"Leaflets from my Life,"

A NARRATIVE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY

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(GREGG)

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JOINT AUTHORESS WITH HER SISTER (ELIZABETH KIRBY) OF

"DISCONTENTED CHILDREN," "CHAPTERS ON TREES," "FLORA OF LEICESTERSHIRE,"
"OBSERVING EYE," "THE WORLD AT HOME," "MARGARET'S CHOICE,"
"DEEPDALE VICARAGE," ETC., ETC.

"There's no place like home
A charm from the skies, seems to hallow us there,
Which seek through the world is ne'er met with elsewhere,
There's no place like home."

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.
LEICESTER:
J. & T. SPENCER.

1888.

LEICESTER :
J. AND T. SPENCER, PRINTERS.

TO

The Rev. E. T. Vaughan, M.A.,

(Once Vicar of St. Martin's, Leicester)

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE COMFORT ENJOYED IN HIS MINISTRY, AND OF THE MANY HAPPY MOMENTS SPENT WITH HIS CHILDREN, THESE LEAFLETS ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

THE AUTHORESS.

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Leaflets from my Life.

LEAFLET I.—Childish Days.

SOME philosophers, in descanting on the subject of the memory, have made a distinction, or a decided difference between 'Remembrance' and 'Recollection.'

All that we have ever seen, or heard, or known, remains buried, as it were, in our minds for ever. That is *Remembrance.* But *Recollection* must come to our assistance, and then, and then only, will the events of the past be so vividly recalled to our mental vision, as to pass before us, like the scenes in a play.

I was born on a Sunday, in the month of April, and in the town of Leicester, but do not remember where, or know exactly the reason why —though, from my heart, I have many times repeated the thanksgiving to Almighty God, for our "creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life," and added a prayer that I might not live in vain.

The first thing I do remember, and that very distinctly, though I was hardly three years old, was finding myself over the edge of the fender and on to the fire; and it came about in this wise.

It was ironing day, or washing day, or one of those dreadful days in the household, when all hands are impounded, and called upon to help. No doubt the nurse-maid was one of those victims, and so I had a few nuts, ready cracked, given to me to play with, and was dismissed into the parlour, and told to sit down on the floor and eat them.

I can picture to myself, that parlour door with its old-fashioned brass lock, and I carefully shut it after me by running backwards and forwards and pushing at it, until it gave a click and was fast. Then, when my nuts were all eaten, and I had nothing left to do, the thought came into my mind that I would throw the shells into the fire with my eyes shut. So filling both hands, and doubling them up quite tight, I shut my eyes and deliberately walked into the fire.

Of course I screamed lustily as I felt the heat, and my coral necklace catching upon something or my snatching at it,—I don't know which,—broke, and I heard the beads fall one by one into the ash-pan, and I felt my pinafore beginning to smoke. My mother and the maids were happily on the spot in a moment, and pulled me up before any serious damage was done.

My mother took me on her knee, soothing me as only a mother can; then, feeling over me to find if anything was on fire, she exclaimed "Thank God!" and very soon from crying we fell to kissing.

My sister Sarah was some two years older than I was, and went every morning to a Mrs. Stewart (a lady in reduced circumstances, who had taken rooms close by) to be taught to read, and the first rudiments of music.

Alas! she could not learn music! and after many tears had been shed, and many prayers had been said, she was allowed to give it up. So I was to have the music lessons in her stead, and took to music as a duck does to water. My mother was so delighted when I could play tunes in the Instruction book, that to encourage me to further exertion, she bought me a music stool, with a red morocco top, and brass nails, and gave it to me for a birthday present; strange to say, after all these years, that stool is with me still.

At that remote period of existence, we lived in Southgate Street, not far from the Newarke Gates.

There were two houses just alike, with gardens running back a good distance, and divided from each other by a close wooden fence, some six feet high, and painted green.

A Mr. Rawson occupied the other house, side by side with ours, and he had a most good-natured son, named William.

He was a young man about twenty, very musical, and had been taught to play on the organ. Indeed, I believe he used to play when there was a needs be, in the different churches in the town. But he had an organ of his own in the largest of their two parlours, and there he used to practise. I have said he was very good-natured, and so he was; for he used to draw us up by our hands to the top of the garden fence, and then lift us down. Of course we were on the watch for him, and always ready. No words can tell how exciting that organ music was to me! I stood motionless, as long as he would go on playing, and could feel every nerve in my body thrill with the delightful sound.

But one day, a post chaise and pair of horses, with a postillion on one, stopped at our door, and stopped us in our play.

The only idea that crossed our minds was that it must be the judge's carriage, that used, at the assize times, to drive up and down our street, to and fro, to the Castle. But a lady in velvet cloak and plumed hat alighted, tightly clutching a little child. She was a Spanish lady, and spoke a jargon of English, Spanish, and French. We were required to stay and amuse the child, who, however, kept close to her mother's side.

Our curiosity was on tiptoe, when we heard the lady ask, what had become of Mr. Jones, her husband, and where he was to be found?

She understood that my mother knew him, and corresponded with his sister, so that explained her visit. She talked very fast indeed, and said he had married her in Spain, her own country, according to the rites of her Church—the Roman Catholic Church; and then had left her and her two little ones to go to England, promising to return, but had never come back.

Here she cried bitterly, and said one of her children, Donna Anna Maria, etc., had been forcibly taken away from her, and she was in constant dread lest this little one, Dolores, etc., should be taken from her too, for her husband was not a Catholic, and he would think it all right to get her away, and bring her up to be a Protestant. She vociferated and used a great deal of action, as she talked, and several times we could distinguish the word 'brute.'

My mother had some luncheon brought in, and did her best to comfort her. Yes, she could tell her where Mr. Jones was to be found. He was in Bristol, where he had bought a practice as a surgeon, and Miss Jones, his sister, was going to open a school at Market Harborough, and would no doubt have little Donna Maria under her care.

When Mrs. Jones had extracted all the information she could, she drove off again, with Dolores on her knee.

Our childish sympathies were all with the poor broken-hearted mother; and a fortnight after, when Miss Jones, my mother's friend, arrived on a visit of indefinite length, we felt a new sensation,—that of dislike. But alas! Miss Jones' cant—religious cant—and her fawning ways, induced my mother to promise that, when something happened, that was going to happen, she would send her two little girls, Sarah and Mary, to school at Market Harborough.

LEAFLET II.—Miss Jones' School at Market Harborough.

MISS JONES'S house was newly built, and stood at a short distance from the town, on the Leicester road; it was perched high up with three or four steps to the front door, in order that the kitchen department might be half underground. No pleasant prospect in front, for we looked over the turnpike road into a field, with a stagnant pond in the middle of it.

The Spanish child, Donna Anna Maria, was a poor half-starved little thing, with a very dark skin, and jet black hair. Her aunt was very unkind to her, and made her a regular drudge for the old servant Sally, keeping her up late at night, and rousing her up early in the morning.

I was a poor delicate child myself, and the *régime* of food was by no means beneficial to me. The milk and bread breakfast used to go

against the grain, and more so than ever, after I had found a piece of the rind of cheese at the bottom of my basin. Then I hated fat, and as we were never allowed to leave aught on our plates, I quietly conveyed mine on to my lap, and carried it off in my handkerchief. A little girl, Miss Taylor by name, who sat next to me, thought she would do the same, but she was not so dexterous, and let some of it fall on the floor. Poor child! it was gathered up and she was forcibly made to swallow it! This arbitrary mode of proceeding seemed to us as great an act of cruelty as if she had been broken on the wheel!

There is nothing pleasant to say about Miss Jones. I believe she took, at times, more to drink than was good for her, and then she would fly into violent passions, and throw the lesson-books at the children's heads; on such occasions, the old servant Sally would nod and wink and make signs, which we did not understand, till long afterwards.

A gentleman used to come and teach the writing and cyphering (I was only in pothooks, and just learning to make figures) and he used to give us lectures, at his own house, on electricity and the microscope and all that sort of thing. But I think he had the same failing as Miss Jones had, for he used to come in an evening and stay very late, so that we were often startled out of our sleep by the noise he made in taking his departure; and then old Sally would peep in at us with her nods and winks.

There was only one break in the cloud over Market Harborough, and that was when our father came through from London by the coach, and we were sent to the inn, where the horses were changed, to meet him. How delighted we were to see him, and he gave us each a picture-book (with coloured plates) that he had bought at Darton's, in St. Paul's Churchyard. The teacher, Miss Lee, went with us, but the longing to go home with him was so strong that it made me quite ill, and I remember afterwards falling off my chair in a faint.

But I remember one day doing a very naughty thing. I had not learnt my lessons, and wanted to go in, but my sister Sarah, to tease me, held the gate of the playground so that I could not get through; I flew into such a passion that I made the mark of my teeth on her shoulder, and was ashamed to see it red for some days after; she was more sorry and concerned than I was, and tried, though in vain, to prevent my being sent to bed there and then.

There were several beds in one room, and one night, when we were all in bed, the point discussed was, what we should do to Miss Lee, the teacher, if we could have our own way. This Miss Lee was more disliked than Miss Jones, and one child proposed the pond: "Put her in the pond!" How was it to be done? It was like the bell to be put on the cat's neck. "If I get her in a sack" said the little conspirator, "who will help to draw her to the pond?" "I will!" "I will!" came first from one, and then from another, and so we were all involved in a would-be crime!

But the hour of our deliverance came at last. We went home for the holidays, and were never sent back.

