,' was an impossibility; while for all but those with plenty of time and long purses, excursions beyond Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest were not to be dreamt of.

Still for all that there were certain towns every year well thronged with visitors. Bath, Cheltenham, Harrogate, Tunbridge, all had their periodical influx. People who, under the pretence of drinking mineral waters, the very taste of which now-a-days is scarcely known, flocked to these fashionable resorts, and walked, danced, dressed, and flirted as their grandchildren do at the present time at Biarritz and Baden-Baden. The glory of our English mineral springs has departed. Where is the Beau Nash of other days; where the public balls, the solemn card-parties, the links, the music, the sedan-chairs, the coaches? All, all have gone, faded away into dust, as we and our amusements must fade in like manner, to give place to new faces, new dresses, new pleasures, and a new generation. The very use of mineral waters has been forgotten by the English, except that sometimes Mrs. Bull suggests to her husband that the springs of Interlacken and a judicious diet of goat's whey may bring back the roses to the cheek of their dear Julia; and that Major Rook, who has such a wonderful knack of turning up the king at écarté, and gives such delightful little card-parties, goes periodically to Baden-Baden for the benefit of his health. Certainly, too, gentlemen who speculate heavily, are occasionally ordered off to Boulogne, sometimes at an hour's notice, to try the effects of the bathing there to recruit their shattered frames; but with these few exceptions, the number of English who make any pretence of deriving benefit from the use of mineral springs is small.

Not so with our friends and allies across the Channel. The French, Germans, and Italians have a partiality, not only for the attendant pleasures, but for the actual water cure, and it is to one of their bathing settlements to which I intend to introduce you. Not, may it please you, to semi-English Boulogne, with its chattering, gossiping promenade, its cathedral and its casino; not to Dieppe, with its sociable water-parties, where a lady accepts the escort of a gentleman for a swim in the same way she might his hand for a quadrille; not to Calais the dismal, or Ostend the every-way-objectionable. We may, if you are so minded, bestow a passing glance at whichever of those places you please; but our destination lies far inland, across the dreary, sandy plain, through the low marshy districts, with the apparently interminable rows of poplars. Past country stations we must dash in the express train for Paris, catching momentary glimpses of quaint villages, quaint costumes, and quaint faces; the train slackens speed, and stops at a platform, 'Vingt minutes d'arrêt, messieurs.' Military uniforms, fierce moustaches, country women with baskets, bearded men

in blouses, swords, cocked hats, sour wine, and tobacco; then the blowing of a horn, and once more *en route* for Paris. But not to linger in that world-renowned city. More train, more cigars, more uniforms, more clattering and jabbering, more flat country and poplars; but now with faint, misty blue hills in the extreme distance, and at length a halt of the train for the examination of the baggage. The boundary line is crossed, and we are in Switzerland.

Now as each succeeding summer takes an increased number of English to ramble about the Alps—as artists have painted, photographers photographed, and guide-book manufacturers romanced in the Tyrol —it may be thought that any description, unless of a route diverging much from the beaten track, such as the ascent of a hitherto inaccessible peak, or the exploration of a dangerously crevassed glacier, must lack interest; but, may it please you, the village to which I am about to introduce you depends but little on its scenery for its interest; and though it lies right in the beaten path, but few remain there a sufficient time to learn its manners and customs. In short, it is my desire to take you with me to Loèche-les-Bains, not as a tourist, knapsack on back and alpenstock in hand, but as a bather, with a neat flannel bathing-gown at the bottom of your portmanteau.

The situation of Loèche-les-Bains, or Leukerbad, as it is called by the Germans, is more curious than beautiful. It is a small village, built, with the exception of one or two houses, of wood, and clustered round the hot springs. It is placed in a natural basin, and is almost surrounded by apparently inaccessible walls of bare rock, which, although not destitute of a certain savage grandeur and picturesqueness, can hardly be said to exhibit the beauties of Alpine scenery in perfection. There are two ways of approaching Loèche-les-Bains, one by the valley of the Rhone to Loèche, and from thence by a steep but good carriage-road to the baths; the other by the most wonderful mule-pass in Switzerland, down a precipice which from the bottom appears scarcely cleft sufficiently to afford a footing for anything but a goat or a chamois. It need scarcely be said that invalids visiting the baths usually prefer the former route; for although the latter, known as the Gemmi pass, is perfectly safe to traverse, the awful precipices and walls of rock are trying to weak nerves, the path by which adventurous tourists descend being in many places actually hewn from out the solid perpendicular rock, and seldom exceeding three or four feet in width.

Loèche-les-Bains being situate at the foot of these precipices suffers in winter much from avalanches; but at that time it is deserted, the bathing season only lasting from the commencement of June to the end of September, during which months there is no danger to be apprehended from the falling snow. The village itself is unpretending enough, even the hotels, with the exception of the Hôtel des Alpes, being of wood, but nevertheless affording tolerably good accommodation for those who are not over particular. Some half-dozen shops, where inferior articles are sold at high prices, and a few wretched châlets, together with these hotels, complete the village, with the exception of the baths themselves. The hot springs which supply them are so numerous, that nine-tenths of the mineral water is not used, and runs into the river Dala, ultimately to mingle with the mighty Rhone. However, it is more of the habits and customs of the bathers that I wish to treat than of the place itself.

Let us take a day in the water. It is half-past six in the morning, and a bell is clamouring forth as if it enjoyed the joke 'Lady and gentlemen bathers,' it says to those who know how to interpret the accents which fall from its iron tongue—'Lady and gentlemen bathers, it is time for you to bestir yourselves;' and accordingly, yawning and stretching, those who are trying the water cure rouse themselves and get out of bed preparatory to the bath.

A knock at the door and simul-

taneous entrance of the waiter. 'Will monsieur take coffee or chocolate this morning?' Monsieur will take coffee, and presently it is brought to him in his room, together with a small roll, with which he refreshes himself while dressing: this latter operation, however, does not take much time; a long serge gown covers monsieur from his neck to his ankles, a small cap, more or less jaunty according to the dandyism of the wearer, covers his head, and a pair of slippers his feet: this done, monsieur is fully equipped for his morning bath; and after a matutinal cigarette (if not forbidden by the doctor) he sallies forth from his hotel for the hot springs. It is true, there are dressing-rooms attached to the bathing establishment, but as it is only situate a few yards from the door of the hotel, monsieur —ay, madame and mademoiselle also—usually prefers to cross the road in his bathing costume to the trouble of dressing and undressing.

The baths, of which there are several in the village, are, with the exception of one dismal stone building, little better than wooden sheds, having high pointed roofs with a lantern or belfry at the top, which admits light to those soaking within. Viewed externally, they resemble cowsheds, internally, it is quite impossible to liken them to anything. On first entering, the sudden change from brilliant sunlight to comparative darkness prevents visitors for some minutes from discerning anything; but on their eyes becoming more accustomed to the light, they find themselves in a tolerably spacious chamber, entirely filled with water, but crossed by a light bridge a few inches above the surface. There are rows of small doors on each side which communicate with the dressing-rooms; and from which about an hour after the bell has sounded come tripping the ladies and gentlemen, clothed as already described, for their morning bath. They descend a few steps and then quietly take their seats on benches placed beneath the water, which in this attitude reaches to their chins, and settle themselves comfortably for their morning's stew. The temperature is very high, the hot springs on leaving the soil attaining a temperature of about 120°: it is almost needless to say that the water is somewhat cooled before being used for the baths.

As those using the baths for the benefit of their health are forced to spend their entire morning up to their chins in water, everything is done to render the four hours as little irksome as possible In the centre of each of the compartments, for the bridge divides the bath, rises a gaily-ornamented vase filled with flowers, while before each bather float small trays on which are placed coffee, newspapers, novels, chessboards, or whatever may be chosen by the invalids to help them to wile away the time. Flirtations, and various games and discussions are eagerly carried on in the water, though with regard to the latter, religious controversy is especially forbidden by the regulations; and while on this subject it may be mentioned that stringent rules for the proper preservation of decorum are rigorously enforced. While messieurs and mesdames are in the bath their friends, both male and female, who are not themselves trying the hot-water cure throng the bridge, and keep up a lively conversation with their immersed acquaintances, and merry peals of laughter continually resound through the building: occasionally a tourist whose curiosity has been inflamed by guide-books, enters timorously and stares around him in blank amazement; and well he may, for the sight of some score of heads, some grizzled and wrinkled, others bright and pretty, emerging from hot water and without any visible bodies to support them, is certainly well calculated to astonish those who view it for the first time. Use, we are told, is second nature, and certainly after the first few days the bathers appear to be as much at home in the water as on land. Of course, among the multitude of those who use the baths, there are some whose sufferings have drawn their faces into permanent expressions of pain, while others have the unmistakable stamp of death upon their countenances; but these are

the exceptions: ghastly ones too they are, and often serve to check the laughter of visitors which might otherwise be aroused by their singular appearance.

In conversation, reading, and games the allotted four hours rapidly pass away; the bell sounds again, the bathers flock from the water to their hotel, there, in accordance with the medical decree, to pass an hour in bed. After that, they dress, donning this time their gayest robes and brightest colours; then a third time the bell clangs forth, and the whole party descend to the *salle à manger* for the first great meal of the day, the *déjeûner-à-la-fourchette*.

Six courses of various made dishes, coffee, chocolate, claret, bordeaux, eggs, absinthe, and eau-sucrée, laughing, flirting, jesting, scandal, politics, and small talk, buxom ladies with caps and fronts, pretty girls with hair dressed *à l'Impératrice*, gentlemen with beards of every shape and hue, old and feeble, young and lively, perpetual cries for the waiters, and an occasional disturbance caused by late arrivals—imagine all this, with a never-ceasing undercurrent of jangling, clattering, jabbering, and rustling, and you will have some faint idea of the scene presented at our hotel during the *déjeûner*.

Supposing you, my reader, to still retain your English prejudice of liking your breakfast earlier in the day, you will now have ample time to look around you and note the appearance of your fellow-bathers, when habited in ordinary costume.

There then, behold! At the head of the table sits a Cardinal! Perchance this morning you noticed in the water an old, wizened, yellow, cadaverous little man, who seated himself apart from the more noisy bathers; but I much doubt if you recognize him again in his red robe and skull-cap—so much does the bathing dress sink all to the same level; though, for that matter, ordinary costume is not to be relied upon as a test of caste. That handsome, well-dressed youth, who talks so much, and ever eats and drinks of the best, is the son of a watchmaker at Geneva, while his neighbour, with a grizzled moustache, and a red ribbon in his buttonhole, who has just made so great a disturbance because the remnant of his yesterday's wine has not been brought to him, is an Italian count, with a villa on the lake of Como, and a palace in Turin. Madame, again, seated at his right hand, is an opera-singer; and report says that the young demoiselle who looked so sallow and hollow-cheeked in the water this morning, but who is now so plump and rosy, is but a dancer, and commenced her career in a travelling circus. Be that as it may, every one is sociable at Loèche-les-Bains, and the hours, whether in water or on land, pass quickly enough to those whose health and spirits permit them to join in the society. A chance visitor, however, is scarcely likely to find much pleasure in the place, when his curiosity has been gratified by a sight of the baths. The hotel-keepers know he is not a bather, and will not remain more than one night, so do not pay much attention to him, and the bathers usually wait to make acquaintance in the water.

The *déjeûner* concluded, there is yet a short time allowed to the invalids before proceeding to their second soak. The gentlemen light their cigars, the ladies amuse themselves in the *salon*, some playing on the piano—about which perhaps the less said the better—others reading or talking. There is a promenade at Loèche-les-Bains, from whence a good view is obtained, and thither many of the bathers stroll in the interval previous to their second immersion, and listen with a feeble show of interest to the strains of some wandering brass band, or itinerant barrel-organ, the while they stare in at shop-windows at coloured views of the village without recognizing them, or lazily turn over the everlasting carved wood salad spoons and nutcrackers, in the vain hope of coming upon something they have not seen before. Even the consolation to ladies of criticising each other's dresses is wanting here, for there are no shops where purchases can be made in the way of grand attire, and the carriage of luggage

by coach or train is a serious item in continental travelling, and one against which Paterfamilias, be he French or English, is apt to rebel; consequently, after two or three days' stay, the contents of my lady's wardrobe are revealed, and all interest in her—as far as her dress is concerned—is at an end. However, finding what amusement they can, the visitors stroll and dawdle about till the time for the second bath arrives, which need not be described, being but a repetition of the first—the same faces, the same dresses, and the same amusements. After a second four hours' parboiling, the bell sounds again, and the bathers rush from the water to prepare for the great event of the day—dinner.

This meal is little more than a repetition of the *déjeuner*, with twice the number of courses, and protracted to an indefinite length; but everything must come to an end, and after about two hours at table, the ladies and gentlemen all adjourn together to the *salon* to finish the evening.

With a little music, a great deal of tobacco smoke, a fair amount of sentimentalism, a few cups of coffee, a short stroll if the weather be favourable, an occasional game at piquet or écarté, and a *petit verre*, the day is concluded; and the party of bathers retire to rest at an early hour, to go through the same course the next and every succeeding day for three weeks, when the cure is supposed to be completed.

Let us count the way in which these bathers fill up their twenty-four hours. Nine are spent in bed, eight in the water, three in eating and drinking, one and a half in dressing, and the remaining two and a half in dawdling and sauntering. Let us hope it does them good.*

Though the greater part of those who make any stay at Loèche-les-Bains are there for the benefit of their health, there are several who may be described as supernumeraries, or hangers-on. For example, Madame is recommended by the family doctor to try the baths, and Monsieur and Mademoiselle bear her company on land, although they most probably decline to do so in water; for pleasant as stewing for eight hours a day may be, as a cure for disease it can hardly be considered either exhilarating or amusing.

For these hangers-on, unless possessed of a well-trained and contented spirit, Loèche-les-Bains must be the dullest of dull places. As previously stated, it is situated in a basin formed by surrounding mountains, with only two exits, one up a precipice, and the other down the valley of the Dala. The latter is of course the principal walk or ride, the other presenting difficulties which many do not care to face, though the wonders of the ascent, and the magnificent view from the summit, amply repay those who undertake the task. At the top of the pass is a small lake, called the Daubeu See, which is interesting for the wild, weird, bleak nakedness of the surrounding scenery; whilst yet a little further is the solitary châlet of Schwarenbach, in which Werner laid the scene of his gloomy tragedy, 'The Twenty-fourth of February.'

There is yet another excursion, though but a short one, from Loèche-les-Bains, but no tourist should omit to make it. Those acquainted with the place will know that I allude to 'The Ladders.' A walk of about two miles, the latter part of the path being through a pine forest, from whence, through openings amidst the trees, very fine views of the valley of the Dala are to be had, leads to this remarkable spot.

High above upon the mountain side lies the village of Albinen, to reach which from Loèche-les-Bains, the only way without making a détour of some miles, is up the side of a perpendicular wall of rock, which even a chamois-hunter would hardly attempt to scale without some assistance. To render this way practicable, a series of rough wooden ladders, eight in number, are rudely fastened to the rock, resting on such narrow ledges as

* In giving this account, I have only narrated what takes place amongst one set of bathers at one hotel. The other hotels and baths may have different arrangements for anything I know to the contrary.

Nature has afforded. The ascent of these, or, still worse, the descent, is not to be lightly attempted; for though securely fixed they are given to shift slightly, with the weight of the climber, and the knowledge of a precipice several hundred feet in depth immediately below, does not help to make the motion pleasant to the adventurous tourist. Still, the inhabitants trip lightly up and down at all hours of the day and night, sometimes, too, with a little more brandy or kirchwasser in their heads than is good for them, and never come to grief. It is said that when two mountaineers meet on these ladders, one swings round to the inside, and holds on by his hands till the other has passed: but though it may be, and doubtless has been done, I much doubt its frequent occurrence; the customary plan being for those commencing the ascent or descent, to utter a few cries, which shape themselves into a rough song, to warn any one who may be on the ladders that some one is approaching. After scaling the rocks by means of this rude help, a rough mountain path leads to Albinen, which is chiefly remarkable for being a thoroughly Swiss village, and affording a fine view, which, however, is better obtained from the Col de Torrent, the ascent of which can be made from this village. Before quitting 'The Ladders,' it may be mentioned that this novel route has given rise to a curious addition to the costume of the fair inhabitants of Albinen, they wearing an article of attire generally supposed to be the exclusive property of the sterner sex. When ascending or descending the ladders, their petticoats are tucked round their waists, and there is little to distinguish them from boys in their appearance.

There is another way to return to Loèche-les-Bains from Albinen, but it necessitates a great round—in fact, more than doubling the distance; but the path is pretty, and there are no ladders.

You, my readers, being now initiated into the mysteries of bathing as conducted at Loèche-les-Bains, and having made the two excursions from the village, I entreat you to take the advice of one who speaks feelingly from experience of its dulness and monotony, and get away from the place as quickly as you can. A dismal omnibus with a Hansom cab skewered on in front, and called a diligence, starts every afternoon for the quaint old town of Sion, and is a pleasant drive for those who do not object to spending nearly five hours in going sixteen miles. There is an interesting footpath over the mountains, which saves four miles, so that a stout pedestrian leaving Loèche-les-Bains at the same time with the diligence, would arrive at Sion considerably before it. One of the most interesting objects connected with the drive is the gradual descent into a warmer climate, and more cultivated region. Leaving the bare sterile rocks and dark pine forests, one, by almost imperceptible degrees, reaches the fertile valley of the Rhone, with its vineyards, and orchards, presenting, in its whole scenery, a complete and delightful contrast to the barren basin in which Loèche-les-Bains is situated—the only unsightly object in the valley being the mighty river itself, which brings down with it a quantity of loose stones and débris, which litter in ugly patches what would otherwise be green pasturages.

By those tourists who care simply for beautiful scenery, Loèche-les-Bains may be avoided altogether, or the Baths of Pfeffers substituted—though there the bathing is carried on upon the 'separate' system; but to those who feel an interest in manners and customs as well as mountains and lakes; to those who would see the most *curious* pass in Switzerland (not the grandest or the most impressive); I confidently recommend a trip over the Gemmi to Loèche-les-Bains, at the same time that I advise all pleasure-seekers to limit their stay there to a single day, unless they have faith in the waters, and desire to simmer away ill-health, boil down incipient maladies, and pickle their constitutions.

WARNER STERNE.

## JUNE PROMENADERS.

'How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmer away!'

SIGHING, whispering, shouting, thundering,
Leaping up the crashing scale,
Murmurs faint swelled out to pæans—
Isis had withdrawn her veil!
Nature, late in bondage, tremulous
With a sweetly-selfish glee,
Rent the heavens with benediction—
Beauty once again was free!

Stately as a twin Apollo,
Easy with a victor's grace,
Marched the jewelled Spring, and triumph
Flushed the down upon his face.
Violets blushed, and kissed his sandals;
Perfumes smote him from the bowers;
Heaven lent ocean smiles of greeting;
Clouds wept parti-coloured showers.

Streaking, glimmering, gleaming, blazing,
Rushing up from deeps of night,
Strode the sun, as strides a giant,
To the 'upper deeps' of light.
Thronging cities praised his splendour;
Hill and vale essayed to sing;
Streams gave tongue through countless channels;
Music soared on every wing.

In the spring-time and the morning—
Youth of year and youth of day—
When near noon the moments halted,
When June caught the soul of May;
'Neath a roof of young-leafed arches—
Green o'erlaid with sunny gold—
Wrought I reverie-mosaics,
Fitting fancies new with old.

Then my dreamy eyes a vision
Saw in twofold grace to glide;
For a Brightness passed before me,
With a Virtue by its side.
And my heart in blessings bounded
To a happy voiceless tune:
'Sure,' it chanted, 'ye are sisters
Of the Morning and the June!

'Sisters of the prime of Nature
Or in action, or repose;
Sister-flowers that bloom to opening—
One a lily, one a rose!
One so stately, proudly happy,
Free and grand and debonair;
One so coy in sober gladness,
Dear to thought, to pity dear!

'Sisters of the June and Morning,
Of the Light on sea and shore—
Each is sister of the other!
How may worshipper say more?
As the sun towards the darkness
Ever bends his goalless race,
Be afar the clouds of sorrow
From each sweetly different face!

'So akin to grace and beauty,
Will ye not to love be kind?—
Though to choose were task too arduous
For the much-divided mind?
Why the knotty question settle,
If I here record an oath
In my heart of hearts to cherish
Love all-constant to you both?'

A. H. G.

## LONDON SHADOWS.

### No. II.—The Police Station Notice-Board.

THE publishing firm with which I deal for sensational literature is situated neither in the 'Row,' nor in Piccadilly, nor in the Strand. Its locality is anything but fashionable, being the bleak end of an eastern thoroughfare, and in a line with the parish vestry-hall and the parish doctor's shop, and the parish engine-house. Exteriorly, it is not so cosy a building as publishing houses as a rule are, but a gaunt edifice composed of the rawest-looking of red bricks, severely 'pointed,' with the narrowest lines of dead-white mortar, that looks like the braiding of an official uniform. What may be termed its shop windows are not enlivened by a display of gorgeously-bound volumes, with the title-pages temptingly revealed, but are reduced to opacity by an inner coating of grey paint; while without a rigid regiment of iron bars stand grimly sentinel; and its outer door, oaken, and studded with iron bolt-heads, looks decidedly the reverse of hospitable. In the centre of the door is a plain brass plate, inscribed with the name of the proprietor of the house, which is 'Police.'

My publisher wears a suit of dark-blue, adorned with leaden buttons, and his feet are encased in square-toed bluchers, and about his neck he wears a leather collar. He is the cheapest publisher in London, which is one among many reasons why I patronize him. He pastes his stories on to a board about four feet long and three deep, which he brings outside with most praiseworthy punctuality every morning, and hangs to a hook in the wall between the door and the window; and you may go there and read them without it costing you a single farthing.

Being so liberal-minded a man, the reader will be pleased to learn that my publisher does a very extensive business. All the year round trade is never slack with him. Other sensational publishers are amenable to 'season.' They go muzzled, as it were, in the dog-days, which cannot be regarded but as a merciful dispensation of Providence. My publisher, however, is exempt from this salutary law. True, in the depth of winter, when the iron earth defies the labourer's spade, and the ice-merchant goes harvesting—when suicide is quoted in the horror market as 'brisk,' and the coroner and his twelve merry men are doing a roaring trade, my publisher is busier than usual, and the issues from his

press are more numerous; but his average business is as level as that of the cheesemonger on the opposite side of the street.

It is peculiar, however. Full-blown stories are not at all in my publisher's way. His plan is to give you no more than the mere bones—and rags—of his heroes and heroines, and leave you to fill in and pad and bolster as you please. This to lazy minds may appear an objectionable system, but, for my part, I prefer it. It isn't every one's cookery that suits my palate. I have a fancy for raw material in such cases; and at my favourite Whitechapel house it may be obtained in any quantity, pure and unadulterated.

There is sufficient material to make the fortune of any intelligent novel-writer in the publications of one morning. Murder, burglary, misdemeanour, absconded husbands and faithless wives; trustworthy servants, with twenty years' character, anxiously inquired after by too confident masters; respectable tradesmen 'wanted' as criminal bankrupts. Love, hate, crime, ill-gotten wealth and ill-fated poverty, despair and suicide—all may be found on my publisher's board, set in a frame of four feet by three.

