

THE CHUMPLEBUNNYS

AND
SOME OTHER ODDITIES

G-7
SKETCHED FROM THE LIFE

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"MUSIC AND MANNERS," "MONARCHS I HAVE MET," "A WANDERER'S NOTES"
"MY 'HANSOM' LAYS," "THE BATTLE OF BERLIN," ETC., ETC., ETC.,

AND ILLUSTRATED BY

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TO
JOHN LAURENCE TOOLE.

A TRIFLING TOKEN
OF AFFECTION AND ADMIRATION

FROM HIS FAITHFUL FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I THINK it highly probable that some of my readers may recognize the originals of these sketches under their more or less absurd pseudonyms. It may be well to inform such perspicuous persons, that all my caricatures have been executed and published with the permission—even with the approval—of those whose harmless eccentricities they depict. The Chumplebunnys and Poodlechicks not only “live and have their being,” but are familiar figures in the literary, musical and dramatic circles of London society. Far from finding any offence in this booklet, they are good enough to pronounce it decidedly funny, and to wish it success. As far as they are concerned, therefore, I send it forth with a light heart and a clear conscience, sincerely hoping that their favourable verdict may be endorsed by the British public at large.

W. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

CONTENTS.

THE CHUMPLEBUNNYS.

	PAGE
CHUMPLEBUNNY'S GERMAN COOK	I
THE CHUMPLEBUNNYS ON THE OCEAN WAVE	24
THE CHUMPLEBUNNYS AT OSTEND	44
THE CHUMPLEBUNNYS UP TO DATE	72
<hr/>	
THREE WEDDINGS	97
WHY A. P. LIVES IN LODGINGS	134

THE CHUMPLEBUNNYS.

CHUMPLEBUNNY'S GERMAN COOK.



MY friend Achitophel Chumplebunny, though a comic poet, is a cheerful and contented man. The fact is that he combines drysalting—whatever that may be—with humorous verse as a source of revenue; the former brings him in a prosaic two thousand a year, which, added to the hundred

guineas or so accruing to him by reason of his metrical contributions to *Pan*, *The Universe*, and *Veracity*, makes up a comfortable income. He lives, in fact, as the French figuratively put it, "like a cock in paste," and has set forth the fulness of his well-being in one of his own diverting poems, which, as he has confessed to me in strict confidence, was especially intended to describe the exceptional felicities of his mundane condition. It begins thus:—

I am prosperous in business and healthy as can be ;
My Amelia is good looking and affectionate to boot ;
Like an emu I digest—from poor relations I am free—
I've a pretty taste in *bric-à-brac*, and play upon the
flute.

Chumplebunny has indeed much to be thankful for. As may be gathered from the above *quatrain*, he is musical, as well as poetical and drysalterian. To hear him play a Scotch Air with Variations on his favourite instrument would at any time draw tears from the most hardened cynic. Its effect upon his dogs must be heard to be believed in. It makes them "sit up" and wail. When they

see him open his flute-case their fine lively countenances become sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, and the expression in their tails denotes an agonized consciousness of coming and inevitable woe. To those who may deem it strange that a drysalter should be thus endowed with power to wring the hearts of naturally cheerful quadrupeds, I would observe that Chumplebunny's flute-playing is not to be listened to unmoved, even by human bipeds of singular fortitude and resolution. I myself have felt the pathos of it so poignantly that I have more than once quitted the room—aye, even the house—in which he was performing, in order to avoid being compelled to give way to my feelings. I found that whilst I was within hearing of Chumplebunny's flute my sadness steadfastly declined to be comforted. Nothing short of distance—considerable distance—would revive my shattered cheerfulness. So I withdrew into another parish, and smiled again.

In his wife, children, dogs, flutes, and old china Ächitophel Chumplebunny rejoices ex-

ceedingly. He is justly proud of these accessories to his happiness, and considers each of them absolutely first-class of its kind. But the article upon the possession of which he especially plumes himself, I incline to believe, is His German Cook. Her name is Thekla Schwefelschweif; and, in his estimation, she is far above rubies. I know Thekla well; indeed, I have reason to believe that my familiarity with her native idiom has established me firmly in her good graces, and that she is polite enough to consider me an exception to the rule she is accustomed to propound with relation to my compatriots, viz., that they are "Dummkoepfe," or dolts. She is a short, squab, powerful woman of thirty or so. All that can be seen of her, in the way of beauty unadorned, is red—bright, robust, rough red. In cheap neighbourhoods a flushed popular sausage may be observed, which, in its uncooked state, exhibits the exact normal hue of Thekla's face and arms. This tint has been imparted to them by oceans of hard water and tons of stinging soap; for cleanliness, in Thekla's rules of life, ranks "with and

after" godliness, and she has been graphically described by a fellow-servant as "one o' them perfick noosances as is always a washin' of their faces and 'ands."

It is even rumoured in Chumplebunny's neighbourhood—he lives in a highly respectable London suburb, where foreign servants, by reason of their infrequency, are regarded as objects of absorbing interest—that once a week, during the small hours, when my friend and the members of his family are buried in slumber, the basement of his house becomes refulgent with inner light; and that the policeman, prompted by this untimely radiance to cast a professional glance at the kitchen window—with fire or burglars in his mind's eye, presumably—has caught glimpses of Thekla, in native worth and honour clad, much ruddier than the cherry, and indulging in orgies of self-purification with a Bath-brick and a nutmeg-grater. When recounting this incident in select circles, as I am told, the policeman claims to have veiled his face and fled as soon as he realized the situation; but his revelations, widely disseminated by those

to whom he originally confided them, have invested Thekla with no inconsiderable local celebrity. But for the inconvenient lateness, indeed—or rather, earliness—of the hours at which she performs her Hygeian rites, my friend Chumplebunny's front garden would probably be thronged at intervals by his fellow-parishioners, bent upon witnessing Thekla's performances with the Bath-brick and nutmeg-grater. As it is, when she is seen in the streets near her abode—which is but rarely, as she does not get on with British shopkeepers, and scarcely ever takes a holiday—she is the object of devouring and awe-stricken public curiosity.

Chumplebunny and His German Cook appreciate one another with a fervour and intensity that seldom pervade the mutual admiration of persons differing widely in sex, nationality, and social station. She considers him a paragon of genius, nobility, and manly virtue; he regards her as a sort of female phoenix, rising daily from the flames of his kitchen fire to dispense blessings to

himself, his family, and his friends. He is never weary of dilating upon her varied gifts, characteristics, and idiosyncrasies, the observation and study of which have been an inexhaustible source of entertainment to him for some years past. None but Achitophel Chumplebunny can do justice to the achievements of Thekla Schwefelschweif. I therefore propose to let him describe some of his domestic experiences, in connection with that remarkable Teuton, to my readers, as nearly as possible in the language in which he has often narrated them to me.

“You may remember that, some eight or nine years ago, I was living in Berlin, where I represented the great firm in which I am now a junior partner here. It was on the left bank of the Spree that Thekla first entered my service, on the recommendation of a younger sister, who had theretofore held the office of cook in my household with somewhat infructuous results, as far as my domestic comfort was concerned ; for nature had intended Minna Schwefelschweif to achieve

distinction as an acrobat. Her proper sphere in life was the public circus, not the private kitchen ; consequently, though teeming with 'excellent differences,' in which—being myself a fair athlete—I took great delight, she failed to meet my views in connection with the culinary art. Minna was a pretty, meek-faced girl ; but her figure was that of a muscular stripling, displaying none of the more salient outlines usually characterizing persons of her sex. She was as agile as a cat, as strong as a Dartmoor pony, and as hard as nails.

“As an illustration of her aptitude to athletic exercises, I may mention that one morning, whilst writing in my study, I found my attention distracted from my correspondence by a mysterious thumping and stamping overhead, for which I could not account by any conjecture based upon my previous domestic experiences. The sounds resembled those produced by very energetic carpet-beating, varied now and anon by the heavy thud of a paviour's hammer. I hurried upstairs, curious to discover the origin of these

strange noises. It was this. My only son, a powerful lad, had been taking boxing-lessons of an English gymnast employed in Renz's circus. On the occasion in question,



Minna—fired by ambition to acquire some rudimentary knowledge of the noble science of self-defence—had persuaded ‘der junge Herr’ to put on the gloves with her; and I found her in a large empty room, just above my study, facing my Onesiphorus in a spirited

pugilistic pose, with the light of battle gleaming in her usually mild blue eyes ; in a word, cheerfully giving and taking hard, dry blows, that made my ribs ache sympathetically as I listened to them. I am firmly convinced that, guided by pure and uninstructed fighting instinct, she was more than a match for Onesiphorus, although his instructor had pronounced him 'uncommon handy with his mawleys' ; and the boy himself, filled with youthful admiration of her pluck, vigour, and lithesomeness, confided to me that 'Minna was a real brick, and had given the red-bearded Schutzmann in our street a rare old hiding when he tried to kiss her !'

"I could fill pages with anecdotes of Minna's eccentricities; how, when roll-skating was all the rage, she assiduously practised that swooping exercise in the kitchen with my eldest daughter's best pair of Plymptons, and, being detected one day, in her alarm skated backwards through a doorway crowning the *escalier de service*, and fell down two long flights of stone steps with a quite inconceiv-

able clamour; how, having gone out latish one summer evening without the street door key, and being at daggers-drawn with the porter, she contrived to clamber up the front of the house by the aid of some trelliswork and creepers, scaled the balcony of our drawing-room, and bounced in at the open window of that apartment whilst my wife and I were playing an absorbing match at piquet, her sudden apparition paralyzing Mrs. Chumplebunny with affright; how, a house painter having become enamoured of her charms and making passionate proposals to her, *en tout bien et tout honneur*, whilst standing professionally on a ladder outside her window, she incontinently hurled him into space, ladder and all, with one fierce thrust of her muscular arms, and effectually healed his love-pains by the counter irritation of a skinful of sore bones. But this were digression, of which sin I have perhaps been already guilty. Let me, therefore, revert to a subject that is ever welcome and congenial to me; that of my German Cook.

"Appearances are more than usually deceitful in the case of Thekla Schwefelschweif.



Few objects more prosaic than her form and face have ever met the human eye; but at

soul she is a poet, and her views of life are strongly impregnated with the spirit of romance. Her odes are as good as her *ragoûts*—if anything, better—and she turns out ballads and *entrées* with equal facility. Although true poetry lurks in her sweets, she is capable of keeping her two creative faculties quite distinct in practice; joints and side-dishes are not the favourite themes of her lays, and I have never known her to write a sonnet on a hash, or to make a hash of a sonnet.

“As a cook of the fine old incongruous German school, she is all that the fondest heart could wish; her “Clods,” “Sailor’s Flesh,” and “Looking-glass Eggs” are masterpieces, each in its kind. But she appeals even more strongly to my sympathies as a poet. I, as you know, not infrequently produce verses, though in a far lighter vein than that which runs through Thekla’s compositions. These are never frivolous; they are, indeed, altogether lacking in humour, and occasionally soar to considerable heights of

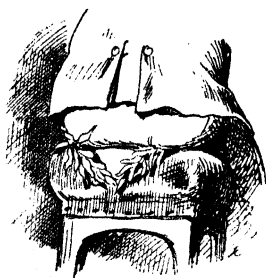
pathos. When I am sad—a physical condition by no means unfamiliar to comic writers—her mournful numbers stir a responsive chord within my breast, and I feel that it were little short of profanation to rebuke so plaintive a bard in connection with an abortive sauce or a blighted gravy. Thekla, moreover, holds me in high consideration as a kindred spirit. She cannot read my verses, being unacquainted with the rudiments of the English language, which she contemns as deficient in homogeneity; but she honours them with her entire approbation and esteem. It has even reached my ears that she considers me the first of living English poets, which is the more subtly flattering in that my works are utterly unknown to her; her judgment of me being, therefore, the outcome of pure faith, rather than of servile comparison.

“Entertaining this opinion of my poetic gift, it is not surprising that she should have addressed to me the majority of the works composed by her during her sojourn under my roof. I have received from her birthday

odes, poems appropriate to the festive Christmas season, and New Year metrical greetings, one and all characterized by original thought, excellent versification, and caligraphy of the most elegant and finished description. The orthography and punctuation of these effusions are simply faultless. I am open to wager a year's income that the world does not contain a cook of British birth capable of producing, in our vernacular, the equivalent of any one of Thekla's occasional poems.

"But the romantic strain that permeates Thekla's individuality does not exclusively reveal itself in the form of verse; from time to time it prompts her to action, so curiously out of keeping with the commonplace routine of every-day English life as to be absolutely surprising. For instance, on family anniversaries or occasions of special interest—as when a new book, song, or operatic libretto of mine is brought out—it is her delight to crown me with laurels, which she dexterously weaves into wreaths several sizes too large for my head, so that I have to wear them as Collars of Knight-

hood are worn by the illustrious possessors of those emblems of chivalry. Nothing would now induce me to omit the induing of these garlands when offered to me by Thekla; for once—it was on a birthday morn—she had laid a wreath on the stool before my writing-table, and, not seeing it there when I entered my library in a hurry, I sat down upon it to its irretrievable ruin.



Thekla, who was watching me, fled noiselessly to the bottom of the garden, where she was found, hours later, in the fowl-

house, shaken by emotion, and, like Niobe, all bathed in tears. We had a great deal of anxiety that day, and no luncheon, in consequence of my mishap with the wreath. Henceforth I have kept my eyes about me on "Familienfeste," and, whenever I have seen a garland lying about, have put it on without a moment's hesitation, preferring to look like Jack-in-the-Green on May-day to

wounding the highly-wrought feelings of my Poet-Cook.

“Upon another occasion, and again quite unwittingly, I was so unlucky as to trample upon Thekla's susceptibilities with painful and apparently heartless vigour. Mrs. Chumplebunny and myself had spent our accustomed autumn holiday in Italy, whence we returned to London towards the middle of October, and drove home from Charing Cross Station in one of the densest fogs I ever remember to have afflicted the Metropolis at that time of year. On arriving at our house, which was invisible from the roadway—I still wonder how the cabman contrived to hit it off—we naturally hurried indoors, where we were joyfully received by our children. All the servants, too, were in the hall—except Thekla. At the moment, this detail escaped my notice; but after the first bustle and bringing in of the luggage had subsided, I missed her and asked where she was? As I did so, I heard sobs, sniffs, and gurglings in the direction of the kitchen-stairs, on the

uppermost step of which, crouching, her head muffled up in her apron and her robust frame convulsed with grief, I found my German Cook.

“What ails thee, Thekla?” I enquired, holding out my hand to her; “art thou sorry that we are come back?” “Ach Gott! nein, gnaediger Herr; im Gegentheil!” she sobbed out; “aber Sie haben ja den Triumphbogen gar nicht angeguckt!” (Good Heavens, no, gracious Sir; on the contrary, but you never even glanced at the triumphal arch!) “The triumphal arch!” I exclaimed, “what on earth does the woman mean?” Copious information was forthwith tendered to me by my family, in reply to this question, and on the following morning, Thekla’s meaning was made indisputably clear to me by the testimony of my own eyes, to my exceeding perplexity and consternation.

“The front of my house, as you are aware, is adorned with a portico, the flat top of which can be reached with some small difficulty by a ‘rapid act’ of descent, in the Baron von Trenck manner, from my bathroom window.

Throughout a period of some ten days before the date fixed for our return home, Thekla had spent the chief part of her time alternately on this 'bad eminence' and in my front garden, constructing a triumphal arch with broomsticks, rakes, hoes, evergreens, and wire. During this process, as I subsequently learnt, my dwelling became the cynosure of all surrounding eyes—the central point upon which the whole neighbourhood's interest converged and was fixed, without intermission, from rosy morn to dewy eve. Upon erecting her triumphal arch, Thekla lavished an amount of labour and ingenuity that might well have sufficed for the building of a cathedral. It was a monument of architectural intelligence and indomitable perseverance. She had stripped all my perennials of their leaves in order to clothe her edifice with verdure, and had squandered at least a month's wages upon wire and whipcord wherewith to keep it together. With that deplorable lack of sympathy with art that characterizes suburban populations in this

country, the inhabitants of my district had taken a coarsely humorous view of Thekla's arch, and had exasperated her daily by gathering together in great numbers at my gates and making mock, very audibly, of her labours and their result. The soreness of spirit that accrued to her from these ribald demonstrations accounted to a certain extent, no doubt, for her outburst of anguish when she found her 'Triumphbogen' unnoticed by those in whose honour she had toilsomely set it up.