LEAFLET III.—Robert Hall.

MARKET HARBRO', with all its childish sins and sorrows, was left behind, and we were happily at home again.

But here everything was changed; it was as though another leaf had been turned over in our lives. Old things had passed away, and all things had become new. We saw nothing more of our good-natured friend William, or his organ, or his pretty strip of garden, with its beds of bright-coloured tulips, carefully shaded from the sun, or its patches of ranunculus so brilliant and so gay. Our home was not there any longer, we were in another house, and a good roomy old house it was, which my father had bought in the Friar Lane, with a garden going through, and opening into the Millstone Lane.

There was an oval grass-plat, and in the centre stood a weeping willow, with its drooping branches coming to the ground. A broad gravel walk ran round the grass-plat, and was bordered with lilacs and laburnums, and flowering shrubs.

The back windows of the house looked into the garden; while beyond it, we saw the cattle grazing, and country roads, and pretty green hedge-rows. How different the view then, and now! To the right of the garden, in the Millstone Lane, my father was having a warehouse built, but at present that was in embryo.

Not only did we find the house new, but a new baby had arrived, (a little girl named Elizabeth). We also had a new nursemaid, named Ann Burbidge, and when we asked her where the new baby had come from, she told us the "parsley bed." So, day after day, we used to examine the parsley bed, but it is needless to say it was all labour lost.

And now, there came a happy interregnum of holiday time; we were allowed to run about the new garden, and to play to our hearts' content in our new nurseries, where the darling doll "Euphemia" was dressed and undressed, without any regard to day or night. It was a delightful time, and there was only one slight accident to be any drawback to our pleasure; the painters were in the house, and poor Sarah was unlucky enough to put her hand on their wet paint, and leave the mark of her fingers and thumb on the wall of the staircase. Whereupon, the painter gave us chase, and declared that if he could only catch us, he would paint our faces black! After that, we were like mice in our holes, and only looked out when the coast was clear, and were very cautious in our movements.

All this time, our mother had been ill, and had never come out of her room. One day, when we were taken in to see her, and lifted up to caress her, and to hear what she wanted to say to us, Robert Hall was in the room, sitting by the bed with his face covered with both hands, as if he were in prayer. But as soon as he saw us, he rose, and greeted us with,—"God bless you my children; if you can do nothing else for your mother, you can pray for her; God always hears little children."

In March, of the following year ('26) Mr. Hall brought his ministry at Leicester to a close, and removed to Bristol. I believe his farewell sermon was preached from the text "Unto me who am the least of all saints," etc.—*Eph.* iii., 8.

His leaving was brought about by the disgraceful conduct of a young woman, a dressmaker, who made a great profession of religion, and was a member of his church.

She had been in the habit of working for my mother, who used to think highly of her as a good christian woman.

But lo and behold! Mr. Haines a draper in the Market Place, who supplied her with silks and satins, and whatever else she wanted, began to suspect her honesty; so accordingly, had her house searched, when stolen goods were found secreted, to the value of several hundred pounds.

She was tried and convicted of the theft; and the circumstance was so painful to Mr. Hall, that, as he said to his friends, "it wounded him to the quick."

He preached a sermon on the occasion, and the culprit was afterwards excluded from the society.

During the time of his removal from the one place to the other, he made our house his home, and we children grew to be very fond of him.

Ann Burbidge had informed us that he was a *genius*, and we watched his every movement with the greatest interest. He was a very large man, and used to come down stairs, in a morning, without coat or waistcoat, in a loose black gown, fastened at the neck, and that floated behind him. He despised luxury, and would wash at the sink, and stand to brush his teeth in the yard, where he could pump as much water as he wanted; next came the shaving business,—to us the best part of the whole proceedings:—the glass was set up on the kitchen dresser, and as soon as the razor was safely put aside, he would talk to us in the most simple and affectionate manner; and before he went back to his room to finish his toilette, he never failed to put his hand upon our heads and give us his blessing.

We were very sorry indeed, when the time came for his departure; but our mother, who was devoted to him, and quite appreciated by him, observed the day with weeping and lamentation, and had all the blinds drawn down, and the shutters half closed—feeling, as she said, that she had "lost a friend."

Robert Hall was indeed a *genius*, (see Dr. Johnson's definition of the word, "a man endowed with superior faculties") and his superior faculties lifted him far above the prejudices of any sect, and beyond the contracted circle of the Dissenting Church in Harvey Lane.

Many eminent men—painters, poets, and philosophers, in their journeyings to and fro, used to make a point of visiting Leicester for the purpose of hearing him preach. And my mother used to say how much he regretted his want of freedom in not being able to invite his visitors

to the Communion Table; but it was contrary to the rules of the community, for Baptists to meet any, save the members of their own Church.

Robert Hall was an ornament to his country; and it is well that the inhabitants of Leicester have done tardy justice to his eloquence and his powers of mind, by erecting a statue to his memory.

A great number of anecdotes are told of Robert Hall's wit and sharpness of reparteé, many of them too frivolous to believe.

But it is a well-known fact that punctuality was not one of his virtues, and when he went out to dine, he would too often try the patience of his hostess, by keeping the dinner waiting for an hour or even more; and when remonstrated with, he invariably replied "he was sorry, but that the dinner was not too much done for him."

But all public men with the same fault, have not met with the indulgence that was shown towards Robert Hall.

It is said, that Beau Brummel thought it a mark of fashion, to try the patience of his entertainers by keeping them waiting.

One of these was a Marquis, and he determined not to submit any longer, to the oft-repeated insult. Accordingly, he had dinner served at the proper time, and the consequence was, that Beau Brummel and the cheese arrived together. The Marquis vouchsafed no apology, and Beau Brummel was so far cured, as never to be late at that table any more.

Robert Hall, it is said, was one day dining with a large party of friends, when the lady of the house pressed him several times, and over much, to let her help him to more. Mr. Hall got impatient, and turning to the maid behind him, said abruptly "if you have a Bible in the house, bring it." Everyone looked surprised, and anxious to know what was coming, when Mr. Hall went on "Bring it, and I will take an oath, that I have had enough!"

Among the many friends who came to visit Mr. Hall at our house, to enjoy his society, and to take a regretful leave of him, was one who was to exercise a lasting influence upon our lives, in the matter of education.

This was Mr. Ryley, a gentleman of independent means, who had followed Mr. Hall from Cambridge, and was living with two daughters in a house of his own in the Newarkes.

He was very stern, and in those days we were frightened at him, and generally contrived to run away. But he was in trouble, that we knew nothing about.

He had lost his only son, a youth of great promise, and just of age. By lifting some portfolios that were too heavy for him, he had broken a blood vessel, and died in a few hours.

Nor was this all, his mother was so distracted with the grief, and the suddenness of the blow, that her mind became unhinged, and within the space of three short weeks, she was borne away, and laid beside her son.

Very soon after Mr. Hall's departure, another visitor came to see my mother,—an old gentleman from Nottingham. I forget his name, but

the advice he gave to us, we never did forget. He told us not to be satisfied with an apple from the lower boughs,—the higher the fruit grew, the finer and the better it was; and he bade us be sure and pluck an apple from the top of the tree.

And so it came to pass. Providence gave to us both an apple from the topmost bough.

But to return to our nursery.

We had watched, from its windows, the progress of my father's warehouse being built in the Millstone Lane, and for many weeks had seen the men at work, raising it up. We knew quite well the bricklayers, and the carpenters, and the slaterers, who with hammer and nails, had been busy a long time fastening the slates on little slats of wood upon the roof.

And now that all was done, the workmen and workwomen in my father's employ, had a supper given them, of roast beef and plum pudding.

The supper was in the lower room, but the dancing and the play were in the one above.

Before the evening was over, Ann Burbidge took us up the stairs to have a peep. It was a merry party, and the game just then being played, was "turn the trencher." I believe that Sarah and I, had each to give a turn to the said trencher, and then amid a cheer for "the young ladies" we were marched off to bed.

LEAFLET IV.—Rowland Hill.

ALTHOUGH we were enjoying a freedom from school, and a comparative holiday, my father kept our minds well supplied with books, which he used to buy, when he could not procure them in any other way. Isaac Taylor's "Scenes" in Europe, Asia, and Africa, were well nigh worn out by us, for the plates that were not coloured, we used to paint ourselves; our favourite picture being that of a liar, a native of Siam, with his mouth sewed up, and he tied to a post, and left to die. On Sundays, we were allowed to see the pictures in "Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible," folio edition in two volumes, and were made familiar with the furniture of the Jewish Temple, the ark, the censers, the vestments of the high priests, the brazen candlesticks, etc.

Another favourite book was a large printed edition of Dr. Paley's "Theology," which interested us very much.

Of course we never doubted the existence of a God, but Dr. Paley's argument about the watch has never been forgotten. If the watch with its mainspring, its chain, and its delicate wheels must have had a maker,

how much more the universe, with its mechanism, and its wonderful contrivances must have had a Creator?

How true are the words of the Psalmist, "the *fool* hath said in his heart there is no God.

Rowland Hill's "Village Dialogues" were, in those days, amongst our most edifying Sunday books; though we were quite ignorant of the depth of Mrs. Chipman's guilt, or the heinousness of "My Lord Dash's" crime; but we liked best, and read first, those parts of advice about marriage. "The boy is the father to the man," and the same proverb may hold good, of the opposite sex. But how impossible it is when once grown up to feel any more as a child! Then, we used to weep over Mr. Merryman's grave, but now, can read the affecting recital without a sigh.