The bottom part of the board is devoted to the leading article of my publisher's trade, which is in 'Bodies Found.' Condensation is his especial study, and he will give you seven stories on as many half-sheets of ruled foolscap. Terribly brief! In ten lines a life's history may be clearly read by an intelligent person. Let the curious reader go to my publisher's board and try his skill. It is astonishing, when once you get the cue, how easy it is to build up your novel out of the slender materials he provides. He keeps in stock a regular 'form,' with the words 'When,' 'Where,' 'How dressed,' &c., &c., in print all down the one side of each half-sheet of foolscap; so that when he is in a humour to hit off a story, he has only to write down appropriate answers opposite the various question. Here is one, copied verbatim from my publisher's list for January:—

| | |
|---|---|
| When . . . | Sunday, 6 a.m. December 28th. |
| Where . . . | Limehouse Hole, River Thames |
| Apparent age . | Twenty-three. |
| Hair and eyes, colour of. | Hair dark; eyes blue. |
| How dressed . | Old lavender silk dress, crinoline, one petticoat, spring-side boots, with military heels, much worn; bonnet, blue silk, black feather and roses. |
| Particular marks on person . | Left eye blackened as from a blow; scar on left ear as though one ear-ring had been pulled through the lobe. |
| Where lying . . | Bone-house, Shadwell. |

Here are your beans ready sprouted for stringing. Let Jenkins, the aspiring poet, who writes 'Lines on Amelia's Eyes,' and verses 'On my Lady's favourite Hound,' go to my publisher's board, and indulge his teeming fancy there!

Take the stark occupant of Shadwell bone-house: restore her to life: make the old lavender silk new: mend the torn left ear, and fill it and its fellow with a pair of twinkling pendants: renew the splendour of the blue silk bonnet: titivate the bruised and soddened features, and restore the boots with the military heels, and you have your heroine. Give her poor though honest parents, whom she has deserted, and a handsome West-end blackguard, to whose serpent tongue she has listened, and you may account for her six-months-long brilliant career. Have ready a neat gambling or forging scene, in which West-end B. is the chief actor, and a liberal quantity of startling revelation, remorse, tears, entreaty, abandonment, struggling poverty, temptation, swift descent from the West to the East end, evil company, recklessness, gin,—and you may return your heroine from whence she came—the Shadwell bone-house—with a serene consciousness of having done your duty by her.

It must be admitted, however, that it is not always so easy to deal with the raw material my publisher provides. Take the next case:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Where found . | In the cellar of an unfinished house at Pimlico. |
| Apparent age . | Thirty-five. |
| How dressed . | Of gentlemanly attire; pockets empty. |
| Particular marks on person . . | None. |

Here is a mystery worthy the consideration of the great 'sensation'

author. Who is this man of gentlemanly attire, and aged thirty-five (apparently)? How came he in the cellar? His pockets were empty. Did he, driven hard by destitution, deliberately slink into the unfinished house after the workmen had left it, and descend into the cellar to lie down and die? Altogether unlikely. A man so abased as to prefer dying in a cellar, while there were several spacious upper apartments at his disposal, would have seen nothing shocking in disposing of his gentlemanly waistcoat, which would have enabled him to struggle on yet a little longer. Empty pockets! Was it a case of robbery? Scarcely. When thieves commit murder it is by accident. There is an unexpected awakening of the victim, an uproar, a struggle, and a desperate blow. But the description says most distinctly, 'Particular marks on person. . . None.' A bruise would be accounted a particular mark—even a torn whisker or a scratched hand. Besides, a thief must be a rare dunce at his trade who would not appropriate the whole of the gentlemanly attire as well as the contents of the pockets thereof, and this as much in mitigation of the chances of the victim being recognized as on pecuniary grounds. No! it is not a case of robbery and accidental murder. Then it must be a love and suicide case. 'Apparent age, thirty-five,' my publisher says; but a face smitten by Death soon grows older, and so we may safely knock off five years.

Set him up in his gentlemanly boots, and set him breathing once again. Ah! now we recognize him! What! Algernon! Algernon Puffball, counter clerk at Rolmin Riches, and Co., the bankers, of Lombard Street! Why, how comes this? 'Hush! 'tis the night-watch! Stay until his measured tread has died away round the corner, and I will tell you all. List! She came; her golden hair dancing in the sunlight, and her beaming eye ethereal blue. No! no! it was not accident. Once it might have been so; nay, it is in the bounds of possibility that it might have happened twice; but when for the *third time*, as she handed me the pass-book, her heavenly thumb touched mine—when, with drooping eyelids and a voice tremulous with emotion, she whispered, "Take this, if you please," could I longer doubt? My aged mother reasoned with me. She is a homely woman. "The eagle does not mate with the cuckoo," said she; "neither are cheese-parings a fit garnish for roast duck, my son." Embracing her, I laughed wildly, and flew from her presence. The number of my angel's house in Belgrave Square was no secret to me, and from morn till dewy eve I kept breathless vigil. At last she came! She came in a brougham, and seated by her side a titled villain, who fawned and smiled and smelt at the bouquet she held up for the purpose. The sight was maddening! I gnashed my teeth until a back one that is much decayed began to ache horribly. Thus goaded, I formed a desperate resolution. "Since it is hopeless to live for you," said I, shaking my fist after the brougham, "I at least may enjoy the sweet satisfaction of dying for you." So saying, and assuming a jaunty air, I entered a chemist's shop, and bought poison. My first idea was to make myself comfortable on *her* doorstep, and there take it; but it flashed to my mind that my rival, discovering my body, might gloat over it, which would be unpleasant. There was only one way to prevent it, and that was by destroying my identity. Instantly I acted on the brilliant conception. My watch and pocket-book I dropped down a sink-hole: for cleaning my boots I gave a shoe-black all the money in my possession, amounting to seven and elevenpence. You know the rest.'

One more extract from the station-house notice-board. The individual to whom it refers is mentioned simply as 'Aged—found dead at a common lodging-house—particular marks on person: an anchor and two hearts tattooed on left arm, marks of bullet-wound on left shoulder, and scar, as of a cutlass-stroke, on right cheek.' Here at a glance we have a romance of love

and war. Seaport courtship fifty years ago—lovers' vows—anchor weighed—sea-fight—decks slippery with gore—hand-to-hand combat—wounds—heroic preservation of captain's life: 'If we weather this bout, come to me in the evening, Bob Marlinspike; you are a brave fellow!' (observation of Captain Mainbrace)—return to port—sweetheart fickle—Government ditto—sixpence a day—watercresses or lucifer-matches—rheumatism—street begging—'now lying at Lambeth Workhouse.'

My publisher's list is very extensive; from 'murder,' to 'a lost bunch of keys,' each diurnal revolution of the world evolves material for his board. His press is continually throwing off broadsheets concerning every conceivable crime and disaster, here of felony, there of arson, riot, burglary, bigamy, unnatural fathers deserting their natural progeny, lost babies, lost dogs, lost purses, and stolen watches, *ad infinitum*. The fullest and most particular publication, however, to be found on my publisher's board, is that which is headed FORGERY. It always contains more information than any other in the list; and whereas, on ordinary occasions, my publisher seems to delight in brevity (he has probably heard that it is the soul of wit), his Forgery pages are most elaborately prepared. It is evident that a loving hand has lingered over the task, touching here a sentence, and there a word, until it assumed a satisfactory appearance before its charms were displayed to the gaze of a vulgar, inappreciative public. There has always seemed to me a mystery about this feature of my publisher's board, that grim *murder* itself standing by its side, fails altogether to neutralize. There is something terribly interesting in the word Forgery: whether it is in the long row of figures that usually follow beneath, or in the horribly minute description of the perpetrator, is hard to say. The forger may be hidden between walls twenty feet thick, far from all danger of capture; but here, on my publisher's board, he stands revealed to the very finger-tips of his unworthy hand, 'nail of middle finger, right hand discoloured, as if from a pinch or blow,' says the description.

The forger may be hundreds of miles away, but his ugly shadow is thrown full on my publisher's board, pilloried as it were with murderers, burglars, and suicides. He is the only *gentleman* criminal—excepting the suicides—to be here met with; and to be at the same time a gentleman and a criminal, mind you, is something uncommon. There was once a divine who suffered death for forgery; and M.P.'s have ere now walked into my publisher's shop, almost soliciting a place in that gallery of distinguished characters which hangs on the hook outside. This is the reason, I opine, why the forger is treated with so much ceremony. The police use him as tenderly as his own valet; Detective Twig may put handcuffs on the forger's white wrist, but he does so with an apologetic air, and a respectful intimation that it is his unpleasant duty, &c. It appears to be a fixed principle of commercial morality that it is better to hang five innocent forgers, than let one guilty one escape. Better that the Royal Exchange become a dismal wilderness, than one forger of crisp bank notes roam at large within its sacred precincts. The bulls and the bears fall upon the unlucky wolf, and worry him into Newgate.

Once more we will refer to the board.

'Left his home, Elkanah Wilkins, aged forty-three, deserting his disconsolate wife and eleven unhappy children. Last seen in the vicinity of Liverpool, and supposed to meditate taking ship at that port for some distant colony. The unfortunate man suddenly left his home on the night of the 17th ult., *with no apparent cause*; hence it is feared his mind may be deranged. Whoever will give such information as shall lead to his discovery will be handsomely rewarded, and receive the grateful thanks of his distressed wife and family. Apply, 14, Bolton Crescent, E.C.'

A more affecting appeal than this

can scarcely be conceived, and a more heartless case of desertion has scarcely ever been recorded on my publisher's board. Suddenly leaving his happy home, his affectionate wife, and his eleven dear children—every one of whom are represented as bemoaning his disappearance—his unnatural behaviour is feelingly attributed to mental derangement, and a large reward is offered for his recovery. Some cynical readers at my publisher's shop will, I know, urge much in the wretch's behalf; they will attribute the misery of the family at its patriarch's disappearance to its sordid interest in the patriarch's goods and chattels. 'As for the sorrowing wife,' say they, 'she is advertising not for E. W., but for E. W.'s three per cents.;' finally, they will justify, on philosophic principles, the action of a man who flies from eleven children to New South Wales or the Cape, or anything else equally monstrous and shocking. But we trust that before this the misguided Elkanah has returned to the loving amenities of 14, Bolton Crescent Of the kind and forgiving spirit in which the erring man would be received by his disconsolate family, no one can doubt. His five sons and six daughters would be ready to receive him, and prove to him solemnly, but respectfully, the folly of his ways. There remain the congratulations of his spouse; and Elkanah would once more be happy in the bosom of his family, and even his bitterest enemy could not but murmur *Requiescat in pace!*

Besides the examples already given, my publisher has constantly on hand materials for stories, in which the highwayman, the rich heir or heiress, or the burglar, may figure as the leading character. He informs you, on a more capacious sheet than that on which he writes on, 'Bodies found,' that whereas, on the night of Wednesday last, the dwelling-house of Crawley Mammonitch, Esq. was burglariously entered through the roof-trap, the lock of the iron safe picked, and therefrom stolen certain deeds and family papers, together with a little money, and a few articles of jewellery.

Here is work already cut out for the ingenious story-maker. He will immediately set the detectives on the right scent. They will bring him a long list of burglars known to the police, describe to him their age, dress, height, and general appearance, and inquire if he has seen such and such lurking about his premises. But he will laugh to scorn their shallow and commonplace suggestions, and whisper to their dull ears of a certain nephew of Crawley Mammonitch, a wild young man, and a villain to all the rest of the world, save the lovely Araminta Brimvillas, Crawley Mammonitch's ward, and residing under the old gentleman's roof. He will hint to the amazed detectives of foul play, of bonds and deeds concealed by old Mammonitch for the purpose of defrauding the lovely Araminta out of at least two-thirds of her vast estate. He will relate to the officers of the law a little episode of the said nephew's childhood; how that, whilst constructing a rabbit-hutch, the knife slipped and amputated *the middle finger of his right hand.* Then he will carry the detectives to the roof of old Mammonitch's house, and show them, in the slimy coating of the leads, *the impression of a three-fingered hand.* If he, the story-wright, on the strength of such material cannot get fairly afloat with his sensation story 'Trap and Counter-trap; or, the Ward's Inheritance,' it will be mere waste of time to potter about my publisher's shop any longer.

# THE MERCHANT PRINCES OF ENGLAND.

(*Continued from page* 457.)

With Paterson philanthropy was quite as strong a motive as commercial gain, and perhaps it was the blending of these two generally discordant elements that led to the failure of his project; but, whether rightly or wrongly, his countrymen thought with him. The Scottish African and Indian—better known as the Darien—Company at once found favour with the people of Scotland. There is no good authority for the statement often made, that Paterson went north with his visionary friend, Fletcher of Saltoun, and, by a series of extravagant representations, worked upon the credulity of the ignorant. It rather appears that the first plan of a Scottish colonization of Darien began with others—with Sir Robert Christie, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and Lord Belhaven, in especial—and that at their instigation Paterson consented to give up to his own country the scheme he had wished to see adopted by some richer and more influential state. At that time Scotland was poor indeed; but it was rich in zeal on behalf of this scheme. No sooner was the subscription list opened than people of all classes and from all parts flocked up to Edinburgh to set down their names. Paterson, himself a subscriber for 3,000*l*, was at the head of a committee in London; and in a few days from the first announcement, capital to the amount of 300,000*l*. was there collected. So soon as the project that he had vainly advocated for ten years was publicly taken up, it found abundance of supporters. Statesmen, merchants, and philanthropists alike were charmed at the thought of establishing a new colony upon the narrow strip of land connecting North and South America, so as to embrace the trade of both halves of the great continent, and afford a convenient meeting-place for the ships bringing merchandize both from Europe and from the distant settlements in India and the Asiatic islands. Vast regions in America had been appropriated and found wonderfully profitable. Vast enterprises had been set on foot, with excellent result, for bringing within reach of civilized Europe the natural and developed wealth of the richest parts of Asia by means of long voyages round the southern coast of Africa. But till now, as Paterson urged, men had forgotten the real 'key to both the Indies,' a splendid place for commerce in itself as well as the portal to that direct traffic with the East which had hitherto been carried on in roundabout ways. 'The Isthmus of America,' he said, 'all things considered, is in healthfulness and fruitfulness inferior to few, if any, of the other places in the Indies, as naturally producing plenty of gold dust, dye woods, and other valuable growths, vast quantities and great variety of the best timber for shipping in the known world, and is capable of yielding sugar, tobacco, indigo, cocoa, vanilla, annatto, ginger, and such like, of the best and in great abundance. But besides, and above all, as being an isthmus, and seated between the two vast oceans of the universe, it is furnished on each side with excellent harbours, between the principal whereof lie the more easy and convenient passes between the one and the other sea. These ports and passes being possessed and fortified, may be easily secured and defended against any force, not only there but that can possibly be found in those places which are not only the most convenient doors and inlets into, but likewise the readiest and securest means, first, of gaining, and afterwards for ever keeping the command of, the spacious South Sea, which, as it is the greatest, so even, by what theory we already know, it is by far the richest side of the world. These ports, so settled with passes open, through them will flow at least two-thirds of what both Indies yield to Christendom, the sum whereof in gold, silver, copper, spices, saltpetre, pearls,

emeralds, stones of value, and such like, will hardly amount to less than 30,000*l.* sterling yearly. The time and expense of the voyage to China, Japan, and the richest part of the East Indies will be lessened more than a half, and the consumption of European commodities soon be more than doubled, and afterwards yearly increased.'

Whether Paterson's plans and hopes were trustworthy or not is open to question; but they took the world of English commerce by surprise, and were gladly endorsed by the multitude of merchants and adventurers whose capital and energies were not already employed in the old-fashioned channels of Eastern trade. To the East India Company and its rivals, the Turkey and Muscovy Companies, of course, the new project was altogether distasteful, and to their united opposition must mainly be attributed its disastrous ending. 'The gentlemen here,' wrote Paterson on the 9th of July, 1695, 'think that we ought to keep private and close for some months, that no occasion may be given to the Parliament of England to take notice of it in the ensuing session, which might be of ill consequence, especially as a great many considerable persons are already alarmed at it.' The caution was not unnecessary. During a very short time, as we have seen, the subscriptions in London alone to the Darien Company rose to 300,000*l.* The amount would doubtless soon have been very much greater but for the East India merchants and the 'great many considerable persons' who supported them. These opponents, however, were too much for Paterson. His plan was approved by King William himself, and endorsed by some of his foremost ministers and shrewdest advisers, with Lord Halifax and John Locke at their head; but it was energetically denounced in Parliament as wildly fanatical in itself, and certain to bring about war with Spain by its tampering with the Spanish monopoly of Central American trade; and those arguments had sufficient weight to lead to the impeachment of Paterson and his chief fellow-workers before the House of Commons. The impeachment was never carried through; probably it was never meant to be more than a threat; but it served its purpose, by frightening the English capitalists and deterring Londoners from taking any important share in the enterprise.

Therefore it was confined to Scotland, and Scotland was too poor or too inexperienced for the single-handed prosecution of so large an undertaking. Instead of the 300,000*l.* promised in London being added to, only a small portion of the amount was paid up, and months, not days, were needed for collecting as much in Scotland. A few large sums were tendered, Paterson's venture of 3000*l.* being backed by contributions to a like amount from the Duchess of Hamilton and the Duke of Queensberry, Lord Belhaven and Sir Robert Christie, the city of Edinburgh and the city of Glasgow. But most of the subscribers took shares of 100*l.* or so apiece; and in the Scotland of a hundred and seventy years ago there were not a great many men with even 100*l.* to spare. Not till the beginning of 1697 was an aggregate capital of 400,000*l.* subscribed, and even then there was some delay in prosecuting the schemes of the Company, owing to the difficulty of collecting stores and building ships at Edinburgh and Leith.

A very prudent man would not have embarked on the huge enterprise with so small a fund, and with the knowledge that when it was spent the revenues of Scotland would be pretty nearly exhausted. But Paterson, full of joy at the realization of his lifelong hopes, was naturally disposed to be somewhat imprudent. Therefore, from the handsome offices of the Company in Milne Square, Edinburgh, he boldly directed his operations, and made ready for the sailing of the first fleet in the spring of 1698, with himself as its commander, until an untoward circumstance robbed him of his supremacy and virtually ruined the whole affair. It seems that a sum of 25,000*l.* was set apart for the purchase of stores at Amsterdam and Hamburg, and thither Pa-

terson himself went to transact the business, having previously lodged the money in the hands of a London merchant named James Smith. By so doing he thought to save the Company 2,000*l.* or more, consequent on the variations of exchange between Edinburgh and London. But the result was far otherwise. Paterson was in Hamburg near the end of 1697, when he heard that one of his bills upon Smith was dishonoured, and further inquiry showed that a large portion of the money — upwards of 8,000*l.* — had been fraudulently made away with.

That was a terrible blow to Paterson. His subsequent conduct in the matter gives notable evidence of his chivalrous character, just as his treatment by the directors of the Company clearly proves their meanness and unfitness for the responsibilities devolving upon them. A common man would have said, 'I am very sorry, but I acted for the best, and am not chargeable with the defalcations of others.' But Paterson did otherwise. He practically took the whole blame upon himself. He represented that, 'by his engaging himself in the Company's service, leaving his own affairs abruptly, and thereby neglecting also other opportunities by which he might have advanced his fortune in England, he had lost more than the balance now due to the Company,' and was therefore unable at once to repay the whole amount. He was willing, however, to pay all he could, and for the rest, the directors were at liberty 'either to dismiss him out of the Company's service, allowing him time to recover some fortune or employment, and then, as he became able, he would pay by degrees; or to retain him in their service, and allow him some reasonable consideration out of the Company's first free profits, for his pains, charges, and losses in promoting the same, out of which allowance to be given him by the Company he doubted not in a few years to discharge the balance.' The latter plan was urged, amid much praise of Paterson's energy and honesty, by two gentlemen to whom the question had been referred, Mr. Robert Blackwood, merchant, of Edinburgh, and Mr. William Dunlop, principal of Glasgow College, who, according to a contemporary account, was 'distinguished by the rarely united excellencies of an eminent scholar, an accomplished antiquary, a shrewd merchant, a brave soldier, an able politician, a zealous divine, and an amiable man.' 'We are convinced,' added these referees, 'that Mr. Paterson's going along with the Company's expedition is, we will not say absolutely necessary, but may be very profitable and convenient, for these reasons: first, it is well known that for a considerable course of years he has applied himself to the knowledge of whatsoever doth principally relate to settlements, and certainly the advantage of his experience, reading, and converse must needs be very assisting to those whom the Company will think fit to intrust with the management of their affairs out of Europe. Secondly, Mr. Paterson having certainly a considerable reputation in several places of America, and wherever the Company will settle, the account of his being there will doubtless be a means to invite many persons from the neighbouring plantations who are possessed with an opinion of him.'

In that advice kindness and unkindness were mixed. The directors took the unkindness by itself, and aggravated it to the utmost. Paterson was deposed from his place as manager, and in the preparation of the expedition that quitted Leith in July 1698, he had no authoritative share; but he was sent with it in a subordinate capacity, the direction of the voyage and the plantation being intrusted to seven incompetent councillors, invested with equal powers. That mad arrangement was in keeping with all the other plans for the undertaking. Before the ships started Paterson represented that they were scantily supplied with bad provisions, and that the stores sent out for sale were not worth their freight. But he was overruled both then and all through the tragic history of the expedition. That history we need not

stop to repeat. It has been told times without number, most eloquently in the fictitious pages of Warburton and in the equally fictitious pages of Macaulay. There was bad management of every sort; Paterson's persistent efforts to correct abuses and prevent disasters being as persistently thwarted by the ignorant and arrogant men in authority. Twelve hundred men went out in the gladness and hopefulness of youth and unembittered manhood in the summer of 1698; a hundred and fifty miserable wretches returned in the early winter time of 1699, leaving the ruins of their settlement as a huge and ghastly tomb for the members of a second expedition, despatched in the previous August.

William Paterson was the greatest sufferer of all. He certainly did not go out, as Lord Macaulay represented, 'flushed with pride and hope.' Painful by reason of its monotony of sadness is his record of the voyage, in which nothing was done as he wished and had purposed. But on the other hand, though miserably ill during many months, and afflicted by the loss of his wife and her infant son—the first wife, the widow Bridges, having died many years before—it is an error to say that 'his heart was broken, his inventive faculties and plausible eloquence were no more, and he seemed to have sunk into second childhood.'

It was a second manhood into which the noble merchant-patriot—at that time only two-and-forty—entered with the beginning of the year 1700. 'Thanks be to God,' he wrote to one of his friends of the second Darien expedition, 'I am wonderfully recovered, only a great cold and feverish humour oppress me at present, but I hope it will soon be over.' Finding that he only had been thoroughly honest and devoted to their interests, the directors of the Company began to repent of their long ill-treatment. 'They are exceeding hearty and sensible, and do seem to make amends for any former neglect or defect. I comfort myself, hoping that at last the Almighty will make us glad according to the days wherein He has afflicted us; and in all my troubles it is no small satisfaction to have lived to give the Company and the world unquestionable proof that I have not had any sinister nor selfish designs in promoting this work, and that unfeigned integrity has been the bottom of it. How and what I have suffered in the prosecution thereof God only knows, and may the Almighty lay it no further to their charge who have been the cause! I have always prayed for this, but must needs confess I could never, since my unkind usage, find the freedom of spirit I do now.' That freedom of spirit he used, as long as there was any hope, in striving to correct the errors of the first Darien exploits and lead to a successful colonization. Therein he failed, and Scotland suffered heavily from the loss of men and capital, although by no means so heavily as contemporary and subsequent critics have represented. Nothing but honour, however, is due to Paterson. If he erred at first, he erred because of his enthusiastic generosity and philanthropic zeal, too great to take a fair account of the difficulties in his way. If now he failed, he failed because others were not as disinterested and untiring as himself. But though his views were not adopted, honest men of all parties joined in showing respect to his superior honesty. The Scots, who thought themselves ruined by the failure of the Darien Company, honoured him as their benefactor. The English, who denounced the Company as a wanton piece of folly, joined praise of him with abuse of his associates. The paid hirelings of the court, it is true, raked up old stories, and twisted them into new libels; but by King William and his ministers he was held in hearty esteem. In singular proof of this we find a letter from the Duke of Queensberry, the Royal Commissioner in Scotland, written on the 31st of August, 1700, showing that William had ordered some money to be sent to him in relief of the poverty to which his labour had brought him. 'The poor man acts,' he says, 'with great diligence and affection towards the king and country. He has no bye-end, and loves

this government both in church and state. He knows nothing yet of my having obtained anything for him; and I am a little embarrassed how to give him what I am allowed for him, lest his party in that Company should conceive an unjust jealousy of him, or he himself think that I intend as a bribe that which is really an act of charity.'