"But worse remained behind; and I feel assured that to this hour she deems her 'Herrschaft' guilty of black ingratitude towards her. For when Mrs. Chumplebunny arose from her couch the next morning, and looked out of window upon the road in which we live—a great highway, along which omnibuses run with considerable frequency—she observed a jeering crowd obstructing the pavement in front of our house, and was startled by the sight of several knife-board passengers *summâ diligentia*, rolling about

an omnibus-roof at the peril of their lives, in very contortions of merriment. It was, I regret to say, the amazing aspect of Thekla's commemorative arch that racked them with this unseemly mirth. The position, you must admit, was an untenable one. My heart bled for Thekla, whom I perceived to be threatened with a crushing sorrow ; and I positively declined to play a leading part in the domestic tragedy of which she was manifestly doomed to be the victim. It therefore became Mrs. Chumplebunny's painful duty to intimate to her that the structure in which she took such justifiable pride must be promptly removed, in deference to popular prejudice.

“ The effect of this announcement was to all but sever the bonds connecting Thekla with my family. At first she flatly refused to execute the mandate conveyed to her, on the ground of some venerable Wendish superstition, according to which fire, pestilence, and death are bound to smite the household of those ill-fated persons who (an arch of

welcome having been set up on their account) should wilfully have it pulled down before the expiration of the third full day after their arrival home. Only when it was pointed out to her that I should probably become the object of parochial surveillance as a presumable lunatic if I lent my countenance to the endurance of the arch, did she submit to Mrs. Chumplebunny's decree; claiming, with the sad meekness of a stricken fawn, the melancholy privilege of undoing with her own hands the work from which she had anticipated so much joy, to us as well as to herself.

"It is hardly too much to say that Thekla watered with her tears every leaf of the laurel and ivy decking the frame of the luckless arch, as she doggedly pulled the whole concern to pieces. She must have shed several pints during the dismal process. For days she avoided my presence; and the pretty present I had brought to her from Florence ignominiously failed to raise a smile to her wan cheek. After her woes had found vent, however, in a metrical dirge of great length

and uncommon lugubriousness, describing the demise and interment of her heart's fondest hopes, she gradually recovered her normal cheerfulness, and reinstated me on the pedestal of her esteem, from which my unfeeling conduct with relation to the triumphal arch had hurled me down. Since then we have lived in harmony and concord. I trust that we shall continue to do so for many years to come ; for, though I cannot say with truth of Thekla and myself that ' we twa hae pu'd the gowans fine thegither,' there being no plants of that description in my garden, we are firm friends, and it would take a good deal to part us."

I could add to the above several curiously entertaining anecdotes connected with Thekla Schwefelschweif's career in London ; but haply I have told enough to convince my readers that Achitophel Chumplebunny and His German Cook, whose actuality I solemnly guarantee, are distinct oddities, as human beings go, by no means devoid of humour, and eminently suitable to one another.

THE CHUMPLEBUNNYS ON THE OCEAN WAVE.



HE Chumplebunnys are the oddest people in creation. Volumes might be written about their eccentricities of conduct in every-day life. I have known them long, and revelled in their quaintness times without number; but one of the funniest of my experiences in connection with this remarkable family, was

that of going abroad with them the summer before last to Ostend, on one of the G.S.N.C.'s steamers—the *Swallow*. My friends are perfectly well known on board this vessel, the whole ship's company of which, from skipper down to cabin-boy, does its utmost to make life at sea bearable to the ladies of Chumplebunny's family; for these latter, poor souls, suffer grievously and unremittently from the moment at which they leave the wharf till they arrive at their destination.

I will try to set down, as nearly as I can, what I remember of that humorous journey. It was, indeed, to me—who am perfectly at ease upon the ocean, no matter how turbulent the weather—a mirthful one, thanks to the idiosyncrasies of my estimable but peculiar friends, the Chumplebunnys.

Achitophel Chumplebunny delights in punctuality. He may, without exaggeration, be said to wallow in exactitude; and habit in his case, as regards "being in time," has assumed the character of inveteracy. I cannot truthfully say as much of the partner of his joys and sorrows. She, the calmest of

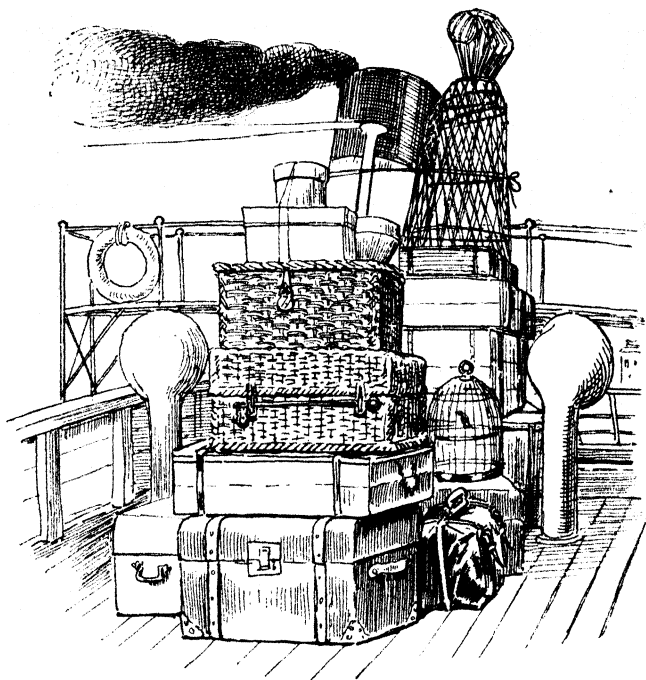
her sex, likes to take her ease in all things, and entertains a rooted objection to being hurried. Moreover, she does not allow anything to disturb her equanimity ; so that Mr. Chumplebunny, when waiting to take her out to dinner or haply to the theatre, being prompted by his love of punctuality to stamp and swear at the foot of the stairs, and to exhort her, with stentorian outcry and passionate invocation, to come down, elicits no answer whatsoever from her ; and she presently sails deliberately down the stairs in a provokingly serene manner, asking, impassively, " Is the cab there ? " Whereupon Chumplebunny uses language of more than Oriental fancifulness, combined with an Occidental vigour rendering it quite unfit for publication. This incident is chronically recurrent in the Chumplebunny *ménage*, and never fails to exhibit Mrs. C.'s bland placidity in soothing contrast to the uncompromising fervour of her excitable spouse.

It was a fine morning on the 1st of September, 1886, when we all prepared to

leave London for a month's sojourn at Ostend. It is a far cry from Hampstead, where my friends reside, to St. Katherine's Wharf, whence the *Swallow* was to take her flight, and the hour of her departure was fixed for 1 p.m.; so that, at 10.30 a.m., Mr. C. ordered four cabs to be fetched. The family, I should perhaps mention, consists of five persons, Mr. and Mrs. Chumplebunny, Anastasia Chumplebunny, known to her intimate friends and family as "Tommy," Chumplebunny junior (Onesiphorus), an ingenious lad of fourteen, and the baby, or "Scratch," a powerful lassie of nine. The quantity and volume of luggage which Mrs. and Miss Chumplebunny took with them for a month's outing was simply amazing! They must have had different dresses for every hour of every day.

When the boat was ready to start you could see the Chumplebunnys' luggage towering high above the funnel; and perched on the top of this tall sumptuary pile was a basket outline of a female figure, whereupon,

as my fair friends assured me, drapery effects might be studied to the greatest advantage! Upon my venturing to murmur a feeble joke



at the expense of this spectral object, I was coldly informed that "no lady having any respect for her appearance would think of leaving home for more than a day without a dress-frame." Whereupon Chumplebunny

muttered a word or two eminently calculated to prejudice the prospects of his immortal part.

I must not forget to record the fact that Mrs. Chumblebunny always insists upon taking all her dogs abroad, steadfastly regardless of Mr. Chumblebunny's entreaties that she will leave them at home. Hence, on the morning in question, just as we were about to start, the alarming problem arose, how should we convey Hamlet, a mastiff, several sizes larger than a six weeks' old calf, down to the Wharf? After a great deal of tender persuasion, Mrs. Chumblebunny induced Hamlet to get into one of the cabs; but when an attempt was made to shut the door upon him, he was found to be so much too long for the accommodation available to him, that he was compelled to hang his formidable head out of one window, while his tail flourished uneasily, more in astonishment than in anger, out of the other. Punch and Judy, dogs of a less roomy character, two birds, and a cat (of the tailless Manx persuasion), the children, and

Mrs. Chumplebunny's maid, were carefully packed together in the other cabs ; and thus we drove off, in a somewhat impressive procession, to the wharf. On arriving there, long before the *Swallow* had completed her cargo, Anastasia found on board the vessel several of her admirers, who had come thither to present her with valedictory flowers ; and, thanks to Chumplebunny's unflinching resolve to "be in time," after unloading the cabs, taking possession of our berths, and finally getting comfortably settled down on deck, we had quite an hour to spare for a farewell chat with our friends, before the *Swallow* cast off her moorings and began to steam briskly down the stream.

Mrs. Chumplebunny's trials now began with their customary severity. No sooner had the boat started than she began to feel exceedingly squeamish. We propped her up with cushions ; and Mr. C., with well-affected sprightliness, endeavoured to call her attention to the fine buildings and other objects of interest lining the river banks on either hand.

Love had less to do with her unwonted

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But none of these things—not even the shipping, in the description of which my worthy friend displayed the eloquence of a professional orator, and the technical knowledge of a master-mariner—availed ought to divert Mrs. Chumplebunny's mind from the unpleasant conviction that she was "in for it."

Anastasia, too, became less and less conversational as we approached the mouth of the Thames. By the time we had arrived within a measurable distance of the Buoy at the Nore, her usually cheerful countenance had become "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," and her freely-flowing stream of small-talk had dried up into gloomy silence, broken at rare intervals by a feeble monosyllabic croak, when any question or remark, requiring answer, happened to be addressed to her. Some might have ascribed this dismal muteness to brooding regrets for "an absent one"; but I, who knew her well as "a maiden fancy free," could readily see that Love had less to do with her unwonted

taciturnity than Liver. The qualms with which Neptune afflicts those who worship him not, were doing their worst by Anastasia. Mrs. Chumblebunny herself was not more livid in hue or sorrowful in spirit than was her usually sprightly daughter, as the *Swallow* began to frolic with the gamesome waves of the Channel. Both ladies—to all appearances mere shapeless bundles of rugs—clung despairingly to the deck, whilst the stewardess hovered round them with basins, and poor little “Scratch,” all her demoniac impulses quelled by incessant nausea, rolled about in the wash of the scuppers, audible, but unheeded, her nurse having been reduced to inarticulate helplessness by the wambling of the steam-packet whilst still within sight of Southend Pier.

I need scarcely say that my friend Chumblebunny, all this while, exhibited every symptom of physical comfort and psychical exhilaration ; conveying to all around him the impression that his home was on the billow, and that, although accident had thrust him

into the drysalting groove, nature had intended him to achieve maritime distinction as a "sea-dog" of the very briniest description.

As we progressed towards mid-Channel his appetite developed to formidable proportions, laying a heavy strain upon the resources of the *Swallow's* commissariat, and could only be stayed, if not appeased, by huge wedges of household bread, and blocks of pale damp cheese, plentifully anointed with the peculiarly scorching mustard that abounds on board ship, and is so infrequently to be met with on dry land. Of these dread edibles, from which he would have turned with loathing and dismay, had they been offered to him in his own dining-room, he devoured masses—and with manifest relish—in the stuffy cabin of the *Swallow*, whilst that vessel was plunging and swaying like a distraught porpoise. During the intervals between his amazing feats of consumption, he and I and Onesiphorus paced up and down the deck, trying to keep ourselves warm, or stood upon

the bridge chatting with the skipper and gazing upon the wonders of the deep. It was during one of these brief sojourns aloft between the summits of the twin paddle-boxes, that Captain Butcher called our attention to Chumplebunny, junior, whose complexion had assumed the tint of a "short six," while his demeanour betokened a profundity of thoughtfulness altogether foreign to his lively and even somewhat rollicking disposition. As we watched him, we noticed that he visibly decreased in bulk, and that his head shrank between his shoulders in a strangely tortoise-like manner. We set him on a camp-stool surrounded by ship's buckets, to which he immediately became an apparently in-haustible tributary.

.. "Now," observed the kindly skipper, "the youngster is quite ship-shape and comfortable."

This may have been so. All that I can say is that he did not look the part.

But Onesiphorus endured his tribulations with singular fortitude and composure. For

more than an hour he devoted himself to the buckets unflinchingly, losing weight, but never once audibly rebelling against adverse destiny; after which we bore him below, "desolate but all undaunted," and deposited him in a berth, with the Manx cat and a cage of sea-sick canaries. Thenceforth, until our arrival at Ostend on the following morning, his efforts to rid himself of his vital organs by the process of expulsion were eager and continuous.

When, at 6 a.m., a holy calm having succeeded the agitations of the night, I exchanged the horizontal for the perpendicular, and sought breakfast in the after cabin, it was a spectral Chumplebunny junior whose ghastly presence I encountered, as I entered that apartment.

Mrs. Chumplebunny had quitted the deck at an early hour of the previous evening, and had sought oblivion of her wrongs in one of those malignant contrivances for the prevention of slumber and the promotion of bruises, called a berth. On this Procrustean

couch she had writhed and ached throughout the watches of the night, atoning for a thousand sins of unpunctuality, and bemoaning the hardness of her lot, as well as that of her bed, in accents the piteousness of which might have melted a heart of stone.

It has been said that a good man in adversity is a sight to move the compassion of gods and men; but to my mind, a still sadder spectacle is afforded by a congenitally calm woman racked by the throes of sea-sickness. Where was Mrs. Chumplebunny's impressive placidity—where her imperturbable self-possession, believed by all who knew her to be proof against the most fantastic vicissitudes of fortune—as she lay groaning under the *Swallow's* starboard wing, complying perforce with the undignified suggestions of her revolutionized stomach? On *terra-firma*, no woman living is more capable of holding her own than Amelia Chumplebunny; out at sea, it is far otherwise with her. There, she is distinctly at a disadvantage; how much so, must be seen to be believed.

On the occasion referred to, however, her daughter, Anastasia, was even more to be pitied than she herself, for the following reason. The rules and regulations of the *Swallow* not permitting dogs, however deeply beloved by their owners, to sojourn in the cabins by night-time, it was proposed by the ship's cook, at about 7 p.m., to convey Anastasia's especial pet, a large Russian poodle called Punch, to a sort of cubby-hutch hidden away in the casing of the paddle-box, and there to confine him in darkness and solitude until morning. The outrage to her feelings involved in this heartless proposal fairly roused Anastasia from the lethargy into which protracted sufferings had plunged her. Nothing but death, she murmured faintly, should separate her from her favourite dog. A lively discussion ensued. What was to be done? The night was windy, showery and cold, as is too frequently the case on the Channel in the early Autumn-tide; yet Anastasia Chumplebunny, rather than part with

Punch, actually sate up all night long on the cabin stairs, steadfastly holding on to Punch's "leader," as he crouched shivering beside her, and causing almost inconceivable inconvenience to herself, her fellow-passengers, and the officials engaged in the service of the cabins. It was blowing hard, and raining in torrents, but remonstrance and entreaty were alike in vain. Anastasia, alias "Tommy," defied parental authority, and stuck to her perch, electing to be soaked and frozen in preference to incurring a brief severance from her faithful four-legged companion.