There is such sly wit about Rowland Hill, that it gives a relish to his book, and he is far more liberal with it, than one of his lady characters, who keeps her pepper and salt under lock and key, lest her domestics might flavour their food too highly, and be tempted to eat too much.

Then too, we became acquainted with the family of the Greedys and their wealthy uncle, who knew better than anybody else how to turn the pockets of others inside out, that he might fill his own; and who once was going to marry a rich widow, but he frightened her so much with his threatened economy, that she begged off, and had to pay him a good round sum for her breach of the contract.

Rowland Hill came one evening to preach in Leicester, at the chapel in Bond Street, and Sarah and I were put to bed more than half an hour too soon, to enable the nurse, Ann Burbidge, to go to hear him.

On her return, she was all excitement, and very much delighted with his sermon, in which he had related several telling anecdotes.

But before the service began, there was a cry raised of a gallery falling, or the schoolroom floor sinking; and a regular panic was the consequence; Ann sat still through all the noise and confusion, but had to witness the crush, and even the sight of some ladies mounting on the seats, and striding across the tops of the pews, making only one step, from one to the other.

It was a false alarm, and all the mischief that came of it, was through the crowd squeezing each other nearly to death; but when quiet was at last restored, Rowland Hill came into the pulpit, and conducted the service as if nothing had happened.

I have said my father kept us well supplied with books, and I might add, that, from his boyhood, he made every effort to educate himself, for he had a natural taste for literature.

He was one of a family of fifteen, born and brought up at Ibstock, on one of Mr. Pares' farms, in the county of Leicester.

We children never knew the grandfather Kirby, but he was much respected by Mr. Pares, and after staying a number of years at Ibstock,

removed to another farm, under the same landlord, and obtained a reputation for his fine breed of stock, which was held in much esteem, and secured good prices.

There were two of the Mr. Pares, and together they were the proprietors of a Bank at Leicester, now made into a joint-stock Bank, but still retaining the name of "Pares' Bank."

One of them carried on a business in the Leicester trade, worsted spinning, and manufacture of hosiery, in the Newarke, where he lived in a noble looking house, like a mansion, and boasting of a paddock with an avenue of very fine trees. It need hardly be said, that what was then a paddock, is now a street of houses.

One May fair day, as soon as the boys were old enough to get their own living, John (who was my father), and his brother Samuel were driven by their father in a gig over to Leicester, and left behind to make their own way in the world.

My father was taken into Mr. Pares' hosiery warehouse in the Newarke, while his brother, who could write a better hand, and was ready at accounts, was chosen to fill a situation in the Bank.

An Ibstock worthy once informed us that the Kirby family were noted for their industry; and so it happened, that the whole brood of fifteen, made their way in the world, and grew up to be well-to-do men and women.

I might say, that the two brothers, remained for a long time boarding in a public house, without getting into any mischief. It was kept by a Mr. Findlay who used to shut the door at ten o'clock; and I have heard my father say, that if any customer came knocking after that hour, Mr. Findlay would call out, "Good night," and bid him carry his money elsewhere. This mode of proceeding in no wise interfered with his success in trade, for after a time, he retired in good circumstances, to a house in King Street.

My father who had gained his esteem and good opinion, was left trustee for his widow. And it was one of our treats as children, to be fetched to take tea and spend the evening at Mrs. Findlay's, where we were waited upon like princesses, and no doubt had a great deal more plum cake than was good for us.

It is the privilege of few children to have such a kind and good father as we had, for he was always planning something for our benefit, and never thought much of the money spent upon our education. He was also fond of giving us any little pleasure in his power. And on Fair days, when the Humberstone Gate would be crowded with stalls and shows, he would steer us down, carrying me on his arm, and take us in to see the wild beast at Wombwell's; but Sarah was generally frightened, and cried if the lion or the tiger began to roar.

On one such occasion, he had to bring us out again; and let us look for a time, at the dancing ladies in front of the show all dressed in silver and gold, bedizened with jewels, and their faces well painted pink and white.

When Sarah had dried her tears he let us go into another show calling itself the "Dramatic Troupe"; here we took our places in a gallery, or more properly speaking "the boxes," and looked down on the sanded floor, which in common parlance was the stage.

A number of performers came in and out, from behind a curtain, but we could not understand what they said or what they meant, until, at last a clown led in a pony by a long rope, and told us that this was the "*wonderful pony*," who knew all our secrets, and was going to tell them to the public.

The clown stood in the centre of the stage, and let the pony run round and round to the extent of its tether, and close to the company in the boxes.

He asked the pony several questions about sweethearts and such like things, till at length came the fatal inquiry, "who is fond of lying in bed in a morning?"

This fell like a thunder bolt upon Sarah and upon me, and we tried to hide ourselves as best we could; but round and round ran the pony, and stopped at last, and thrust his nose into the face of a fat rosy cheeked girl, who only laughed, and clapped her hands, and shouted out as loud as she could—"the pony's right, wise pony! wonderful pony to have found me out!"

We came away at once, and were delighted to get off, without having any of our own secrets made public.

LEAFLET V.—The Whipping Toms and The Vicar of St. Mary's.

SHROVE TUESDAY was always a noisy day for the Friar Lane, and we were generally in the middle of dinner, when a rabble-rout of plough boys, and farmer's men, used to clatter down the street, in their smock frocks, and hob-nailed boots, and with waggoner's whips in their hands.

They were making their way to the Newarke, which was said to enjoy some privilege, or exemption from a rate, on condition of this fair being allowed there once a year.

On one of these Shrove Tuesdays, we were taken under the Newarke gateway, to see the Whipping Toms, and my father held first Sarah up in his arms, and then me, to look over the heads of the crowd.

The Whipping Toms had arranged themselves in two lines, face to face, leaving a space between them like a lane. The fun was to get some unfortunate persons between the lines,—and they were not very

scrupulous about pushing them in, and then to whip them up and down to their heart's content. The screaming was of course deafening, and we soon had had enough.

St. Mary's Vicarage stood at the further end of the Newarke, and once upon a time, a Reverend Vicar, ventured down, thinking of course, he would not be assailed; but no sooner was he fairly within the lines, than the Whipping Toms set upon him. Such a glorious opportunity did not often occur, and was not to be lost.

The Vicar was whipped down to his own gate, and is said not to have waited to open it, but in a second to have taken a leap, and "*whipped*" over it.

This said Vicar, was no other than the Rev. Thomas Robinson, well known as the author of "Scripture Characters" and many other works; and it is through his instrumentality and moral influence that the fair of the "Whipping Toms" was put down, and finally suppressed in the year 1847.

My father was a churchman, a friend of Mr. Robinson's, and a communicant at St. Mary's; but my mother was devoted to Robert Hall, and a member of his church, and declined to leave his ministry for any suitor, or on any consideration whatever. Whereupon my father called on Mr. Robinson to ask him what he had better do, as he should not like to go to one place of worship and his wife to another.

Mr. Robinson was clear in his judgment, and cut the knot by saying "by all means go and hear Robert Hall, and be thankful; for if it were possible, I should be delighted to go, every Sunday and hear him myself."

And so from the time of his marriage, he became an attendant at Harvey Lane Chapel; and as his children grew up around him, they were taken there too.

In his younger days, my father had made a stay of some months with friends at Nottingham; and during that time, had taken the opportunity of learning French from a refugee, who was settled there, and teaching the language for a livelihood.

And so it happened that many French books which he had bought for his own use, now became of great use to us.

Besides his dictionary, and grammer and such like, he had "Telemachus," "Fontaine's Fables," and what we liked best of all, two volumes of "Madame Bonne and Her Pupils." These were in very easy French, and our favourite translation books.

They are full of old fashioned Fairy tales, such as,—"Beauty and the Beast." "The Prince with the Fairy Ring," which gave him a nip whenever he did anything that was wrong. And another, of a Prince who displeased his fairy godmother, by his vanity, and to punish him, she stretched his nose to such a size, that he could scarcely find a place large enough—not for himself, but for his nose.

Whenever we were ill and had to stay indoors, we used to have "Dr. Syntax Journey in Search of the Picturesque," with its coloured plates by Rolandson, to amuse ourselves with. Then every Saturday night, a number of the Penny and Saturday Magazine, used to come out of our father's coat pocket. And from the same place, on other occasions, we had Miss Edgworth's "Evenings at Home;" and by and bye, "Chamber's Miscellany," and later on, Knights publications.

It was very different in those days, when books were scarce, and to write a book was thought to be a Herculean task, to these modern times, when everybody can write a book, and there are perhaps more books than readers.

The Permanent Library was a great boon to us, and we were often trusted to carry the books, for exchange, to Mr. Coombe's shop in the Gallowtree Gate, where the library had been got together in the upstairs rooms, and remained there for several years, indeed until the News Room in Belvoir Street was built.

Mr. Coombe's windows were a very convenient place, from which to see the processions at elections, or any other sight that was to be seen.

And once upon a time (though such a thing can scarcely be believed), we saw Mr. Gladstone chaired, as the Conservative Member for Leicester; with plenty of cheering, and blue banners flying. From some cause or other, the men who carried him, seemed to totter under their load, and we thought it a very unsafe mode of conveyance.

This event however did not occur until the year '35.