Just three weeks later the Duke of Queensberry wrote again to London, saying that 'Mr. Paterson, the first person that brought the people of Scotland into the project of Caledonia, was writing such things as it was hoped might create some temper of moderation among them.' This was a volume of 'Proposals and Reasons for constituting a Council of Trade,' published in 1701, for a long time by everybody, and even now-a-days by some,* attributed to John Law, but clearly proved by Mr. Saxe Bannister to have been written by Paterson. In this work the merchant set himself in excellent spirit to suggest plans for repairing the mischief which his Darien scheme had done to Scotland, and to propound much else full of patriotism and good sense. The establishment of a sort of merchants' parliament, with vast legislative and executive powers on all commercial matters, was not very wise or feasible; but the general purport of the tract was admirable. In Paterson's judgment Scotland needed intellectual and moral, as well as commercial advancement. The political troubles of the country during the disastrous hundred years following on the accession of James I. had not been beneficial to it. 'Although a great and capable genius be a kind of metal that can never be so well-tempered as by and in the furnace of affliction, yet the meaner and more abject sort of spirits, instead of being better or further improved, are rather the more depressed and crushed thereby. Instead of growing more wise, prudent, patient, constant, careful, diligent, meek, and easy in themselves and with others, they become more hardened, presumptuous, conceited, rash, unthinking, and uneasy, or otherwise more mean, abject, heartless, and stupid.' But wretched, indeed, was the country in which this state of things lasted for ever; and it was with the view of helping his own nation out of so great a mischance that Paterson wrote, in the hope, as he said, 'that the many and various exercises we have lately met with will have the better and not the contrary effect, and prove only necessary preparatives, the better to fit the people of this kingdom for some glorious success to come; that after a lethargy of near an age they will now be effectually roused up, and that their sense and genius in matters of trade shall be capable of mounting somewhat higher than the aping a few of the worst, meanest, and most pernicious shifts and mistakes of some of our most trading neighbours; that contrariwise our hearts will be enlarged in proportion to the weight and consequence of what we have in hand, and the favourable occasions that offer at home and abroad; and that by the means thereof we may have the glory as well as the comfort of taking more care of the next generation than the last has done of us, and of putting our country in the way of regaining in the next century what it has lost in this.' The details of Paterson's proposals are too elaborate to be here set forth. Their general character, and the nature especially of their impracticable parts, may be gathered from a satirical letter written at the time to William III.'s confidential secretary: 'The design,' we are there told, 'is a national trade, so that by it all Scotland will become one entire company of merchants. It proposes a fund of credit by which in two years to raise above 300,000*l.* sterling. With this stock they are, first, to trade to both the Indies and to the colonies, on the terms of the Act establishing their Company; second, to raise manufactories throughout the kingdom; third, to pursue their fishery to greater profit in all the markets of Europe than any other fishing company in Christendom can do; fourth, to em-

* Especially by Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, in his recent novel, 'John Law of Lauriston.'

ploy all the poor in the nation, so that in two years there shall not be one beggar seen in all the kingdom, and that without any act of slavery; fifth, to pay back to any subscribers to the African stock his money, if demanded, so that nobody can complain of any loss that way.'

Paterson never forgot his Darien project. He was faithful to all his old plans for the benefiting of mankind. Some of them, especially the plan of the Bank of England, had had wonderfully good effect; but the financial and political troubles amid which William's reign was ended, disheartened him as well as all other earnest men. 'In the last months of the life of this great but then uneasy prince,' he wrote, in a very valuable letter, showing, as it does, how influential was his position even in this time of poverty and apparent disgrace, 'I had access to him, when, finding him in much perplexity and concern about the state of his affairs, I took opportunity to represent to him that his misfortunes did not so much proceed from the variable tempers or humours of his people, as some pretended, but rather from the men of his house, or those he had trusted with his business, who, either for want of capacity or experience, or that they preferred themselves to him, had brought the affairs of the kingdom into such confusion as made his subjects uneasy; and now at last, instead of removing the causes of complaint, they had presumed to employ his treasure and authority to silence the complainers,—that, as matters stood, there were no reins of government, no inspection, no inquiry into men's conduct; every man did as he pleased, for nobody was punished, nor indeed rewarded according to merit; and thus his revenue was sunk, and his affairs in the utmost confusion. He owned this, but asked for remedies. Upon which I proposed that, in the first place, he should put the management of the revenues on the right footing, without which all other remedies would prove ineffectual. The first step towards reforming his revenue was that of restoring the public credit, by making provision of interest for all the national debts, and by taking care for the time to come such should be granted as to prevent further deficiency. The course of the Treasury and Exchequer should be so regulated, both in receipts and payments, as to render them easy to be understood, and so certain and prudent as to leave no room for fraud or ill practices in time to come. In order to this, I proposed that a method of inquiry and inspection from time to time into the behaviour of all men concerned in the revenue be laid down and nicely executed. Thus I showed him that he would quickly get out of debt, and at least a fourth part of the revenues would be saved hereafter. The next thing I proposed to him was the seizing upon the principal posts in the West Indies,'—a modification of the old Darien scheme, about which enough has already been said and quoted. 'The third thing I proposed was an union with Scotland, than which I convinced him nothing could tend more to his glory, and to render this island great and considerable. The fourth thing I proposed—and which I told him was to be done first, in order to the restoring his authority, and showing to the world that for the time to come he would no more suffer such a loose and unaccountable administration as his being a stranger to men and things here had forced him to wink at hitherto—was a present commission of inquiry, by which he would see how and by whom his affairs had been mismanaged, and who they were who, under pretence of mending matters, perplexed and made them still worse, and in particular would be at a point how far the present debts did arise from mismanagement or from the deficiencies of the funds. I spoke much to him of the nature of this commission, with which, and the other proposals, he seemed extremely satisfied, as is evident by his last and memorable speech, in which he earnestly recommends the retrieving of the public credit, and offers his concurrence to all such inquiries as should be found necessary; and it

is plain, by the seventh article of the Grand Alliance, and his messages to the two Houses of Parliament, how much he laid to heart both the affair of the West Indies and that of the Union.'

Of this very noteworthy letter—interesting both as an important link in the man's own biography, and as a contribution to the general history of the country—the most noteworthy part is that referring to the union of England and Scotland. To this great end Paterson's mind had been steadily advancing since the disastrous close of his Darien expedition. He saw in it the best, perhaps the only, means of breaking down the jealousies of the two nations, and of making possible their full development, commercial, political, and moral. And though contemporary writers did scant justice to the merchant, and modern historians have altogether forgotten him, facts show that no other single man contributed as largely to this glorious result as William Paterson, the visionary and the pauper.

For some years from this time Paterson was in and out of London, living chiefly at a house in Queen Square, Westminster, writing many tracts on miscellaneous subjects of importance, and planning the formation of a valuable library of trade and finance for the use of merchants and all concerned in the commercial welfare of the island, but working chiefly on behalf of the Union. Almost the last thoughts of King William were on behalf of this noble business; and it was one of the few matters in which Queen Anne's ministers were willing to follow the lead of their predecessors. Paterson was throughout the guiding genius. A proper account of his work, however, cannot possibly be given here. It would involve a re-telling of a large portion of English and Scottish history during the early years of Anne's reign. All through those years we see Paterson in busy conference with the leading statesmen of both countries. On one day he is writing a quire of notes for Secretary Godolphin's consideration; on another he is explaining and adding to them in person. At one time he is arguing down the prejudices of Englishmen; at another he is showing Scotchmen how groundless are their fears. During these years he was generally to be found in London; but often, especially in the autumn of 1706, he was in Edinburgh as Commissioner from the English Government. It was in September and October, 1706, that he wrote five letters, or treatises, which, according to an impartial contemporary, 'cleared the understanding of some dubious, though well-meaning people, who were deluded, misinformed, and carried away by the surmises of scribblers making it their business to perplex, and, if possible, cause the Union to shipwreck in the very harbour where, in all appearance, it ought to have been protected; and bore such weight with the committees appointed to examine the several matters referred to them, that we may, without flattery, say they were the compass the committees steered by.' 'Not any sort of league, confederacy, limitation, agreement, or bargain, or, indeed, anything less or below a complete Union,' said Paterson himself in a longer work on the subject, published in this same year, (1706), 'can introduce the good which may be justly expected therefrom, or effectually deliver these nations from the mischiefs and inconveniences they labour under and are exposed unto for want thereof. Nothing less than a complete Union can effectually secure the religion, laws, liberties, trade, and, in a word, the peace and happiness of this island. And since, by the blessing of God, a happy occasion now offers for completing this great and good work, not in humour or in rage, but in cool blood, with reason and understanding, it is hoped that, after all the troubles, hazards, and distresses of these nations for want thereof, an Union shall in their temper and disposition be concluded, to the glory and renown of our excellent queen, common benefit and general satisfaction of all her subjects, who, as having but one interest and inclination, may for ever after be of one heart and one affection.'

Not altogether to the glory and renown of excellent Queen Anne, or to the common benefit and general satisfaction of her subjects; yet, as soon as national jealousies had been overcome, to the immense advantage of both nations, the Union was agreed upon, and the separate States of England and Scotland were merged into the kingdom of Great Britain on the 1st of May, 1707. The last act of the Scottish independent Parliament, dissolved on the 25th of March, was to declare that William Paterson, Esquire, deserved a great reward for his efforts in promoting the Union, and formally, on that account, to recommend him to her Majesty's favour. Noteworthy evidence of the merchant's influence, and of the esteem in which he was held by all parties, is in the fact that by the Dumfries boroughs, so full of unreasonable discontent at this very Union that they almost became the scene of civil war, he was elected their representative in the first United Parliament. But there was blundering in the election, and Paterson seems to have never sat in the House of Commons.

About his movements during the ensuing years we have no very precise information. That he was busy, as he had been through all the earlier years of his life, devising plans for the benefiting of society, is sufficiently shown in the numerous writings to which we have not space to do any sort of justice. While he was working on behalf of the Union, he found time for the preparation of numerous tracts, sensible and manly to a remarkable degree, on the National Debt, and on systems of auditing public accounts, on free trade and taxation, and the like; and when his political duties were over he had leisure for closer attention to the financial and commercial topics that were his special study. At a time when the National Debt was a new thing it was no idle undertaking to attempt its redemption, and to preach the duty of compelling each year and each enterprise to pay its own costs, without fastening a burden on posterity. This was one of Paterson's chief employments during the later years of his life, and it was no small disappointment to him to find that the foolishness and wrong-doing of Queen Anne's ministers, and the recklessness of the more important leaders of the English people, subverted the objects he had at heart. 'Upon the whole,' he said, in the memorial addressed to Secretary Godolphin on his interviews with William III., from which we have already quoted, 'instead of the valuable securities and advantages we might have justly expected from a sincere and vigorous prosecution of these wise and solid measures of the king, we have seen the then national debts of fifteen or sixteen millions, so far from being diminished, that they are near, if not quite, doubled; the public revenues almost wholly sold and alienated, and yet about one-third of new debts still, without funds for paying them; heavy bills and other such deficient credit at twenty or twenty-five per cent. discount, and in danger of falling still lower, with all the other parts of the public credit in proportion,—disorders which must still increase, if any considerable part of future supplies should be raised by anticipations on remote and doubtful funds; our home industry and improvements under insupportable difficulties; most of the branches of our foreign trade so overcharged as to amount to a prohibition, not only our reasonable designs to the West Indies, but even navigation itself, and our proper plantations and acquisitions abroad abandoned or neglected, our enemies suffered to carry away many millions which might have been ours; and the true spirit of the Union, with the great advantages that would otherwise have naturally followed upon it, stifled and suppressed.' 'At the Revolution,' he said again, 'it was expected that these disorders would have been effectually redressed, but instead of this the confusions of the revenues have grown greater than in any time before, nay, to such a degree that the throne hath been thereby shaken, the public credit hath been violated, the coin adulterated, high

premiums and interests allowed, scandalous discounts made necessary, navigation, with foreign and domestic improvements, discountenanced or abandoned, frauds and corrupt practices in the trade and revenues rather countenanced than discouraged, and those few who endeavoured or performed anything towards the amendment or reforming these or such-like disorders oppressed or neglected.'

Oppression and neglect, without doubt, were the lot of William Paterson. Sorely troubled at the failure of his hopes for the general welfare and financial dignity of Great Britain, he had cause enough for trouble on his own account. Impoverished long ago by the fraud of his agent in the Darien enterprise, which, with an honourable feeling rare indeed among the men of his time, he resolved to consider as a debt of his own, and deeply chagrined at the disastrous issue of the whole enterprise, he continued a poor man till very near the end of his life. The pressure of business, which he felt called upon to undertake on behalf of his country and the public welfare, prevented him from resuming the mercantile pursuits by which he might easily have enriched himself; and the queen and state whom he served with all his powers gave him no recompense. At the time of the Darien failure, the Scottish Parliament had promised him indemnity for his losses therein; and in 1707 it was enacted that 'in regard that, since his first contracts, the said William Paterson hath been at further expenses, and sustained further losses and damages, the Court of Exchequer of Scotland should take account thereof, and likewise of his good services and public cares, and make a full and fair report thereof to her Majesty.' But nothing was done. 'The dependence I have had upon the public,' Paterson said, in a plaintive letter to Secretary Godolphin, dated the 4th of April, 1709, 'for a settlement in its service, or in some way or other to have a recompense for what I have done for near seven years of her Majesty's reign, besides former losses, hath at last so reduced me and my family, that without a speedy provision and support from her Majesty, I must unavoidably perish.' Therefore he asked the secretary to lay before the queen a petition detailing his various services under the State, and their influence on the affairs of the country:—'by which so long-continued troubles and expensive proceedings,' he urged, 'your petitioner is rendered unable to subsist, or to extricate himself from the debts and difficulties wherein he is thereby involved, without your Majesty's special care and protection.' Still nothing was done. 'There are two reasons why men of merit go unrewarded,' said a contemporary historian, writing in 1711. 'Busybodies have more impudence, and get by importunity what others deserve by real services; and those at the helm are often obliged to bestow employment on their supporters without any regard to merit.' Therefore Paterson, without influence among the place-givers, and too true a patriot to desist from the good work because of his employers' ingratitude, was forgotten, and many besides the writer just cited had to complain that 'this great politician, the chief projector of the Bank of England, the main support of the Government, very instrumental in bringing about the Union, and the person chiefly employed in settling the national accounts, should be so disregarded that the sums due to him were not paid.' He lived as cheaply as he could, doing his utmost to keep himself in honourable independence We are told, among other things, of an advertisement in one of the old journals inviting pupils to his classes in mathematics and navigation. But he could not keep himself out of debt. Paul Daranda, the great merchant, his former associate in the establishment of the Bank of England and other good works, received in 1719 1,000*l.* in payment for the help given to him in the support of his stepchildren—children of his own Paterson seems not to have had, with the exception of the infant who died at Darien—and other debts

were faithfully repaid by him as soon as he was able.

That, however, was but a little while before his death. 'A memorial of Mr. Paterson,' a document of great interest, both personal and public, addressed to George I. soon after his accession, tells how, 'with much pain and expense, he hath already made considerable progress towards a proper return or representation of some public affairs of the greatest consequence, particularly of the taxes, impositions, and revenues of Great Britain, with the anticipations and debts charged and contracted therein during the last twenty-six years, amounting to about fifty millions sterling. This volume is to demonstrate in what cases these impositions may be rendered more easy to the subject, yet the revenues greatly improved, whereby, of course, this immense debt will be sooner and more easily discharged. But the great expense he had been at in the last twenty-three years in things relating to the public service, and the non-payment of a considerable sum of the equivalent-money, detained from him for several years by a violent party, disables him at present from completing this design. Former neglects of these and like things, make it no easy matter soon to put them in any tolerable light. However, 500*l.* or 600*l.* present supply, would enable him to go forward with this great work till further provision be found proper.' That modest request for 500*l.* or 600*l.* was promptly answered by a parliamentary vote, passed in July, 1715, assigning him 18,000*l.* as indemnity for the many and heavy expenses he had been put to in the service of the State.

The gift, if gift it may be called, was well-timed. It enabled Paterson to pay all his debts, reckoned to have amounted to something like 10,000*l.*, and it encouraged him to the writing of his last and most valuable work, 'An Inquiry into the State of the Union of Great Britain, and the Past and Present State of the Trade and Public Revenues thereof,' published in 1717. It contained suggestions for the reduction of the National Debt, which George's statesmen were not wise enough to adopt, and which so offended 'the meaner sort of dealers in the public funds,' the dishonest stockjobbers of those days, that they burnt it in front of the Royal Exchange. But it also contained other suggestions, about exchequer bills and public credit, excise duties and taxes, which were made the basis of many important financial changes, and the means of saving vast sums of public money, besides contributing greatly to the national honour.

But those reforms were seriously checked; and Paterson's last days were painfully embittered by the strange favour accorded by the world to his famous kinsman's pernicious teachings. Cruellest of all the slanders with which the fair fame of Paterson has been sullied is that which connects him with the schemes of John Law of Lauriston, his junior by thirteen years. Between the two men there was some sort of cousinship; and Law, the goldsmith's son, of Edinburgh, doubtless spoke the truth when he told Montesquieu that he traced his skill in the jugglery of figures to the lessons taught him by Paterson's Bank of England, in 1695; but we have no evidence of intercourse between them, while there is abundant proof that Paterson was the foremost opponent of Law's visionary and dishonest projects. In 1705, when Law made his first experiment in the financial speculations that reached perfection in the Mississippi scheme, by addressing to the people of Edinburgh 'two overtures for supplying the present scarcity of coin and improving trade, and for clearing the debts due by the government to the army and civil list by issuing paper money,' Paterson issued two able pamphlets showing the mischief of that and all other 'imaginary projects,' and maintaining that there would be no national credit without solid cash, and no national progress without persevering industry. These maxims he adhered to all through his life. It is true that he looked with favour upon the South Sea Company before it was converted into the South Sea Bubble;

and, having no funds of his own, agreed to his friend Daranda's investing 4,000*l.* in it; but he heartily disapproved of John Law's reckless conduct in France, and of the infatuated liking with which in later years he came to be regarded in England.

But the consummation of that saddest and maddest of all financial follies William Paterson did not live to see. On the 3rd of July, 1718, 'at the Ship tavern, without Temple Bar, about four in the afternoon,' he made his will, therein providing that all his debts should be paid, and the residue of his property, about 6,400*l.*, be divided among his stepchildren, his nephews and nieces, and his 'good friend Mr. Paul Daranda.' He died at the age of sixty-one, in the following January, 1719. In the foregoing paragraphs our limits of space have not allowed us to say half of what ought to be said in illustration of his great talents and greater honesty, his untiring patriotism and persistent devotion to everybody's welfare but his own; and we have not been able to say anything at all of the good influence that his commercial and financial teachings had upon the future trade of England; but enough has been done to justify the praise given to him by his friend Daniel Defoe, as 'a worthy and noble patriot of his country, one of the most eminent in it, and to whom we owe more than ever he'd tell us, or I am afraid we'll ever be sensible of, whatever fools, madmen, or Jacobites may asperse him with.'*

H. R. F. B.

* For his courteous permission to make free use of his edition of 'The Writings of William Paterson, Founder of the Bank of England' (three volumes, second edition, 1859), we are much indebted to Mr. Saxe Bannister. Besides the careful editing of all Paterson's works now known to us, Mr. Bannister has, in his prefaces, his biographical introduction, and his appendices, brought together nearly all the available materials for Paterson's biography,—both those which his own patient research has discovered in the State Paper Office, the British Museum, and other manuscript libraries, and those contained in the 'Darien Papers' of the Bannatyne Club, and other publications.

# ON THE ROAD TO DINNER.

(Illustrated by Adelaide Claxton.)

'THE tocsin of the soul, the dinner-bell!' Dinner-bell indeed! Thank goodness that relic of the dark ages, that knew not Ude, Soyer, and Francatelli has almost entirely disappeared from the metropolis, and its sound is now only heard in country-houses, manufactories, and such like large establishments, where, indeed, its services are eminently useful. Even in country-houses we have a somewhat theatrical bias towards a gong, and could write a sensational stage direction to this effect:—

*Scene, the Dining-room. Time, Evening. Attendants discovered preparing Banquet. Gong sounds. Attendants retire mysteriously. Gong sounds again. Enter Guests.*

It's an unco' awfu' summons that gong On the stage it would be taken as an intimation of the appearance of a demon, a fairy, or (in Muster Richardson's show) a ghost; and in a large country-house its sound will bring all the fairies of the family tripping downstairs to the ethereal enjoyment of dinner.

Will it be considered as savouring of the most gross epicurean doctrine, to say that dinner, as the principal form of feeding, is the object of life? This expression of opinion will be received with a solemn unpleasant silence. These words, if uttered loudly, nay defiantly, by way of a challenge to the general company, will fall like a hot coal, popping itself out of the grate on to the drawing-room hearth-rug. Come, my friends, I am only joking; speaking for the sake of saying something as smart as possible during that intermediate state of mistiness and uncertainty that lies between the arrival of the Guests, and the hour appointed for dinner Of this quarter, half, or three-quarters of an hour, more anon: let me clear myself of this seeming epicureanism, falsely so called. For what does the modern man of much leisure live, if not for dinner? Certainly not for breakfast: for allowing him to take that meal as late, say, as twelve or one o'clock, it is evident that he hasn't lived his day out by that time. Neither is his end and aim centred in luncheon; if, that is to say, he even admits the word into his vocabulary. At what meal is it that he meets his friends with their various items of general and personal news of the day? To what meal of yesterday does he refer in his conversation at the club to-morrow? Dinner. Dinner ends the modern day. I say the modern day, because our forefathers closed theirs with supper, taking it at about the same hour that finds us at the dinner-table. As to the ancients, who knew not gas, and were economical in the matter of candles, they dined at 11 o'clock A.M., and, absurd as it may seem, liked it. But then these old Romans turned themselves out, or were turned out of bed by their slaves, as soon as there was sufficient daylight for shaving purposes. For what does the man of business live? Why does he work? To support himself. Precisely. And he supports himself by food? Exactly. And the main portion of this support is taken at what meal, sir? *At dinner.* Thank you. Then, sir (it's always well to throw in 'sir' when you're going to state a clincher) 'then, sir, the man of business works that he may dine. He works that he may live; he dines that he may live; he works that he may dine. If he has a family, his labour is significantly stated to be for his children's 'bread.' But here there is a chance of such a theme as shall force the writer into a pathetic strain. That won't do there must be no red eyes, or moist probosces, at dinner-time. So let us laugh and sing; capital thing for the appetite, by the way, is singing. With many, besides being a cause, it is a sure sign of hunger. Young Hummer, in whose society it has often been my lot to drive in a cab to dine

with a mutual friend (I own to being somewhat nervous about writing that word 'mutual;' but whether used rightly or wrongly, I know what *I* mean by it in this place, as also, I fancy, will the friendly and lazy reader);—well, during our journey, Hummer eschews conversation, and treats me to reminiscences of popular operas: whereby I know that Hummer is hungry. If Hummer is not hungry, he talks. I have vainly tried to get Hummer out of this habit, by starting some topic which is interesting to Hummer. Thus, after the usual greetings consequent upon Hummer's getting into the cab, when *I* 'pick him up,' or my getting into the cab when *he* picks *me* up, as the case may be, there is a silence, and the cab rattles onward. Presently Hummer begins the march from Norma, 'Tum ti dum, lum ti dum, lum ti dumti' (*dumti* being very high and slightly out of tune, he finds it convenient to change the key, and proceeds with the next few bars in a bass voice, like somebody else singing), 'lumti doodle deedle doodle lumti dumti;' the next part he whistles, accompanying himself on the leather strap that pulls up the cab window. Much as I admire Bellini, yet the work of the great master rendered by Hummer, through the somewhat unmeaning and decidedly monotonous medium of 'doodle deedle, doodle deedle, lum ti dum ti,' loses much, if not all, of its native charm and original freshness. There is a pause, at last I begin to congratulate myself on the probability of Hummer not knowing another tune, and of having had enough of Norma by this time. This is, unfortunately, rather premature.