When darkness covered the face of the waters, and we were so far out at sea that the Foreland lights only made themselves manifest to our gaze by an occasional twinkle as the *Swallow* rose to the very top of an exceptionally high wave, Chumplebunny and I went below and called for food, stipulating that it must be hot, savoury, and plentiful. A seething dish full of eggs and bacon was speedily served to us, disseminating a highly

appetizing fragrance throughout the cabin as it was borne to our table from the galley. It made some of our fellow-passengers who were lying on the plush couches in the poop



squirm and shudder from head to foot, and turn their faces away in silent loathing. One of them—a cadaverous-looking old gentleman—muttered, “Disgusting brutes!” staggered to his feet, and vanished into a side

cabin, where he forthwith dispelled any doubts we might thitherto have entertained as to something having disagreed with him in the course of the voyage.

It was, moreover, about this time that certain plaintive sniffs, and convulsive gurglings, proceeding from the direction of the state-room occupied by my friend's family, reached our ears. As these sounds did not seem to be exclusively suggestive of unmitigated happiness in those uttering them, Chumplebunny put his head in at the door, and tried to say something kind and soothing to the poor sufferers inside. He was immediately reproached in mournful accents with having brought his family there with the intention of killing them, without incurring any legal penalty for his homicidal act; and Mrs. Chumplebunny moaned, "I really can't stand this awful movement any longer. *I must get out!*"

It having been the Chumplebunnys' habit to pamper their domestic pets with every class of dainty, I need scarcely observe

that the quadrupeds attached to their suite fell easy victims to the vagaries of the Channel. Punch, Judy, and the tailless cat were completely overcome by *mal-de-mer*, and grovelled helplessly about, too weak and spiritless to utter a single yelp or mew of protest.

Hamlet, however—so denominated in deference to his striking resemblance to the eminent impersonator of the ill-fated Danish prince, by whom, when a long-legged, grave-eyed, pallid puppy, he had been presented to Achitophel Chumplebunny—had been relegated to solitary confinement in the paddle-box region, where he had greatly distinguished himself throughout the night, not only by producing several thousand protracted howls of amazing volume and indescribable dismalness, but by emulating the historic achievements of Latude and Casanova with extraordinary energy, perseverance, and singleness of purpose. So well directed and efficient were his efforts to break prison that when, after our arrival in harbour at dawn of

day, Mrs. Chumplebunny was conducted to the door of Hamlet's cell, she found, upon that portal being thrown open at her bidding, that the mighty mastiff had eaten away a considerable portion of the ship—fortunately for the safety of all on board, *above* the water-line. A little more, and Hamlet would have had his nose through the side of the *Swallow*, despite the stoutness of that good pyroscaphe's frame. As it was, Chumplebunny had to stand the racket of a "particular average," to which class of shipping casualty the result of his favourite dog's untiring industry was subsequently pronounced, on competent authority, to belong. Mrs. Chumplebunny, I need scarcely say, pitied her "sweet pet" for the restraint, although lightened by intelligent exertion, which he had undergone, and spoke in disparaging terms of the timber to which he had devoted his attention so felicitously, as "Nasty, hard, dirty wood, so bad for his dear teeth, you know!"

This was the last of the *contretemps* that

befell my honoured friends the Chumplebunnys during their memorable trip to Ostend. I saw little of them during the following winter, and only heard of one thrilling incident in connection with their *menage*—to wit, that Hamlet had inconsiderately eaten a postman of great bulk, the father of many children, thus unexpectedly orphaned. But the announcement of this untoward occurrence reached me somewhat indirectly, and was not confirmed by newspaper record. I therefore persist in cherishing the hope that it was not entirely free from exaggeration, and that perhaps Hamlet—for whom I entertain sincere affection and respect—may have exercised a judicious and timely moderation by only devouring a part—and not a vital one—of the public official who is reported to have permanently vanished down his capacious maw.

THE CHUMPLEBUNNYS AT OSTEND.



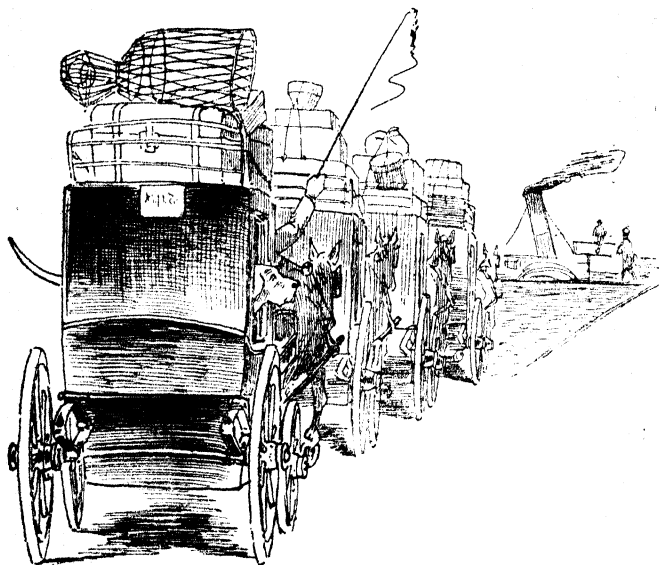
NCE again did I ride on the crest of the infuriate billow with my genial and peculiar friends the Chumplebunnys. Either oblivious of the disintegrating Channel experiences she acquired two years ago, or hopeful that some special providential mercy would deign to avert their repetition, Amelia Chumplebunny—whose least word has more than statutory force in her domestic circle—gave utterance, in the second week of last August but one, to the significant sentence, “There

are worse places than Ostend wherein to spend a brief autumn holiday." This remark was put forward by Mrs. Chumplebunny one day whilst the members of her family were gathered round her at luncheon, and I—an accidental guest—was seated at her right hand, in a state of mind for the time being akin to that of the Irish gentleman who met the mermaid at a moment when, all unconscious of the amphibious surprise awaiting him, he was walking along "thinking of nothing at all." Nobody present had led up to Mrs. Chumplebunny's observation, which imported the element of astonishment into what had theretofore been a commonplace conversation, dealing more or less discursively with Anastasia's admirers and other ordinary topics of the day. No sooner, however, had the above-quoted words been pronounced than we were one and all penetrated by the conviction that the fiat had gone forth, and that, within a fortnight at the utmost, Ostend would claim us for its own.

And it was so. On Sept. 1, 1887, at early

morn, a procession of four growlers, creaking and swaying under huge superstructures of Chumplebunryan luggage, might have been observed meandering ponderously along the leading thoroughfares intervening between South Hampstead and Tower Hill. The *cortége* bore a strong general resemblance to that which a twelvemonth previously had conveyed my excellent friends and their impedimenta, including myself, to St. Katherine's Wharf, there to embark upon the stout and steady-going *Swallow*, bound for Ostend. Achitophel, the inveterate slave of punctuality, and his unruffled Amelia were firmly wedged into the first cab with dressing-bags, glazed bonnet-boxes, and rugs tightly rolled and strapped round umbrellas and sunshades; in such sort that nothing short of a vehicular somersault could possibly have displaced them more than an inch in any known direction. The second cab contained Anastasia, Onesiphorus, and Punch the poodle, similarly converted for the time being into "fixtures" by an ingenious arrangement

of "unconsidered trifles." Mrs. Chumblebunny's confidential maid, in charge of golden-haired "Scratch" and Judy the pug, and flushed with the proud consciousness of foreign travel, occupied the third four-wheeler;



and in the fourth mighty Hamlet—consigned to my custody by Mrs. Chumblebunny "because I was so fond of him, and the dear dog, bless him! would do anything to please me"—stood contemplating successive Postal

Districts with unflagging interest, whilst I squatted, cross-legged like a Turk or a tailor, on the back seat, strenuously clutching his collar, and tussling with him from time to time, after the manner of Androcles and the Lion, with the object of quenching his burning desire to leap through the window upon the roadway—an enterprise which suggested itself to him with exceeding vehemence every time he saw a dog ; that is to say, about thrice a minute during an hour and a quarter's drive. The noble animal never once resented the throttling process by which alone I was enabled to restrain his ardour. He knew me for his friend, and submitted to my interference with high-minded magnanimity. But I had, on the whole, a genteel sufficiency of his society and “pretty, winning ways,” as Mrs. Chumblebunny would have called his almost unintermittent “struggles to be free.” When we arrived at our destination I was breathless, bathed in perspiration, and covered from head to foot with Hamlet's hairs. • For a

moulting dog, I never knew one so powerful, persistent, and void of acrimony.

It is my mournful duty to state that the Manx cat who had accompanied us to Ostend a year previously was not with us during our second voyage to that healthful watering-place, having succumbed to a disappointment in love early in the past spring, and received decent interment with all accustomed rites in an onion-bed at the bottom of Chumplebunny's garden. Anastasia had been persuaded to leave her canaries behind, on the ground that sea-sickness subjected their vocal chords to an excessive strain, productive of chronic hoarseness and constitutional gloom. Our party, therefore, was less numerous by four than it had been on an occasion already chronicled in these pages.

Strange to say, no corresponding minishment in the quantity of luggage conveyed by the Chumplebunnys to Flanders was visible to the naked eye. I brooded over this mystery uneasily, until it was dispelled by a

remark that fell from Anastasia's rosy lips as we were gliding past Greenwich Hospital. She let out that an unusually strong muster of her cosmopolitan admirers was already awaiting her at Ostend, and that she was bent upon comprehensive conquest. "Wait till you see my new frocks!" she exclaimed with enchanting archness. Chumplebunny was within hearing, and I noticed that he shuddered. "I propose to assimilate the sumptuary patty, as papa would say, this season at the Kursaal and Noppeney's. In some of those boxes about which the horrid men at the wharf swore so frightfully whilst they were carrying them on board, there are gowns and hats, my childhood's friend, that mean business, I can tell you!"

The light of coming triumphs over Continental counts and barons, artists and authors, gleamed in "Tommy's" bright hazel eyes as she spake these words of portent; and my perplexity anent the unabated number and dimensions of my friend's packages vanished like the shadow of a dream.

After a calm and uneventful passage, during which the *Swallow* displayed a tender consideration for Mrs. Chumplebunny's shortcomings as a mariner that would have reflected credit on a Dove, we reached Ostend, and took possession of the comfortable quarters we had occupied on the occasion of our former sojourn in Flemish Brighton. The fashionable tide of the season had turned, and was distinctly on the ebb. Unsettled weather and thrilling events connected with the local fishing interests had thinned out the crowd of health and pleasure-seekers which, but a fortnight before our arrival, had so absolutely exhausted the accommodation resources of the gay little town that, one night, a goodly number of belated tourists was compelled to partake of "Nature's kind restorer" *sub cælo* on the benches of the Digue, and an enterprising hair-dresser of my acquaintance let an arm-chair in his cutting-room to a weary son of Mammon from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. for twenty francs, paid in advance. We, however, found Ostend by

no means uncomfortably full, an exodus *en masse* having relieved it from its plethora of guests during the last week of August. The customary whirlpool of pleasure was still revolving, though with somewhat abated velocity, between the Kursaal and the Casino; and my worthy friends at once plunged into its vortex, resolved to steep themselves to the very bones in mundane amusements.

They had pitched their tents in a locality that lent itself to indulgence in frivolous pastime. One end of their street debouched into the Place d'Armes, in which are situate the Casino and the Société, establishments in which, during the season, are nightly enacted scenes of reckless revelry and desperate dissipation—at least, from the Belgian point of view. The other led into the Place Léopold, where an embarrassment in the choice of recreations awaited the nocturnal votary of gaiety; for to his left stood the flaring theatre with its seductive muffin-bell and alluring fried-potato stall, clamorously soliciting his patronage, whilst to his right towered the

colossal Kursaal, resonant with the strains of Perier's superb orchestra—a vast complex of restaurants, cafés, ball-rooms, billiard-rooms, music-rooms, and reading-rooms, all gathered together under one roof and communicating readily with one another—not to mention Veuve Schmitz's shooting-gallery, no longer a humble shanty cresting a stray slip of sand hard by the ocean, as of yore, but a substantial panelled and polished edifice, solidly walled and roofed, containing every imaginable variety of unrestful device in pipe stems, turning round and round or swinging laterally in such sort as to thwart and baffle the smartest of snap-shots.

The Chumplebunnys revelled in the handiness to their lodgings of all these institutions ; especially in that of the theatre, which they attended nightly with unfailing regularity, even on those “ popular ” evenings when the performance, comprising a five-act melodrama impregnated with gore and larded with *couplets*, and an irreverent three-act comic opera, commenced at 7 p.m. and terminated

at one o'clock of the following morning. Mrs. Chumplebunny, who had never theretofore resided in the immediate vicinity of a theatre (although one of the most inveterate playgoers in London) was deeply impressed by the convenience of an arrangement which enabled her to keep a watchful maternal eye upon the younger members of her family without sacrificing any portion of her evening's entertainment.

"The comfort of having one's theatre so near home," she observed, "is that one can utilize the entr'actes in a reasonable and inexpensive manner. When my shoes begin to hurt me, for instance, as they always do when the plot of a drama is thickening, I can change them comfortably at home during the 'wait'; or I can see with my own eyes that Onesiphorus and Scratch have their supper and are properly put to bed; or I can take the dear dogs for a short walk on the Digue without running the least risk of missing a line of the play; for the official who wields the warning muffin-bell never fails to traverse

the haunts of fashion in a manner audible to the naked ear throughout a period of from five to seven minutes antecedent to the resumption of the piece; thus giving me ample time to return home from the sands, seclude Hamlet and Judy in the sitting-room, and re-occupy my stall with dignified composure several seconds before the rising of the curtain. This arrangement is incomparably superior to that prevailing in London, where our house is four miles distant from the nearest theatre, and the 'waits' seldom run to ten full minutes; so that stepping home between the acts is quite out of the question, no matter how painfully one's boots may pinch or draw, and going to the play severs me from the dear dogs for at least four hours at a stretch, if not five!"

In the opinion of her family and, I may say, of myself, the severance above referred to by Mrs. Chumplebunny, however distressing to her feelings for the nonce, would have been preferable to the unspeakable notoriety conferred upon her by certain incidents,

arising from the extravagant fondness of her four-footed favourites for their loving mistress, which occurred within the precincts of the Theatre Royal, Ostend, during performances honoured by the presence of her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians.

On one occasion, Chumplebunny having secured places in the *loges du premier rang*, which are held higher in French and Belgian esteem than the stalls, I was sitting between my valued friends, listening with rapture to the excellent vocalization of Zélo Duran, when all of a sudden my attention was distracted from the singing by a deep throaty baying, as of a huge bloodhound scenting his quarry from afar. The canine note rang familiar in my ear. Again it sounded, this time nearer to me than before, and accompanied by a subdued chorus of angry and alarmed human voices. Immediately afterwards, something soft but forcible was thrust against the door of our box, all but bursting it open; then came an outburst of strong language in the corridor, followed by a low but formidable growl, such

as an irritated lioness might utter when preparing to spring ; then I distinctly heard the sound of swiftly-retreating footsteps, and finally a long, pathetic sniff, produced on a level with the flooring, and intimating quite unmistakably the plaintive entreaty " Please let me in ! "

What was to be done ? The occupants of the crowded boxes on our side of the house were all on the *qui vive* ; the Queen's attention had been directed to us, and she was contemplating us with manifest curiosity ; a calamity of some sort was inevitable, and obviously the best thing to do was to minimize its horrors—*avant tout*, to avert bloodshed, which was quite on the cards. I shuddered and grew pale as I remembered the devoured postman, and as the vision of a dismembered box-opener flashed across my mental eyeball.

" Better the grisliest public humiliation than that the sons of a people friendly to Albion should be compelled to welter in their gore, mutilated illustrations of ' The Dog's Attach-

ment to His Master,' " I muttered, arising from my seat and raising the latch of the box-door ; whereupon, with an emphatic bark of joyous satisfaction, Hamlet rushed in, placed his enormous forepaws upon his mistress's lap, and proceeded to demonstrate his delight at having unearthed her, so to speak, by licking her profusely with a twelve-inch tongue as red as a raspberry, and as rough as a rasp.

This touching episode was visible to everybody in the house, before or behind the footlights.