But now our holiday time came to an end. A lady opened a day school, on the London Road,—Miss Elizabeth Coltman was the name of the lady, and she called in the Friar Lane, with an introduction to my mother, who was prepossessed in her favour, and promised her a pupil, if not two.

It was eventually agreed, that Sarah should go as daily boarder to Miss Coltman's, for a time without me, and that I should go with my dear mother, for the benefit of her health, to Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

LEAFLET VI.—Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

MY Father drove us in an open carriage, my mother and myself, the nurse Ann Burbidge and an afflicted child (named Fanny Shardlow) whose parents were sanguine enough to think that the Ashby baths would cure. After he had stayed with us a few days and comfortably settled us in lodgings,—a first floor over a shop, he drove back home again.

The baths, the pump room, and the gardens, with their drooping trees, and seats at every turn, were to me like fairyland. And to make it still more like Elysium, a gentleman was there, who had a musical box. When he took it from his pocket and set it off playing, I thought at first it was a piece of magic. But when he beckoned me to him, and took me on his knee and showed me the mystery of the music I clapped my hands for joy and was quite wild with pleasure. Of course he and I were nearly always together, and a great many times did that little box play. I believe the prudent nurse Ann Burbidge did once venture to expostulate with my mother about "the child" being so much with a stranger, a gentlemen who was quite alone, but my mother was wise enough, not to spoil my pleasure, and the stranger expressed himself very happy in my company.

The baths might have been very good for Fanny Shardlow, but they were made distasteful to me by the bath-woman, one day coming suddenly behind me as I was enjoying myself in the bath and without any notice popping my head under water. It gave me such a shock that I could never be persuaded to bathe any more.

My mother was acquainted with some ladies and gentlemen at Ashby-de-la-Zouch and joined them in a picnic or two. One of these picnics was to Sir George Beaumont's seat at Coleorton; a very pretty place and the gardens a mass of flowers.

Another time we drove to Lord Hasting's Park, at Castle Donington, a lovely place, indeed, with herds of deer feeding under the fine old trees (the finest in the county) and the broad river Trent sparkling in the sun, and looking very inviting. After dining on the grass in a cool shady place, the gentlemen would have out the boat and row us on the water. But as they did not understand rowing, I felt very thankful when we were safe on dry land, and that my dear mother was not drowned. But in spite of all my pleasures I had a secret, and terrible grief. The lodgings we were in were over a shop, where corn and straw, and meal, and such like things were sold. An old man, a Mr. Worstall was the master, and as I ran in and out of the house, he used to way-lay me, and when he could catch me, he would hold me fast between his knees and tell me that I need not think of going back to Leicester any more, for that he meant to keep me, and to make me his little wife. Of course I believed every word he said, and felt like a hunted hare, and used to lie awake at night and cry, to think what a dreadful fate mine was. I had a great mind to tell my friend with the musical box the trouble I was in, but felt ashamed to mention the name of such an ugly old man as Mr. Worstall.

At last, Fanny Shardlow who slept in a crib in the same room with me, let the secret out. So then my mother comforted me, wiped away my tears and told me that she would settle with Mr. Worstall, and that he should not have me. And so it came to pass, that I was rescued out of his clutches like a fairy princess and brought safe to my home again.

Are not the troubles of children as great as those of grown up people?

LEAFLFT VII.—School Days

AFTER the return from Ashby-de-la-Zouch, I went with Sarah to Miss Coltman's school on the London Road. One of my father's young men who had played at turn the trencher, used to take us there, and fetch us back, and if it was wet or dirty he would carry me, which I liked very much better than walking on the Leicester stones. Poor Sarah was just at this time promoted from baby socks to stockings, and as her fat round knees refused to keep them up, she was continually lagging behind to give them a pull; whereupon, James Beales, for that was the name of our escort, complained to my mother, that he did not like to be seen walking with a young lady who "did up her garters in the street."

But it happened once, when James was not with us, and Sarah had run on and left me looking into a shop window, that I came to grief.

I opened the door as usual, and ran up the stairs to the back room where we used to take off our bonnets. But lo and behold! I was all wrong; it was a bed-room, and had a bed in it, with crimson curtains, and worse than all! a man in his night shirt started up in bed and began to ring the bell. I cleared the stairs at one bound and was out in the street in a second, but still the bell kept on ringing and I fancied I heard the tramp of feet coming after me—most likely to take me up.

When I got to Miss Coltman's (which was the very next house) I sat down on the stairs trembling and faint, until some one came to look after me.

Miss Coltman had a lady to assist her in the school, a Miss Palmer, and a most good-natured lady she was. We used to say our multiplication table to her, and stand in the stocks, and hold the back board while. The constrained position always made the tears run down my face, when Miss Palmer would take her handkerchief and wipe them away, and I can fancy I hear her now saying in a cheerful voice, "twice three are six, and twice four are eight, if we get on as well as that, we shall soon have done."

She had a niece, a weekly boarder in the school, who used to be called "little Miss Palmer" to distinguish her from "her big aunt." That little Miss Palmer has been a life-long friend.

There were no police in those days, and watchmen used to go about the streets with their lanterns, and cry the hour—"one o'clock, cloudy morning," and so on.

Well, one night, in the middle of the night, when Sarah and I were fast asleep, we were startled up by a loud noise, that I thought was a knife grinder, and that he was grinding his knives and scissors in our room; the noise kept on and seemed to get louder and louder, so out of bed we jumped and ran down to our mother.

She said it was the watchman springing his rattle, and that he was crying "fire."

My father was in his dressing room preparing to go out, so we popped into the warm bed, and lay there, all in a tremble till he came back.

He said the fire was at Mr. Kelly's factory on Bow Bridge; but we did not hear all particulars, for we had to turn out, and run upstairs again to our own bed.

It was that *very* Bow Bridge over which King Richard III. had ridden on his way to Bosworth Field, after he had spent the night in Leicester at the Old Blue Boar Inn; and on which the gipsy woman had met him, and told him, that where his heels were that morning, his head would be that night.

But to return to our school days. Miss Coltman was rather a melancholy lady, and so she soon grew discouraged and gave the school up, or rather transferred it to a cousin of hers, a Miss Lydia Coltman, who took a house more in the centre of the town, in what was then called the "Swine's Market."

She was a very romantic person, and used to excite us, and delight us too, by relating stories of the supernatural and most imaginative kind.

She had come from Lichfield, and one day she frightened us all, with a ghost tale, or what was seemingly a ghost, which had been seen wandering about in the Cathedral in the dead of the night.

"But all's well that ends well." So she and her friends after watching the quasi ghost for some time through their bedroom window, had the good sense to get up and see what it was. Of course it was no ghost, though we had been worked up to expect one; it was a poor half-witted person, who had fallen asleep during the afternoon prayers and been locked in.

There were a number of pupils in the school, also of the romantic kind. Sarah and Annie Biggs (sisters of John Biggs for whom a monument in the shape of a statue has been erected on the Welford Road), took the lead in everything, and were well read in Shakspeare, and devoted to the Drama.

On Saturday afternoons, we used to spend the half holiday at their house in the Humberstone Gate. And there an empty room was turned into a theatre with a stage and curtain and all complete; and there we used to perform to our hearts content; and sometimes one of the brothers, William or Joseph, (on grand occasions) made his appearance and would join us in our play, but always in full costume, with a sword by his side. These were certainly very happy half-holidays, and no doubt did us a great deal of good.

But Miss Lydia Coltman herself had a taste for dramatic performances, and one Christmas-time, before we broke up, she gave a public entertainment; in which all her pupils were to take a part. Hannah Moore's "Search after Happiness" came first, but in spite of our shepherd's crooks and broad brimmed hats, we found so much poetry rather heavy and tedious.

But then came a little play called the "Inquisitive Girl," and I was chosen to take that most important character.

The test was, a box that I was forbidden to open, and it would not have been in human nature if I had not wanted to know what it contained. So after some debatings with myself, I lifted up the lid, and of course out flew a bird; in vain I tried to catch it, or get it back into the box, and at last, was obliged to give it up in despair.

There was a great deal of merriment and applause from the audience, but unfortunately it did not end in the room.

Many a time after that performance, I used to be startled in the street, by some one calling after me, "Holloa! little inquisitive! how goes it now? have you caught the bird?" I felt so ashamed, I used to run as though I were shot.

A gentleman—a half-pay officer (retired), of the name of Brown, came to live on the other side of Friar Lane, and his two daughters, going to Miss Coltman's too, used to walk to school with us.

Mr. Sarson, Senr., once followed us as we went along, talking very fast, and of course not thinking of being overheard. We were discussing the merits of oysters—scalloped or raw. So ever after, he used to call after us in the street,—"Well now, my little oyster girls! are they to be scalloped? or are they to be raw?"

LEAFLET VIII.—A Skirmish in Frisby Church.

ABOUT this time, an artist Mr. Edward Fancourt, nephew to Dr. Fancourt, vicar of St. Mary's, came to Leicester, and took lodgings in the Cank Street, near to the old pump, now no longer in existence.

He was a very interesting man, and was very often at our house; but so shy, that if there came a double knock at the front door while he was having his supper, he would lay down his knife and fork, and look round for some means of escape. My mother was extremely hospitable, and by degrees made him feel quite at his ease. Dr. Noble was one among his many patrons, and for him he painted a copy of Murillo's "Flower Girl," which was a great ornament to the dining room at Dannett's Hall.

He had come from London, where his father was chaplain to the Jews' chapel, in Hoxton Square. And by and bye his wife,—Mrs. Edward Fancourt arrived, and received a cordial welcome at our house.