HUMMER (*begins in the middle of the favourite tenor air in Marta, delivering the same in a sort of semi-whistle*).

MYSELF (*trying to interest him*).—'Oh! have you heard from Charles (*his brother*) lately?'

HUMMER (*shakes his head, by way of answer, but doesn't stop whistling*).

MYSELF (*finding that the first method is a failure, attempting something that requires some other answer than simply 'Yes,' or 'No'*).—'What did you think of Gladstone's speech last night, eh?'

HUMMER (*stopping his whistling, and shaking his head*).—'Ah!' (*Shuts his lips and hums the Guards' Waltz, as if in deep thought.*)

MYSELF (*in desperation*).—'What do you say to that queer turf case, the other day, eh?'

HUMMER (*shrugging his shoulders, and singing the Old Men's Chorus in Faust*)—'Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pŏp-ă-pop fol lol de riddle liddle li-e-ey- (*shakes*) do.' (*Finishes.*)

MYSELF.—'Well, but do you——'

HUMMER (*encores himself*)—'Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pŏp-ă-pop, fol lol de riddle, riddle li-i-i-i-ey- (*shakes*) do. (*Finishes, and smiles at me.*)

MYSELF (*determining to give him a taste of the nuisance, vaguely, no tune in particular*).—'Tooral looral, looral laral, lum di dum (*this in a high key*), ri fol looral (*interrupted by a cough: then as a baritone*) looral loodle um doo.'

HUMMER (*starting with words*).—'Beautiful star-ar! Beautiful star-AR!' &c.; then encores a duet, which should be written operatically thus:—

HUMMER (*steadily*).—'Beau-tiful star-ar! Beautiful,' &c.

MYSELF (*unsteadily*).—'A life on the ocean-wave, and a (*joining in, involuntarily*) Beautiful star-ar—'

HUMMER (*looking out of one window*)—'Beautiful star-ar! (*keeping steadily to the tune*) Beautiful star-ar! Star of the e-vening! Beautiful,' &c.

MYSELF (*looking out of the other window, trying the only tune I know, A life on the Ocean Wave*).—'A toodley um ti dave—a tweedley um ti boo—a boo—(*finding myself gliding into Beautiful Star-ar, I try back in another key, with words*) A life on the ocean wave,' &c.

*Ensemble.* { HUMMER (*triumphantly*). 'Beautiful star-ar!' &c. / MYSELF (*vaguely*). 'Beautiful star-ar!' &c.,

and here, owning myself defeated, I give in to Hummer. He stops once in the course of the drive to observe that he is very hungry.

'I knew that,' I growl.

'Why?' he asks.

'Because,' I growl again, 'you

always kick up a row—what *you* call singing—when you want your dinner.'

Hang the fellow! Hummer only laughs, and off he is again chirruping with the perseverance of a throstle. Have you ever heard the animals at the Zoological Gardens, just before feeding-time?—Hummer equals any two of them, before his dinner-hour. At last we arrive at Lady Plateglass's mansion. The occasion is a grand dinner-party little Hummer is asked, because Hummer is at this moment private secretary to my Lord Partiton, and, moreover, Hummer, let me tell you, is very well connected. If you ask me of his connections, I cannot say anything no one of whom I've ever inquired, ever could; but there is a sort of tradition floating about society generally that little Hummer is 'doosed well connected, you know.' Why my Lady Plateglass asks *me* is a question between that fascinating aristocrat and myself, that neither is, nor can be, any business of yours. I do not often go. I am glad of that. I should become what Mr Mantalini called 'a body' if I did; and I do not want—that is, at present—to go out of this beautiful world, merely because I take a pleasure in seeing my name at the bottom of the lists of the beau monde that dined at Lady Plateglass's the other evening. Oh! the dulness! oh! the stiffneckedness of these state dinner-parties! I ask you to look at those people coming downstairs, at the portrait of my Lord Plateglass. You'll only see his back as he vanishes into the dining-room, but that's enough, leading the way with the principal guest on his arm, and my lady, with that single curl cork-screwing itself over her right shoulder, leaning on the arm of a most distinguished exile, who looks about as cheerful as an undertaker at a wedding. As to the next resplendent couple who have returned from some Olympian reception profusely decorated, as you now see them, I am glad that my lot will not be cast between *them* at the dinner-table. There's Hummer on the stairs with an eyeglass; depend upon it that, oblivious of his partner, he is rum-ti-toodleyumming from 'Norma' or 'Puritani,' as he sniffs the dinner afar off. Shall I point out the present writer to you? The artist has saved me the trouble by beheading me with the armorial bearings of three champagne glasses and a couple of bottles in the left-hand corner of the picture. But if I am thus hidden from view, so also is the graceful limner herself, whom on his arm it is the great pleasure of this present scribbler to be handing down to dinner. 'The Spanish fleet you cannot see,' says the Governor in the 'Critic,' 'because—it is not yet in sight' Behind the decorated Duchess of Kiljoye (nothing less I assure you) comes Lady Venetia Winsom, the Marquis of Pledgitt's charming daughter. Charming! yes, that's the word, for she is an enchantress, a fascinatrix. She's just twenty-one, and the wickedest little thing that ever ruined a man's peace of mind. The exact number of hearts that she broke in her first season I have no means of ascertaining, but it was known everywhere that it was through her Charley Fortescue was on the point of shooting himself, and, changing his mind, went to shoot something or other in Abyssinia. Wasn't it through her that Jack Straw, of Straw's Castle, who hasn't got a penny, ran into all sorts of extravagances, and has been obliged to expatriate himself? Finally, to omit all mention of others, didn't this little sly puss ('sly puss' is a mild term for my young lady, by the way, considering the mischief she did) give Fred Green (the banker's son) to understand that she loved him and only him, and wasn't the fashionable world awoke out of its sleep rather early one morning, to hear that Lady Venetia had eloped with Lord Tiptop? Green was mightily cut up; it was only the day before, that he had presented her with a magnificent diamond bracelet. Green could have bought Tiptop even at his (Tiptop's) own price, which is not saying a little either. That's not Tiptop or Green that Lady Venetia is walking with now—that's the Honourable Percy Freemantle, a man of the world

and an experienced male flirt—that is, when he has got under his wing such a one as is the daughter of the house of Pledgitt. There's Green, the banker's son, following his enchantress; he pretends that he is indifferent to the flirtation that she is at this moment carrying on with Freemantle. But that the tallest footman with the biggest calves would instantly receive him by his coat-collar, he would have fallen down on his knees long ago on the landing and have poured out his impassioned words. Decorum, however, forbids: but beneath those coral studs and elaborate shirt-front, thumps a heart in such a manner as to affect his appetite and thicken his utterance, so that when he would address his companion, Miss Brankleigh, he does so in a guttural tone, that appears to issue from somewhere under his white tie. Miss Brankleigh, who sets herself up for a bit of a 'blue,' bothers poor Green about 'Julius Cæsar.' Has Mr. Green read the Emperor's work? No, Green has not. Is he going to read it? Green doesn't know; in fact, he hasn't made up his mind; that's—yes—that is, certainly, if he has time. 'You'll consider me very ignorant, I'm sure,' says Miss Brankleigh, playfully, 'but who *was* Julius Cæsar?'

Green is brought up with a sharp pull. His mind must wander no longer

'Who *was* Julius Cæsar?' repeats the unhappy Green, beginning to say to himself that he *ought* to know, and trying to call to mind the memories of his, not very far distant, schoolboy days. He must give an answer, and so he says, with a smile intended to assert superiority of knowledge, 'Why, he was a Roman.'

'Yes, yes,' returns Miss Brankleigh, 'I know that. But I mean, how did he—that is *if* he did—so much resemble the great Napoleon?'

Green is about to reply—by way of illustrating the historical similarity—that Julius Cæsar conquered Hannibal; but suddenly calling to mind that Napoleon the First did *not* conquer Hannibal, for the simple reason that there was no Hannibal to conquer, he gives that up at once. A bright thought then occurs to him, and he says, 'You see they were both emperors and great conquerors, and—a—' here failing to produce any further facts, he repeats vaguely—'and a great conqueror.' He thinks a second afterwards that he might have shone a degree more brilliantly; but before he has time to make, as it were, a corrected copy of his last speech, Miss Brankleigh, who apparently eats nothing, has tackled him again.

'But were the two emperors so much alike in every respect?'

'Well,' replies Green, trying (in nautical phrase) to round the question safely, 'there were many points between the Emperor of Rome—and—' here a doubt flashes across him as to whether Cæsar was an emperor, or a consul, or a tribune, and he hesitates, and, in his nervousness, refuses the only dish that he wanted to taste. 'When I say emperor,' he resumes, finding that his fair listener expects some further information, 'I should say that Cæsar was a—' he is going to say Decemvir, but is uncertain as to its meaning; 'Cæsar was not an emperor—but had the power of an emperor.'

'Oh! of course he wasn't,' exclaims Miss Brankleigh. 'How very stupid of me to forget that!'

So thinks Green, and sincerely trusts that the conversation is at an end. Miss Brankleigh, who finds this an easy method of forming an acquaintance with all sorts of general information, continues: 'What *was* he?'

'He was a—dear me—' says the artful Green, trying to pretend that the word is on the tip of his tongue—'he was a—a what's-his-name, with Cæsar, Antony, and Cleopatra—I mean Lepidus—no I should say Brutus: a triumvir!' he adds triumphantly, 'a triumvir.'

'Oh! I thought,' observes Miss Brankleigh, 'that that was Octavius Cæsar.'

Poor Green! he begins to think that it *might* have been Octavius Cæsar—that it *was* Octavius Cæsar; until the probability became a certainty, and he bows down before

the lady's superior memory and knowledge of ancient history, by deciding against himself that it *was* Octavius Cæsar. If at this moment, on pain of instant bow-stringing, he was commanded, by the Pasha with three tails to write a short and precise account of Julius Cæsar, he would say, being completely and hopelessly muddled on the subject, 'Julius Cæsar was not the same as Octavius Cæsar, the triumvir with Antony and Cleopatra: he conquered Hannibal and crossed the Alps into Gaul, where he wrote his "Commentaries." Here Pompey appeared to him, and said, "We shall meet again at Philippi," which he did. Subsequently, being killed by Brutus, to whom he called out "*Et tu, Brute!*" He was a great conqueror, and there was an oration over his body.'

These great dinners are melancholy affairs. The true philosophy of meals may be fully stated in the following system, which, for the convenience of those who are inclined to follow me, I will divide into fourteen propositions. The first is——however, in this case a proposition made by my friend Jack Gourmay, who comes in to suggest, that I should at once dress and come to dine with him at his club, 'The Stilton,' in St. James's Street. Gourmay is not a man to be refused with impunity; and, moreover, *he* knows, if any one in London does, what a dinner should be. Therefore, thanking you for your kind attention, as academical lecturers say, we will, if you please, resume this interesting subject at our next meeting. I wish you all a very good morning. F. C. B.

## A MAY DREAM

### OF THE FEMALE EXAMINATION.

IF you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For to-morrow in the Senate-house at nine I must appear;
To-morrow for all womankind will be a glorious day;
And I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

There's many a blue, blue-stocking, but none so blue as I;
There's not a girl amongst them all with me can hope to vie;
There's none so sharp as little Alice, not by a long, long way,
For I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

I lie awake all night, mother, but in the morn I sleep,
And dream of Virgil, Euclid, Dons, all jumbled in a heap;
And the letters in the Euclid dance about like lambs at play—
Oh! I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

As I came by King's Chapel, whom think ye that I saw
But Andrew Jones de Mandeville Fitzherbert Aspenshaw?
He thought of that hard problem I gave him yesterday—
For I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

He thought me such a bore, mother, for he couldn't get it right;
To see him puzzle o'er it was such a funny sight;
But not on such a dolt as him I'd throw myself away,
For I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

They say he is fond-hearted, but that can never be;
He can't get through his Little-go—then what is he to me?
There's many a senior-wrangler who'll woo me in the May,
For I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the gate,
And, till they give the questions out, at the window she must wait;
And when she's got them, back to you, mother, she shall haste away—
And I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

In the papers country parsons have written lots of trash—
They say this scheme for us, mother, is sure to come to smash;
And aged dons all shake their heads, and say it will not pay—
But I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear;
I had something more to say, mother, but my head is not quite clear;
For I always have a headache when I put my books away—
But I'm to be head o' the list, mother, head o' the list, they say.

*The June awaking.*

I thought to have gone down before, but still up here I am,
And still there's hanging o'er me that horrible exam.
They said I should be first, mother, but then I'd such bad luck—
Though I went in for High Honours—*I only got a pluck.*

X. Y. B.

# 'BETWEEN THE LIGHTS.'

A Tale in Four Chapters.

## CHAPTER I.

TWILIGHT AND JACK MORTIMER.

THE ladies (they were comprised in my wife and our sole guest, a cousin feminine) had left the dining-room; so I drew up my chair beside the open window, elevated my feet into a second, and prepared to extract the greatest amount of comfort, compatible with circumstances, from that half-hour of post-prandial bereavement, which is the Englishman's privilege.

And really circumstances just now were not otherwise than conducive to enjoyment. The soft-scented air of a sweet summer evening rustled very pleasantly through the wide-open window. The voices of the village children at play, mellowed (I am happy to say) by distance, came up ever and anon upon its gentle breath, and, it must be owned, a more delicately fragrant glass of Burgundy has seldom gladdened the heart of man than that which blushed beside my elbow on the table now

I was, let me trust, in an appreciative and grateful frame of mind; but yet, as I sipped my Burgundy and lay back in my chair watching the tender evening light die away on the distant trees, I was conscious of a want, for, after all, he is but a churl who can contentedly drink even the glorious vintage of Burgundy alone.

'Man never is, but always to be——' I was beginning, when the door opened.

'Mr Mortimer, sir.'

'Let us be thankful for small mercies!' I ejaculated instead; 'glad to see you, Jack! Stevens, clean glasses.'

'Am I the mercy?' inquired Jack, depositing himself leisurely in the most comfortable chair at hand. 'Not a particularly small one, then, I'm thinking, Frank.'

'Not small in any sense of the word,' answered I, pushing the Burgundy across the table; and really, just now, in the vague half light, Jack Mortimer's six feet three loomed even unusually large and handsome. No, Jack was certainly not a small mercy. We had been schoolfellows at Westminster, chums at Cambridge, the best of friends always, though for the last half-dozen years or so parted by many a thousand miles of sea and land.

Even by this half-light something indescribable in the set of my old friend's ordinarily fashionable garments, a something more indescribable still in his whole bearing, —a certain large ease and freedom, as of a man accustomed to an almost unlimited amount of space to turn himself in, would have been suggestive of one fact, I think, to the most casual observer—'Home from the colonies.' And home from the colonies it was.

For the last five years Jack Mortimer had been enjoying life in the bush. Not that in his case there had existed the usual inducement for viewing life under those delightfully primitive aspects, for my friend had occupied from his youth upwards that enviable position of heir to a wealthy maiden aunt; but merely, as it seemed, from a natural and inevitable tendency in his own nature towards that simple and patriarchal state of things. There having been no particular necessity for his prospering in the line of life he had adopted, prosper, of course, he did; but a few months back, in compliance with the wishes of the maiden aunt, who was getting on in years, and craved, as she said, to see her boy (which she would have called Jack if he had been sixty, instead of well up towards thirty, as he was) take up his position in his native land before she died, he had disposed of all his flocks and herds, and come back to Old England to

settle down as a country gentleman and landed proprietor.

I had not very long previously succeeded to my own modest patrimony of Meadowsleigh, and flatter myself that that fact had some weight in the selection made by Jack of a residence: the same being a queer, rambling old house, with a valuable, but certainly improvable property attached, in my neighbourhood, called The Wild.

Here Jack had been domiciled for some months now, the head of a curious bachelor establishment, organized, I should say, on strictly bush principles.

As near neighbours, as well as old friends, Jack and I were accustomed to exchange unceremonious visits at all hours, so that after we had nodded to each other over our first glass, there was scarcely any need of his accounting, in a half-apologetic way, for his appearance at this particular time, by saying 'that The Wild was apt to feel duller than usual on these long, quiet summer evenings!'

'I can imagine a vacuum there, which, being abhorred of nature, it is consequently unnatural of you not to fill.' I said, lazily, 'Jack, why don't you marry?'

This suggestion my friend received in the silence which I had sometimes noticed it was his habit to receive remarks of a similar nature, nor was it his usual custom to lead up to such, by any reference to his bachelorhood. As he sat now, leaning back in his chair, looking very large, and brown, and handsome, and yet with unwonted gravity on his face too, a suspicion for the first time entered my head, as I glanced at him, that there might be some reason, of a tender and romantic nature, to account for his peculiar reticence on this subject; though, indeed, Jack Mortimer, with his jolly laugh, his genial face, and kindly words and looks for all the world, was not easily to be reconciled with the idea of 'blighted hopes' 'worms in the bud,' and so forth.

My wife, with whom Jack was on terms of mutual amity and goodwill (as, indeed, this gentleman is a favourite with married ladies in general), was firmly impressed with the conviction, not only that Jack had never been in love, but that he would never marry.

'And why, madam, should you infer this of a man who is in every way calculated to adorn that honourable estate?' I inquired, when the partner of my joys first enunciated her views upon this subject. 'Is not my old friend eminently social in his habits, brimming over with all kindly affections? Why, then, should he be incapable of love, and cut off from the joys of matrimony?'

'I did not say he was incapable of love, Frank;—ah, no!' answered Mrs. Marchmont, 'though I think he will never marry. It will be some woman's loss too, for men like Mr. Mortimer—men more affectionate than passionate, more constant than ardent, make model husbands. Their wives are better loved than even their—their sweethearts (yes, Frank, I like the pretty old world name for the old, old relation, and think no other so simply expressive). And hearth and home are more to such men as he, than the rest of the world, I think.'

'Upon my word, ma'am,' I remarked in some surprise, for my wife's voice was very soft and gentle as she spoke, 'you seem to have brought a great deal of consideration and reflection to bear on the subject of Mr. Mortimer!'

'Reflection!—not at all, dear,' Mrs Marchmont said simply; 'one feels—at least I think a woman does instinctively—the worth of such a man as John Mortimer. And he is not of that order that is most attractive to the greatest number of women either.'

'Indeed! Be good enough to explain the contradiction in your words, young woman. If Jack Mortimer is possessed of such unusual virtue, and women instinctively perceive the same, why is he not the honoured object of their regards? Or am I to understand that the female mind prefers an exhilarating sprinkling of vice in its idol, if only to throw the virtues up into broader light, as it were?'

'No, not that exactly,' Mrs. Marchmont answered rather hesitatingly; 'but I think, perhaps, that women prefer in general a—well—a more showy style of thing than Mr. Mortimer. Don't laugh, Frank.'

But I did laugh.

'Of course they do, bless their hearts! And so poor Jack is to be the victim of an unappreciating female world.'

'I don't think I meant that, either, Frank; but of this I am convinced, that any woman willing to marry Mr. Mortimer would have to make him understand it in an unmistakeable manner, or he would never credit the fact'

'Well—well, my love. Then let us hope that a lady may cross our friend's path in life with sufficient sense to appreciate his worth, and sufficient courage and candour to volunteer the state of her heart to the object for which it beats, or else we may consider his fate as sealed, I suppose.'

'Mr. Mortimer would never marry any woman who could forget in the slightest degree womanly delicacy or propriety,' my wife returned with much dignity.

'Then may the saints help him, my dear; for help from man or woman availeth not, as I understand you,' said I, dismissing the subject.

I had pooh-poohed my wife's observations, of course, thus vindicating my natural supremacy and superiority, but secretly I own they had weight with me, and I had long ago set down Jack as not a marrying man, in spite of his natural predilection for the society of women, as evinced in his seeking that of those who were safely provided with husbands.

The tender evening light was fast fading into the transparent darkness of a midsummer night as we sank into mutual silence. Streaks of mellow light from the wide-open windows of the adjacent drawing-room chequered the long shadows of tree and shrub on the lawn with broad bars of quiet light. The low airs of evening sighed tenderly to the trees, which whispered back answers all lovingly tremulous, and then, suddenly, there grew out from that murmurous accompaniment, a strain of plaintive passion, of wondrous sweetness.

'*Einsam bin Ich.*'

I think we both held our breaths as that inspiration of Carl Maria von Weber's, breathing sorrowful regret, passionate yearning, came borne to us on a rich young voice; and when, in a few minutes, it sank and faltered into silence, Jack rose from his chair and leaned out of the window without speaking. 'Come,' said I, presently, 'let us join the ladies. "Music hath charms," especially on an evening like this.'

The sudden change from the darkling atmosphere of the room we had left, to the radiance of that which enshrined the ladies of my household, was a little dazzling and bewildering Was it only that? or did I see, as Jack Mortimer turned from his friendly greeting to Mrs. Marchmont, to bow in response to my introduction of 'Mr. Mortimer' to 'Miss Francis,' a sudden start, followed by utter confusion on Jack's part, a vivid blush, and an exceedingly haughty up-rearing of the head, on that of my pretty little cousin, Beaty Francis?

## CHAPTER II.

### WHAT IS THE PLOT?

'So, Miss Beaty! My introduction of my friend, John Mortimer, last night, was altogether superfluous, it seems. You were already acquainted?'

'I have seen the—the gentleman before, cousin Frank,' answered Miss Francis loftily, but with that faltering, tell-tale colour rushing over her face nevertheless.

Dignity is not my cousin's forte; she can be saucy and loving, and pettish and tender, charming always, but she cannot be dignified nor awe-inspiring, consequently I pursued the subject, in no wise daunted by the little lady's displeasure.

'What, in the name of wonder, did you mean by that awful pause before "gentleman," my dear? What denomination did it take the place of?'

'Squatter, perhaps,' was the pert

answer. 'Is not that what the creatures are called, who live in the outlandish place your friend comes from?'

'Certainly not, Miss. The term is not euphonious, I admit, but it is neither one of ignominy, nor reproach, as you in your ignorance would imply, being only another name for a landed proprietor, and signifying the same thing. My friend was merely a cattle dealer, and I own it puzzles me to imagine when your high mightiness could have met an individual in so lamentably an inferior condition of life.'

'What does it matter where I met him?' my cousin burst out with a vehemence that quite startled and overwhelmed me, her sweet face crimson, her eyes filling with tears —of anger, of pain, of mortification —of what? 'I never wanted to see him; I wish I never had! Oh, how often I have wished I never, never had! Why did he not stay out at the other side of the world? I thought he was gone for ever.'

These sentences, full of 'evers' and 'nevers,' came in jerks from lips that quivered pitifully, and when they were ended, two great tears fought their way through restraining lashes, and rolled heavily down her face.

If I was utterly surprised, I was moved also. My little cousin was very dear to me; she had been my pet and plaything ever since the day when I, a rough schoolboy, used to steal away from companions of my own sex and age, to play with a pretty toddling baby in a white frock and blue shoes.

I took her two hands and drew her up beside me.