Amazement sate upon a considerable number of brows : there was little laughter, the Belgian sense of humour being neither ready nor keen, but a good deal of murmuring and growling, only restrained by the presence of Royalty from breaking out into angry clamour.

One or two of Chumplebunny's *sotto voce* remarks were sultry enough to wither the unborn babe. They bore scathing reference to his pet mastiff, to his life's partner, to Ostend, the Belgian nation and myself, at that

moment engaged in an ineffectual effort to haul Hamlet out of the box by his tail and the skin of his back. The only result of this futile enterprise being to cause the affectionate beast to low like a mournful bullock at the mere notion of being again, and so soon, separated from the object of his adoration, there was nothing for it but that Mrs. Chumplebunny should show him the way out of the theatre in person—which she did, I am bound to say, with unruffled calm, despite the abuse with which our small procession was hailed by the members of the garde d'honneur and other loafers, as we escorted Hamlet through the foyer and vestibule, and down the stone steps leading to the open street.

There is no knowing to what annoyances the impassive Amelia might have been subjected by the boorish Flemings gathered round the main exit from the house, had I not sharply warned them that if they did not instantly "shut their heads" and make room for us to pass, I would loose the dog upon them. Warriors and civilians alike, they

awaited no further monition, but fled, swiftly and silently.

We led Hamlet peacefully back to the place of his accustomed seclusion, Mrs. C.'s drawing-room, whence he had escaped by opening an ill-secured lattice and leaping into the street, where he soon hit upon our trail, and followed it up, regardless of interference or official protest, to the very door of our box at the theatre. Having consigned the staunch hound to durance luxurious, this time guaranteed by bolted windows and locked doors, we returned to the theatre and—much to the astonishment of the audience and management, I am bound to say—resumed our places as though nothing unusual had happened.

Of course there was no end of a hullabaloo next day about the whole affair; but it all ended in smoke, nobody having been damaged or even inconvenienced to any appreciable extent by Hamlet's escapade; the concrete effect of which was to establish the Chumplebunnys' renown for congenital

eccentricity in the Belgian mind for all time to come, and upon a basis of monumental solidity.

Had their fame in this regard needed "confirmation strong," its requirement would have been more than met by an occurrence which took place shortly after the thrilling episode above alluded to, and in which another of Mrs. Chumplebunny's canine dependents played a leading part. I refer to Judy, the aged, obese, and asthmatic pug, which for many a year past has occupied that honourable social position known as "the apple of Amelia Chumplebunny's eye."

Parenthetically, and in illustration of the fine and accurate discrimination with respect to breeds of dogs that obtains in Belgium, I may remark that on several occasions when, leaving Judy at home for some good and sufficient reason, my amiable friend had done her rounds of shopping at Ostend, accompanied by Hamlet, who—like Judy—is fawn-coloured with dark points, the tradesfolk have vociferously congratulated her upon the rapid

growth of "ce cher petit chien," so well known by its constant barking and its "fidelity to Madame." The proportion of Judy to Hamlet, in size, is that of a very small ass to a very large camel; but neither this fact, nor the incongruity of the notion that a pug, by observing any process of evolution, however rigorously, could possibly develop into a mastiff within a few hours, or even years, was apparently perceptible to the opaque Flemish apprehensions.

To return to the celebrated exploit of Judy, however (premising that this particular dog, as an assiduous and indefatigable barker, has never known an equal in all the canine circles which I have been privileged to frequent), that remarkable incident may be narrated in a few words.

One night, towards the close of the season, when Kursaal and theatre alike were making a grim nightly display of empty seats, Mrs. Chumplebunny glided into the theatre with her usual stately grace, for once in a way unaccompanied, as she thought—Chumple-

bunny and myself being pledged to a valedictory rubber at the club until ten, when we proposed to join Her Placidity in time for the afterpiece—but in reality closely followed by Judy, who, unperceived by her fond proprietress, had contrived to wriggle past the ticket-office and *contrôleurs* into the body of the house unhindered and unrebuked.

As soon as Mrs. C. had taken possession of her accustomed stall, Judy revealed her presence by briskly springing upon the contiguous *fauteuil d'orchestre*, which not being turned down, promptly executed a "half revolution," and cast her, squalling with terror, upon the floor. Mrs. Chumplebunny, thus unmistakably apprised of Judy's whereabouts, gathered up her discomfited pet with many soothing caresses and blandishments, and was about to remove her from the building, when the polite impresario, who happened to be standing close by and had witnessed the foregoing episode with no small amusement, begged her "not to derange herself," pointing out that, the attendance

being unusually small in number, there was abundant room in the stalls for "Madame's beautiful little dog, if Madame would only have the extreme goodness to restrain its comments upon the performance."



This Mrs. C. gratefully promised to do. Judy was comfortably "adjusted in a fauteuil next to that occupied by her mistress, and, for a time—in fact, throughout the first piece, an operetta—conducted herself with exemplary

decorum, sitting bolt upright on her crimson plush seat, watching the stage "business" with anxious solicitude, and manifestly somewhat dashed in spirit by the blare and bray of an execrable band.

The afterpiece, however, happened to be a well-known Palais Royal broad farce intituled "*M. Choufleury restera chez lui le . . .*," in the course of which a number of persons, in compliance with an accidentally misdated invitation-circular, call upon an abnormally ridiculous retired tradesman at a moment when he least expects them. Each successive arrival of these unwelcome guests is signalled by a rat-tat-tat-ta in the wing.

As ill-luck would have it, of all sounds (and they were many) which from her earliest youth had suggested to Judy the imperative necessity of uttering several hundred consecutive barks of the utmost shrillness, a knock at the door was by far the most stimulating. So unfailing, indeed, was its influence in this direction that, yielding to overwhelming family pressure, Mrs. Chumplebunny had

reluctantly consented to the segregation of Judy, on reception-days, in a remote attic, where the irritable little beast would yelp incessantly throughout a whole afternoon or evening, until the front-door had been finally closed upon the last departing guest.

The effect of M. Choufleury's unexpected visits—or rather, of their percutatory announcements—upon an animal afflicted with this particular idiosyncrasy may readily be imagined. The first double-knock brought Judy to her legs as promptly as though she had received an electric shock. There she stood, growling and yelping, every hair of her coat bristling with ungovernable wrath. In vain did Mrs. C. essay to pacify her. As well endeavour to soothe an elephant on the rampage, or a Malay running *amok*. When the second knock made itself heard, Judy struggled down to the floor, upsetting her stall once more as she did so, took refuge under her mistress' seat, and commenced one of the interminable series of

barks for which she had earned infelicitous celebrity in the metropolis when a mere puppy. On this occasion, the humour of the situation proved irresistible to actors and audience alike. The scene was played to its very end amid roars of laughter, accompanied by such an *obbligato d'aboimens* as has probably never been performed, before or since, within the walls of a theatre, even when the *Dog of Montargis* has been in the evening's bill. No attempt, however, was made to eject or silence Judy, who had her own way in the matter of barking until the close of the entertainment, when she was carried home in triumph, still hoarsely defiant, and quite consciously "monarch of all she surveyed."

On another occasion Amelia Chumplebunny's strange infatuation for this vociferous quadruped induced her to smuggle it into the Circus, hidden under her cloak. She felt convinced that Judy would enjoy the feats in the ring. As it turned out, every time the chief

functionary in topboots cracked his whip, Judy was stricken by an agony of fear that moved her to claw the buttons off the front of Mrs. C.'s dress ; and when, after an hour or so of this pleasing exercise, somebody was fired out of a cannon with a report that shook the circus to its root, and extinguished all the gas in the building as effectively as if it had been turned off at the main, the wretched pug uttered a dismal shriek, tore itself from its owner's embrace, and fled out into the night, wailing like a professional mourner at a Servian funeral.

Chumplebunny's comments on this and other cognate adventures into which his wife was continually being plunged by her affection for Judy were pregnant with acrimony ; but I always doubted their sincerity, knowing well that he entertained a sneaking kindness for the noisy little brute, whose manifold offences he was ever as prone to pardon as he was ready to countenance Mrs. C. in violating every conceivable official regulation

and human bye-law that hindered her from indulging her irrepressible pug to the top of its bent. This was the more strange, in that Chumplebunny is essentially a law-abiding man, as steadfastly opposed to misdemeanour as to unpunctuality—which latter, however, is his special aversion. But I fear that his wife, children, and dogs have power to sway his moral sense and warp him, if I may say so, from the straight path of duty along which his instincts prompt him to stride, year in, year out, with steadfast measured pace.

I was forced to leave the Chumplebunnys somewhat abruptly before they had completed their appointed term of sojourn in Ostend. At the time of my sudden departure Anastasia was carrying on at singularly high pressure with a Polish Count, lineally descended from the Jagellons, young, rich, good-looking, and probably the most fervent, not to say bigoted, Roman Catholic of this or any other age. Soon after my arrival in

London, a rumour reached me to the effect that "Tommy" and the Count had disappeared from East-End-super-Mare a day or two before the clôtüre of the Kursaal, and that Chumplebunny had started in pursuit of



the fugitives, having secured an Evangelical clergyman to "put them through" wherever found. This step on his part was suggestive of a complication or two which might not have occurred to my energetic friend's, active

intellect, probably possessed exclusively, for the time being, by the resolve to remedy any slight imprudence to which his daughter may have thoughtlessly committed herself. All the Chumplebunnys, you see, are confirmed Agnostics, and the companion of Anastasia's alleged flight was an inveterate Papist. Where, then, I asked myself, did the practical utility of the Anglican ecclesiastic come in, whom Chumplebunny was said to be dragging about with him all over the Low Countries? Perhaps, however, the whole story was a groundless fabrication. But what did look rather odd was that the Chumplebunnys were at least three weeks overdue at Hampstead, and that during the interval, their servants had not the least idea where they were, or when they were coming back. *Quel fut ce mystère?*

THE CHUMPLEBUNNYS UP TO DATE.



HEN my excellent friends the Chumplebunnys at length returned to their native soil after an unusually protracted sojourn in Flanders and Brabant, the family, I am glad to say, was complete in number. The story of Anastasia's sudden disappearance and her father's agonized quest turned out to be a myth, invented by Mademoiselle Eulalie Moeghendrekyn - Vanderbeestensmaak, a lovely creature belonging to the very flower of the Ostend aristocracy, who considered that she owed Tommy "one" for having cut

her out with the two best "eligibles" of last season, from the Belgian point of view—Alcibiade de Hougoumont, only son and exclusive heir of a celebrated Brussels millionaire, and Willem Vaulckers, the greatest portrait-painter of the Low Countries, no less renowned for his sinister and fatal beauty than for his extraordinary talent, and for the recklessness evinced by him in squandering his vast professional earnings. Eulalie had had these two local lions well in hand until Anastasia dawned upon them, at early bathing-time, one morning on the Plage; when straightway they became captives to Miss Chumplebunny's bow—a veritable *arc de Cupidon*, made of two rosy lips. It was the "spretæ injuria formæ" that moved the blonde and buxom Moeghendrekkyn-Vanderbeestensmaak to promulgate the false report of Anastasia's elopement. Far, however, from having bolted with a Sarmatian magnate ending in "ski," my spirited young friend had given that injudicious nobleman his congé with startling peremptoriness, in response to

the merest hint on his part that he would feel highly flattered and gratified if she would vouchsafe to embrace himself and the faith of his forefathers simultaneously. She confessed to me, when we met, that he had bored her a good deal before he committed himself to this untenable proposition, and that she had joyously jumped at the chance of getting rid of him. To quote her own words:—"I said to him 'Count Ladislas, I am indeed surprised. I shall certainly not embrace you or your religion; and it was most indelicate of you to ask me to. I am a Gnostic or an Agnostic—I don't remember which it is, but papa knows, and he is always right. My convictions are deeply rooted, and nothing can shake them. You cannot have formed a very high estimate of my character if you believe me capable of forwardness and apostacy. As you think so poorly of me, we had better be strangers for the future. *Bonjour et bon voyage, Monsieur!*' And then I made him a little curtsey, and he got very red, and stammered something, and

slipped out of the room in what I thought rather a sneaking way. So there was an end of *him*; and I was so jolly glad, you don't know; for he had no more sense of humour than—than a rasher of bacon has" (this is a fair average specimen of Anastasia's similes), "and, if I had married him, would have bored papa to death. Of course I could never, never marry anybody who would make my father yawn if he saw him coming round a street-corner, or heard his name mentioned in casual conversation. Now Ladislas was dull; he lacked variety; I always found him loving, but tiresome. *À la longue, il m'aurait ennuyé mortellement, ce garçon-là*, and I should have worried him into a premature Polish tomb. We are well quit of one another.

"Do you really want to hear why we were so long before we came home? Listen, then, and I'll tell you. You know what sort of a sailor mamma is; well, it came on to blow the day after you left, and went on blowing for a week, getting worse and worse, until every-

body went away, and they boarded up the Kursaal for the winter. Papa didn't mind, for he played whist all day long at the club with the Burgomaster, the Governor of Brabant, the German Consul, and one or two other local fossils, to cut in and out, you know. To a contented spirit like that of the author of my being, fivepenny points, even without a rubber bet, are a continual feast. He would have sat complacently in the Casino for eight hours a day until Christmas, or would have crossed to Dover any morning or afternoon in a tornado, with equal cheerfulness, dear old thing. But mamma is different. At the end of the week she said to papa, one morning after breakfast as he was struggling into his waterproof, 'Achitophel, it is, I feel, impossible that I should continue to contemplate the Channel in its present state. Let us take Mrs. Glasse's advice, and 'try another way.' If we are to go on having weather that prohibits our return home, let us have it, for goodness' sake, in some place not entirely unprovided with theatres, restaurants, cabs,

and wholesome dog-biscuit. I propose that we go to Brussels by the 4.5 express, remain there until the elements shall have come to some sort of reasonable understanding, and then take the shortest sea-route to South Hampstead. I am sorry to interrupt amusements which you conspicuously prefer to the society of your family ; but I daresay you will get a rubber somewhere in Brussels—at the Legation, very likely. Besides, the dear dogs want a change badly. Everything is packed, so perhaps you will be kind enough to meet us at the station a few minutes before the train starts. Papa only smiled, in that odd way of his, and said, ‘ Very well, Amelia. Let us pluck the Brussels sprout upon its native soil. I have ever been the sport of Destiny.’ That evening we were comfortably settled down in the Bellevue, servants, dogs and all, and there we stayed for a whole fortnight, getting daily telegrams from the coast about the state of the sea, which, strange to say, continued unsatisfactory until we had been to all the theatres, seen all the pictures,

had our photographs taken, and done an amount of shopping that necessitated the purchase of two more large new boxes to carry our acquisitions home in. When we had done Brussels thoroughly, mamma, in that seemingly causal way of hers which invariably cloaks a settled resolve, observed at dinner-time, 'The weather is quite fine in the channel now. I wonder how long papa means to stay in this singularly tiresome place;' whereupon papa muttered something about 'Hope being the nurse of young Desire,' which I didn't exactly understand, and a few hours later we were crossing from Calais to Dover on as fine a starlit morning as ever I remember. There you have the plain unvarnished tale of our flight from Ostend, which was a family affair instead of an individual elopement, as you were told. The idea of my running away with anybody, indeed!"