She was a remarkably handsome woman, and her husband painted a charming portrait of her, half length and full size.

It was well he did so, for he little knew what the chances and changes of this mortal life were to be.

There was an outbreak of small-pox in the town, and this poor lady was one of its victims. Alas for her beauty! It was gone for ever; and in spite of her husband's great tenderness, she never seemed quite so happy afterwards.

Mr. Edward's sister, Miss Fancourt, was arranging to take a school at Frisby, from Miss Noble the vicar's daughter. And to Frisby I was destined to go.

I was always delicate, and the air of the town, my mother thought, was not so desirable for me, as that of the country; and besides, there was another motive, she had attached herself warmly to the Fancourts, and the friendship thus begun, lasted as long as she lived.

As the boarding at Market Harbro' had been such a failure, and had rather done my health harm than good, another plan was fixed upon for Frisby. I was to live in the village with my mother's mother, in a cottage taken for the purpose, and to go every day, morning and afternoon, to Miss Fancourt's school.

Miss Fancourt was a very handsome and attractive woman; she had very fine expressive eyes, and their dark lashes lay half way down her cheeks. I used to admire her very much indeed, and to love her so ardently, that I often thought, if I were but a man, I would certainly marry her.

In spite of the separation from home, which was the only drawback, I led now a very delightful life.

The cottage was not far from the church, and looked into a garden full of apple and other fruit trees. I had a bit of ground given to me in front of our parlour window, to do as I liked with, and to make a garden of my own.

It was soon full of pinks and carnations and other sweet smelling flowers; but to enable me to walk round it, there must needs be a path; and so one was made, and covered at first with the black dust from the coals. Then my grandmother said, I might fetch a little gravel, from a gravel pit in a field at no great distance; and she brought out a white leather bag, made in a triangular shape, which she said had been her powder bag, when it was the fashion to wear her hair powdered.

The maid Jane went with me, trowel in hand and all things needful; but when we had filled the bag, and were ready to start back again, I heard the sound of voices and of footsteps on the other side of the hedge. I am sure my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth with fear.

The thought flashed upon me, that they were men, come to take me to prison for stealing this gravel. Jane marched along without hearing or heeding any thing, but I came lagging after her, with my head down, and not daring to look anywhere but straight down my nose.

When the path was finished, its colour was certainly improved; and the next time my schoolfellows came in, they admired it, and said if they

had but known of the excursion to the gravel pit, they should have been delighted to go with me, and have done all the work for me. So I felt relieved and comforted by the thought, that after all, the gravel pit might have been public property.

But a new turn was given to my thoughts at Miss Fancourt's school. Her father being chaplain for the Jews, we had a great deal of fancy-work to do for the Jewish cause, and were led to think a great deal about them. Magazines on their behalf, were freely circulated amongst us, as were also the publications of Edward Irving, for the Fancourts were staunch friends and great admirers of his.

The vicar, Mr. Noble, used to come to teach the writing and the cyphering; and we made the greatest fuss with him, caressing him not only in the school-room, but even in the vestry of his church. He was a very kind-hearted old man, and much beloved by everybody; but he had strong notions about baptism; and believed that salvation depended upon it. One Sunday, he went so far as to insert a word or two of his own, into the lesson for the day, thus he read—"he that believeth not," and after a pause "*and is not baptised*, shall be damned."

On our way from church, my grandmother attacked him for this altered version, and openly declared he was altogether wrong. He skilfully turned the conversation, and when he shook hands and said goodbye he assured her that she was safe, and that he had no desire to baptise her over again.

But an incident occured in the church, which was most exciting. Mr. Casson, a gentlemen in the village, enclosed a pew for himself and his nieces; and it seemed, had placed it on the very spot where a bench had stood for the old folks to sit on. The sides of the pew were panelled, the seats cushioned with crimson, and a lock put upon the door. This inovation of the fine gentleman was not to be borne, so Mrs. Pepper, the village leech, was deputed to resist it.

She was a very stout old woman, and knew quite well how to proceed. When Mr. Casson followed by two ladies, arrived, and unlocking the door, was about to come in, she showed fight, stuck her toes into the opposite side of the pew, stiffened herself, and prepared to give battle. Mr. Casson was unwise enough to go in, and taking her by the waist, try to get her out. But no such thing! She was more than a match for him, and he was obliged ignominously to beat a retreat, locking the door upon her, and leaving her in possession.

Mr. Noble was meanwhile standing in the reading desk ready to begin, and we were on tiptoes, on our basses, anxious to see the end of the fray.

Mr. Casson disappeared from the village for a time, and I believe was at last obliged to come down with his "dust," and bribe the old folks to be quiet.

We, naughty children that we were, felt at heart, glad that old Mrs. Pepper had been victorious, and not parted with her bench for nothing.

LEAFLET IX.—Miss Fancourt's Miraculous Cure.

I HAD a great many simple pleasures at Frisby; besides walking out whenever I liked with the young ladies, one of them, Louisa Lucas, used to come every Saturday afternoon (holiday time) and bring her guinea paint-box to our cottage; we used to gather a flower, and paint it together, comparing our performances afterwards. She was very good-natured and always ready to assist me in anything I had in hand.

And once a week, I used to go up the street, to an old woman, Peggy by name, who churned our butter and made cream-cheeses, round and thick and rich. My mother had one of these cheeses sent to Leicester every Saturday by the carrier, in a basket we used to call "the hoppet," and which hoppet came back in the evening with our provisions for the week.

Peggy always treated me as if I had been a queen, dusting a chair and making me sit down, while she had her say out; and then packed the cheese with its cloth of brilliant whiteness into my little basket, generally adding a pat of butter, she had taken from the churn on purpose, as a present for me.

Going to Peggy's was one of my pleasures, but I also had a friend in Mrs. Noble, the vicar's wife, who would get me to the vicarage whenever she could; and tell me all manner of tales out of her own life, rambling over the house or garden all the time. Gold and silver pheasants were kept in the garden in a wire fence, and we always went first to take a peep at them and to admire them.

There was a room in the house, that had formerly been Miss Noble's schoolroom, but was now only used for lumber. Here, one day we found a mahogany box,—yes, it was a paint box and it was locked. It was not till weeks afterwards, that Mrs. Noble found the key and then to our chagrin it was empty!

She was of the true old Tory blood, abusing the Radicals in fine style, and the Methodists too. There was a tiny chapel in the village, and it happened once, that a woman, a Mrs. Physon, came there to preach.

She was of great use to the drunkards, for she held them over the bottomless pit and gave them such a shaking, that many of them became sober men ever after.

The father of our little maid Jane was one of her converts; from being a drunkard, a prize-fighter, and a very bad husband, he became all that could be desired.

Miss Fancourt used sometimes to come in and call upon my grandmother, most likely on a Sunday. She had a teacher, a Miss Brown, with whom she could trust the children. Well, one Sunday afternoon she came in, in a very excited manner and brought some letters to read, which had come from London, from her father in Hoxton Square.

From these letters, she read to us the narrative of her sister Elizabeth having been miraculously cured. She had been lying on her couch for

eight years, from some disease of the hip, and had never been able to rise. A clergyman, a Mr. Greaves, had visited her and having thought over her case and made it a matter of prayer, he came one evening and asked her whether she could have faith enough in the Lord Jesus to rise and walk; she answered "yes," hardly knowing what she said, and thereupon he bid her in the Saviour's name, "to rise and walk"; she did rise, and to the astonishment of all her friends from that time was cured.

This was what had excited Miss Fancourt so much, and this was what she read to us.

By and bye, Miss Elizabeth Fancourt herself, came down to Frisby and joined her sister in the school. The publicity of London was more than she could bear; the circumstances were noised about and she was followed to be inspected by the curious, whenever she went abroad; and even indoors she had no peace or privacy; for clergymen, and ministers of all denominations, were continually calling and desiring an interview with her, to cross-question her and convince themselves of the truth of her statements.

She was almost like a person from another world, for her thoughts seemed all in heaven. She began a bible class, and tried in every way that lay in her power, to influence us for good. She once invited a lady over from Melton Mowbray, a Miss Latham, to take the class for her, thinking that Miss Latham's words might be more efficacious than her own.

Miss Latham put us, verse by verse, through the 6th chapter of St. Matthew, and dwelt particularly on the fact, that in the sight of God our motives were of far more importance than our actions. We might be very generous, and do deeds of charity, but as He knew what had led us to do them, or what our motive was, they might be hateful in His sight. And when we prayed, He knew what had induced us to pray, whether we really wanted Him or felt our need of Him, or whether we did not care to have our prayers answered.

Miss Latham was a little fragile woman, and yet was so much in earnest, that she could not help making an impression.

At Melton she was quite a public character.

LEAFLET X.—Paganini's Concert.

MR. EDWARD FANCOURT and his wife (no longer beautiful) made a long stay at Frisby, and seemed in no hurry to leave it, and to prefer the country to London town.

We school children felt a kind of admiration for Mr. Edward, that no doubt was very childish. A word from him—and it was always a kind word,—or even a look, and it was sure to be a smiling look, was enough to feed upon for the rest of the day.

He made a number of very pretty pictures for his sister to hang in a group, in her drawing room,—portraits of her pupils, small size, oval and painted in oils.

As two of us went to practice in the drawing room, a Miss Parr, a black-eyed young lady was caught standing before her portrait, and taking an admiring look at herself. Of course she was teased unmercifully about the sin of vanity, and it was a long time before she heard the last of it.