'My dear,' said I, 'I ask your pardon if I have jested on a subject that really touched you in any way. I never dreamed of your having any special interest in Jack Mortimer; how could I?'

Hard is it for the mind masculine, to follow the twists and twinings of the one feminine. I had touched the wrong string again. Up went my cousin's head, while a hot flush came to dry up the two great tears.

'And I have no interest—special or otherwise—in Mr. Mortimer. He is nothing to me, nor ever will be. I beg you to believe that once for all, Frank.'

'Of course, dear,' said I, soothingly, but taking leave, at the same time, to doubt that assertion under the circumstances. 'Any one could see from your meeting last night that your previous acquaintance must have been of the most casual nature A ball-room one, perhaps, dear, when you danced five out of every six dances with Jack, ate ices together under the orange trees in a shady conservatory, watched the moon out of the cool balcony, and passed him in the street the next day, without so much as even a glance of recognition. It was something of that kind, wasn't it, my little Beaty?'

'No, Frank—nothing like it. A ball-room and dancing! Oh, no, no! A death-chamber, and dying words rather. Oh, Frank, Frank! I wish I could tell you all!' And with that, poor Beaty nestled her flushed face on to my breast (many a time in the old days she had cried herself to sleep there after some childish grief, or a fit of naughtiness) and wept.

'Then tell me, as, indeed, my pet, who has a better right to know all that vexes or pleases you than your poor cousin Frank; and in the dear old days that are gone, Beaty, to whom did you ever carry all your griefs (thank God, they have not been many, nor heavy, my dear!) but to him?'

'Ah, used, Frank!' she cried, nestling ever closer and closer.

'And will still—yes; for I have never separated the Beaty of to-day from the little child I used to love so dearly; and I claim the right still to be the sharer of all that pleases, all that grieves her: I shall never give it up till one comes between us with a better, and that can only be a husband.'

'No husband will ever come between us. Frank, dear, I shall never marry—never!' said Beaty, with much energy, through her tears; and beyond reiterating this presently, when she sat up and dried her eyes, I could extract nothing at all from my cousin on the subject that moved

her. I had loved this little girl very dearly. I had been accustomed to think of her as mine by a peculiarly near and familiar tie. I was wounded to think the woman could have a secret, when the child had confided all. I was hurt, and I suppose I showed it, for with a faltering smile Beatrice put her arms round my neck as she said—

'There are some things—some troubles—that are best never told, dear Frank, I think, and this is one of them. It could do me no good, and would, perhaps, be wrong also, since another person is concerned in it. You could not help me, dear, no, not if it were possible to wish to do so more than you do—which could not be, I know—and—and it's nothing new—and I don't often think of it now—only, last night, it all seemed to come back so freshly. I am afraid I have been very silly, and pained you needlessly. Don't speak or think of it any more, and I will try and forget it also.'

'One word, Beatrice; do you know that Mr. Mortimer is our near neighbour and constant visitor? Tell me, my dear, would you rather not see him any more, while you remain here?'

'Oh! I don't know; I don't care, Frank; let that be as he likes,' again with that burning colour; 'don't say any more about it;' and with this I was obliged to be content.

Feign to be so, I mean, for content I certainly was not.

A horrible, haunting idea that Jack Mortimer, whom I had hitherto sworn by, as the worthiest, kindest, most chivalrous of men, had fallen short somehow of right-doing where my little cousin was concerned, beset me painfully.

It seemed incredible, and yet how otherwise account for what had passed between my cousin and me?

I could not rest, so laying the reins upon the neck of my inclination they straightway led me in the direction of The Wild.

Mr. Mortimer was at home—yes—would I walk into the study or the dining-room, while Binks went in search of his master, who was somewhere out of doors?

'Out of doors? No—I would not come in then. I would prefer finding Mr. Mortimer myself;' and being pretty well acquainted with Jack's habits, I turned confidently down the shrubbery walk that led towards the stables. The responsible-looking head groom was standing at the door of the harness room (the stable department at The Wild was much more ably administered than the rest of the establishment).

He touched his forelock in answer to my inquiry.

'Mr. Mortimer? Yes, sir, in the loose box, sir, along of Ajax—mostly there at this time. This way, sir.'

In the loose box accordingly—an apartment as spacious and much more neatly kept than the dwelling-room of many a family—I found my friend seated, pipe in mouth, and in a very easy position, on one corner of the manger, out of which black Ajax was leisurely partaking of his midday meal, yet lifting his head ever and anon to look into his master's face with that pensive kindness we see in the eyes of the horse or dog that loves us. Close at Jack's feet, too, lay an animal of the last-named species, a splendid kangaroo dog, that, too noble for jealousy, watched yet, with a certain wistfulness, the hand so often withdrawn from its resting-place in the sort of sash Jack wore, in place of a belt or braces, to fondle the horse's short velvet ears, or shining crest.

The man, the horse, and the dog, all powerful and beautiful of their kind, made a pretty picture, and verily, Jack's frank face, and kind eyes were not those of a man who could wilfully wrong any of God's creatures, great or small.

The doubt lying heavy at my heart vanished somehow, when my hand was griped in that friendly one; but curiosity and interest, deep and overpowering, remained.

Jack duly inquired after Mrs. Marchmont's health, but referred in no way to our visitor or his recognition of her, and biding my time I made none either. After half an hour with Ajax, stable topics, local matters, crops, and neighbourly talk generally, we sauntered away from the stable precincts, out under

a row of flowering limes, where the bees were making drowsy music.

One of those intervals of silence had befallen—that more than anything, almost, goes to show the complete intimacy that subsists between those who indulge it in each other's society—and presently into this silence stole the plaintive music of that melody of last night, whistled very deftly and sweetly, whistled as I think only one man can execute that accomplishment, that man being Jack Mortimer.

I let him finish and then turned rather suddenly:—

'By-the-bye, Jack, you never told me you were acquainted with my cousin, Beatrice Francis!'

Jack's brown face gained a perceptible access of colour.

'Didn't I? Well—no—I dare say I never did. I saw her once, I think, before I went to Australia, five years ago—never since I came home, till last night. I don't even know, being mightily ignorant on such matters, whether one meeting gives me any right to claim acquaintanceship with Miss Francis—what should you say, Frank?'

'That it depends upon the circumstances under which the meeting took place, of course,' I answered, remembering with great perplexity Beaty's reference to death-chambers and dying words. Under what possible combination of circumstances could these, my friend Jack, and my little cousin be associated?

I had been quite as accustomed to suppose I possessed Jack's confidence as well as that of my cousin; yet here evidently was a mystery I was not to know, and one that had existed for five years, apparently, without my ever having had an inkling of it. I had felt wounded on the first discovery; by this time I began to experience a feeling of injury, and, with perhaps unwise frankness, avowed the same.

Jack withdrew his pipe from his lips, shook out the ashes in troubled silence, put the pipe slowly into its case, and the case into his pocket, before he spoke.

'I hate mysteries and secrets; they are not at all in my way, as you know, old friend. I never expected the thing to befall me that I could not talk over with you; but, Frank, there comes something into most men's lives, sooner or later, that they do not care to speak of, that no good could come of speaking of, and besides——' He paused and then added: 'This is not my own affair either, entirely—another is concerned as well as I——'

'Why, those were Beaty's very words and reasons for denying me any explanation,' I ejaculated in intense astonishment.

'Have you spoken to Miss Francis—to your cousin on the subject?' asked Jack, flushing.

'Certainly, and got the same amount of satisfaction as from yourself.'

'Thank Heaven, then, that I never breathed word of it to living creature,' said Jack. 'I might have done it one day to you, Frank, though I never regarded myself as having any right to talk of it. But tell Miss Francis—assure her from me, that I never have, never will now—she need never fear any allusion, not the slightest, to what is gone, from me—tell her this, please, Frank,' said Jack, earnestly.

'I'll tell her nothing of the kind. Hang me if I ever speak to either of you again on the matter!' I answered, losing patience; 'and I wish your future wife joy of the nice little Bluebeard secret you carry about with you, Jack!'

'I shall never marry,' Jack said quietly.

'Grant me patience,' I cried out; 'she said that, too!'

'Did she?' inquired Jack, very earnestly.

The next minute he turned away his head, and I heard him mutter; 'Oh! Amy, Amy!'

In a few minutes more Jack and I parted, for the first time in our lives, with mutual relief.

## CHAPTER III.

### IN SEARCH OF SOCIETY.

A week, a fortnight went by; long days of rich unclouded sunshine, evenings of tranquil sweetness,

evenings long, and still, all perfumy with the breath of flowers, like those Jack had declared made the loneliness of his empty old house intolerable to him; but neither glancing sunshine, nor tranquil sunset brought my old friend any more to Meadowsleigh.

I cannot tell all that want was to me; I scarce knew myself; and I chafed angrily, as I was forced to own that I was powerless to do anything but mourn over it.

Who but Jack himself, could judge how far his presence was fitting in the house where the sharer of this precious mystery was for the present domiciled?

At the end of the first week I had called at The Wild; but Mr. Mortimer was from home, and not expected to return till night: at the end of another, I sallied forth once more in that direction.

The footway to the domain called The Wild led up through my own grounds, crossed the high road, and entered my friend's by a low gate. The day was one of these same summer ones, bright and still, hot and glowing. Brilliant sunshine steeped all the fields of waving grain, fast ripening now to harvest, in floods of golden light; but the arching trees that met overhead, above the pretty woodland path I walked, only admitted here and there glimpses of that glowing splendour. Shadows, broad and cool, closed all around me; the light that came in here, all soft, and dim, and broken, caused one to think of solemn old churches in a land beyond the sea; dim with painted windows, misty with incensed altars, and grave with the gathered memories of all the bygone years. Perhaps, too, of trysting-places, and waiting lovers, all the joy of meeting made tremulous, and sorrowfully sweet, by the shadow of that inevitable parting that waits upon all meetings here. As this last thought strayed across my fancy, I reached a sudden opening in the trees around me, through which the pathway wound, and turning into it, I came to an abrupt halt in utter and unbounded surprise.

Lovers and trysting-places, truly! Why, what was this, and who were these, standing among the flickering shadows yonder? Surely I could not mistake that figure, full of graceful lines and flexile curves; I knew every one of them by heart. I knew, too, the downward bend of that golden head, with its pretty rippled hair drawn into a knot behind the ears; I could fancy the very look on the downcast face at this moment, though it was turned from me—and then—well—yes, I knew my cousin Beaty's usual walking dress of simple holland, and the little velvet hat with the bright wing—in which she looked—like herself, in short, and like no one else ever did, in my eyes.

And if this was unmistakeably my cousin Beatrice, the tall gentleman in light morning clothes, the set of which was somehow so indescribably loose and easy, who stood hat in hand beside her, speaking so earnestly, and looking so steadily at the bent-down face that yet turned towards him too, was no less certainly Mr. John Mortimer.

How long had this conference between these two apparently hostile powers lasted? How long was it going to last? Was a truce being declared, war determined on? Or was peace, mild-eyed and beautiful, hovering sweetly over this communing pair?

How could I tell, who had never been admitted within the mysterious circle that seemed somehow to enclose these two? Should I advance now, on my way, which would lead me straight upon the unconscious creatures? or should I turn back and pretend I had not seen what I had? While I still remained dubious, pondering these things, Beaty turned and saw me; and observing that without an instant's hesitation she came slowly towards me, and that Mr. Mortimer followed her, I in my turn advanced.

I did not care to look too closely into the child's face, as she came up and quietly put her hand within my arm, but I did look at Jack.

He coloured a little, but he met my eyes very frankly and steadily, and when he held out his hand, it was with the unmistakeable look

about him, somehow, of a man who never had, who never could do anything he was ashamed to be caught in.

'I was on my way to The Wild, Jack.'

'Were you? It is well we fell in, then, for I was coming over to call on Mrs. Marchmont, whom it seems an age since I saw. I met Miss Francis a few yards from here, and learnt she was at home.'

Was that simple inquiry the one Jack was making so earnestly as I came upon them?

We all turned, and strolled back towards Meadowsleigh together, I disguising whatever curiosity I had (I may as well own, it was intense) under, as I flatter myself, a very perfectly simulated aspect of unconsciousness that my companions stood towards each other in any than the ordinary relations of a lady and gentleman who met then and there, for the second or third time in their lives; but I speedily arrived at the conviction that that confabulation among the trees, which I had interrupted, had partaken of the nature of a truce, or an accommodation, at least, the demeanour of the contracting parties was so evidently in accordance with rules and regulations laid down and agreed upon.

Jack did not, as on the occasion of their former meeting in my drawing-room, refrain from addressing or even glancing in the direction of Miss Francis; on the contrary, he studiously, not to say laboriously, endeavoured to include her in the desultory talk by which we beguiled the way; and poor little Beaty, with a manner lamentably differing from her usual one, all the careless flow of her pretty talk sobered into constrained and measured cadence, gravely followed his lead.

I think both were glad when we reached the house, and they were released from any necessity of keeping up this show of common intercourse. But from this time the communication between The Wild and Meadowsleigh was resumed upon something of its old footing; and yet no, for I never now, as I threw up my window of a morning, and leaned out to inhale the health-giving breeze of early morn, was greeted by a cheery voice nor gladdened with a sight of Jack Mortimer, coming, with those long quiet strides of his, across the dewy lawn of Meadowsleigh in time for an early breakfast. He did not drop in to luncheon, nor saunter up between the lights in his old fashion. It is true he might still have come at some of these times, but never now without being asked.

Nor did these symptoms of an agreed on and regulated demeanour towards each other, which I had detected at first between my cousin and my friend, disappear on continued intercourse. They showed now, in a mitigated form, perhaps, but they were still observable.

And over my little cousin a shadow had fallen, that, try to hide it as she would, she could not cover from my sight. I could not accuse her of moping or pining—she did not sullenly turn her back upon life and its duties, refuse companionship, nor decline her daily meals. No; whatever her trouble was, she strove with it, as the good, healthy-minded English girl she was, and had evidently never a thought of giving up, nor giving in.

But as I noted sometimes how the sweet laughter would falter into sudden silence—the words lightly begun end in a sigh—her pretty, childish beauty deepen, and sadden at times, into thoughtful womanhood—my heart was sore within me. My little Beaty! thou wert very dear to me; but, alas! what human love avails to shield its object from the doom of all the world? I could only stand silently on one side, and grieve that it had come at last upon thee—that burden and heat of thy day here, which I could neither lighten nor share. Ah! I think there are few sadder moments in life than these—these in which we realize with a cruel pang that all our love, tender and true though it be, is powerless. 'The world goes sobbing through space;' none who live upon it can escape the doom of sorrow, and regret, and tears.

And so summer days stole away on noiseless feet, and with the au-

tumn came that time for Jack, which, let us hope, is seldom one of rejoicing, pure and unalloyed; that time when expectation becomes fulfilment, and the heir comes into his kingdom. The kind old maiden lady at Charleswood went quietly to her rest, and John Mortimer of The Wild, was now also lord of the fair domain of Charleswood, and a personage of considerable importance in the county where it was situate.

But when he came last to The Wild after some weeks of absence, and we walked under the limes, whose leaves shivered silently to the ground beneath our feet, I was vexed to observe that my old friend was disposed to treat this fact but lightly, and that in his mood and conversation generally there was a discontent, and gloom almost, quite unwonted in him. His sudden appearance, during my stroll, was somewhat unexpected, and I said so as I welcomed him.

'I seem to have been away an age, too,' he answered, hastily; 'and I came—upon my soul, I hardly know why I came, except that I was horridly lonely up at Charleswood, and no wonder! Not that The Wild is much better, though, only, at any rate, I don't miss there a kind old face I used to know. Frank, if it had not been for the dear old lady I should never have come home, I think; and since she's gone, I can't do better than go back again. I declare, if it was possible, I'd go back to the bush to-morrow.'

'In search of society?' I inquired.

Jack laughed, but the next instant he sighed.

'Ah! you may laugh at the idea of a man who has been five years in the bush, crying out at the solitude of an old country house under bachelor rule; but I can tell you solitude is not at all the same thing there—nothing like boredom in the bush, Frank; and somehow a friend's face seems all the more worth seeing, when you have ridden over fifty miles of green slope and swell, with that sole end in view. In fact, I think a man must go to the bush before he really understands the meaning of the word "neighbour." No offence to you, old boy.'

'None in the world; but, for a gentleman of passably engaging manners, decidedly handsome means, in a moderately populous, and sociably disposed neighbourhood, to complain of solitude, and talk of flying to the bush for society, strikes me as a fact requiring explanation. If Charleswood and The Wild are dull, fill them with friendly faces, dear lad; they are never turned away from such as thee.'

But Jack shook his head.

'The dear old country seems to have grown small, Frank. I feel in the way here.'

We were just at the end of the shadowy avenue of limes as he spoke, and the next instant there was a faint rustle among the withered leaves on the grass, and my cousin Beaty glided into it, and faced us. We both started a little, but the little lady held out her hand to Mr. Mortimer with ever so quiet a smile, and then swept away, before we could turn and accompany her.

Jack looked after her for an instant, and there was trouble in his eye.

'Miss Francis is not looking well,' he said; 'she has grown thin, and pale.'

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## CHAPTER IV.

### BETWEEN THE LIGHTS.

There was no prettier nor cosier room in all comfortable and picturesque old Meadowsleigh than that one appropriated to its master, and called 'Mr. Marchmont's study.' It was sacred to myself, and I was chary of allowing the intrusion of my household across its threshold, feeling that the 'business' in which I talked solemnly of being engaged during a quiet hour or so, when it pleased me to retire from the bosom of my family into its comfortable seclusion, might perhaps suffer in the respect of its members, if they found how often it was transacted with a cigar between my lips and in a position of recumbency on a lounge constructed with many cunning

contrivances for insuring the greatest amount of comfort, with the least expenditure of effort, on the part of the individual who sought its sleepy hollow.

The fire had sunk down into a deep red glow on the wide tesselated hearth, my favourite hound was sleeping peacefully in its heat, all the room was full of brooding shadows, and that wavering glow from the fire only very dimly defined the large person of Jack Mortimer as he lay extended very much at his ease on that same lounge.

A tap at the long window that opens upon the shrubbery.

'If you please, sir, Jones would thank ye to walk down to the stable. Lady Betty went dead lame to-day, sir, while one of the boys had her out exercising, sir.'

Uttering an anathema upon boys in general, and stable boys in particular, I caught up my cap and hastened away without a word of excuse to Jack, who was, moreover, half asleep.

I might, perhaps, have been absent half an hour, for I had to wait the veterinary surgeon's arrival and report upon the disaster of my favourite mare; and when I presently re-entered my sanctum, which I did by the window, as I departed, I stood still a moment surveying the sight that presented itself to my eyes.

Not with surprise—no—I flatter myself I had entirely overcome any tendency to that emotion where Jack Mortimer and my cousin Beaty were concerned; for of course, those young people composed the tableau on which I looked.

It was not otherwise than a pretty one, I am bound to confess that. There was Jack seated easily back on my favourite resting-place, and by his side—and so very close, that Jack's arm could scarce have found a position anywhere but round her waist—nestled Miss Beaty. As far as I knew, he had hardly hitherto touched the little finger-tips of my pretty cousin, and now—lo—but I was calm, and advanced into the charmed circle within the firelight, as if for a lady and gentleman apparently on the most formal terms of acquaintanceship, to assume the present relative position of these two, was among my most ordinary and familiar experiences.

'Wish me joy, Frank, old fellow,' said Jack, jumping up then.

'I wish you all possible joy,' I answered meekly; 'none the less sincerely, that I don't in the least know of what.'

'I should think it was plain enough, too,' Mr. Mortimer answered, turning to draw Beaty up beside him; 'but I am afraid you are vexed, old boy, that we should have had a secret from you all this time. I suppose we have each fancied it the other's; but now it can be yours, too, Frank, if Beaty will tell it.'

'Not I, Jack. I came here this evening meaning to tell Frank, and made a sad mess of it (here she glanced up at Jack, with the most enchanting look imaginable). You do it this time. Sit here, Frank, dear.'

And my little cousin, bless her loving heart! seeing that I was grave (which I was, through sheer bewilderment), and fearing that I was wounded, sat down by me on the side not next Jack, and her soft cheek lay against my shoulder while I listened.

'I don't know whether you remember my sister Amy, Frank,' Jack began; 'I think it is likely enough you may not, for you could not have seen her many times. My home was always at Charleswood with my aunt, and after Amy left school she went to live down in Essex with her guardian. We two were pretty much alone in the world, and perhaps that was the reason we thought a great deal of one another—at least I know I was very fond of my little sister.

'And she thought there was no brother in all the world to compare with hers, and never tired of talking of him,' murmured a voice on my left—Jack was on my right.

'And perhaps I never heard of Miss Beaty Francis, either, before I saw her,' answered Jack. 'I remember I laughed one day when Amy was setting forth her perfections, and said she must introduce

me, and perhaps I might be the happy man who would win this paragon for his wife. Perhaps this unlucky speech of mine first turned my little sister's thoughts towards such a thing, though it passed entirely out of my mind; for very soon afterwards Amy fell into delicate health, and before many months were over I knew that we should not have her long.'

Jack paused here. When he resumed his voice was lower, and Beaty's face was hidden against my shoulder.

'It was a sad time, and I don't care to think of it. She sank very rapidly, and one day burst a blood-vessel; after that we knew the end must come very soon. She knew it herself, too, and pined so much to see her dear little school-friend Beaty Francis, that her kind old guardian went up to London himself, to beg Miss Francis might be allowed to return with him to bid the poor dying child "Good-bye!"'

'I have never forgotten that day you came, nor how I first saw you,' Jack went on, addressing himself now to Miss Beaty, with that involuntary softening of his deep voice as he did so which tells a tale to those who listen.

'Often and often out in Australia, when I have been sitting quite alone in my hut, with the level sunset light streaming through the open door, I have seen it all over again. That golden light coming across the low Essex lands, and flickering on the wall above the sofa where Amy lay, her poor little wasted face propped upon pillows; and lying beside it, pressed close against it, your fresh rosy face, and your yellow hair, so bright and wavy, mixed with hers, all dark and straight. I did not think much about it at the time, but I suppose it must have made some impression. I remembered it all so often afterwards; then I thought of little, but my poor Amy. Your coming seemed to have put new life into her. She had scarcely spoken for days, now she laughed and talked so gaily, that something almost like a hope began to wake up in my heart. I looked over at you, and said, I remember, that you were the best doctor that had come near Amy yet, and that I thought a few days of your company would do all they had not been able to accomplish. And then—but you remember.'

'Yes,' whispered Beaty.

'*I* do not,' I could not refrain from reminding these absorbed creatures.

'I beg your pardon, Frank,' returned Jack, with quite a start; 'I had forgotten I was telling you.'

'So it seems. But go on, my dear old fellow.'

'Think of Amy, then, Frank, as a very young, very warm-hearted and loving—romantic, perhaps, and lifted, by the knowledge that she was dying, above ordinary, every-day life; very sorry for me, too, whom her death would leave but with very few to care much about me—think of her so, and then perhaps you will understand how it all came about: that, holding her friend's hands in hers, she asked her to promise her something, and that Beaty answered, "Yes—willingly—gladly—anything!" Then, looking across at me, Amy asked me to do the same. How could I dream what the poor child's thoughts were fixed on? I answered, as Beaty had done. And then—then—with a light in her dying eyes, and a smile on her mouth, she told us that what she asked of us, what she had longed for, thought over, and prayed for, was, that we two would marry. That we had promised to grant her what she asked, and she asked that.

'Just imagine, if you can, our awful confusion while we listened, Frank; I'm sure I can't depict it. I only dared once look towards Miss Francis, and then saw nothing of her face—only one little ear and a part of her throat, and they were flushed with deep, and, I felt sure, indignant crimson. I was unutterably pained and shocked; but could I reproach my little dying sister? I did try to laugh the matter off, awkwardly enough, I dare say; at any rate, I failed, and made matters worse. "How could I joke on such a subject, or dream that she

could do so with dying lips?" Amy said.