Thus Anastasia, to the great moral relief of one who had known that sprightly and self-willed maiden from her early childhood,

and to whom the alarming rumour of her alleged escapade had sounded only too plausible. She escaped the Polish Scylla, however, only to run up against a Wendish Charybdis, and is now booked to a Mecklenburg Junker, lineally descended—so he says—from Alaric, and nearly seven feet high. Indeed, the year that has elapsed since their last trip to foreign parts has been an eventful twelvemonth for the Chumplebunnys. Early in the month of May, Judy—the dogs always come first in any record of my worthy friend's family events—definitely ceased to bark. For several weeks Mrs. Chumplebunny was inconsolable. She put all her other domestic animals into mourning, and caused a handsome monument to be erected on the lower lawn over the remains of the defunct pug. In her mind's eye, as I understand, she continually sees Judy robed in white and playing upon a golden harp in a highly advantageous paradisaical position—a sort of celestial reserved-seat. The remaining members of the family bear their bereavement

with decent fortitude and exemplary resignation. Chumplebunny himself received the sad tidings tearlessly, and has since casually mentioned to me that both his next-door neighbours, as well as many of his personal friends, have warmly congratulated him upon the providential dispensation which, as far as his residential premises are concerned, has substituted a silent cenotaph for a noisy nuisance. Onesiphorus is passing through the Fuchs stage of academical development at Bonn, and hopes to qualify in a year or two as a "mossy-head renowner." He has already achieved some not inconsiderable collegiate distinction in connection with the "cow-gulp" feat. My acquaintance with his beer-drinking capacities encourages me to believe that he will carry off high university honours. "Scratch," too, has left the parent nest for a boarding-school, in which, shortly after becoming one of its inmates, she acquired imperishable renown as a leader of revolutionary emprise.

About the time of year at which Chumplebunny is periodically accustomed to enjoy a

few weeks of well-earned repose from his labours, alike as a drysalter and as a writer of humorous verse, he was summoned to the south of Spain upon business of importance. During his absence the amiable partner of his joys and sorrows resolved to seek consolation and change of air at an English watering-place. She was induced to select Eastmouth, by the representations of certain intimate friends who pronounced it in every respect superior to any of the Riviera sanatoria, none of which they had ever visited. "Why go all the way to Nice or San Remo," they urged, "when you have Eastmouth within a three-hours' railway journey, combining all the climatic blessings of the Riviera with the curative resources of France, Germany, and Bohemia, in the way of mineral waters and medicinal baths?" Unable to answer this question in a sense conclusively favourable to the shores of the Mediterranean, Mrs. Chumplebunny, accompanied by her two daughters and a choice selection of her domestic animals, betook herself to Eastmouth, full of confi-

dence in the healing properties of that celebrated seaside settlement, and prepared, from a sumptuary point of view, to take a creditable—I may even say a distinguished—part in its seasonable gaieties. It was her settled intention to bask daily in the sunshine that, as she had been positively assured, never failed to shed a matutinal glow on the cliffs and beach; should the heat prove oppressive, to court coolness in the fragrant glades of the adjacent pine-woods; to go through the whole series of forty-six different mineral baths advertised by the enterprising management of the chief hotel, a palatial edifice bearing the title of a famous continental sanatorium; to while away the evening hours, which sometimes lack incident at British health-resorts, by attending concerts, theatrical performances, and subscription balls, all which entertainments, according to her information, were so abundant in Eastmouth as to convert crepuscular existence into a giddy whirl of bewildering pleasure. These diversions, interspersed with refreshing episodes of

driving, donkey-riding, and shopping, constituted the recreative programme to which my sanguine friend mentally pledged herself and her family when she quitted her comfortable villa at Hampstead for small but expensive lodgings at Eastmouth-by-the-Sea.

The depth of disappointment suffered by Amelia Chumplebunny during her sojourn in "that loathsome hole," to quote her own succinct but forcible description of Eastmouth, proved infelicitously proportionate to the height of her expectations. She found the place a chronic prey to every variety of meteorological intemperance. When she arrived, it was shrouded in a thick, moist fog, which endured for a day or two, and was followed by a long spell of bitter east winds. These, having searched her to the bone, subsided at the close of her first week's stay, making way for a second sen'night of torrential rains that culminated in a raging snow-storm. Having thus triumphantly established its climatic superiority to the Riviera, Eastmouth relapsed into the clinging embrace of a fog even more

opaque and malodorous than the one with which it had greeted Mrs. Chumplebunny a fortnight previously ; whereupon that much-wronged lady indignantly packed up her trunks and returned to London, *jurant, mais un peu tard*, like Lafontaine's Maître Renard, *qu'on ne l'y prendrait plus*. During her fortnight's stay, however, she had ample time to contract one or two curiously infelicitous experiences, besides those immediately connected with the local weather and with the intrinsic deadly dulness of the place. Imprimis, Chumplebunny's "Three Graces" had not abided twenty-four hours by the sad sea wave when Anastasia lost her wrist-watch on the cliff. As this costly gaud had been presented to her by the descendant of Alaric, in order that she might never fail to be reminded of him when ascertaining the time of day, she persuaded her mother to invoke the aid of the police for its recovery. Mrs. Chumplebunny is by no means a woman to do things by halves ; so she proceeded to harry the executive on the subject of her

daughter's loss with such bland steadfastness and calm persistency that, on the third day after that on which she first took the matter in hand, the entire police-force of Eastmouth and a large body of county constabulary,



summoned from remote boroughs, were exclusively engaged from morn to eve in searching for the person or persons unknown who had "found" Anastasia's watch. "Intelligent officers" were in and out of Mrs. Chumplebunny's lodgings all day long, fre-

quently bringing with them "suspects" for identification—a course of action the utility of which would have been indisputable had either of my fair friends ever set eyes upon any human being whom they could directly or indirectly associate with the disappearance of the watch. Innocent people were dogged about the byways of Eastmouth, on the assumption that they had secreted, or were about to secrete that article, until their lives became a burden to them. One peculiarly guiltless artisan was arrested, conveyed ignominiously to the police-office, thrust into a cell, and there left to moulder all night long, because somebody who owed him a private grudge mentioned casually to the inspector that "he had seen Bokins pick up something on the cliff, and put it hurriedly in his pocket." When eventually released, Bokins promptly looked up Amelia Chumplebunny for compensation, and held forth such blood-chilling threats of action for false imprisonment, that he had to be expensively compounded with. Several other natives—among them a tinker of strangely blameless

antecedents—were subjected to domiciliary visits, not unaccompanied by vexatorial interrogation, the local force owning a detective of unacknowledged ability, who burned to achieve distinction. Eastmouth was convulsed by these inquisitorial measures, and its visitors began to leave in large numbers, lest they should be accused of unlawfully possessing and concealing Miss Chumplebunny's watch. When matters had come to this pass, the police, in deference to popular feeling, relaxed the stringency of their investigations. I need scarcely add that the missing valuable has never come to light, though Anastasia is still in active correspondence with the authorities respecting it, and though it has not yet ceased to furnish paragraphs to the *Eastmouth Gazette*, which conclusively prove the editor of that enterprising journal to be endowed with a luxuriantly fertile imagination, and an elegant literary style. Meanwhile the name of Chumplebunny, justly honoured in metropolitan drysalting and journalistic circles, is

anathema in Eastmouth, and likely, I fear, to remain so for many a year to come.

Poignant disappointment was suffered by Amelia Chumplebunny in connection with the bathing arrangements magniloquently advertised by the chief hostelry of Eastmouth, which, under the attractive title of the "Hotel Bigorre," professed to provide its patrons with every variety of fancy bath devised by science upon the surface of the habitable globe. This palatial establishment, in its announcements to suffering humanity, claimed to have all the medicinal waters of the Continent permanently laid on and perennially on tap within its stately precincts, and to supply, at a moment's notice, the liquid staple of the "treatments" practised at Karlsbad, Marienbad and Franzensbad, Kreuznach, Schwalbach and Wiesbaden, Royat, Bourboule and Mont Dore, Pan, Luchon, Aix-les-Bains, and a score or so more of the best known European sanatoria. When the dulness of Eastmouth and the baleful brayings of its sixteen German bands

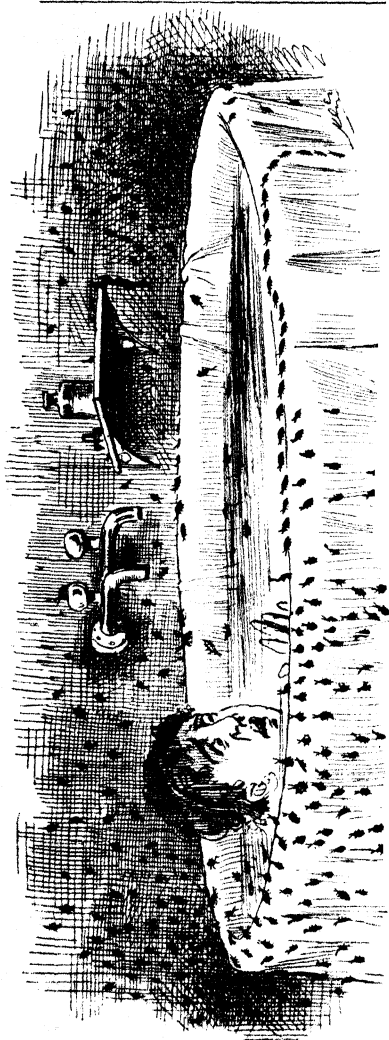
had lowered my kind friend's spirits to such an extent that a course of noisome waters recommended itself to her as a sparkling relief to the monotony of existence, she resolved to gauge the mineral resources of Hotel Bigorre, and betook herself one forenoon to its balnearic department for that purpose. Finding no one to take her money at the office where bath-tickets should have been issued, she entered the building, and was presently encountered by a middle-aged female of forbidding exterior, who asked her "what she wanted." Mildly but firmly, Amelia replied, "I should like to take a coniferous bath." Emitting a grunt of disapproval, the attendant ushered her into a roughly-boarded coop, containing a short bath and a straw chair: turned on two taps of ordinary water, vanished with another grunt, and quickly reappeared with an assortment of diminutive bottles, saying "You can choose which you like of these here mineral preparations, and then all you've got to do is to hemþty it into the bath, and there you are!"

Speechless with amazement, Mrs. Chumblebunny examined the tiny flasks one by one, and found them labelled respectively "Pine Extract," "Sprudel," "Chalybeate," "Sulphate," "Ferruginous," "Arsenical," &c. "Do you mean to say," she gasped, "that you prepare all the mineral baths mentioned in your advertisement by mixing a tablespoonful of chemicals with several hundred gallons of water?" "That's the way we do it," was the reply; "you takes your pick, and what do you want more?" "Thank you very much," Amelia answered, waving away the phials with a dignified gesture; "I think I will try a warm sea-bath, if you please." "You can't have that to-day, for we ain't got no sea-water." "Has anything unexpected happened to the sea, might I ask?" inquired Mrs. Chumblebunny, with what she intended to be withering irony. "No, there ain't; but the supply-pipe's got out of order. You can have a packet of Tidman's Sea Salt, and put that in your bath; it'll do just as well for what you want!"

"I am truly obliged to you, but I would rather not. I did not come down to Eastmouth to sit on crystals, or even to await their melting, in a cubby hutch constructed of unplanned planks, carpetless, draughty, and sloppy. Would it be inconvenient for me to have a plain warm bath, at a temperature of about 96°?" "I don't know nothing about no temperature; but you can have a warm bath in this here room as soon as you please."

"Kindly prepare it, then, and fetch me some bath towels." This request having been grudgingly complied with, Mrs. Chumblebunny dismissed the attendant, undressed, and got into the bath with some difficulty, it being several sizes too small for a full-grown adult. Looking carelessly round her whilst immersed, her glance fell upon a large brown beetle, pensively crawling up a towel that she had spread out over the back of a chair.

Like many other women of great general intrepidity, Mrs. Chumblebunny regards the harmless necessary beetle with unconquerable



horror and loathing. If an African lion had entered her bathing-coop, her alarm could not have been more intense than it was when she caught sight of that meandering coleopter. She uttered piercing cries for help; but no one came. To reach the bell she must have got out of her bath in close proximity to the intrusive insect; and that, as she subsequently assured me, she

would not have done for a prince's ransom. As she cowered, shuddering in the fast-cooling water, she suddenly became aware that millions (as she put it) of beetles similar to the first had issued from some occult lair, and were careering all over the interior of her compartment. Beetles were investigating her garments with restless curiosity and absorbed interest. Beetles peered at her from the ceiling, and threatened to drop upon her unprotected form. Her shoes were full of beetles. Beetles pervaded the floor, and stood upon one another's shoulders all up the chair-legs. Clustered beetles festooned the frame of the dim looking-glass; isolated beetles laboriously climbed up the sides of the very bath in which she was reclining, and stared solemnly at her over its brim with their highly varnished eyes. This final indiscretion on the part of the Eastmouth Coleoptera caused Amelia Chumplebunny to utter a shriek of so piercing a character, that it brought a slightly-draped lady from an adjacent compartment to her rescue. In

response to this fellow-bather's look of mute interrogation, she ejaculated, "The beetles ! the beetles !" wringing her hands in an agony of fear. "Yes, they're rather troublesome, are they not ?" was the reply ; "but not nearly so much so as they were last year. Then you couldn't put one foot before the other in this place without cracking hundreds of them, and all the food in the hotel tasted of beetle. We think very little of beetles here, don't you know ; but people who object to them should keep away from Eastmouth, and especially from the Bigorre Hotel. Let me ring and have some of them moved, so that you may be able to dress in peace and tranquillity." So saying, Mrs. Chumplebunny's saviour peremptorily summoned the surly attendant, who reluctantly brushed down and swept away a few thousand beetles, grumbling audibly at the superfluous labour by "some parties as there was no pleasing ;" as if to let loose a horde of hideous insects upon a lady divested of clothing and shut up by herself in a small wooden coop ; charging

her moreover a handsome fee for the whole transaction ; were a subtle and delicate attention which could not fail to be fraught with exquisite delight to its object.

Once more "clothed and in her right mind," Mrs. Chumplebunny shook the dust—I should say the beetles—of the Hotel Bigorre off her feet for ever. A day or two previously, the descendant of Alaric, carried away by a paroxysm of the tender passion, had entertained her, as well as the object of his affections, at the festive board of that establishment, with the painful results that no one had anything to eat, and that the amount of the bill caused him to contemplate the necessity of mortgaging one of his smaller estates near Schwerin. The fact that hunger was charged for at so very high a figure in the renowned Eastmouth Sanatorium had rather set my friends against that health-dispensing institution ; the "beetle-bath" outrage determined them to do without its benefits for the rest of their lives. On the morrow of Mrs. Chumplebunny's grisly

adventure—the situation created by Anastasia's wrist-watch having meanwhile become what the French figuratively call *trés tendue*—she, her two sprightly daughters, and the pensive Wend, left Eastmouth for London, having one and all arrived at the conclusion that an English watering-place, especially of the seaside variety, is the locality of all others to spend one's autumn holiday out of. They mean to try the Balearic Islands next September, by which time "Tommy" will probably be a countess, and Onesiphorus may be expected to have taken a first-class degree in beer. Chumplebunny, who had returned severely flea-bitten from the Huerta de Valencia, wants me to promise to accompany them, at least as far as Minorca. But I am waxing nervous with increase of years; and so many startling things always happen to the Chumplebunnys, that I think I shall let them make their Balearic experiment without me, my Spanish not being of a fluency upon which I can always rely at a moment's notice. We shall see, however. *Quien sabe?*

THREE WEDDINGS.



HEN my excellent friend and whilom war-comrade, Graf Botho Henning von Finkthal, asked me some years ago to spend my autumn leave at his country seat, Schloss Hohenfluss, in a district of the Mark Brandenburg which I knew (from old manoeuvre experiences in that part of the Prussian dominions) to be

considerably sandier than the Libyan desert, I hesitated—perhaps a thought too conspicuously—about accepting his kindly invitation. “For,” I asked myself, with the velocity of an overdue lightning-flash, “how will it be possible to get through the time at Hohenfluss during the month of September without plunging into crime or lapsing into imbecility?” As I have said before, I had already made some cursory acquaintance with the *terrain* in which Finkthal’s estate was situate—a slice of the amazing tract of sand that traverses Northern Europe from east to west, between, let us say, Wirballen and Magdeburg, and the superficial flatness of which is unrelieved by any surface-irregularity as high as Primrose Hill. What could be hoped for, in the way of sport, from such an arid wilderness, wherein even the mild recreations of walking and riding, save in rainy weather, were out of the question, by reason of the clouds of dust evoked from the friable soil by the least movement of man or beast?

This I soon engaged in guessing, but no

syllable expressing to Finkthal, whose azure eye, piercing my bosom's core, there espied infirmity of purpose; whereupon he became vehemently persuasive.