As Miss Elizabeth Fancourt had taken the place of Miss Brown, the teacher, her services were no longer required, and she took an affectionate leave of us all. We felt sorry to part, and our consciences gave us a prick, and told us that now and then we had been a trouble to her.

She was a lady of middle age, and very suitable for the responsible situation she held. But children are always in mischief, and apt to ridicule those who are set in authority over them. And so it came to pass, that Miss Brown caused us no little fun. Her Sunday gown was of black satin, taken so much care of, that she never liked to sit upon it; so used to lift it over the stool, and carefully sit down. Of course she was apt to forget what she had done, and then would walk across the schoolroom, dragging the stool behind her. The power of imitation led us to do the same, and it was a trial of skill, which of us could walk the longest distance with the stool after us.

We had a young man, from Melton, to teach us Music. He used to walk over to Frisby once a week, for the purpose. He was one of the clerks in the Melton branch of the Leicestershire bank, and his name was Mr. Hickson.

A few years later, he brought his brother, Mr. Charles Hickson over, and introduced him to Miss Fancourt. He was a native of Melton, but as a lad had gone to Manchester where he had been very successful, and was now a junior partner in the firm of the cotton-lords,—"Townend and Hickson."

Of course, he fell in love with Miss Fancourt, and it was not to be wondered at, considering how attractive she was.

After I had left school some little time, she came to Leicester, to tell us that she was going to change her name for that of Hickson, and to say "goodbye" before she was married; when I felt a pang of jealousy, that made me unhappy for days.

We had afterwards, the opportunity of seeing her in her new home, and I could not help thinking how much more pleasant Frisby was, with its scent of roses and honeysuckles, than that dingy, money-getting, city of Manchester.

As Miss Fancourt's relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Fancourt, and an unmarried sister named Jane, evidently wished to leave London, and seemed to cling to the quiet of a country life, she began to look out for a larger and more commodious house. By and bye, she took one at Hoby, a village about a mile off, and removed there; but my mother

declined to let me remain as a boarder, so I stayed at Hoby only a few weeks, and was treated like a visitor, enjoying it very much indeed.

In the evenings, Miss Fancourt read aloud, Richardson's novel of "Sir Charles Grandison," and as she was of a romantic temperament herself, she gave due effect to the hair-breadth escapes and sentimental troubles of Miss Harriet Byron.

It was with regret that I said goodbye to Hoby, and Frisby too; my grandmother's cottage was given up, and not a vestige of those happy days remained.

All the flower roots in my little garden were carefully packed up, and sent by the carrier to Leicester, as I intended to have a garden of my own, in some pleasant corner; but to my dismay, when I got home, I found that my mother had allowed the two little ones—Catherine and Elizabeth to appropriate all my plants, and set them where they pleased. So there was an end of all my pretty pinks and carnations, and sweet smelling flowers.

I flew into a violent passion, and ran upstairs, stamping and protesting at the injustice of the proceeding. I locked myself in my room, and cried as though my heart would break, and heartily wished myself back at Frisby again. After my passion was over, I gave up the idea of having a garden at all; and then bathing my eyes, I went downstairs and made as light of it as I could.

My grandmother had given me two new bright penny pieces, and these I presented to my little sisters, as a peace-offering. They were very much delighted with them, but I might have remembered the adage,—"much coin much care;" for the same thing happened, as related by Mrs. Jameson in her drama under that title. The next time I went into the nursery, the children were crying, and quarrelling fiercely; one of them had dropped her penny, and not being able to find it, had snatched the other one's away, and was threatening to keep it. Of course, I soon picked up the lost penny, and order was restored without serious damage.

I had not been at home very long, before a rumour spread through the town, and everybody was excited, by the news of a terrible crime having been committed in the Wellington Street.

A man, and to all appearance a respectable man, of the name of Cook (by trade a bookbinder), occupied a house and shop there; as he was paying a bill to a London traveller, the temptation seized him to come behind his chair, as he was stooping to receipt it, and give him a cowardly blow. As soon as the fatal deed was done, the pockets of the poor innocent man were rifled of their contents, and his watch appropriated—Cook endeavoured to conceal the body by burning it; then locking up his house and shop, absconded, hoping to escape the hands of justice.

But of course, that was impossible; he was soon discovered and after a fair trial, was condemned to suffer the penalty of death. But what he had done was regarded with such horror and indignation, that the jury inflicted a still further punishment, and a very unusual one—the gibbet.

The worst of it was, that the spot selected, for carrying out this barbarous sentence, was in a pretty rural lane, turning off to the left from the toll-gate on the Aylestone Road. For long afterwards it was known as "Cook's Lane," and looked, (what in truth it was)—"a blighted place," for every blade of grass and even the trees and hedge rows had been completely trampled down, by the crowds of people, who had come from far and near to see the revolting sight.

As the poor man was buried in the lane, a ghost was soon invented, and nobody liked to pass that way, and even Sarah and I did not drive our pet pony any more in that direction.

But our thoughts were very soon turned into a more agreeable channel; our father took us to a concert to hear the celebrated violinist Paganini, and it was one of the greatest treats of my life.

He had been performing in London (probably in the year 1834), and was making excursions into the provinces.

No description can give the least idea of his playing, or the effect it had upon his audience. He played on three strings, or two strings, or on one, and it made no difference; it was all the same, a full rolling music more like the organ than the violin, and yet not like either.

As he played, he grew so excited, and looked so wild, with his hair flowing down his back, as to be more like a Dervish, or a super-natural person, than a man.

The enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds; it was in vain for them to shout "encore," "encore," for he kept retreating across the platform, and suddenly disappeared down the steps. The scene of confusion that followed is indescribable; stolid men and women, who looked as if they had never been excited in their lives, got upon the seats, the benches, and the chairs, and waved their shawls or handkerchiefs or their hats or anything they could catch hold of, to simulate a flag.

The moment Paganini appeared, and began to play, they were spell-bound. He improvised the subject according to his fancy; and could work upon them just at his pleasure, either moving them to laughter or to tears.

He was a great genius, and the art he possessed has certainly died with him.

LEAFLET XI.—The Rivals.

THOUGH I had left Miss Fancourt's, and all the peaceful scenes of a country life behind me, yet I found many of the sweetest joys awaiting me at home. The love I had for my mother was sufficient in itself to make me happy, and to add to that, my two little sisters, Kate and Elizabeth, were most affectionate and dear children, and I loved them with all my heart.

They went every day to a school kept by Miss Roughton, a lady of most agreeable manners, but whose personal appearance had been marred by small pox. I used to go to Miss Roughton's once or twice a week to take lessons in French, from a Parisian lady, resident in the house. I also took lessons in music, from a new master, a Mr. Mavins, who was a professor as well as a composer.

About this time, a gentleman paid us a visit who could not walk in the street without attracting attention. He came from Odessa, and wore the Russian dress, with plenty of fur, and a girdle of leather round his waist.

By profession he (Mr. Graves) was a doctor, and claimed to be a relative of my mother's, having married Miss Warner, who was her great-niece.

The real purport of his journey, was to get a little property, that he expected to come to his wife, on the death of her father; who was a fine specimen of an old English squire, with silk stockings, silver shoe buckles, and silver buttons on his coat, bearing his initials J. W. (Joseph Warner) and nobody knows what else besides.

He was brother to my grandmother, and walked over to Evington to see her; for a cottage had been taken for her there, when the one at Frisby had been given up; but it had no romance of the Fancourts about it, and was comparatively flat and uninteresting.

Joseph Warner was an old man, and found the walk longer, and more fatiguing than he expected. When he reached the village, and entered the cottage, the tea things were on the table, and tea was ready for him. But he felt exhausted, and tea was not what he wanted; so snatching up the cream he poured it all on the back of the fire, and giving the jug to the maid, he thrust a shilling into her hand, and said "Here my lass, no tea for me, fetch me some brandy!"

Mr. Graves had a flattering tongue, and tried to make love both to Sarah and to me, in an offensive and most disagreeable manner. And he used every argument to induce his wife's father, old Mr. Warner, to go back with him to Odessa, under the pretence of seeing his grandchildren; but my father was opposed to any such scheme, and privately told Mr. Warner what his fate might be, if he put himself into the power of such an unprincipled man—a push overboard, and he would never be heard of again.

The Warner family, to which my grandmother belonged, was an old Leicestershire family of gentlemen farmers, occupying a farm house in the neighbourhood of Hinckley, that is now in ruins, but was then dignified with the name of "Hall."

Mr. Warner and his son were evidently fond of pleasure, as they rode after the hounds, and indulged in every rural sport.

We were very fond of getting our grandmother to talk about that old hall, with its wide, open chimney and fire upon the hearth, and to tell us how they kept Christmas in those days.

At dinner, the master and mistress and all their guests sat at one end of the table, while the servants took their places at the other; the salt-cellar was set in the middle, and the gentry seated themselves above it.

The mistletoe bough hung from the ceiling, and the boar's head was carried in on a great dish, and with a great deal of ceremony.

My grandmother was a very handsome woman, as her portrait taken after she was fifty years of age bears witness. She was reticent by nature, and her lips were always sealed about her married life.

While she was in the bloom of her youth, she was engaged to a gentleman, who had the folly to boast of her beauty to a friend, a Mr. Bentley, who would not believe what he said, unless he saw it with his own eyes; so they went together to pay her a visit.