'Be angry with her I neither could nor would; and when all was over (she died with her arms round my neck that night, Frank) it was only left me to try and make the best of the matter with Miss Francis. I told her—at least I tried to—that she need never think herself bound by a promise so given—that she need never fear my insulting her, by making any claim upon it.'

'Oh, Jack, Jack, you incorrigible old blunderer!' I could not forbear crying out here; 'so you as good as told a lady you would not have her.'

'I suppose I did blunder horribly; I've no doubt I did,' answered Jack, seriously; 'for certainly Miss Francis——'

'Behaved very foolishly, I am afraid,' here broke in the voice on my left. 'But I was very young—only a schoolgirl—and the idea would torment me that you might think Amy had talked of—of what she wished to me before, and that perhaps I knew what the promise she asked referred to, before it was given. Thinking this, I felt so horribly ashamed, I could not bear to see you. I thought I never should be able.'

'Only it appears to me that you have changed your mind on that point, Miss,' pinching the little fingers that lay in mine.

'Yes, Frank,' responded the demure monkey.

'Since when, pray? for deuce take me if I can understand how you and Jack, who seemed only this morning as far as the poles asunder, can have arrived, in the space of half an hour, at the—well—I think I may say without offence, "close relations," in which I found you.'

'Don't, Frank, dear!' whispered Miss Beaty. 'I'll tell you another time.'

'No time like the present. Come, Jack. I comprehend now, how the hostile attitude came about. Do clear up the mystery of the allied one.'

'It was arrived at very simply, too. Miss Francis and I have been under the mutual impression all this time, that we were respectively disagreeable to each other. By a—a little accident this evening we found out that we were mutually mistaken, and so——. I think that will do, Frank.'

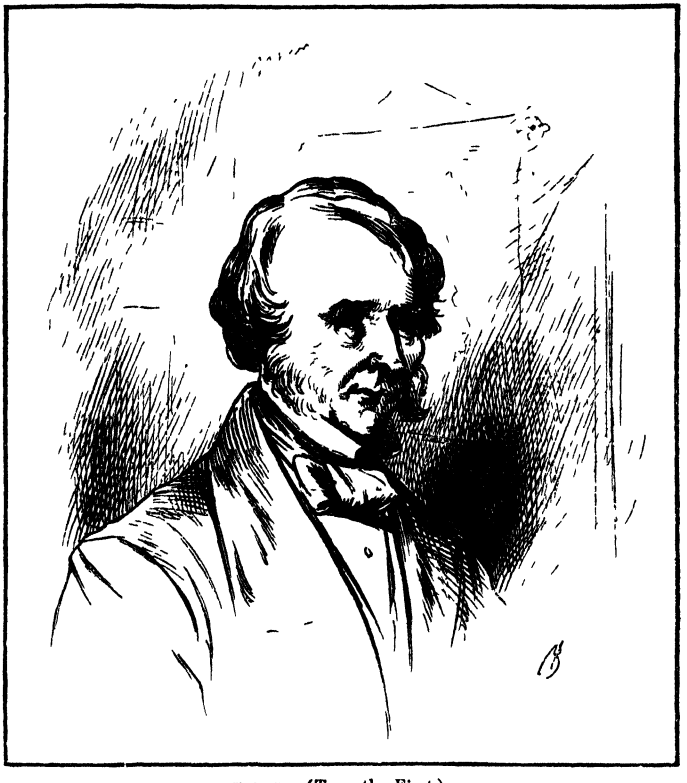
'By Jove! no; for I declare I'm all in the dark.'

'*We* were in the dark, cousin Frank,' Miss Beaty whispered here, laughing and blushing, I dare say; certainly turning her face so that it should be invisible to Jack, who had risen by this time, and was standing before the fire. 'At least, no—it was "between the lights;" and I came in here to talk to you about something that was making me very unhappy—something I heard you and—and Mr. Mortimer talking of this afternoon in the avenue—about his going away to Australia for good, I mean. I thought it was you lying on the sofa, Frank. And before I had found out it was not, I had said—I don't know what. But Mr. Mortimer knew then I did not dislike him; and so—and so——'

'And so poor little Amy's wish has come about, after all, thank God! And I don't think I shall go farther for a home now than Charleswood, unless Beaty particularly prefers the bush,' concluded Jack, coming to the rescue.

'And my shrewd little wife's prediction is verified, also,' I observed, 'that if ever Jack Mortimer married, the lady would have to make the first confession of love. There, Beaty, never hide your face, my dear. Methinks a woman need scarce do that, when she owns to loving John Mortimer, no more at shining noonday than "between the lights."'

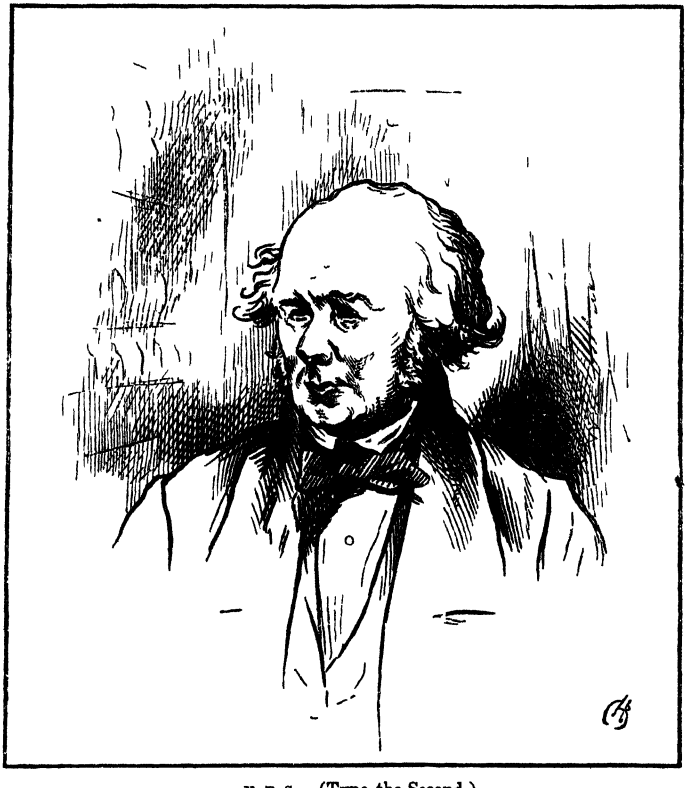
# FELLOWS.



F. R. S.—(Type the First.)

HOW desperately some men struggle in life to obtain the privilege of adding honorary initials to their name; and if one could only look behind the scenes of action and of toil, we should see how bitter are the disappointments, how exquisitely painful the annihilation of hope, when a candidate for the membership of one of our learned societies is not permitted to join the great body towards which he gravitates, and is refused the distinction of adding those mystic letters to his ordinary cognomen which raises a man at once from the ranks of mere citizenship, and places him amongst the *cognoscenti* of society! In the same way that ciphers placed before or after a unit make just all the difference in its value, so initial letters placed either before or after a man's family label give it insignificance or weight. Mr. Frederick Richard Sydney Small is nobody; but the identical Mr. Small with the initials of his names following, not preceding his Smallship, bids him become F.R.S. (Fellow of the Royal Society), and raises him at once from a decimal to a unit of value, with as good as three ciphers on the right side, representing worth and importance. Like a kite refusing, without a tail, to rise to the high empyrean, is the individual who is unable to add some sort of alphabetical tail, or adjunct, or balance, to *his* rising in the world. The only drawback is, there are such a

large number of honorary distinctions now-a-days that even that noble lion the Royal Academician, after his apotheosis has taken place, must look down from the cloudy heights where he associates in seclusion with Zeus himself, and tremble as he views the array of learned giants piling distinctive initials heavenward, and threatening to scale the highest pinnacles of Parnassus. What a Pelion upon Ossa is R.A. (Royal Academician) united to F.R.S! What a basis to work upon is F.R.I.B.A. (Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects)! Those cabalistic letters F.R.S. are indeed well worth possessing, suggesting as they do our oldest scientific body in existence; and when we remember the flood of light which the 'Philosophical Transactions' has cast upon the world, it is indeed a real honour

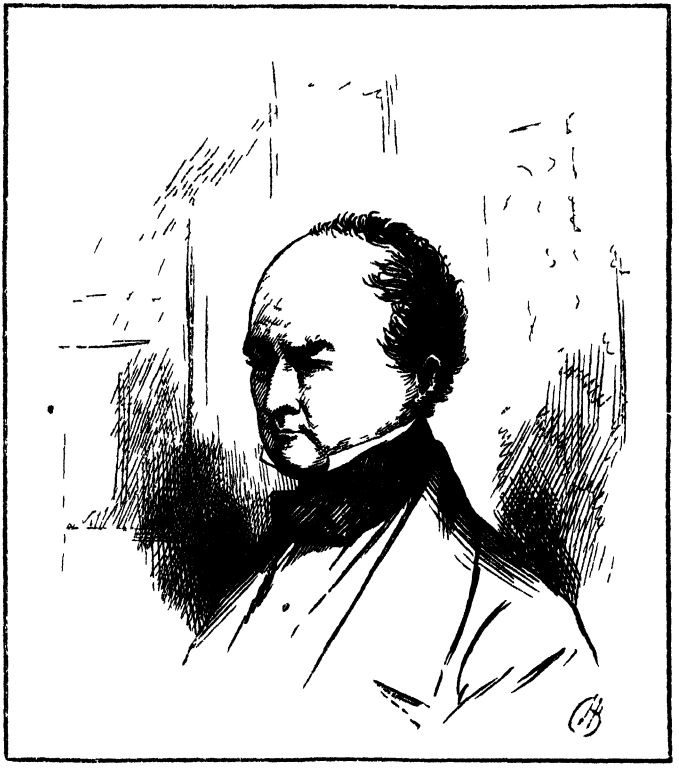


F. R. S.—(Type the Second.)

to join a corporate association which ranks amongst its archives the most illustrious names that the ever-rotating cycle of the sciences has whirled into fame.

How curious is the fact that the word 'fellow,' which certainly fails to convey an idea of dignity or wisdom, should be the one chosen to describe the members of the learned societies! There is no noun-substantive in the English language used so vicariously; and the variety of its meanings are as endless as the combinations of Mr. Babbage's calculating machine. At Eton or Rugby 'fellow,' with the adjective 'good' or 'bad,' tells its own tale; and at college 'slow' or 'fast,' coupled with the name, shadows forth the probable academical honours of Jones, Brown, and Ro-

binson. 'What a fellow you are!' is a common expression, but which, according to the tone of voice, conveys meanings vastly different; or 'I say, old fellar, let's go to Ascot,' is a form of speech whose fascination it is impossible to escape. Sometimes, in more slangy nomenclature, other words of like genre have the insolence to usurp the place of 'fellow,' and the expression 'a stingy curmudgeon,' or 'a rummy old buffer,' exhibits that inordinate desire for change which the lover of familiar expletives usually exhibits. Even the fair sex are not free from the epithet, for they are often 'fellows' of associations, and a 'Fellow of the Botanic Society' appears in crinoline and rustling silk, and sweet odour, and graceful presence, and tender bearing; not in any way like the idea which the male-sounding word 'fellow' usually implies. Not

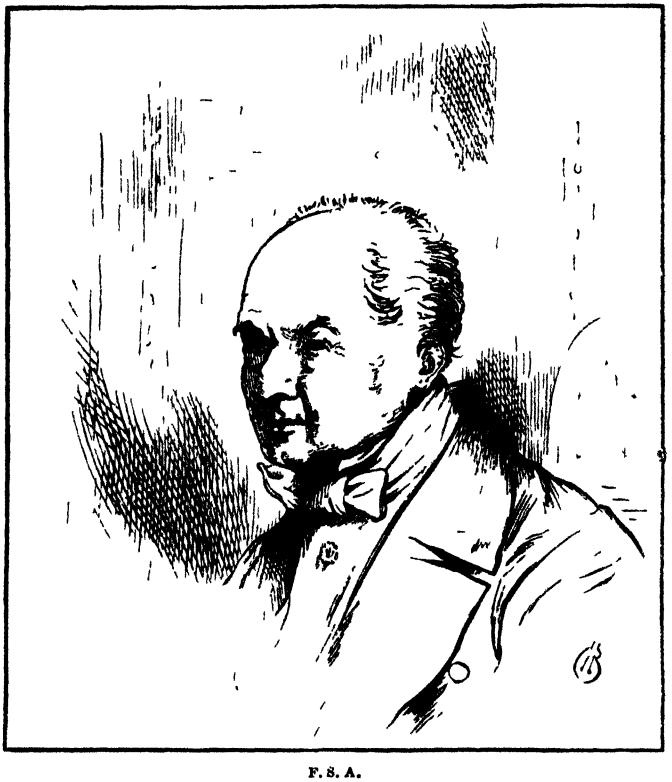


F. R. G. S.

content with single independence, the word often appears as a compound, and entering into the bonds of matrimony becomes fellow-creature, yoke-fellow, bed-fellow, *cum multis aliis*. Perhaps its strongest and most terrible form (in relation to sound, not to orthography) is that last act of a weak and foolish fellow who commits a crime which in legal parlance is termed *felo-de-se*. Then the various jokes, good, bad, and indifferent, which the fellows of learned societies occasion. F.R.S. has been rendered Fellow Remarkably Stupid. C.B. (Commander of the Bath), though not within our present category when speaking of the learned societies, has tried the ingenuity of many a wag, being sometimes translated as Confirmed Bore, and anon as Confirmed Bache-

lor. Probably these two last descriptions blend and harmonize, and become stereoscopic, and melt into one picture. F.S.A. (Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries) has been thought to mean 'Fellow of the Sulky Athenæum,' a base insinuation, invented by some silly fellow who after ten years of probation found himself A.B.B., which may be construed either as 'Associate of British Big-wigs,' or 'Awfully Black-Balled.' Contented vanity would doubtless prefer the first reading of the *primares literæ*, if it be not an Irishism to so call letters which follow instead of preceding a name.

We herewith present a few specimens of the said Fellows to our readers; and possibly a brief description of each of the societies suggested by our artist's sketches may interest—not those who sat (all



F. S. A.

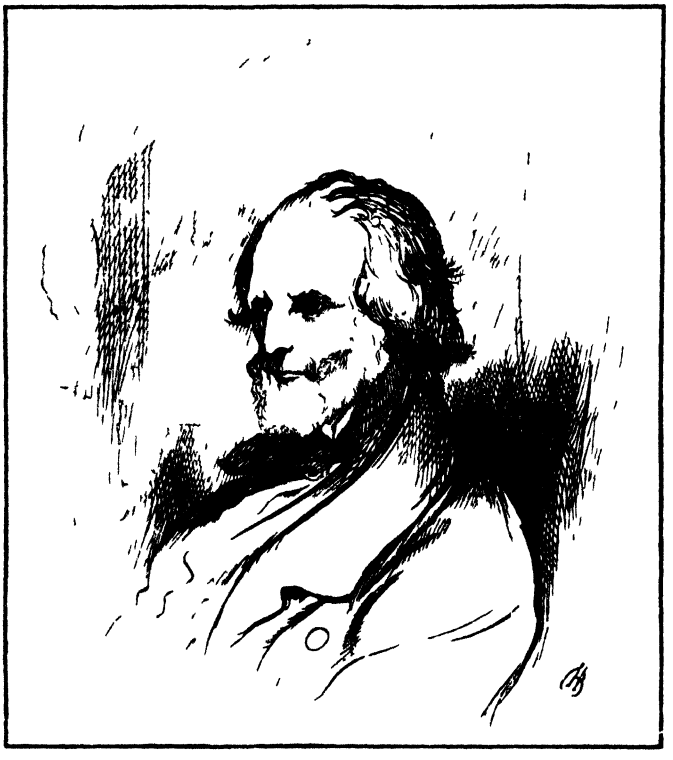
unconsciously) for their portraits, but fellows of society generally.

The *Royal Academy of Arts*, Trafalgar Square, was established for the promotion and encouragement of painting, sculpture, and architecture; and was opened Jan. 2nd, 1769, on which occasion Sir Joshua Reynolds, its first President, was knighted. Its meetings were originally held in Market Lane, near Pall Mall; but in 1771, a portion of Somerset House was set apart for its use; and in 1837 it was removed to its present position in Trafalgar Square.

It consists of forty Academicians, twenty Associates, and, latterly, Academician and Associate Engravers, with Professors of painting, sculpture, architecture, perspective, anatomy, ancient literature, and an-

cient history. Its members are not permitted to belong to any other society of artists in London. The Associates are chosen from the annual exhibitors, and the Academicians from the Associates.

Its schools, which are intended for the advancement of anatomical knowledge and taste of design, consist chiefly of two departments, one relating to the study of the best remains of ancient sculpture, the other to the study of living models, and include a school of painting. The candidate for admission as a student must be a proficient in drawing and modelling, and be acquainted with anatomy, at least so far as it includes a knowledge of the skeleton and first layer of muscles. If seeking admission as a painter, he must send in, as a specimen of his abili-



R. A.

ties, a chalk drawing about two feet in height, of an undraped statue or a torso; if as a sculptor, the model of a similar figure, either in the round or in relief; and if as an architect, the plan, elevation, and section of some simple original design, and a drawing from plates. If what he exhibits is approved of, the candidate is admitted on trial for three months, during which time he has an opportunity of executing other specimens; and if these are satisfactory he is admitted, without any charge, a student for seven years; and, should he obtain a medal, he becomes a student for life. Failure does not preclude him from other attempts, except he is found to have presented the works of others as his own. As the students are expected to make themselves

well acquainted with the rules of the Academy, none can plead ignorance of them as an excuse for transgressing them.

The Academy, in time of peace, sends in rotation from each of the classes to the Continent one of the students who has obtained gold medals, to study for two years, paying his travelling expenses and the cost of his maintenance.

That mean building in the square dedicated to Nelson's glory, and often compared to a cruet, its two domes standing for the pepper-casters, is the spot where the R.A. is in his glory. There, either at the May Exhibition, in the National Gallery, or the drawing-school, he can wander and muse as he pleases. To him the place is full of memories. Close by, in St. Martin's Lane, Hogarth studied. Not far off, in the Adelphi, chivalrous, half-crazed Barry perished for fame. In the painting-school of the Academy cautious, taciturn Wilkie drew side by side with noisy, ambitious Haydon. There little leonine Fuseli ranted about poetry and the Greeks. There also are sombre, grand Roman landscapes by poor Wilson, who almost starved till the Academy made him at the last moment their librarian. Not a picture in the academic rooms but has its strange history. Here is a beautiful 'Satyr and the Nymphs,' presented by Etty after his long struggles for success. And close by a glowing Reynolds and a meretriciously beautiful Lawrence.

The R.A. in meditative moments must often wander through the Cruet Stand with thoughts of past triumphs and past disappointments. He must think of the day when, with a portfolio of drawings under his arm, he knocked at Flaxman's or at Chantrey's door; of the proud day when first he became a probationary student, and was allowed to take his seat on the little sharp square wooden stool, placed reverently before the seated Mars, the Jason tying his Sandal, the Dying Gladiator, the blatant Hercules, or the Faun, whose wanton mirth no time can lessen. Then he thinks of the day when first, with blushing cheek and trembling voice, trying to be grand and indifferent, he presented his first picture to the terrible porter, who is so contemptuously calm; and of that still more dreadful day when he found it was rejected, and had to fish it out from vast stacks of other rejected pictures, all marked with the fatal white chalk crosses of rejection. Then he would think of his first triumphs —of the first great picture—of the crowds round it—of the first eager purchaser—and how he wrangled with some less fortunate dealer or amateur who lost his temper because he failed to get the great picture—and so on from triumph to triumph till the title was gained, and with it honour, wealth, and European fame. And now the annual dinner—that moment when the gas is suddenly turned on with a sudden rush, as of a hasty daylight, and all the wonders of the art break upon his view—it is the proudest in the R A 's life.

The *Royal Society*, Somerset House, was established in 1634, and incorporated in 1662; and is therefore the oldest institution connected with science in London. Its objects are extremely varied; its labours have been productive of great advantage to the physical and mathematical sciences; and to be a member of it has always been considered a high honour. The Fellows are elected. The 'Philosophical Transactions' were first published in 1665, and, with some interruptions, have been continued since.

The *Royal Society* dates back to the time of Charles II., the shrewd, swarthy monarch who propounded to the Fellows the celebrated problem about the fish in the bucket, the puzzle of which consisted only in the impossibility of the experiment It has grown to manhood since the days when Swift ridiculed Boyle's meditations and the frivolous experiment of the fashionable cognoscenti—when Butler, in 'Hudibras,' laughed at the philosophers who mistook a fly on the telescope-glass for a monster in the moon. It has survived all that early ridicule, and now it has the laugh on its side. It has erased many errors, and done much to

destroy mischievous superstitions. It was one of the first of the learned bodies to expose the follies of alchemy, even when patronized by royalty, the last great claimant of the art of gold-making having destroyed himself to prevent exposure at the hands of this learned Society. It still continues its labours in the cause of science, by aiding discoverers and concentrating into one focus many scattered rays of light that would otherwise be 'dispersed to naught.'

The *Society of Antiquarians*, of London, Somerset House, was instituted in 1717, and incorporated in 1751. Its object is the advancement of antiquarian knowledge and history, both as they relate to this and other countries. Its ordinary meetings are held on Thursdays, and its annual meeting on St. George's Day, unless it falls on a Sunday. The Fellows are elected by ballot, on a written testimonial signed by at least three of the Fellows of the society, one of whom certifies from personal knowledge, and the others from acquaintance with his works.

The *Society of Antiquarians* has had much to bear since the days of Ben Jonson and those of Shadwell. There was a time when the antiquarian—the Dryasdust, was a stock-butt for the novelist, the dramatist, and the wit. Even Scott had his Monkbarns as a whetstone for his kindly satire, and under the shadow of that character he laughed at many of his own peculiarities, at his own credulity and too great readiness of faith, at his spurious *Roman camp*, and the forged ballads with which his friends rather too freely deceived him. We have all laughed at the collector with his 'brick of Babylon,' which his zealous servant, in her ardour for cleanliness, one day in his absence carefully divested of its invaluable cement, a thousand years old. Smollett, too, raised a hearty laugh at the antiquarian who would make all his friends ill by treating them to a supper after the manner of the ancients.

But still, though too sanguine, and often trivial and restricted in his historical views, the antiquarian has done more than any one to re-write English history, to advance etymology and the science of language, and to improve topography.

The *Royal Astronomical Society*, Somerset House, was established in 1820, and incorporated in 1831. It was instituted for the promotion of astronomical science. Its ordinary meetings are held on the second Friday of every month, and its annual meeting on the second Friday in February. Abstracts of the papers read are published in monthly 'Notices,' and their details in half-yearly 'Memoirs.' The Fellows are elected.

The F. R. A. S., with the fine fleece of hair and the swan's neck of white cravat, scarcely looks to the ordinary observer a person likely to be a friend of Mars, and on the best speaking terms with half the planets. Yet those courteous, smiling eyes have beheld sights such as few have beheld—occultations of starry worlds—luminous burstings into blossom of previously unknown planets—the fiery charges into space of wild comets, broken loose from the Sun's stables—the revolving of Jupiter's moons, and the glory of Saturn's belts.

In no black velvet robe, stamped with trine and cross, such as the astrologers of old wore, but in the plain evening dress of a quiet English gentleman, our F. R. A. S. has looked through his telescope and seen worlds no bigger than calomel pills spinning round each other and executing extraordinary dances, the figures of which take some millions of years in the accomplishment. He talks of billions of miles as coolly as other men do of the distance between London and Bath. Indeed, take him altogether in his relationship to the visible or the invisible world, as Jove's cousin, or as a friend of Saturn, and a crony of Aldebaran's, the F. R. A. S. is a strange mixture of the man of science and the old astrologer.