“Look here, Gordon, you had really much better come. I'll find lots for you to do, and we'll have no end of fun. There'll be plenty of birds, you know, in the potatoes, and our hares are as big as *this*!” Here he indicated the height of a full-grown St. Bernard. “We are sure to get a few roe-deer, and my cook is famous for her ‘arrangement in yellow and pink’ of Rehrücken with cream and cranberries. Our asparagus is as long as *this*” (another descriptive gesture, leading me to infer that the Hohenfluss asparagus averaged the length of an ordinary oboe), “and extraordinarily succulent. There are crawfish all over the shop, too; millions of'em, my dear fellow; just the thing for you; Bisque soup every day, if you like. Besides, there are Molly and the three girls—they've got lawn-tennis and croquet, and I don't know what besides, all brand new from Berlin; they mean

business, I can tell you! Then again—by Jove, I had nearly forgotten the best thing of all—about the middle of the partridge month we shall have *Einquartierung* in the Schloss and the village—such a lark! An old campaigner like you will be glad to see how our fellows look at the end of a stiff Royal Manœuvre, and to meet some of the rising generation of Guardsmen. It is just possible that a detachment of my old regiment may be billeted on Hohenfluss; if so, won't we just have a time! Peach-bowl, eh? and brandy-punch to follow—dancing and *tableaux vivants* in the great ball-room—Soldatenlieder and 'Wo, wie und wann' till daylight doth appear! Dost like the picture?"

I did, and said so, to Finkthal's manifest delight. Need I add that, before we quitted the smoking-room of the London club in which, during the season of 1884, the above colloquy took place, I had bound myself *auf Ehrenwort* to sojourn in a castle, not by the sea, but unquestionably built upon sand, throughout the hottest month of the year.

During the great war of 1870-1, whilst attached to the head-quarters of the Crown-Prince of Prussia in the quality of special correspondent, representing an influential London newspaper, I had acquired the friendship of Botho von Finkthal, at that time a lieutenant in the Guard-Hussars, and "extra galloper" to good old General von Kirchbach, then commanding the 5th Army Corps before Paris.

Finkthal and I were drawn together, in the first place, by his strong English sympathies. The language and literature, songs and society slang, manners and customs of my native country were as familiar to him as to myself; his mother was an Englishwoman, and he was engaged to a charming Scottish girl, through the happy chance that old Count von Finkthal had been a confirmed Anglomaniac ever since he wooed and won the beautiful Lady Mary Sygnet whilst attached to the Prussian Legation in London. English had been for some thirty years the Finkthal family idiom, and Botho, his brothers

and sisters, all spoke it with the careless fluency that characterizes the every-day talk of well-bred Britons.

What originally prompted me, indeed, to obtain a special introduction to Botho, was the circumstance that, at a regimental mess-dinner given in the *mairie* of Fontenay-les-Roses shortly after Ducrot's unsuccessful sortie—a festivity at which he and I happened to be the guests of the evening—I heard him sing “The White-blossomed Thorn” with admirable expression and unimpeachable accent.

We had already been formally presented to one another, in accordance with the excellent custom prevailing in Prussian messes on guest-nights—namely, that every stranger invited to dine shall be made known by his host to the latter's brother-officers and their guests. But I fancied that his choice of an English song, when he was called upon to “contribute to the harmony of the evening,” was intended as a compliment to the only Anglo-Saxon present, and so made a point of

asking my own particular Amphytrion to introduce me over again to his good-looking comrade, the musical Guard-Hussar.

Thus was struck up an acquaintance which speedily ripened into friendship. Finkthal and I soon found out that we had more than one taste and predilection in common. We were both passionately fond of music, fair pianists, and really good sight-readers; eagerly addicted to field sports; a close match at the leading games of skill, such as chess, billiards, picquet and écarté, as well as with the foils and sticks; devourers of military and fictional literature; in short, eminently qualified by disposition and training to revive the classical parts of Damon and Pythias with nineteenth-century dresses and accessories. During the last three months of the siege of Paris we acquired the *sobriquet* of "The Inseparables."

All through that terrible winter scarcely a day passed that we did not contrive to foregather, if only for an hour at a spell. Whenever Finkthal was not on duty he was to be

found at my quarters in the Place Hoche. Many a long evening, whilst Valérien was booming out dismal war-notes at brief intervals from the lips of "La Grande Cathérine," and the snow lay thick on the frozen ground around the beleaguered city, did he and I sit side by side at the piano, playing every imaginable piece of music that had been arranged for four hands, and surrounded by an admiring circle of staff-officers and "specials," with now and then a princely idler from the "Zweiter Staffel" or a stray diplomatist, delighted to escape from the Black Sea clause of the Paris Treaty to a comfortable fireside, a bowl of punch, a "Bismarck" cigar, and a veritable orgie of operatic "quatre-mains," varied by popular ballads and occasional Studenten-lieder, sung in full chorus by such a jolly company of soldiers and civilians as no other salon in Versailles could boast of just eighteen years ago.

When I first knew him, Botho von Finkthal-Schoenfelden was one of the handsomest

men, as well as smartest cavalry officers in the Prussian army ; a giant in stature, broad of shoulder, and slim of waist, blue-eyed, golden-haired, ruddy-cheeked ; as active as a deer, and as strong as a prize-fighter. Since he left the service, married, and succeeded to the paternal estate, he has put on flesh to an extent that—as I have repeatedly noticed—affects his horses with visible spinal limpness after he has ridden them for a couple of hours or so. But he is still a superb specimen of the *genus homo*, as full of fun and devilry as a high-spirited schoolboy, adored by his wife, children, and three sisters—of whom more anon—looked up to as the greatest of living heroes, sportsmen and sages by his servants and tenantry, and greatly respected by the squirearchy of his district, in which he plays a leading part as a magistrate, arbitrator of local differences, and scientific farmer. He is also what the Germans, in their quaint titular jargon, designate as a “ Knight’s-Estate-Owner.” (*Rittergutsbesitzer*), that is to say, the owner of a freehold landed property ; and

his compatriots, when they address him in writing, precede his family name and title of nobility by this cumbersome predicate, which, however, has to give the *pas* to that which denotes his whilom grade in the army—"Lieutenant a. D.," *anglice*, lieutenant on the reserve list—military rank, in Prussia, taking precedence of territorial designations, hereditary honours, and bureaucratic prefixes.

Marion von Finkthal, my friend's wife, was a slim, sunny-haired Scotch lassie when he married her, with no end of a pedigree, and blood as blue—from a herald's point of view, of course—as her bright laughing eyes. She makes as stately and dignified a "gnaedige Frau" as any of her German sister-matrons to the manner born; but every now and anon her native Caledonian humour peeps out through the courtly shell of her Prussian Countesshood, and—when no Germans are about to criticize her demeanour—she is one of the merriest little ladies who ever danced a reel or brewed a jorum of toddy north of the Tweed.

The "three Graces" of Hohenfluss, Botho's fair sisters, are indeed charming creatures.

Agathe, the eldest, whose sound common sense and solid accomplishments have earned for her the family *sobriquet* of "Sobersides," is unusually small of stature, but exquisitely proportioned, with dainty little hands and feet; a good musician and linguist, skilful with every variety of needle, and endowed with a gift for "cutting out" that, as I have been assured, is the admiration and envy of her *couturière*.

Irene, the second — surnamed "The Sprite," in virtue of her strange pallor, dreamy expression, and general ethereal appearance—is, in reality, the humorist of the house of Finkthal, bubbling over with quaint quips and cranks, and strongly addicted to satire.

Elfride, the *cadette*—a tall, slight girl, with broad intellectual brows and a peculiarly fascinating smile—is a genius, whose artistic creations, both in poetry and painting, display

amazing vigour and rare originality. Uncommonly pleasant companions, all three, to an Englishman sojourning in a German country house, even though the brown of his beard be deeply dashed with grey ; dangerous ones, too, had I been a gay gallant of five-and-twenty, instead of a battered campaigner of double that age. Even when one knows oneself to be out of the running, as far as the captivation of a maiden's fancy is concerned, it is just a thought mortifying to find oneself promoted to pseudoavuncular rank, and heartlessly accosted as "Uncle Jack" by three pretty girls, who are far from being one's nieces.

But no matter ! Every heart knoweth its own sorrow ; probably the Finkthal "Comtessen" thought they were giving me a shining proof of the esteem in which I hope and believe they hold me, when they forewent the formal "Captain Gordon" for the familiar and confidential "Uncle Jack." Besides, I am bound to admit that they granted me the privilege of addressing them by their nick-

names (Elfride's is "The All-Rounder") whenever the Schloss should be void of guests other than myself.

For a few days after my arrival at Hohenfluss the diurnal programme of our doings underwent no appreciable variation. It was this, or nearly so : early breakfast of the English pattern, followed by a cigarette—perhaps two—and a cursory glance at the London and Berlin newspapers, brought in per mounted retainer from the nearest post-town every morning before nine. From ten to one, pursuit of the furtive partridge and the wily hare by Finkthal and "Uncle Jack," in the company of two indefatigable brown pointers and a party in green, specially told off to "pick up" and carry the bag. It was hot work, walking up reluctant birds on sand mingled with potatoes, in a temperature of 84 degrees in the shade—a class of sport uniformly attended by incessant thirst of distracting intensity. We stuck to it, however, day after day, until we had plunged all the parent birds on the estate into mourning, and produced

such general consternation amongst the hares of the district, that not a "Herr Lampe" of them all would show his nose within the limits of Finkthal's domain.

One day a neighbour of my host joined us, gun on shoulder, just where his land touched the Hohenfluss boundary; a Landrath, if you please, and a sportsman to boot, of great local repute for his mastery of the *Weidkunst*, by no means the sort of Johnny one would have believed to be capable of deliberately shooting a fox. But he did; I saw him do it. The dogs started a fine, old, grey gentleman, from a patch of low covert belonging to the vulpicide, who brought him down with a careful, cold-blooded shot, whilst Botho and I stood and looked on with horror and indignation depicted on our streaming countenances.

But I digress. Back to the Schloss at once; tub and rapid change, to the clanging of a mighty luncheon-bell *obbligato*. Massive mid-day meal; the German dinner, rechristened "lunch" for the nonce, in consideration of my insular prejudices. Coffee and cigarettes

under the striped awning of a huge-flagged verandah intervening between the dining-room and the flower gardens. Four-handed encounter with Moszkowski, Dvórák, and Fuchs, by Finkthal and Gordon, with relays of "Comtessen" to turn over. Five o'clock tea (verandah again), a sacred institution of Hohenfluss, followed by lawn-tennis, croquet, and strolls in the park or down to the village as long as daylight lasted. Supper—we called it dinner—of Homeric solidity at eight; after which we made "music" and played games of divination, at which the All-Rounder invariably took the cake, until midnight, when we bade one another "Auf Wiedersehen" until the morrow.

For a week or so nothing particularly occurred to interfere with the even tenor of our daily routine. One morning, however, so early that the flies had only just "roused and bitted," although a more maddeningly matutinal insect than the Hohenfluss variety of *musca* does not, I have reason to believe, worry mankind in any part of the habitable

globe, Botho burst into my room, exclaiming, "Good news, Jack! Heute kriegen wir Einquartierung! An orderly has just ridden in from Koenigs-Wusterhausen to inform me that half a squadron of Guard-Hussars—my old regiment, juchhe!—will be billeted on Hohenfluss for three days, beginning this morning. The fellows must have started by now, it is only a ten mile *étape*; jump into your tub and togs in the old *reveillé* form, and ride out with me to meet them. I've ordered a nag to be saddled for you; there's schwarzbrod and schnapps in the little breakfast room; look sharp, old man, and we'll start in a quarter of an hour. What a lark it is! Gottsdonnerwetter, I'm better pleased than if potatoes had gone up two thalers a *Wispel*!"

Ten minutes later, booted, spurred, and in my right mind, I left my bedroom to the flies, and hurried downstairs. The Schloss was all astir and in a ferment of joyous excitement, despite the earliness of the hour, for the news had spread like wildfire through its precincts, from kitchen to garret, and all

the members of Finkthal's household were afoot, busying themselves with preparations for the reception of the approaching guardsmen. As every man in the establishment had served, at one time or another, in the ranks of the Prussian army, and as all the women were daughters, sisters, or sweet-hearts of soldiers, it was, no doubt, natural enough that they should regard the billeting of seventy or eighty troopers upon their master's property as an altogether gratifying incident—a delightful interlude in the somewhat monotonous life usually led by the domestics of a German country house. But it struck me, I confess, as just a little odd that my friend Botho should chortle so exultingly over a visitation which could scarcely fail to turn his well-ordered Schloss upside down, besides putting him to considerable expense, and all his people to great trouble and inconvenience. For “Einquartierung,” regarded from an English point of view, is the reverse of a joke to the provincial squires and farmers upon whose shoulders its chief burden necessarily falls.

To board and lodge from twenty to a hundred stalwart soldiers with wolfish appetites for two or three days at a stretch is a right costly undertaking ; besides which, the brief sojourn of these gallant lads, few of them past their twenty-second year, on an estate or farm, unsettles all the women folk thereon employed for weeks after the billeting is over, and, moreover, gives rise to outnumbered domestic dramas that teem with "situations" of thrilling interest.

The State makes an allowance (of about fourpence a day per man billeted) to the person subject to "Einquartierung"; but I need scarcely say that this thrifty dole does not cover one-third of the outlay entailed upon those who are called upon, year after year, to entertain strong detachments of regulars. Moreover, a good many German noblemen and gentlemen—especially those who have themselves "worn the belt" or still hold the Kaiser's commission—patriotically decline to receive the allowance, and are therefore out of pocket to the full extent of their billet disbursements. And

yet I have found all of them with whom I have been personally brought into contact look forward with unfeigned delight to the "Einquartierung" season of the year—generally the first half of September—and eagerly vie with one another in the lavishness of their hospitality to officers and men alike. The former are entertained as honoured guests in the Schloss or Landhaus itself; the latter are distributed amongst the cottages or outbuildings, where they are supplied with four meals per diem, well cooked and comfortably served; and, as far as my experience goes, the more they eat and drink the better their hosts are pleased. The amount of food a German warrior will put away when on field duty and in receipt of rations practically unlimited in quantity is indeed something remarkable, which fact considerably enhanced my surprise when I observed how cordially their entertainers urged them to "cut and come again."

Such relations between soldiers and civilians can, of course, only obtain in a

country the whole population of which is imbued with a true military spirit, and with that sincere patriotism which renders self-sacrifice pleasurable instead of onerous. Such a country is Germany, where every man and boy, matron and maiden, is proud of the noble national army, and all social classes deem no pain or privation oppressive that is required from them to promote the honour, glory, and safety of their beloved Fatherland.

Riding through the sandy Mark in the bright morning light, under a sky as brilliantly blue as the bosom of the Adriatic on a calm summer day, Finkthal and I soon espied the *éclaireurs* of the little cavalry force advancing at a walk upon Hohenfluss from its quarters of the previous night, and, a few minutes later, were engaged in a pleasant chat with the three officers in charge of the detachment—one of whom, by the way, was an “extra,” attached to the half-squadron at his own special request, being a friend of the Finkthal family. He was a singularly handsome “Premier Lieutenant,” by name Graf

Adhemar von Nagelfest, well nigh as good an English scholar as the Schlossherr himself. The other two officers were promptly presented to us by him as "Herr Rittmeister von Wanderleben" and "Herr Lieutenant von Putteritz," smart, good-looking fellows, burnt as brown as horse-chestnuts by the sun during three weeks' manœuvring in scorching weather, and splendidly mounted.

Committing the conduct of the tiny column to the Wachtmeister (sergeant-major), the three officers accompanied us at a brisk canter to the Schloss, where the "gnaedige Graefin" and her charming sisters-in-law received them with kindly grace at the threshold of the chief entrance. There we all stood, discussing the latest regimental news in which my fair friends took an interest only one degree less intense than that of Botho, the ex-Hussar, and awaiting the arrival of the troopers, who presently came to a halt before the castle gates, and were drawn up in double line to undergo a cursory inspection before dismissal to quarters.