After dinner, the two gentlemen took a walk into the fields with Miss Warner, (afterwards my grandmother) and as she opened a gate, and held it for them to pass through, she made the remark, that this field was the worst bit of land on the farm, and was full of weeds and rubbish; then Mr. Bentley corrected her, and said how mistaken she was, for *that* field had in it, a treasure far greater than all the rest, indeed, of more value than words could express,—a treasure of beauty.

And with a few such sweet speeches, and flattering attentions he contrived, in the end, to rob his friend, and to carry off the lady as his bride. After his marriage, Mr. Bentley did not live long, and left his widow with one little girl, afterwards my mother.

The Warner's were very superstitious, and held that March was a fatal month to them, and that all the family had hitherto died in March.

Our grandmother spent the summer in her country cottage, but always passed the winter in Friar Lane. And when her last winter came, and she was keeping her bed, she would enquire, the first thing every morning, what was the day of the month.

She knew it was March, and said if she could only live that fatal month over, she might for a time rally.

But no! It came to the very last day, the thirty-first of March, and at ten o'clock that night, she died.

Our next visitor was a relative of the Warners,—and from that circumstance claimed cousinship with my mother,—she was a solicitor's widow, Mrs. Hudson, and came from London, bringing her maid with her; and made a long stay of three months at our house.

Her son named Bentley (after my grandfather) came backwards and forwards to see her, and on these occasions, we had many pleasant excursions to Charnwood Forest, where he made a number of sketches—views of Groby pool, the ruins of Bradgate, and other picturesque spots.

He was a gay young man, and made love to my sister Sarah; fortunately for her, without producing any effect. My mother could well sympathise with Mrs. Hudson, for our one trouble at home, was that my brother,—who was an only son (and bore his mother's name, Bentley), had been enticed into bad company, by a cousin who was a regular scapegrace and quite beyond control.

LEAFLET XII.—St. George's Church Struck by Lightening.

MY mother's health had always been precarious, and in the summer of 1835, my father again drove her to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in the hope that the baths, and country air might do her good.

I was her attendant on that occasion, and was very happy in her society. I learned many pieces of poetry, such as the lines in Cowper "The Journey to Emmaus," etc., to repeat to her, when she could not sleep,—for to get sleep was one of her great difficulties.

Amongst other remedies, she used to lay a pillow of hops under her head. On the drive to Ashby, I had just found out that the hops had been forgotten and left behind, when we caught sight of a packet in brown paper and tied with string, lying in the middle of the road. I picked it up, and lo and behold! It was a sample parcel of hops. It might have happened to Heinrich Stilling, or one of his German disciples.

At Ashby, we found the baths and gardens in a very neglected state, but my mother was often drawn in her bath-chair, to the ruins of the Castle, where we could stay in some shady nook, and admire the scene before us, and imagine the entertainments which had been held upon that very spot; though Sir Walter Scott's novels had not been written.

Our lodgings were just opposite the principal entrance to the gardens, where the road was very wide, and under the shadow of some drooping trees, was a picturesque well. It was Whitsuntide, and very hot weather; and a pretty sight it was, to see the lads and lasses come trooping in from the villages, all in holiday attire, and gay coloured ribbons, stopping to wind up the bucket, and drink at the well; and there was sure to be plenty of pushing, and laughing, and fun before the holiday-makers had quenched their thirst.

Our stay at Ashby was of no real henefit to the invalid, and although she was tended with the greatest care, she seemed to get weaker.

I slept in her room on a little bed, improvised for the purpose on the floor; and I have a vivid remembrance of her one night, calling me and being too fast asleep to awake. I was busy in Dreamland, trying to dig up a rose tree, that had so many roots, and was so fast in the ground, it refused to come up. She had to call me more than once, and when I did sit up and open my eyes, everything seemed as if I were still in a dream.

On the drive home from Ashby, we were in danger of being caught in a most violent storm. It seemed as if we were between two storms; when we looked back to Ashby, the sky was lurid and black in the extreme, and when we looked forward towards Leicester, the town seemed enveloped in inky darkness. The lightening was so alarming, that we had to take shelter for some hours at a village inn, about half-way, where everything was in the most primitive fashion; as we entered, we met a goodly array of cocks and hens quietly hopping down the stairs, and the house felt as if its windows had never been made to open.

When at last we drove into Leicester, the Northgate Street was as full of people as though it had been a fair. The storm had been so heavy over the town, that scarcely a pane of glass was left whole, and as we passed along, we saw all the windows were broken to shivers. Fear and consternation were depicted on every face, and some persons came forward, to tell us that the beautiful window of St. George's church had been destroyed.

After our return home, my mother kept her bed for a month or more, before the end came. Dr. Noble was her friend, as well as her physician, and nothing could exceed his kindness and attention; but although she had everything that love could devise, or money could purchase, she continued to get worse.

Mr. Ryley whom we once thought so stern, was a great comfort to her in her illness, and with his daughter Clara, used to visit her every day, reading or conversing with her, as she lay propped up with her bed rest.

They often spoke of Robert Hall, and of the pleasure of meeting him again; indeed, my mother was so happy in the prospect of heaven, or as she called it her home above, that it was delightful to be with her.

Before she died, she sent for my brother, and gave him her own Bible, and talked to him very seriously about the two paths that lay before him, the evil and the good, and to be sure and meet her in heaven at last.

He cried as if his heart would break, and she consoled herself by thinking that, in God's own time, her prayers would be answered.

It is impossible to imagine, much more to describe, the desolation that came upon us, when we lost our mother. It is our Lord, and our Lord alone, who can hush the storm of human sorrow, and say to the troubled waves "peace be still."

She had expressed a wish, to be interred in the burial ground attached to Robert Hall's chapel, in Harvey Lane, and accordingly was laid there; a circumstance we have never ceased to regret, as being unconsecrated ground, it very soon became a mere harbour for rubbish.

In the absence of the Rev. J. P. Mursell, (the successor of Robert Hall) the Rev. Edward Mial officiated in his stead, and gave a flowery address about "the garden that lay beyond the grave;" but no extemporaneous service can compare with the simplicity and beauty of that used by the Church of England.

Mr. Mial was then young, a mere stripling in appearance, but he soon became notorious by starting "the nonconformist newspaper," and for espousing in the most zealous manner, the cause of Mr. William Baines, who went to prison for non-payment of church-rates. We had no sympathy with Mr. Mial's politics, or with Mr. Mursell's either, and were thankful to retire from the Harvey Lane cause.

We did our best when all was over, to console my father, and each other, by looking forward to a reunion, and the glorious resurrection at the last day.

My youngest sister, Elizabeth, was of a decidedly poetical nature, and from an early age, began to write both in prose and verse. She found in me a warm admirer; and all her productions I cherished, in the secret hope, that some day, she might do something beneficial to herself and others. She was not ten years old, when she wrote the following lines on the event of her mother's death:—

A Sudden Death desirable.

A SUDDEN death would quickest glory be,
From out my open prison glad I flee,
With rapture greet the long-expected day,
Then slip my chain, and straight to heaven away.

And with a wondering and grand surprise,
On God's fair city light my dazzled eyes.
The veil is rent, and lo! its parted folds display
The holiest of all—the Saints in glad array.

And parted friends scarce known in robes so bright,
Come crowding round with words of sweet delight;
The mother and the child have met, O! what transcendent bliss,
To meet within our father's home, and such a home as this!

Forgotten, now thy daily doubts and fears,
Yesterday's conflict, and this morning's tears,
For grief is dead, the sad heart ceaseth aching,
And this long dream of peace shall know no troubled waking.

LEAFLET XIII.—Lectures at the Mechanic's Institute, Dr. Lardner, etc.

MY sister Sarah and myself had now the care of house-keeping upon us, and being young and very inexperienced, we fell into a great many mistakes. Ann Burbidge had retired from service, and established herself as a shopkeeper; we could not therefore have the benefit of her advice and were very much at the mercy of the servants.

Honesty is a rare quality and we constantly found ourselves robbed, and yet passed it over, from the wish to keep things as quiet as we could; locks were often tampered with, and once a pebble was put into one, so that we could not turn the key.

In the middle of one night we were alarmed by a noise in the kitchen, and ran down stairs to see what it could be; the cook was up, and stood with a candle in her hand, but Sarah felt sure there was someone else there too, and began to look about; on opening the door of the china closet there stood a man with his arms folded, and his head bent, as if he were rather ashamed of himself; she held the candle full in his face, and asked him what he wanted? and which way he had come in? he

said his business was with the cook, and that he came in at the back door; "well then," said Sarah courageously "you shall go out at the front, and I will see you out myself;" whereupon she lighted him all down the hall, and throwing the front door open as wide as it would go, showed him out.

Of course, we had a great many friends about us, but Mr. Ryley was the most valuable of all. We saw him or his daughter Clara every day; they were so full of information of every kind, that their society was of far more benefit to us than any school could be.

He devoted himself to the education of my sister Sarah and myself, and was always bringing us books from his own library, which he required us to read in a given time, and to be conversant with their contents.

He began to teach me Latin, and I was soon able to scan Virgil, and also to read a little Italian with him.

He was president of the Mechanic's Institute, and at the head of all the literary societies in the town; and was in the habit of giving lectures at the rooms of the Philosophical Society, then at Moxon's the tailor's, in the High street. One course on "The Hindoo Drama," was very interesting, and made us quite familiar with Sacontala, etc. And he quoted flowery passages from the "Toy Cart," and other poetical and sentimental plays.