The *Geological Society* of London, Somerset House, was instituted in 1807, and incorporated in 1826. Its object is the investigation of the mineral structure of the earth; and the papers read before it are pub-

lished in its 'Quarterly Journal' and 'Transactions.'

The *Geological Society* has had as many difficulties to encounter, if not more, than any of its fellows. There was a time when the very carrying of the stone-cracking hammer was thought a sure sign of heresy. Now geology and its relations to Scripture are better understood; and the boldest thinker can assert that coal is a mineral fossil fuel that has taken some thousands and thousands of years preparing for our use without fear of being burned in Smithfield. Science no longer blinds itself over books, or by lamp-light, as in the monkish days, but now climbs mountains, squeezes itself into crevasses, gets in the fresh, free air and broad sunlight, and interrogates Nature in her very citadels. The

F. R.A. S.

result is that Nature, who requires to be sought, and will not always come to the loudest calls, yields daily up her secrets. Science now tramps round Cornwall, and goes down mines, and scrambles up alps, and soars aloft in balloons, and uses its own eyes to show us that the whole work-a-day world has a vested interest in its discoveries.

The *Royal Geographical Society* of London, Whitehall Place, was instituted in 1830; and the African and Palestine Associations were soon afterwards incorporated with it. Its objects are to publish geographical facts and discoveries in a cheap and convenient form; to collect a geographical library; to furnish useful instructions to those about to travel; to correspond with other geographical societies; and to reward with a medal those who contribute most to the progress of geo-

graphical science. The number of Fellows is unlimited. Meetings are held at least twice a month from November to June, and the annual meeting in May, on which occasion the royal awards are made to those who have most forwarded the objects of the society; and the President details the progress of geographical knowledge during the past year.

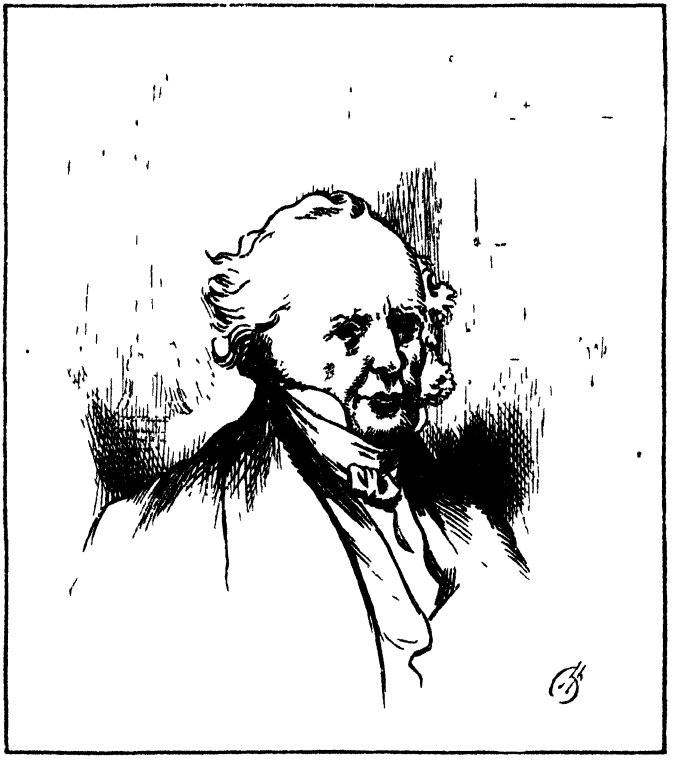
The *Royal Geographical Society* is one of our most useful societies, and will one day be even more useful still, or we are no true prophets. Its province now is to collect and publish geographical facts and discoveries, and to enlarge the bounds of our knowledge of the earth's surface: we trust the time will come when it will keep a digest of the researches of all European travellers, and incite and encourage all

F. G. S.

voyagers whose object it is to extend commerce or bring home to us new products from other countries—fresh medicines, fresh fibres, and fresh plants. In this desultory age, when it is no longer possible for men to be Aristotles or Plinys, and master every branch of human learning, such societies as the Geographical have great opportunities of focussing and encyclopædizing the scattered sciences, and doing by co-operation what no one brain or hand could dare even to attempt.

The *Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce*, John Street, Adelphi. When Dr. Madden, in Ireland, in 1740 left 1000*l.* a year to be distributed in premiums among those who should be most successful in the various branches of art and science, a desire of forwarding the

same objects arose in England, and resulted, about the middle of the last century, in the establishment of the Society of Arts, which was not, however, incorporated until 1847. Its object was to distribute prizes for the various improvements which might be made in arts and manufactures; and the amounts bestowed on individuals varied from 1*l.* to 140*l.* From the very first it met with the warmest encouragement; and in 1765 the Common Council of London voted it a grant of 500*l.* But in the lapse of years its prosperity diminished, and in 1846 it scarcely contained 300 members. It again flourished when his late Royal Highness Prince Albert was induced to become its President; and it has continued to progress since that period. In closing its hundredth



F. R. S. A.

session in 1854, a report was presented, which, among other matters, suggested a law of limited liability in partnerships, and a memorial was prepared on the subject of the paper duty—both which important matters have been since satisfactorily disposed of; and means were taken for rendering more effective the general union of institutions which had been established in 1852.

The duties of the society soon became so multifarious, that it was found necessary to classify and arrange them in departments, over each of which a committee was appointed to preside. The subject of exhibitions of British manufactures having engaged its attention, it organized in 1847 the first of the kind which was held in these islands; and was not only attended with the

greatest advantages in connection with its immediate purpose, but by the satisfaction it gave led to the increased popularity, and therefore usefulness of the society itself. Among the exhibitions it originated was that of 'ancient and mediæval art,' in 1850, at which were collected together a very large number of interesting and valuable objects.

It was intended that there should be an ordinary exhibition each year, and every fifth year a national exhibition of a more comprehensive kind. When the society asked the Government to grant it a building suited to the purpose, it met with every encouragement; and its royal President ultimately devised the plan of the first Great International Exhibition, which was so successfully carried out in 1851, and has served so admirably as a model for the second.

We owe a great debt to the *Society of Arts* in originating our two great International Exhibitions, and in fostering so zealously the art spirit among us. The Society has still its work before it in spreading a taste for pure art among the poorer classes. We want to see the every-day jug and plate of more sensible and beautiful shapes. At present they are of moulds that the very South Sea Islander surpasses. Let us remember that the poorest Greek had his water-jug of a matchless form, and that thousands of years ago the very baskets and vases of Athens were of beautiful types.

## IN THE STREETS.

### A London Reverie.

ONE day lately I had to meet my wife at the terminus of the Brighton Railway. She failed to come by the appointed train, but sent instead a telegram, begging me to wait for her arrival by the next. Having thus an hour or more at my disposal, I strolled to the foot of London Bridge and amused myself by watching the crowd. Here the great panorama of London life unrolled itself unceasingly for my entertainment, till at last, growing giddy with gazing at the restless puppets who disported themselves before me, I fell into a strange reverie. All these, I thought, are my servants, these toiling thousands are working for me. That waggon-load of mild breakfast bacon, this of cheese, that cartload of cigars, and that other one of tea—all are being distributed for my benefit over the vast city. An ample store of a hundred necessities and luxuries is being so divided that I may anywhere procure a supply of any one of them for the solitary shilling which I have to spend. Soon, however, I lost the momentary dignity which I gained by this reflection in a sense of loneliness. I had stood here for half an hour, looking, during every minute, into scores of faces without having recognized any one. I felt as if stranded on the shore of a fierce stream of life with which I had nothing to do. And yet, who knows whether I was not interested nearly or remotely in many of the plans which the passers-by were so industriously weaving? That man may, for what I know, be considering whether he shall resign the lucrative place to which I shall succeed. One of these pursy, self-satisfied-looking persons may be the cloth-merchant, about, by dunning my tailor, to have the screw put upon me for payment of that little bill which ought to have been settled at Christmas. From thinking of the multitude of ties by which, unknown to themselves, the strangers were bound together, I passed to the consideration of the odd acquaintances, and friendships, and even enmities which grow up in the streets of London, and which never extend beyond them. There are men, for instance, whom I hate because they scowl at me, or grin at me, or sneer at me when I pass them. There are men whom I like,

because, though I never see them out of the streets, they greet me when I encounter them there with a smile, or a nod, or a look of pleased recognition. No doubt I inspire similar feelings in the minds of numerous unsuspected observers of my street life. Then there are the odd coincidences of the streets, for which no explanation can be given. Why, for instance, should I always meet a certain old gentleman, with blue spectacles and a cigar a foot long, in Great Coram Street? Why should a late distinguished political economist have passed me on his road to the Athenæum always precisely opposite the third poplar tree from the entrance to St. James's Park? Why, of the two hundred and odd times at which I have crossed the path of Mr. Paul Bedford should he invariably have been opposite Northumberland House? Why should that very respectable German Jew, of whom I once bought a parcel of Hamburg pigs' bristles, always, when I pass Pentonville Prison, be coming round the corner of the wall with his hand to his hat, ready to bow to me? And why, above all, should I have been persecuted by the Cormorant? This last person lived near me, it is true, but surely that fact affords no explanation of his proceedings. He began by setting up a pair of preposterous models over his gate-posts which appeared to be effigies of the bird after which I named him. This was irritating, because I had to pass them every day on my road to the office, and the things were ugly. Then, after a time, he took to keeping a hackney cab (painted bright blue and with the royal arms emblazoned on each side) waiting at his door and appeared on his top step every morning just as I passed. Then, when I avoided the street, at the expense of an additional walk of a quarter of a mile, he used to meet the same omnibus and ride up to town by the side of me. I tried to avoid him by changing my conveyance, and went up to my work by the train, but he soon found me out and came into the same carriage morning after morning. All this was bad enough, but he hunted me through my holidays as well. I met him at Dorking, I met him at Kew, I met him at Brighton, at Hastings, at Worthing, and at Cheltenham. I only just escaped going to the Isle of Wight with him, for I found him, carpet bag in hand, coming into the Waterloo Station as I was about to take my ticket. On this occasion, however, I was able to escape, and fleeing to London Bridge, went to Dover instead. Then, too, he presumed on this acquaintance and spoke to me. I was at that time very fond of the game of chess, and used to carry a small pocket chess-board with me on which to study problems as I went up to the City. Noticing this, he persisted in talking to me about chess, with which he professed to be acquainted. I could not, of course, be rude to him, so he began to treat me as if I was a personal friend, and stopped me to wish me good day whenever I was unfortunate enough to cross him. Then, before long, he appeared at my chess club, and I found to my dismay that he had just been elected a member, and that I had missed the chance of blackballing him through not knowing that the 'Simson' for whom I had voted was the Cormorant in disguise. After this he got absolutely affectionate, and pressed me to come to his house and play with him. I steadily declined to do this, though I had sometimes to tax my invention for excuses.

Indeed, the pertinacious attempts of this chance acquaintance to force himself upon me, commenced about the time when another chance meeting had given me full occupation. For it was just then that I went down to Cheltenham in the same carriage with the most charming lady I had ever seen. Surely in the whole world there were not elsewhere such blue eyes, or such flaxen ringlets, or such neatly-turned ankles, or such a heavenly smile. She was perfection; she even played at chess. This last merit I discovered by accident. I had, as usual, produced my pocket board, and was busily engaged in the at-

tempt to solve one of Kling's latest puzzles, when the chaperone of my charmer asked to look at the board. I, of course, handed it to her, and informed her where its fellow might be purchased, and thus succeeded in entering into conversation with both of them. Before long, I was actually playing a game with the younger lady. I lost: how could I help losing when she added to the effect of each move by so sparkling a glance of her beautiful eyes. In a second and third game, I had the same fate. She played well certainly; not that she would have been able to beat me, one of the best players of the Tamerline Chess Club—if I had been able to fix my attention on the game. But what could I do? It was so pleasant to see her hand hovering over the board as she prepared to move, and to look up into her face while I waited for her, that I was quite unable to think of my own play. She had conquered me in more ways than one. From that time I thought of nothing but the lovely chess-player. I made numerous journeys down to Cheltenham, passing most of my Sundays there, and going the round of its churches in hopes of finding her at one of them. I haunted the platforms of the Great Western Railway for the chance of seeing her arrival or departure by one of the trains, to such an extent that, as I afterwards found, the porters and police kept a regular watch on me under the impression that I was a thief preying on the passengers' luggage. Once, only once, I saw her again. The train was just starting, and I had not seen her get in; but all at once she appeared at a window waving her hand to some one. Till she was out of sight I could not remove my eyes from her; but when she had disappeared I felt a jealous desire to know who had been blessed with her recognition. There was no likely person about the platform—the person, whoever he was, had gone. Cursing myself for not having looked earlier, I walked out of the station, and there, driving off, was the Cormorant (I'll swear it was he) in the detestable blue cab. I slunk back, however, and he fortunately did not see me.

Some weeks afterwards, when I had begun to despair of ever seeing her again, I met the Cormorant at the club, and in answer to his renewed invitation to go to his house and play with him, I actually said I would. I was disgusted with myself afterwards; but at the moment I was thinking of that delightful journey to Cheltenham, and scarcely knew what I answered. However, being now in for it, I had no choice but to keep my appointment; but I determined to give the man such a beating as would make him very unlikely to ask me again; for I was quite satisfied that he could not play, though I had never had a game with him. It was impossible, indeed, that a man with such a forehead and such eyes as his could make a stand against me.

I went. We had commenced a game, and I had already, in eight or ten moves, obtained a winning advantage, when the door opened and two ladies entered. 'Let me introduce you,' said the Cormorant, 'to my wife and my daughter. Minnie,' he went on, addressing the latter, 'you will get a lesson if you look on; Mr. —— is the best player in the Tamerline.' Could I believe my eyes? Here in the house which I had so resolutely avoided was the owner of the blue eyes and the fair ringlets who had carried off my heart in that famous ride on the Great Western, and for whom I had sought so long! How I played after that I know not—badly I fear. Suffice it to say, that I went to the house very often afterwards; that the Cormorant turned out a jolly good fellow, with a capital bin of old port; and that his daughter is the identical lady for whom, as her husband, I have been waiting all this time in the streets.

# HELD ASUNDER.

## A Tale in Three Chapters.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE SEMPITERN BALL.

IT was the night of the Sempitern Ball, the crowning glory of the academical saturnalia. Half a dozen men, who had dined together at the 'Mitre,' were taking their dolce in my rooms in Sempitern. A veritable 'Tabaks-Parlement,' wherein languidly, each of us smoked and drank claret-cup, and drank and smoked again, in a lazy silence no one seemed to care to break. A calm sultry night had followed the blazing June day. Through the open windows, across the sacred grass-plots and stiff parterres of the old college gardens, stole its warm breath, balmy as the beloved one's, stirring ever so gently the soft blue haze of cigar-smoke that overhung the heads of the sitters. It was long since we had met all together, perhaps not since the eldest of us quitted our brotherhood at Eton. There he sits, yonder, in my own especial lounging-chair, the red glow of his regalia marking his whereabouts in the spacious oak-panelled room, his feet resting on Bran's submissive back, as the old dog lies panting on the deer-skin patiently. None but his quondam master (whose absence the faithful brute never quite forgot, do what I would to win his affections), none but Durham Vandeleur dare use Bran thus. Van looks, could you see his face, one who, for his caprice as for his settled purpose, would dare quietly and unhesitatingly any and everything. My godfather at Eton, a leader among us there, as he was at Oxford afterwards; the idolized chief of an irregular corps of Sikh cavalry (raised, indeed, and kept together solely by his own fame and the wild stirring work he cut out for them), invaluable during the Indian mutiny, and never remembered when the dark days were past; heir to an uncle's seigneurie, now, in Midlandshire, and holding a high place in the Libro d'Oro of mothers and chaperones in quest of the 'right man' to bestow a darling's unplaced, and, alas! too often undowered affections upon. So far they have, with him, been unsuccessful. Fast and loose, most of you learn in time, mesdames, is a game two can play at, and Vandeleur has not forgotten the time when he was a cadet and a 'detrimental.' Stretched yonder on the sofa, indolently and gracefully as a woman, pulling scientifically at the tube of his new-kindled hookah, lies Bertie Egerton, bronzed, too with the tropical sun, beneath which the 'Beau Sabreur,' as they used to call him, has fairly won his spurs. Beside him sits Lee-Phillips of the B. C S., at home on furlough now, and making up for time lost in his far-away station, in the killing pace he seems to stand so well, of his life in London, Paris, and the Bads; Burton of the Oxford Circuit, and the grave law-calf-lined chambers in King's Bench Walk; Cressingham, of the Q. B.'s, with his faint sad smile and that 'far-away' look in his eyes, those who best know him have seen there since a day, years ago, when Maud Wynne (she is Maud Brandon *now*, you know, and I fancy that hard, stern plutocrat, her husband, sometimes regrets his bargain) and he parted in the crowded streets as she sat alone in the carriage for ten precious minutes, while mamma was chaffering over point d'Angleterre in Madlle. Honorine's back room, and I who speak to you, are the others.

Some one broke the silence—Lee-Phillips.

'Capital cigars, Monti! Carlin favours you. He never gave Pol-

wheal—you remember the bloated Crœsus?—these regalias, though I know he paid anything!'

'Polwheal?' said Cressingham. 'Man with the tin-mine, wasn't he?'

'And a moderate income of some 50,000*l.* per annum! That's the man! You must remember him last season. There was a dead set made upon him by the Ferrers people, as soon as this story about the mine got wind, and Laura Ferrers devilish near hooked him. Unfortunately he overheard her, abusing him to Charlie Wynne in the conservatory while he was waiting for her in the drawing-room. She swears he must have hidden behind the portière to listen to what they were saying.'

'Likely enough,' struck in Egerton. 'He's a frightful cad, I believe. What's become of him?'

'Well, it seems he was hit rather hard last autumn by the best entry of the season—the Lascelles, you remember. He followed her down to Broughton, the Cravens' place, and actually proposed to her! She has nothing, you know, and I suppose he thought she'd snap at him immediately. He was sold though. She refused him dead. The end of it was, he went abroad.'

'I know,' said Vandeleur. 'I was there myself at the time it happened, and thought he was treated as he deserved. The fellow's a brute.'

'Killed his first wife, didn't he?' said Egerton.

'There's some horrible story of *l'une* Madame Polwheal, I know, going about still. They say he's a fiend when he's crossed, and he's sulky enough habitually.'

'The Lascelles wouldn't stand bullying though,' said Cressingham. 'There'd have been something unpleasant if he had tried that. It was well she refused him. Luckily *she* hasn't a fond mother to look after her interests.'

'She'll do that for herself,' said Lee-Phillips, who rather hated the Lascelles for a sharp and merited punishment she had given him when he once tried to patronize her, *more suo*. 'She'll do better than marry Polwheal, you'll see.'

'How do you mean?' asked Vandeleur, somewhat quickly.

'By Jove *you* ought to know, Durham, of all men! If she wins, you lose, that's all.'

'Being interpreted, all this means——?'

'Simply that report (truly this time, for a wonder) gives her the credit of no less a conquest than her guardian, old Lessingholme.'

'My uncle? Not likely. He hates the notion too much. I don't think he'd make a fool of himself at his time of life, either.'

'You forget though, that, with all respect for Sir Gervase, he is precisely at the age when men *do* make, or are most easily made to make, fools of themselves (the expression is yours, remember, not mine). What then is more natural (even if I weren't speaking from sure grounds) than that he should be as little proof against the witcheries of his ward as you——?'

'I?' said Van, haughtily.

'Or myself, or any of us,' went on Phillips. 'And this being so, isn't it probable—I don't say they have, mind—but isn't it likely that such considerations as a title, a rent-roll as long as Polwheal's, and (il faut lâcher le mot) an early widowhood, should have their due weight with the ward aforesaid, a portionless beauty with her own way to make? Upon my soul, if it weren't common talk already, I should say it was more than likely.'

And thereon followed a discussion. Van took no part in it, but I heard him mutter, as he flung himself back in his chair, 'She, too, like the others!'

'It will be devilish annoying for Van, if it's true,' observed Burton. 'The Holme property is all entailed, and if Sir Gervase were to marry, and the usual results followed, you'd be cut out, Van. She must be a clever girl, this Miss Lascelles.'

Van's lip curled bitterly. 'Clever, doubtless. If the story is true—even if there are fair grounds for supposing so—she must be the veriest intriguante that——But she might have had Polwheal.'

'Yes,' said Phillips, 'and had her throat cut too, in one of his jealous

fits. No, no! she's done better, as I said just now. However, they are to be at the ball here to-night. Lady Marabout, her chaperone, wrote to me for tickets. And I'll bet you anything you please that Sir Gervase is there too, playing the gay cavalier, as becomes a relic of the regency. Go and judge for yourself, Van. It's time to dress now. Allons, messieurs!'

True or not, Lee-Phillips's words had wounded Vandeleur, though none there guessed it, like a poisoned blade. He had been, as he said, at Broughton, the Cravens' country place, the previous autumn, and there, for the first time, he had met Violet Lascelles. There, too, he had watched (like an indifferent spectator, as he thought,) the advance and repulse of the Crœsus, Polwheal; but when the game was over he knew by the strange sense of relief he felt that he had been more deeply interested in its issue than he imagined. But he was a man not lightly moved and very hardly won. The curse of such a life as his had been—the habit of disbelief—was on him; yet, little by little, that fair face, so pure and proud, began to haunt him strangely. Day by day he felt himself drawn nearer and nearer to one who in all points satisfied his fastidious taste as no woman had ever done before. Slowly she conquered, but surely. Those were golden days for both, but they came to an end, as days of heaviness and sorrow do. They parted. Fettered as he was then by the thousand bonds that hamper a cadet-de-famille, he had never told her what was in his heart—the passionate love growing up there for her. Perhaps he had no need to tell her. She could trust him. 'Trust me not at all or all in all,' he had said to her once, and she remembered the words and the tone when he was gone, and never doubted.

The news of his freedom reached him abroad. His dream might be realized then, perhaps. In a week he was in England—to find the Violet Lascelles of the days at Broughton, the queen of every London ball-room, flattered, envied, and hated as such suzeraines are. 'She has not forgotten,' he thought. They told him in Park Lane that the Lascelles and Sir Gervase were away, staying, indeed, at the Lodge for the Sempitern ball. And so it came to pass that Durham Vandeleur found his way among us again, to my rooms in Sempitern, that had once been his. What he heard there you know; how Lee-Phillips's words did their work you will see.

The soft string-prelude to the 'Fairy Visions' (we didn't condemn London belles to the punishment of waltzing in pain and grief to the beer-begotten discord of the 'County Crushers' band) had just commenced when Van and I entered the ball-room at the Shire Hall. There was the usual hurrying in all directions of deluded mankind in search of strayed or shirking partners, and the crowd ebbed back slowly from the middle of the room towards the side-seats as the circle began to form. A half-suppressed exclamation from Van, and a triumphant grin from Lee-Phillips, who passed us just then with his favourite valseuse upon his arm, stopping long enough, however, to whisper, 'I was right you see, Van, after all. There's the Lascelles yonder by the window, and there's no mistaking Sir Gervase; he's a head taller than any man in the room. Qu'en penses-tu maintenant?' ere he moved on to swing pretty Lucie Arkwright lightly and swiftly round the crowded circle. I wondered what made Van look so pale and stern. He would not have *shown* vexation, I knew, at the probability of losing the 'Holme.' Was the glamour of Violet Lascelles' loveliness on him too? Hardly, I thought, not knowing then that the passionate *last* love of a man, strong as death, imperious as fate, had vanquished him; that he loved, as he had never loved others, the woman whom until that day he had believed unlike the rest. She was there before him now, as he stood in the crowd pressing back every instant from the widening circle. The slender gloved hand rested on Sir Gervase's arm, and fondly and gallantly the old man's stately head was bent

down to listen to what she was saying; as the proud, delicate face—all the Violet of her name in the pure depths of the large eyes—bronzed gold gleaming in the woven splendour of her hair—was lifted lovingly and witchingly to his. Vandeleur's look was set now and inscrutable. He watched her as she passed. What were they saying? What was she saying? 'For my sake!' and then the answer, heard perhaps, but by his own sharpened ears and hers—'For your sake, darling, anything!' Look and tone more than the words, convinced him, and he felt that Lee-Phillips had spoken truth, or what might prove to be the truth ere long, that, be that as it might, his dream had ended in a bitter wakening!