The men were somewhat dust-stained, as well they might be, the briefest ride across Brandenburg sand inevitably resulting in the horseman becoming a landed proprietor in a small and superficial sort of way ; the horses were a thought fine-drawn, the not unnatural result of three weeks' daily bucketing about and nightly bivouacking in the open, during the fiercest heat experienced in Northern Europe since the famous sweltering Summer of 1870 ; but for all their sun-dried, "over-done" look, finer troops I never set eyes on in the course of my experiences as a soldier and war correspondent, which, I may mention, include six hard-fighting campaigns, and countless spring inspections and autumn manœuvres of the five principal armies in Europe.

When we had looked our fill at them, the "dismiss" and "stable" calls were sounded, and Captain von Wanderleben's command proceeded to distribute itself amongst the extensive and roomy outbuildings of the Schloss, where, after the "quads." had been

accurately rubbed down, fed, and watered, a "fancy" ration of fresh bread and schnapps was served out to the men, wherewith to stay their stomachs till midday should gladden them with a more solid and copious illustration of Botho von Finkthal's soldierly hospitality.

During the three days of "Einquartierung" that followed the arrival of the Guard-Hussars at Schloss Hohenfluss, that feudal abode was the scene of as many festivities and entertainments as could be crowded into the wakeful hours of the day and night. We combined a maximum of jollification with a minimum of sleep. All the "Vons" of the district were bidden to our rejoicings, and came, without a single exception. We produced a whole series of effective *tableaux vivants* and several "plastic charades," the latter representing comic interpretations of the outrageous "word-plays" with which the German tongue abounds. We performed two-act comic opera, with extemporized scenery and pianoforte accompaniments. It

was a screaming success ; never did intelligent amateurs sing and act to so appreciative and grateful an audience.

Our three Hussars, ably supported by the trio of " Comtessen," were the life and soul of every festive function that took place throughout their stay in the castle. They took no rest worth mentioning, and never once exhibited a symptom of fatigue. In their own social sphere, no discordant elements being imported into it—for, if brought into contact with people whom they do not regard as their equals in birth and breeding, they freeze up into an attitude of stiff reserve that is curiously repellent—Prussian Junkers, especially of the military variety, are the cheeriest companions imaginable. Their manners are unexceptionable ; they are all well-educated, whilst many of them are well-read ; I have found them for the most part as kindly, single-minded, and full of animal spirits as amiable children ; they have been trained up in the strictest school of honour existing, and their word may be implicitly trusted. Take any half-dozen of

them at random, and you shall find amongst them at least one accomplished musician, one able draughtsman, and one good linguist, speaking French, English, and either Polish or Russian as fluently as his native idiom. They are, moreover, fine horsemen, expert swordsmen, and good shots; they dance indefatigably, and take their liquor like gentlemen. Whilst the three Hussars were with us, they kept it up regularly till daylight did appear at the long bouts of waltzing with which our nightly entertainments invariably terminated; and then, when the ladies had retired, adjourned with us to Botho's den in the East Tower, where his celebrated brews of *Pfirsich-Bowle* and *Schwedischer-Punsch*—the latter a concoction of appalling strength and sweetness—detained us agreeably enough until the trumpet in the stable-yard sounded the *reveillé*, when one of the juniors turned out, as fresh as paint, to inspect horses and men before turning in, on his own account, for a couple of hours' rest.

They had not been twelve hours on

Finkthal's premises before a dispassionate looker-on, by name John Cosmo Gordon, became aware that the gallant Von Wanderleben had been utterly subjugated by the fairy-like charms of "Sobersides," alias Agathe von Finkthal; that in whatever part of the gardens or park "The Sprite" might happen to be floating about in her pensive way, there or thereabouts Graf Adhemar von Nagelfest might be looked for with the certainty of a "find"; and that any attempt on the part of "The All-Rounder" to complete a sketch or polish up a sonnet in the atelier adjoining the Countess's morning-room was sure to be frustrated by Lieutenant Karl von Putteritz, whose deep interest in the arts of painting and poetry prompted him to haunt the "Comtesse Elfride" with the persistency of a faithful and devoted shadow.

These "autumn manœuvres" did not, as I have already hinted, altogether escape my notice; but, although time has most unequivocally thinned my flowing hair, as well

as changed its colour, I am not too old to take interest in any romance, the leading parts of which are played by brave youths and modest maidens. Besides, when the Hussars began to monopolize the time and thoughts of my sweet young friends, the three "Comtessen," I found myself—strange to say—readily excused from afternoon duty in the lawn-tennis court and croquet ground. In fact, my absence from those places of recreative rendezvous was not noticed, although—in the præ-"Einquartierung" days—I should have caught it finely had I ventured to shirk my spell with the racket or mallet between tea and supper. As a matter of fact, "Uncle Jack" was out in the cold; and consoled himself with the philosophical reflection that, considering the state of the temperature, he might have been in a worse place.

Not for a moment did Marion von Finkthal, my own fellow-countrywoman (like all decent Scotch folk, the Wallaces and Gordons are "sib," and we used to try to make out the exact degree of our cousinhood whenever we

had nothing more amusing to talk about), throw me over throughout the invasion of Hohenfluss by these doughty *sabreurs* in blue and gold. Whilst they were philandering with the *gnaedigen Fraeuleins* in different more or less sultry parts of the grounds, the *gnaedigste Frau* and I, comfortably established in a couple of rocking-chairs, were talking *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis* in her delightful cool sanctum, whither all the newest journals and magazines found their way after breakfast, and where "Uncle Jack" was the only featherless biped—with the solitary exception of the Schlossherr—privileged to smoke a soothing cigarette whenever the spirit might move him in that direction.

One morning—it was Wednesday, and the Hussars had arrived on Monday—she confided to me some of her views in relation to the *Einquartierung*.

"Our guests," she observed, "are really very nice men, and conduct themselves admirably, I am sure; the soldiers, too, poor

things, though there are no amusements for *them*, and they must find it horribly uncomfortable, sleeping head and tail on straw as they do in the stables and cow-houses. But oh! dear me, Captain Gordon, this *Einquartierung* is a troublesome business, when all is said and done, for the mistress of a great place like this. Of course, it is necessary and patriotic and all that, and lambs could not be meeker or more grateful for any little kindness shown to them than those well-behaved troopers, who never seem to fight one another, or get drunk, or make themselves objectionable in any way. Don't imagine that I grudge them anything we can give them, or the trouble they give me. But they have turned the heads of all my maid-servants—silly things!—and of nearly all the girls in our village. Everything is going wrong, and I don't know how to set it right. There is Rieke, now—the chief Stuben-maedchen, you know—the tall girl, with the big blue eyes, whom you noticed one day, and said to me, 'What a strapping grenadier

that wench would make !' Don't you remember ? Well, she was already betrothed to three different men, all of them desperately in love with her, because she is really good-looking, you see ; one belongs to her native place, which is on the other side of the Mark, so that he can't come hanging about after her here, which is a blessing—he's a blacksmith, well to do, and she has been affianced to him for years, and doesn't care a pin for him ; another is in Berlin, a journeyman shoemaker, and a very steady, saving man—I think she likes him well enough ; the third is one of Botho's *Reitknechte*—grooms, I mean—the tall, red-haired one, called Kurt. He is on the spot, poor man, and worships her blindly—so, of course, she tramples on him. Now comes the new complication. Rieke has taken a fancy to one of Wanderleben's sergeants, a very fine-looking soldier, I believe. She told the housekeeper, and the housekeeper told me. Kurt is half mad with jealousy, and we expect a catastrophe every hour. Thank goodness, the Hussars are to

leave us to-morrow morning! There is the cook, too. You haven't seen our cook. She is what you may really call a *plain* cook; a widow, and forty if she is an hour. She is wild about one of the troopers, a one-year volunteer, young enough to be her son. She says he is *entzueckend*; she spoilt the supper yesterday evening on his account. And the *Amme*—Baby's *Amme*, you know, who is as broad as she is long, and has had seven children—two offers have been made to her since Monday by Hussars, making fun of her, of course, the stupid woman! She came to me in a great twitter this morning, and asked me whether I didn't think it was high time to get baby weaned; and only last week, when I told her to try the child with a little chicken-broth and arrowroot, she went into a dreadful passion, and accused me of wanting to kill my own precious little Elsie. And she begged me to give her her Savings-Bank book, which I have been keeping for her. And the housekeeper tells me that all the laundry-maids and dairy-maids are quite up-

set by the *Einquartierung*, and can't attend to their work. And three girls in the village have broken off with their *Verlobten*, all tenants of ours—there was a dreadful confusion at the Wirthshaus last night, so Botho tells me, and the under-bailiff got a broken head in trying to restore order. All sorts of disagreeable things have happened. Old Schnitt, our best ploughman, has been down with muscular rheumatism for weeks past; the doctor told him that on no account was he to leave his bed until he should be cured. Well, when the detachment paraded in our Hof yesterday, the perverse old man got up and dressed himself, and came out to see the show. Consequently he was tied up in knots all night long, and writhing so terribly, that his poor wife did not dare to go to bed. I went to see him this morning, and what do you think he told me? That he had not got up to see the soldiers drill, but because the flies bored him so atrociously that he could not bear to stop in the house any longer. But it was the parade that tempted him, I know;

for he was a *Garde-Drager* once—about thirty years ago, I believe—and all these old *Reiters* are the same—when they hear the trumpet-call they cannot keep still. Now that nearly all our potatoes are dug, we want to begin to plough ; and there is old Schnitt on his back, roaring like a bull, and likely to be bedridden for weeks to come. And that is not nearly all ; only I must not inflict all our misfortunes upon you, Captain Gordon. But you must admit that *Einquartierung* has its drawbacks as well as its advantages.”

“ It would seem so, indeed, Countess. But how about your sisters-in-law ? I wonder whether they think as unfavourably of *Einquartierung* as you do ? ”

“ They ! Poor, dear girls, their heads are in the clouds, and their feet scarcely touch the earth. I am sure that they regard the Prussian system of billeting as the most charming, blissful institution ever invented *à l'intention des jeunes filles* by Royal beneficence.”

“ Has that fellow who seems so gone upon

the Sprite got any money—I mean, enough to keep a wife ? ”

“ Oh, yes ; indeed, they are all three well off, as ‘ eligibles ’ go in this country. Putteritz is even rich ; he has an estate in Silesia and another in West Prussia. He means to leave the army almost directly, that is, before the new recruits are enrolled, and to settle down in his native province. He is of the great, old Wendish nobility, and a quite unexceptionable *Parthie*.”

“ And what does Elfride think of him ? ”

“ She likes him ; she says so quite frankly : you know what a straightforward, outspoken girl she is. But he has not asked her the—the great question yet.”

I walked to the window and looked out into the park. Putteritz and the All-Rounder were walking side by side, very close together, and he was leaning forward, gazing tenderly upon her ingenuous countenance. Turning round, I beckoned to my fair companion saying, “ Look here, my dear Countess. Do you see that ? I cannot help fancying that

the great question has been asked—and answered!”

* * * * *

Next day the *Einquartierung* came to an end, and our friends the Hussars rode away Berlin-wards, amidst a great deal of handkerchief waving from the *perron* of the Schloss and a chorus of “Hochs” and “Hurrahs” ejaculated by Finkthal’s tenantry, gathered together near the castle-gates. The “Comtessen” did not put in an appearance at luncheon, and when five o’clock tea beguiled them from their several retreats, I noticed a pinkness about their eye-lids, which—as Macbeth once remarked of something very unpleasant which he thought he saw on the blade of an imaginary dagger—“was not so before.” We all retired to rest uncommonly early that night, and a few days later my leave came to an end somewhat prematurely. As I drove to the station with my old friend Graf Botho, after taking quite an affecting farewell of the ladies, I caught myself muttering more than once, “Shall I ever, I wonder, be again a

guest at Hohenfluss, and spend as happy a time with these good, kind people as of late ?”

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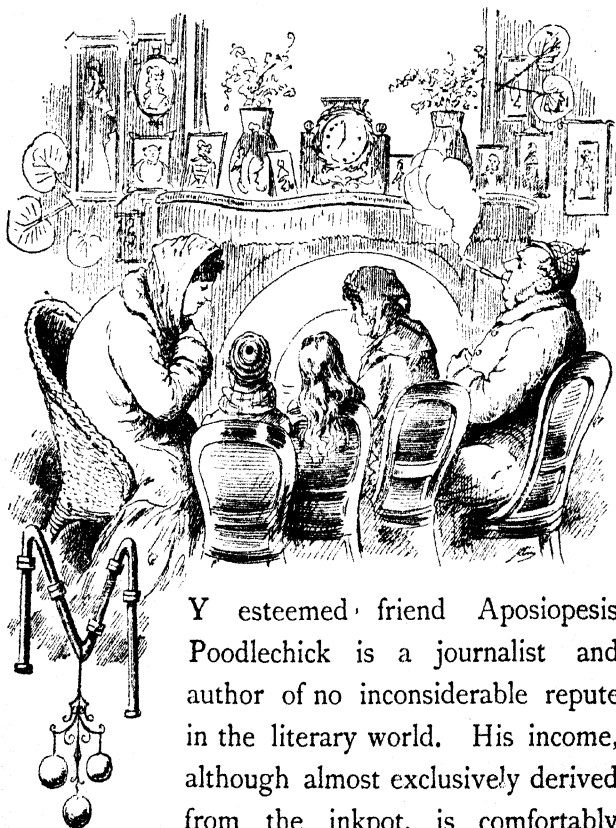
Less than six months had elapsed when one morning, while sitting at breakfast in my London chambers, I received a huge missive—gold lettering on thick enamelled paper—to the following effect :—

“ Count and Countess von Finkthal-Schoenfelden have the honour to invite Captain John Cosmo Gordon to the approaching marriages of their sisters : the Comtesse Agathe with Rittmeister Hans Albrecht von Wanderleben ; the Comtesse Irene with Lieutenant Graf Adhemar von Nagelfest ; the Comtesse Elfride with Lieutenant Karl von Putteritz. The church-ceremony will take place in the house-chapel of Schloss Hohenfluss at eleven a.m. on April 19th, 188-.”

“ By Jove,” I exclaimed, “ this is a cheerful look-out ! Here am I in for three weddings all in a heap, and never a one of them my own !”

And that is what came of *Einquartierung* within my personal knowledge. It is a fine institution, and deserves well of its country; for, though it unquestionably breaks up families, it no less undeniably increases the population of the dear old Fatherland!

WHY A. P. LIVES IN LODGINGS.



Y esteemed friend Aposiopesis Poodlechick is a journalist and author of no inconsiderable repute in the literary world. His income, although almost exclusively derived from the inkpot, is comfortably

expressed in four figures. His wife is good-looking, and has a lively sense of humour ; his children and dogs are all that a fond parent's heart could wish. I have heard him remark with justifiable pride that " he owes not any man," although—being of an indolent habit of body—his brow is seldom wet with honest or any other kind of sweat. In short, he is exhaustively qualified for the position of a British householder. From a parochial point of view he would make an inimitable ratepayer, and the circumstance that he is not entitled to vote for the election of vestrymen anywhere, is a poignant illustration of the unfitness of things. Why he persists in living in lodgings is a mystery to his many friends and acquaintances, and would be so to me were it not my privilege to enjoy a somewhat exceptional intimacy with him, based chiefly upon old schoolfellowship, similarity of tastes, and the still more influential fact that our respective wives get on together uncommonly well. For years, however, I was much perplexed and gruelled by his inveteracy as a lodger.

So I was, too—indeed so was everybody who knew him—by the incongruity of his front and back names. Poodlechick is curious, not to say grotesque ; it even contains an implication of monstrosity, and is, in every respect, the sort of cognomen of which, one would think, the least sensitive man would hasten to legally rid himself with more than lightning-like precipitancy as soon as he should have attained years of discretion. It was, as I have understood, a thumping legacy, conditional upon his sticking to this revolting name up to his fiftieth year (he is only seven-and-forty now) that induced A. P. (“for his unborn children’s sake,” as he feelingly puts it) not to eradicate his Poodlechick birth-brand when he came of age, and cast it from him for ever.