Sir Gervase saw no difference in his nephew's manner when he welcomed him home again, later. The Lascelles, who had refused half a dozen men for the last galop, and whose white glove rested still on Sir Gervase's arm, when Van came up to them—the Lascelles did. She saw, before they had exchanged ten words, that a shadow—something to her vague, untangible, but still something, had arisen between herself and him—that he, at least, had forgotten the time at Broughton. What was it? What did his altered manner—the same, indeed, to other eyes—changed only for her; what did those calm, courteous, chilling words mean from him to her? The blow was sharp and unexpected, but she bore it well; a little pale, but that might be the heat—ever so slight a trembling of the lip and hand—the hand he would not see she offered *him*—and then all was calm and tranquil as before. Her woman's pride rose, angry and scornful. What had she done to merit this? And then something stronger than her pride beat it down. Was she not mistaken? Could he, for whose coming those bright eyes had watched so keenly, for whom the valses he used to like had been left blank upon her card; he who had once sought her and whose calm, stern face was wont to brighten only when she spoke, could he have forgotten all so soon?

'Don't you remember "Il Bacio," Major Vandeleur?' she said; 'it is the next valse, and I have kept it for you, though you hardly deserve it for coming so late!' The little hand holding out her ball-card to him: the soft, questioning look in her violet eyes, the tone of the half-pleading voice, might have vanquished most of us. Vandeleur smiled coldly. 'Pardon me, I have an engagement already. Besides, I must not take you from Sir Gervase now!' So he left her, and her dream too so vaguely sweet, so unconsciously cherished, ended as he turned away. He *had* forgotten then! How could she remember? knowing nothing, unable to guess why his should be the hand to strike her thus, her outraged pride forbade her to recall the past in accusation; it must be for her as though it had never been. She danced 'Il Bacio' with the first man who asked her, and, who, she remembered, ran her against everybody in his frantic endeavours to show himself worthy of the most perfect valseuse in the three kingdoms. They came to a halt just as Vandeleur and Louise Bréloques swept by; her languishing eyes half closed, her head nearly on his shoulder, and her fair hair about her own as usual. The Bréloques thought the 'Bayadère' style rather suited to her and had adopted it of late. Van had made her throw over mamma's protégé in his own favour, and the Bréloques, notwithstanding the maternal frowns and telegraphy, had been but too pleased to do so. She had always cherished a hopeless little tendresse for Vandeleur, not strong enough, you know, to destroy her appetite or her sleep, or prevent her from taking such goods as the gods (and mamma, their importunate petitioner), might provide, in the shape of Polwheal or any other eligible; but it had never entered her shapely little head that he might or would ever care for her. But that night, after that last galop, when he had put her cloak about her, and she had gone down the hall steps on his arm, she began to think it might be on the cards, perhaps, after all.

I fear though, mademoiselle, it is not of you Vandeleur is thinking, as he stands on the steps watching you drive away, but of another face—the same which, do what he will, rises before him, proudly reproachful, as he smokes pipe after pipe in the cool morning air, before he tries to sleep—her face who, alone at last with no eye by to watch her tears, has torn off the stifling mask she has bravely worn till now, and on her pillow is weeping long and bitterly.

## CHAPTER II.

### LEE-PHILLIPS'S STORY.

Held asunder now—meeting of course in the whirl of the London season, but as strangers with a barrier between them neither could break down—Vandeleur and Violet Lascelles had spoken never a word to each other since that night of the Sempitern Ball. Vainly had she striven sometimes to find a reason for his conduct that night; striven till she hated herself for her weakness, and hardened her heart the more against inner voices that spoke for him—against the dangerous enervating memories of the happy past. She could meet him without a sign of weakness, she gained every day a greater power of endurance and self-command; but there were times when the firm hand relaxed, the proud will gave way, and long pent-up tears dimmed the lustrous eyes, and fierce choking sobs shook that frail form, that none saw or heard. Did he suffer too? A line or two grown deeper on his face—a sterner look there, less often softened by his old winning smile—a touch of bitterness now in his satire or his irony, were all the visible outward signs of the work going on within. He saw her often now, neither seeking nor avoiding places where she was sure to be. Wherever she went, with scarcely an exception, Sir Gervase followed or accompanied his ward. Always the same glad, loving smile for him; always her hand nestling under his arm, till he settled down to his whist or his fauteuil in the quiet corner where he could watch his darling. Lee-Phillips's story was common property now, everybody had heard it, except indeed those immediately concerned. The Lascelles' rivals who were her friends confided it to people skilfully by innuendo, those who were her enemies proclaimed it from the housetops.

* * * *

His friends condoled with Vandeleur and abused her, till he grew restive and stopped that summarily. One night at a supper at the Foljambe's villa, partly because he had drunk more champagne cup, than was good for him, partly because he saw it irritated Van, whom he disliked, Fairfax, one of the danseuse's guests, enlarged on the subject of 'the swindle,' as he called it, to a horribly irritating extent, and refused to be interrupted. Van took him up short at last. 'You seem to forget you're talking of people whom you don't know, and I don't choose the actions of any relative of mine should be canvassed in my presence by outsiders. If Miss Lascelles has offended you, she is quite able to take care of herself if you like to try a fall with her; but you had better leave backbiting and scandal-mongering to her own sex—they can do it better than you, and more safely. Suum cuique, you know. Will you give me some mayonnaise, Monti?' And Van resumed his supper tranquilly. The other wisely held his tongue. He saw he had gone far enough; but he liked neither Vandeleur nor the Lascelles a whit the better for the lesson. He couldn't understand a man taking up the glove for a woman who would, as he himself observed, jockey him out of one of the finest estates in England. Many other people besides Vane Fairfax couldn't either. Van had a way of coming down on you when you hit at her that sometimes puzzled you, bitterly as he would speak of her himself.

The Foljambe went nearer the truth than most of us. 'Vous croyez qu'il la déteste—la petite? Je vous dis moi, qu'il l'aime comme un démon! Ah je m'y connais—

J'en mettrais ma main au feu!' she said to Fairfax when Vandeleur had gone. And the little keensighted woman was right enough.

The season was drawing to a close. It was the middle of July. 'I'm getting tired of this, Monti,' said Durham to me one day after luncheon. 'I shall send round the yacht to Marseilles, take a run through the Bads while she's fitting out, and winter abroad, I think. What are you going to do to-day? Drive down to Richmond with me. Cressingham asked me to try those new greys of his, and we'll have a quiet dinner in the cool—it's better than broiling here.' So in due time the greys came round and we started. 'Not bad performers, eh, Monti?' said Van, when we were fairly on the road. 'Passed everything yet hard-held.' 'There's something behind putting on steam to pass us,' said I, as the rapid roll of wheels and the clatter of hoofs made me look round. 'They're coming along at a gallop. I believe it's a bolt!' Van turned his head over his shoulder—'By Jove! it is a bolt, or that fellow on the box is drunk. They'll be into us if we don't take care. He can't hold 'em, and here's the hill! There must be a smash directly!' The greys fought and plunged, startled by the noise behind us, as Van drew them off the road and the grooms ran to their heads. 'Some one inside!' he said, 'a woman! Two, by Jove! Fortunately they haven't tried to jump out. I say, Monti, we must try and stop these devils somehow If they're not mad with fright we may manage it perhaps—that pace must have told!' Swaying fearfully from side to side, the carriage—a low open one—came swiftly bearing down on us as we stood right in its way. It looked a hopeless business enough, and foolhardy withal; but we were bound to do what we could, it seemed. They were close upon us. Another moment, and the mad gallop of the runaways would carry them past or over us. Luckily, when they caught sight of us, they swerved. A violent lurch brought the near wheel against a road-post. The axle broke, but the sudden jerk flung one brute on his knees, and the pair (already fairly blown by their spin), nothing loth, came to a standstill. With a hearty anathema on the now sobered occupant of the box, (the horror-stricken footman had flung himself off into a hedge), Vandeleur went round to the side of the carriage to assure its occupants of their safety. 'I wonder who they are, to trust themselves to the tender mercies of these half-broke brutes and that drunken Jehu?' he muttered. 'Good heavens! Lady Marabout! Miss Lascelles!' None other. The fiery chestnuts, as everybody had prophesied, *had* bolted at last, and very nearly brought about a catastrophe. As it was, it had been miraculously prevented. After one mad effort to fling herself out, checked only by the Lascelles' coolness and the sheer force with which she held her terrified chaperone down in her seat, poor Lady Marabout had done the best thing possible under the circumstances, and had quietly fainted away. The Lascelles wasn't the stamp of woman to faint while the peril was imminent or inevitable. Yet, plucky as she was, she wasn't proof against the reaction, when the danger was past and gone. She saw, without knowing how, that they were saved, and, pale as her unconscious chaperone now, and trembling convulsively, she sunk back beside her. *His* voice roused her. Slowly the heavy lids unclosed, and it was *his* face she saw leaning over hers, with the look of a never-forgotten time upon it once more. Half unconsciously, her thought shaped itself into words. 'You!' she said, 'then I am safe!' 'Saved, thank God!' he said; and for a moment more neither spoke. Poor Lady Marabout gave signs of recovery at length—thanks to the fearfully powerful salts I had discovered; and with a ponderous sigh, awoke gradually to the pleasing conviction that no one was hurt and nothing broken, except the carriage-axle and the chestnut's knees. A groom had been despatched to the pretty little cottage ornée she rented as an occasional retreat during the season, (and

whither, indeed, she and her charge were bound that afternoon,) for the pony-chaise she drove about the park in; and presently returning, my lady, who had sufficiently recovered by this time from her fright to bore Van and myself with the most exuberant and exhaustless encomiums on our noble conduct, &c., was placed therein—the Lascelles guiding the pony, Cressingham's greys had fidgeted and waxed so impatient at the delay that the phaeton had gone on, and Van and I were made prisoners and forced to join the cortége. The Marabout was in the middle of a long harangue à mon intention, and, chafe as he might, there was nothing in courtesy for Van to do but fall in on the other side, on the Lascelles whip-hand.

By her side again; Lady Marabout's flow of eloquence never ceasing; the groom discreetly in the rear, and yet we were almost in sight of the cottage ere either had spoken a word. Perhaps they were thinking (one was at least) of the time when he had walked beside her pony through the autumn woods at Broughton, and silence then had had a divine eloquence of its own. All that was past and gone now. She must forget, as he had done, and never, perhaps, know why they were held asunder. But, at least, he had saved her—saved her, she shuddered still to think from what. Would he not let her thank him? He was speaking at last, and she found herself answering him on a dozen indifferent matters. In a few brief moments he would be gone. She put out her hand to him, her eyes looking half-proudly, half-timidly into his (and few men had ever seen *that* look in the Lascelles' eyes before!) 'I owe you my life, Major Vandeleur; will you not take my thanks?' He bent forward to gather up the reins she had let fall. 'I!' he said; 'you forget there were two of us, and that Hervey was before me. You owe me nothing, Miss Lascelles. Let me restore you your reins. Your pony wants curb, and you mustn't run the risk of another upset to-day.' She bent her head haughtily in thanks. He had roused her in earnest, now; it was indeed something new for her to be treated thus. Her face was as cold and calm as his own when he took his leave, cutting short ruthlessly, but politely, a fresh harangue from the Marabout. Without another word they parted; this time sundered wider than before. In another week we were in Lindenbad.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE TURNING-POINT.

It was pleasant enough at Lindenbad. Both Van and I knew the place by heart; every path in the forest, every track on the green slopes of the hills, the lions and the lounges, the picnic-places and the promenades, the salons of the Cercle, and the faces of the habitués.

But for all that, Lindenbad has always been a favourite haunt of mine, between the end of the season and September. You meet pleasanter wickedness, eat better trout, drink better marcobrunner in that snug little paradise than in half the more over-run and over-'cone' haunts of idleness or hypochondria. There is no 'board of green cloth,' it is true—no kursaal—but your taste for high play can always be gratified at the Cercle, where there is unlimited écarté and lansquenet to play at, and the best hands at both in Europe to play with. The Bad itself is a favourite with the fair *princesses de passage*, amongst others, on leave of absence from their prison-houses in St. Petersburgh, who take their *saison des eaux* on their way to winter in Paris. You may see them performing the regulation walk, and emptying the prescribed number of tumblers of abominable water by day, and flirting outrageously, or playing ditto at night by way of compensation. And they find no lack of partners at either game. Some good-looking cousin or other, (a sub., perhaps, in the Imperial Guard, on leave,) who is sure to turn up by-and-by, or *faute de mieux*, some fair-haired Saxon lad on his first long vacation tour *en fait*

*les frais.* Altogether, you find no lack of pastime at the little Bad.

Once more then, Van and I occupied our old rooms, at the Aigle Noir, played écarté at the Cercle, or lounged away the time in the shady woods, or smoked and drank marcobrunner on the terrace, as in the days of old. Whatever might have been his thoughts, (and to judge by the look I sometimes surprised upon his face they could have been no pleasant ones,) he kept them to himself. Now and then, indeed, when the last drop had been poured from the flask long ago, and the stars were coming out, one by one, over our heads, as we sat in the twilight on the balcony of my room, watching the idlers on the river walk, or the last arrivals by the diligence, he would speak briefly but bitterly, of the sordid intrigue which was to dupe Sir Gervase into committing matrimony. 'She's won the stakes by this time, I suppose,' he would say; 'I wish her joy of them; but it's hard to see a man I've always liked—one of my own blood too—made the victim of a *guet-à-pens* like this. If he were younger, one might believe it all fair and honest enough, but this is the old story. To be sure she has played her cards well. That refusal of Polwheal, which deceived even me, was a master-stroke She might have had the better move planned out even then, and it was done sufficiently well to make the chosen one believe firmly in Mademoiselle's disinterestedness. Bah! I'm sick of barterring like this! And she, too, of all others, to sell herself so shamelessly and openly; she, Vernon Lascelles' daughter—who would sooner have seen her dead than doing this. The proverb's a lie, Monte; "Bon sang peut mentir"—here's an instance!' Knowing that the mere loss of an inheritance he had ever looked upon as his own, would never make him speak bitter words like these, I began to think the Foljambe was right after all, and that it was the loss of her that bore so heavily upon him; that he did love her with the love that must have all or nothing; that would make him sooner love her dead than learn to hate her living, and another's.

The time passed away, and already we began to think of turning our backs on Lindenbad—he to join the 'Sea Queen' at Marseilles, where she lay in readiness for his coming, and I to meet a host of pleasant people at home, make havoc of the coveys in the September stubble-fields by day, and talk to Cousin Gwen in the twilight on the terrace, afterwards.

'Come up to the Schloss and smoke a pipe, Monti,' said Van, after breakfast one morning, coming into my room where I was dressing hurriedly for a riding party. 'It's about the last time we shall see it, and it's infernally hot down in the valley, here.' 'Can't,' I said, taking up my hat; 'I'm engaged to ride to the Weisserbrunnen with the Kraftenberg and her party; I'm late as it is. That fellow in the courtyard with my nag has been waiting ten minutes already. We'll look you up there as we come back.' 'Don't. I'm too sulky to-day to stand the Kraftenberg's chaff. Take care she don't let you in for one of those cousins of hers. Those Vienna girls are uncommonly dangerous! Addio! I'm off!' I saw him stride away in the sunlight across the terrace, and strike into the shaded path that led to the old Schloss on the hill yonder. It was a favourite haunt of ours. In the cool grey twilight of its cloisters, or seated on the somewhat dangerous elevation of its ruined battlements, we had smoked and sketched and chatted many a summer's day away together—had made up parties to pic-nic there, and dance afterwards in the old Rittersaal, the only room in habitable condition, and heard its walls ring with profane laughter, and the popping of champagne corks. Van's practised stride soon brought him up the slope. Just as he reached the level where the Schloss stands, the jingle of bells, and the crack of a postilion's whip made him look round. 'No peace for the wicked it seems,' he muttered to himself; 'lionizers for the Schloss, of course. They'll be an hour, at least; I may as well stay here till they're gone.' He stretched himself on the short

dry turf, under the shadowing branches of a huge tree, and waited patiently. The noise of the horses' bells grew louder as they got into a trot again on the level: he turned his head carelessly to see who might be the occupants of a fearful and wonderful-looking calèche drawn by a pair of short-legged, long-tailed ponies, whereof one was mounted by a native postilion, swallowed up in enormous jack-boots. As he caught sight of the face of some one in the calèche, he started. 'She here! Pooh, it can't be; and yet I could have sworn I recognized her. Bah! am I always to fancy I see her—am I never to forget her?' You see, strive to banish the thought of her as he might, he had never succeeded yet. They would not be laid, those memories of the past; they haunted him unceasingly. He was thinking of her now—bitterly, wrongfully; and yet, could she have read his soul she would have pardoned even that for the sake of the great love wherewith he loved her still. An hour and more passed away, and he had not stirred. Clouds had gathered on the hills, and were moving down upon the valley; a big drop of rain splashed suddenly in his face. 'It's lucky I'm so near the Schloss,' he thought; 'the Saal is tolerably water-tight, and this won't last long.' It began sharp enough, though; ere he had reached the grass-grown courtyard it was falling in torrents. He shook the wet from his shooting-jacket and hat, and, vaulting over the framework of what had once been a window, found himself in the Rittersaal. Not however, as he expected, alone. Some one, like a vision in her white summer robes, a tall girl with bronze-golden hair, turned round with a startled look and a half-suppressed cry at his sudden appearance, and he stood face to face with Violet Lascelles. He *had* seen her then; she must have been one of the occupants of the calèche he had noticed mounting the hill before him. For a moment both were silent, each confounded at the other's presence there. Then the discipline of the world asserted itself. That brief moment had restored her her self-possession, had sufficed to give his face the coldly courteous look it wore when they parted last. She had been sitting in the shadow of the archway (not a hundred yards from him, then, all the time), finishing a sketch for Lady Marabout, who was waiting for her at the forest-keeper's. She had been driven in for shelter by the sudden rain; Lady Marabout would be uneasy at her absence. 'Is it raining still, Major Vandeleur?'

'Harder than ever, unfortunately. You cannot possibly venture at present: but Lady Marabout of course concludes you have found shelter here.'

'On your domain,' she said, half-smiling. 'How you must wish it had been anywhere else! We are enemies, I know, and my trespass on your courtesy shall be short.'

'Enemies!' he said, slowly. 'Do you think so? Do you then think me so utterly selfish?'

'Selfish I do not believe you: unjust (pardon the free speech you have yourself prompted), perhaps: but my personal enemy, surely!'

She spoke lightly; but her words made the strong man turn pale.

'You do me wrong.'

'I?' she answered, and the proud slender form grew erect and confronted him. 'I do you no wrong. Do you not hate me? (since it were best, perhaps, to speak once for all) —have you not proved it by word and deed?—by words brought but lately to my knowledge—unjust, cruel words! by deed, when you thought me, I know not why, too much your foe to take my thanks that day at Richmond? You know it is so. I do not seek to know how I have earned this: you can hardly expect me to divine the reason.'

Was this real? or was she acting still, trying to deceive herself and him?

'Can you not guess? Have you forgotten the days when we first met?'

'You have no right to speak of them!' she cried, passionately.

'And as little wish: the time for recalling them is past. The future you have chosen should have de-

stroyed and blotted them out from your memory—if they ever held a place in it.'

'The future I have chosen?'

'Is it not time to avow it plainly? It was a wise choice, they will tell you, envying your place and power,—a bargain in your favour altogether. You give yourself, it is true, but you take what (though, doubtless, with Sir Gervase it weighs lightly in the balance) most of your sex consider a fair equivalent.'

She started as though he had struck her. The violet eyes flashed, and the delicate form dilated as she answered him:

'And you!—you to say this to me! Are you so bitter a foe that you must needs believe—and help stamp current by believing—the miserable falsehoods your better reason should have laughed at? Am I, then—is any woman so base in your eyes that you think her capable of such voluntary degradation in her own sight as this? What have I ever done that you should judge me thus?'

He listened, pale and silent, his whole being hanging on her lips. Had he indeed judged her wrongly, as she said? She went on:

'I have heard, though only of late, what they have said of me and my dead father's dearest friend—he who, when most I needed one, has been almost as that father to me! Idle scandal, malicious falsehood like this, whispered by those who, knowing nothing, judged me by themselves, needed, I thought, no refutation on my part, even could I, for *his* sake, whom I love and honour as his child might do, have stooped to give one. I deemed, it seems wrongly, that I had no need to fear misconstruction from any one who did not wilfully misinterpret my conduct; that at least *you* would not credit lightly tales like these, and, blinded by (I will not wrong *you* by calling it self-interest)—by I know not what feeling against me, have proclaimed my father's daughter capable of sacrificing all delicacy and self-respect, and of repaying the generous care and affection of her chosen protector by the base, cold-hearted treachery of an unscrupulous intriguante! You best know why you have done this. I have given you no cause. I owe you my life, Major Vandeleur: you have gone far to-day to make me regret the debt!'

She turned away from him, as she spoke, to leave him. He stood following her with his eyes. He never doubted her—perhaps in his heart of hearts he never had. All that he had seen and heard, and that his jealous and exacting love had made to tell (he cursed himself to think how heavily) against her, were as nothing against those few words of hers—against that tone and manner and regard. Never falsehood looked as she looked then. And was he to lose her now?—lose her, when he knew that she was, as he had once held her to be, noblest and best of all? How could he hope for forgiveness?—how expect that much would be forgiven him in that he had loved much; had wronged her only because he had loved her deeply? Could he ask it even? Could he humble his pride to her, who might prove pitiless now as he had been?

Involuntarily, as it seemed to him, her name rose to his lips:

'Violet!'

She turned her head and stood still pale, but calm, to listen to him! (Forgive her, mesdames! you would have listened to nothing, I know. Perhaps she had rather more at stake than you might have thought prudent to venture on the game!) He moved a step towards her. No living man had ever heard from Durham Vandeleur's lips the words they spoke then:

'Violet! forgive me!'

She had conquered then, and their fate was in her hands. What would you have done, mademoiselle? *She* trusted him. She put her hand—the hand he had, blind fool that he was! rejected twice—out to him again. Ah! closely, firmly now, never to be let go again, his own closed upon it; and, strange to say, the Lascelles seemed quite satisfied with this proof of her victory and his repentance. Long before he had finished the passionate pleading, she, silent all the while, never lost

a word of, the cause had been given in his favour; the sin forgiven; the wrong sufficiently atoned for by the knowledge that he had loved her always. Foolish, was she not? I don't think she has had any reason to repent her folly, though. She and Van haven't yet fulfilled the expectations and hopes of certain prophets of evil, though they were married two years ago. Lady Marabout easily forgave Van (he had always been a favourite of hers) when, the rain ceasing, she came in person to explore the Schloss in search of her missing charge,—for his forgetfulness of herself and her chaperone's anxiety. And that night, when she slumbered peacefully on the sofa after her coffee, the lovers stood together in the starlight on the balcony, 'Together now, darling, and for ever!' whispered his voice passionately in her ear, as he put his arm about her. 'Let me forget, as you have forgiven the sins of love against love, that once held us asunder!'

OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

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