“It was borne in upon me to do so,” he once told me in a burst of after-dinner confidence ; “but I thought better of it. That has been my attitude ever since. Meanwhile, my Aunt Cleopatra’s legacy—her name was Poodlechick, too, which may, in some measure, be held to account for the milk in

the cocoa-nut—has been developing itself mutely, by the aid of compound interest, into so pleasing a total that, when I claim it, three years hence, it will, I feel, atone, and something to spare, for all the Poodlechickiness I have suffered during the past quarter of a century. On the same terms I would have even consented to be called Choodlepick, and would have borne that crowning affliction with decent fortitude; for, as the popular French poet pointedly inquires, ‘What’s in a name?’ Whereas there is really a good deal in 3000*l.* a-year, as I propose to demonstrate to you, old boy, in many several ways, shortly after my final interview with the late Cleopatra Poodlechick’s executors.”

But it was not Poodlechick—though in itself a sufficiently deadly blight upon mundane bliss—that led to my friend being addressed and spoken of as A. P. by all his cronies, including the partner of his joys and sorrows. It was Aposiopesis. How any child’s parents, let alone his godfathers and godmothers at his baptism, could have re-

conciled it with their consciences to saddle their offspring with such a ridiculous name, I have never been able to understand. When I asked him, in boyhood's impulsive hour, how this dreadful deed had come to pass, he replied: "It was all my father's doing. He was a remarkable Greek scholar, and, moreover, knew what he was about generally, though the Digamma was his especially strong suit. I have heard him observe that he had excellent reasons for bestowing that particular name upon me. What they were I never ventured to inquire, for it occurred to me that there might be something in them I would rather not know. The governor was nothing if not analytical; probably he discerned some peculiarity in my tender microcosm that suggested the name in question as exquisitely appropriate to your humble servant. Subsequently, he wanted to have my only sister christened Synalœpha, on similar grounds, I presume; but my mother put her foot down with unwonted vigour, observing that he might call his boys by what Pagan names he pleased—boys' names did not matter much—

but she would not have her girls disqualified for matrimony by any heathen incumbrance of that kind. She did not understand what Aposiopesis meant, nor did she want to. She thought it was hard on the boy (myself), but that was his father's look-out. It was, however, her settled resolve to draw the line at Synalœpha; Sarah was her own Christian name, and quite good enough for her daughter. Sarah it was, accordingly; for my father, being a wise as well as a learned man, gave way. Had my mother, on a previous occasion, exhibited a similar timely firmness on my behalf, I might have fought the battle of life an unobtrusive Abraham, or Andrew, or even Albert; whereas her regrettable passivity doomed me to perennial contumely as that most absurd of animate anachronisms—a human Aposiopesis.”

But I am straying from the purpose of this paper, which is to inform my readers why A. P. persistently lives in lodgings. It may be as well, before setting forth some of the occurrences which prompted his resolve in this respect, to state that that resolve was

based, not upon irrational prejudice, but on infelicitous experience. He was a householder before he became a lodger; and it was, as a matter of fact, because he had been the former that he became the latter. What he went through in the capacity of a lessee shall here be told in his own words, as nearly as I can reproduce them from memory.

“As you are aware, I represented a leading London ‘daily’ abroad for several years. After a longish spell of somewhat eventful exile I was recalled. On my return to the land which has been inaccurately described as the exclusive home of the brave and the free, I went into lodgings, entirely to my own satisfaction and that of my *impedimenta*. Shortly afterwards, certain malignant persons, calling themselves my friends, harried me to take a house, insisting that I could not possibly be comfortable under the roof of Another, and that it was not compatible with my professional status or personal dignity that I should, save provisionally, reside in furnished apartments at

so much a-week. I turned a deaf ear to these insidious and presumptuous representations. Not so, however, my excellent wife, whose more impressionable soul is frequently ruffled by storms of argument and even by breezes of persuasion that leave my spirit calm. As soon as her commanding influence was fully enlisted on behalf of the theory that happiness and liability to parochial rates were convertible terms, need I say that my reluctance to burden myself with costly and vexatious responsibilities was speedily overcome, and that Mrs. Poodlechick obtained plenary powers to incur an indefinite amount of fatigue and expense in that most crushing of all human pursuits—house-hunting?

“ For some weeks she stood in the relation, figuratively speaking, of a milch-cow to the confraternity of London cabmen, and sensibly augmented the dividends of the Metropolitan and District Railway Companies, besides acquiring a wayworn and haggard aspect that would have done credit to a Mecca pilgrim. At length, however, she

discovered a dwelling which she thought would suit me; and, to be brief—I shudder at the remembrance—I took it. The landlord was a pleasing adventurer, Eve by name, who met my wildest wishes in the matters of rent and fittings with joyous alacrity. He did not tell me that he was a hopeless bankrupt, although such was the case; but led me to believe that the one fond dream of his long and irreproachable career as a speculative builder had been to secure so admirable a tenant as myself for his most triumphant achievement in the direction of domestic architecture (the house in question); and, in point of fact, that he had had me in his mind for years whilst lavishing unusual beauties and conveniences upon that surprising structure.

“I cannot but admit that, to all appearances, the house was a fine one; stately without and decorative within; suburban, but not oppressively remote from business resorts and pleasure-haunts; adorned on three of its sides by a broad belt of garden ground, and

provided with bath-rooms, patent ranges, smoke-dispelling cowls, and many other symbols of Latter-Day culture. It was brand new. He besought me to take it on a long lease, observing with an air of prophetic inspiration that, once familiar with its virtues, I should never leave it until summoned to my last account. But, somehow or other, I felt tentative about the mansion; so much so that blandishments could not induce me to commit myself to any bond more enduring than a three years' agreement. For the solitary flash of prudence that rent the darkness of my credulity I can never be sufficiently thankful.

“I pass over the ruinous agony of furnishing, and the scathing mortifications attendant upon organizing a staff of servants. The former crippled my pecuniary resources to a degree that it has taken me six years to surmount; and the latter, in all probability, blighted the prospects of my immortal part by reason of the imprecations in which my anguish found expression.

A few days after I had bound myself to my house by temporarily indissoluble ties—it was at Christmastide—I became aware that it could not be warmed. Tons of coal by the score, cubic feet of gas by the thousand, no matter how recklessly and triumphantly incandescent, failed to raise its temperature above influenza level. Colds sprang eternal in my children's heads; rheumatism became a leading family trait; my favourite Manx cat coughed itself into a premature grave. The house, you see, which, by its spokesman, insolvent and delusive Eve, had professed to be founded on masses of concrete, was in reality built *à fleur de terre*, on the actual cold, clammy clay that constitutes the superficial stratum of north-western London. It had no subterranean cellarage, so that its ground-floor, comprising my reception-rooms, library, and kitchens, was in direct contact with the peculiar variety of Mother Earth above alluded to. Thus, to warm my house effectively, it would have been necessary to impart a lively heat to the

entire bed of so-called 'London clay,' some sixty feet thick, underlying West Hampstead and Kilburn. My means as a journalist would not permit me to carry out this enterprise in a thorough and workmanlike manner; so I had recourse to stoves and *calorifères* of many kinds, with (I am bound to confess) but indifferent success. In the course of my experiments, I contracted a chronic post-nasal catarrh, which—so the faculty assures me—will never leave me whilst memory holds its seat in this distracted orb.

"One of the most precious advantages (*testé* Eve) of my house over neighbouring tenements was its unrestricted connection with the main-service of certain waterworks, securing to it an unlimited supply of liquid at permanent high pressure, absolutely independent of turncock ministration. This splendid endowment, combined with a curiously elaborate system of indoor pipes and outdoor conduits, purporting, each in its kind, to convey hot water to every interior

part of the building, and to dispose externally of exuberant fluid, had, in more than one sense of the word, been a *main* inducement to me when I took the house. It proved, however, the cause of such discomfort and affliction as I hope never to undergo again.

“ The winter following my *débüt* as a householder happened to be an uncommonly severe one; consequently, my intricate system of intramural pipes suffered a complication of disorders that defied the plumber’s healing art, but in no way impeded the high-pressure supply that incessantly poured torrents of water into my cisterns with relentless liberality. Thus hot water entirely ceased to circulate within my dwelling, whilst cold water continuously emerged from it through tubes protruding from its outer walls. This new hydraulic arrangement having been firmly established, a frost set in which for severity and perseverance had not been equalled in these isles for an unknown number of years. Consequently, the liquid

that, displaying a strange spendthrift of power, streamed incessantly from the waste-pipes above alluded to, froze in blocks, sheets,



and columns of great strength and beauty—chiefly upon and round an ivy-clad portico fronting the chief entrance to my abode. This portico shortly was converted into a

cave of ice, the transparent walls of which were several inches thick. Stalagmites adorned it in profusion ; the frozen-in ivy was visible beneath its crystal casing, as flies are seen embedded in amber. It was very pretty. It was also very cold, and presented the additional disadvantage that the main entrance to my house was hermetically closed for more than a week. Ingress and egress had to be transacted exclusively through the kitchen-door. During this Arctic episode we gave a dinner party. The invitations had been accepted three weeks earlier in the winter, and we could not put our guests off. Amongst them were a transitory prima donna, a foreign envoy, and a literary peer.

“What Mrs. Poodlechick suffered whilst she knew his Excellency was being ushered past the pheasants that were roasting at the kitchen fire must have been seen to be believed.

“A few days later, when the thaw commenced, my gardener and myself, armed with crowbars, removed four tons of ice and a

considerable portion of the portico, which subsequently collapsed altogether, its constitution having been undermined by the weight of its frigid burden. Meanwhile, it had enjoyed a celebrity singularly irksome to my family. Crowds of persons thitherto unfamiliar with Polar phenomena daily gathered round the garden-gate facing my frozen-up portico, and gazed at the latter with unflagging interest for hours at a stretch, commenting upon it with that rough but incisive popular humour which I enjoy so keenly when it is levelled at any body or thing except myself and my belongings. As it was, the frequent allusions to the fate of Franklin that reached my ears struck me as heartless ribaldry; and I once engaged in personal combat with a peculiarly low ruffian who exhorted me to 'bring out my White Bear and make the thing complete.'

"I think I mentioned my gardener in connection with the portico disaster. He was one of the causes of my reverting from householdership to lodgerhood. With his

wife—a confirmed invalid, who entered my service as cook, and used to lie moaning on the kitchen floor instead of preparing my meals—he came to me from a Royal duke, who spoke of him as invaluable, but had to part with him because he was so inconveniently large. And so he was, worthy soul! six feet four in his socks and broad in proportion; the most powerful man I ever knew out of a show. He had served with credit for fifteen years in the Life Guards, and only quitted that distinguished corps on account of a growing deafness which disqualified him from hearing the word of command. His surdity, indeed, whilst he lived with me, was as absolute as that of Dame Eleanor Spearing, who

‘Might have worn a percussion-cap,
And been knocked on the head without hearing it snap.’
He was also thirty-seven times more obstinate than any mule with which I had had occasion to differ in opinion during my wanderings through Spain and the East. But these were trifling drawbacks, amply compensated

for by Nathaniel's perfect honesty, sobriety, good-nature, and devotion to what he believed to be my interests.

It was his irrepressible tendency to dig that severed us, and ultimately led to the breaking-up of my establishment. In the third year of my tenancy he came to me one fine autumn morning with the request that I would authorize him to make a new flower-bed in the front garden, which, in his opinion, lacked variety. I was very busy at the time, and hastily told him to do as he pleased. He went away rejoicing. Some hours later he sought me again.

“ ‘What is it now, Nathaniel?’ ”

“ ‘Beg pardon, sir; would you give a look at that there hole as I've a-dug? I don't know what to make of it.’ ”

“ ‘Why, what's wrong with it, man?’ ”

“ ‘It's so uncommon miste, sir. I never see sech a thing!’ ”

“ ‘Why don't you dry it, then?’ ”

“ ‘I've been a-tryin' to, sir, this ever so long; but I can't do nothin' with it, nohow.’ ”

“A presentiment of calamity prompted me to quit my desk and accompany Nathaniel to the scene of his recent operations. There, sure enough, in the middle of my front-lawn was a round hole, about five feet in diameter, nearly filled with a brownish liquid, which, after gazing at it in mute consternation for a minute or so, I observed to be slowly rising. A wild notion flashed through my brain, to the effect that Nathaniel might have hit upon a geyser, in which case my fortune was made. But no; I stooped and tested the liquor with a finger; it was icy cold!

“‘What have you been at, miserable creature? Where does this accursed water come from?’

“‘I don’t know, sir, nummore nor you. You see, when I’d got down about four foot and a half, I come to some mighty big stones, lyin’ smooth-like they was, and sech as them is a mortal bad foundation for a flower-bed, ain’t it, sir? So I takes and heaves ’em up, sir; precious hard they was to get out; and then the water it begins to come in’ quite



lively-like ; and all I could do, I couldn't stop it. There lies the stones, sir, as you can see 'em for yourself. One or two on 'em there was as I did think I never should move, they stuck so fast together.'

"Several rough-hewn blocks of yellow limestone, such as the Titans might have hurled at Jove, were lying hard by the teeming hole, in which, as in Heine's immortal ballad, 'das Wasser schwoll' slowly but unceasingly. Nothing short of a giant's strength could have torn them from their subterranean bed. What do you think my absurd Anak, in his digging ecstasy, had done? Broken up an old stone conduit, through which the rainfall of a considerable complex of fields had been for many years conveyed to the Kilburn drainage system. In achieving this herculean feat, he had moreover partially blocked the lower portion of the massive channel, so that the water-flow had no alternative but to fill the pit he excavated in my grass-plot, and, in due course of time, to flood my garden, whence, in a muddy torrent, it

rolled majestically across the pavement into the public roadway.

Again my dwelling became an object of thrilling local interest, this time, I regret to say, with the disastrous result that the attention of the parochial authorities was drawn to it by a zealous lamplighter and a policeman burning for promotion. Before I could staunch the stream welling up on my premises—which, indeed, absolutely defied my private efforts to check its steadfast exuberance—an inquisition was held upon it at the instigation of a maleficent Board, which lost no time in informing me that I had wantonly, if not malignantly, outraged the commonwealth in general, besides inflicting upon my parish in particular an injury which it (the Board) would straightway proceed, under such and such an Act, to remedy at my expense.

It is, perhaps, superfluous to add that the Board fulfilled its pledge to the letter. My grounds were invaded by legions of navvies, who tore up the soil in every direction, enlivening their labour by language that com-

pelled me to plug all my children's ears with cotton-wool from morning till night for a week. One day the foreman in charge of these light-hearted operatives wanted to take down part of my house, in order, as he figuratively put it, to "get at the root of the mischief." From this fell purpose, however, I succeeded in turning him by arguments which experience had taught me to regard as carrying conviction to the minds of persons in his social position. He and his minions, however, wrought me evil enough and to spare, in all conscience. My pretty gardens were converted into a howling wilderness, my trees and shrubs destroyed, my gravel paths ruined ; no matter at what window I looked out, desolation stared me in the face ; it was all rubble and vexation of spirit. For this devastation and despair I had eventually to pay a sum that necessitated the temporary transfer of Mrs. Poodlechick's diamonds to the custody of a near and dear relative.

"I found that I could no longer gaze fondly on Nathaniel after the Board had

sent in its bill ; so he left me to dig elsewhere. A few weeks later, my term of tenancy having fortunately expired, I broke up my establishment, and gave up householding for ever. Since then I have been, comparatively speaking, a happy man, politely indifferent to the tax-gatherer, and emancipated from the haughty plumber's thrall. In 'a house of my own' I was a slave ; in 'furnished apartments' I am free ; and if ever you catch me resigning my dearly-bought liberties, I'll give you leave to say that my name is not Aposiopesis Poodle-chick !"

Dixit et liberavit animam. The above statement sufficiently explains, I trust, why A.P. lives in lodgings.

THE END.



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