The Hindoo drama is now the fashion in this country, but it seems almost impossible that such plays can ever be adapted and abridged, so as to become popular on the English stage.

At the close of every lecture, whatever might be the subject, Mr. William Gardiner, author of "Music and Friends," used to get up and begin to speak; but before he could utter a word, the audience were rude enough to laugh. The fact was, they knew what he was going to say, for he had but one subject, and that was—Music.

Had the lecturer nothing to say about music? Yes—the Indian lute, and *thirty-six* other musical instruments must be discussed; and so there generally followed a lengthened and desultory conversation, that somewhat tried the patience of the audience.

During the winter months, paid lecturers were engaged, to deliver lectures on scientific and other subjects. Dr. Lardner gave a course of lectures on Astronomy, that carried our thoughts completely away from the paltry trials around us, and raised them to the wonders of the heavens. The most obtruse subjects, when he handled them, were made to appear as plain and simple as the alphabet. He explained the theory of the falling stars, and had a diagram of the belt of meteoric stones, through which our earth, at certain times of the year, has to pass. And he showed us how the calculations were made, to a nicety, for the return of comets, and he certainly expressed an opinion that in ages to come, the burning up of our earth might be caused by an encounter with one or other of these fiery bodies in the sky.

Mr. Ryley used to bring the lecturers home with him, to our house, where supper was generally waiting for us; so that we had the benefit of hearing them talk in private, as well as lecture in public.

In this way, we were brought into contact with a number of very agreeable and clever men. Mr. Jukes, who gave several lectures on geology, dined at our house more than once, and gave us quite an impetus to the study; and that led to Mr. Ryley's bringing a number of books on the subject, (Lyall, Lawrence, etc.) and finally inducing me to make a chart of the arrangement of the different strata of rocks, in chronological order.

Then came Sheridan Knowles, lecturing on the drama; a thorough Irishman, a random talker, and rather too free and easy. He was born an artist, but had many struggles, before he became acknowledged as a dramatist.

His tragedy of "Virginius" was taken up by Macready, and proved a great success; while his comedy of the "Hunchback" was played by the Kemble family, and received with enthusiasm; but to his credit he relates, that he retired from the applause of the audience, to his dressing room, where he fell on his knees and thanked God for his wondrous kindness to him, in giving him this measure of success. He talked a great deal, and was full of anecdotes about the stage.

Next arrived Haydon the painter, a disappointed man, who had so much more appreciation of his own works than the public had, that he was embittered against mankind in general, and the academy artists in particular. He could never forget or forgive the crowds that went to see the wonderful fleas, working in harness, and doing seemingly impossible feats, while the exhibition of his pictures was passed by unnoticed, on the very road to the fleas!

But the most attractive of all the lecturers was Professor Adams, and the experiments he made in acoustics were most interesting. He showed us that every note of the gamut had a different effect upon matter, even the dust in the room, he said, was driven into a certain shape by a certain sound. To prove it he had squares of glass, with fine sand upon them, and as he sounded first one note and then another of the gamut, the sand took a set form, always the same for the same note, and he had reflectors over the glasses, so that we actually saw the sand move into its appointed pattern.

The Mechanic's Institute was a great boon to the town, as besides providing lectures and concerts, for the entertainment of the public, the committee (in the summer of 1840) planned and carried out an Exhibition, which was far in advance of the times, and reflected the highest credit on its promoters.

It was held in the New Hall, Wellington Street, then called the "Green Rooms" because it had been built by the Radical party. The large room below was filled with minerals and fossils in glass cases, many of them lent by Mr. Lee of Barrow-upon-Soar, who was a practical geologist,

and had been the means of obtaining from the pits in his own neighbourhood, the remains of extinct animals, mostly reptiles allied to the crocodile.

And here spread out before us, lay the fruits of his industry—the fossil ichthyosaurus and plesiosaurus, and many other such like monsters of a bye-gone age.

After examining at our leisure, these specimens of an unknown world, we passed on to a spacious room that had been purposely erected for the models of machinery, and where a steam engine was always at work.

Here was a canal with a steamer upon it, and a railway with its carriages propelled by electricity. It had been constructed and sent for exhibition by Mr. Uriah Clarke, and called by him "Jupiter."

These were very early days for the electro-magnetic power, to be made to work, and the mystery of its operation was but little understood.

Mr. Hollings, so well versed in scientific knowledge, frequented that room, and was always ready to solve difficulties, or to answer any questions from the visitors. And he used to amuse himself and them by throwing potassium into the canal, and watching it float about on fire.

At that time, John Biggs was the Mayor, and he with his sisters and a party of ladies, would generally stroll in every evening, and as they walked round, they made themselves agreeable to everybody.

Many articles of interest were contributed by Mr. Strutt of Derby, and among others, was a curious toy, for such it might be called, that seemed to solve the question of perpetual motion.

A metallic ball kept rolling backwards and forwards, over an inclined disc, also of polished metal; but when it reached the lower end, it touched a spring, and the disc reversed itself, and sent the ball rolling back again, and as it seemed to us, it might thus roll on for ever. It is no matter here to say how it was worked, but most likely by a Voltaic Pile.

When we were tired of looking at the machinery, we came back through the fossil room, and mounted upstairs to the Picture Gallery. Here were several valuable specimens of the Dutch school, interiors, and sea pieces, kindly lent by the Duke of Rutland.

But there was one, never to be forgotten, picture of the Virgin and child with the white lily, by Carlo Dolci (the property of Wynn Ellis, Esq.), and in contrast to this and rather near it, was a Madonna and child, a masterpiece by Baptista Salvi, but too hard in outline, and cold in colour, to be a general favourite.

Then there was a picture by the Academician Hart, that was of particular local interest. It was Cardinal Wolsey entering the gate of Leicester Abbey, when he is reported to have said to the Monks who received him, that he was come to lay his bones among them, and to have uttered those memorable words of self-reproach, that "if he had but served his God as faithfully as he had served his King, He would not thus have left him.

There were too many pictures to remember them all, but I can call to mind the scene in Sherwood Forest, where Robin Hood is feasting the Sheriff of Nottingham on venison, poached from his own herds, and served on his own silver dishes. His cook is placing the smoking haunch before him, and as he does so, he gives his master a look of supreme roguery and cunning. Friar Tuck is there too, and looking equally mischievous as he pledges the Sheriff in a bowl of sac.

Every evening, there was a musical entertainment, when the Duke's band, and the Quadrille band, played in turn, selections from the favourite operas. Miss Ella, well known for her sweet cakes and sweet smiles, presided at the piano, and played the accompaniments for the several lady-vocalists, who gave us the benefit of song. Some of these were amateurs, and natives of Leicester, but there was one professional, a Miss Grobecker, who sang the "Beautiful Rhine," and "Rory o' More," both of which were *encored* with enthusiastic applause.

The Committee sent an invitation to the members of the Mechanic's Institute of Nottingham, to come and view the Exhibition, and as many as four hundred members and other gentlemen arrived by special train on the Midland Counties line, then but recently opened. They spent the best part of the morning in examining the treasures they had come to see, and then adjourned to the "Three Crowns" Hotel, where a sumptuous dinner had been prepared for them.

A number of toasts were given, and if we had been present to listen to the speeches made on the occasion, we should no doubt have heard, congratulations and compliments without end.

LEAFLET XIV.—Excursion on the Coronation Day.

AS soon as the winter was over and May Fair was come round again, we had an uncle arrive from Bambury. He had driven down to Leicester in a gig, and as he was going to drive back by easy stages, he persuaded my father to let me go with him, saying what a great deal of good it would do me.

Lubbenham Lodge, near Market Harboro' where another of my uncles lived, was the first stage of the journey.

The Lodge was a pretty farm-house, with its garden sloping down to the canal. But just now, the canal was being cleaned out, and men up to their middles in mud, were busy catching eels. It was an unusual sight, and rather ludicrous, as it was impossible for the men to hold the slippery creatures, except between their teeth.

When we drove off in the morning, one of these said eels was popped under the seat of the gig, for our supper, but I did not feel at all thankful, not knowing whether it was dead or alive.

The next night we spent in Northamptonshire, at the farm-house of another uncle; and I then made up my mind, that however picturesque farm-houses might be, they certainly were not the sweetest spots in the world; for the farm-yard lay beneath my bed-room window, and the fragrant smell compelled me to keep it shut.

At Bambury, in spite of kind friends and much attention, it was about the same with me, as it had been at Miss Jones' school—the food did not suit me, and I soon fell ill.

However I was glad to be away just then, for two circumstances happened while I was out, that I had rather not have been at home to see.

One was, my father making an offer of marriage to a lady, who was always most agreeable to him and expressed herself quite ready to accept him. But fortunately for us, her own imprudent haste in trying to hurry matters forward, and my sister Sarah's violent opposition to having a mother-in-law forced upon her, caused the whole thing to drop through.

The other unhappy circumstance was,—my brother leaving home for lodgings on the Welford road, and not making his appearance amongst us again.

After my return from Bambury, my father, in order to divert our minds, made an excursion into Derbyshire—staying a day or two in Derby to see the sights.

The china-factory, and Mr. Strutt's house full of curiosities.

"The King's Head" where we took up our abode, was the very inn described by Washington Irving, in his Sketch Book, and called, a "Sunday in a Country Inn."

As we looked out of a back window into the yard, we saw everything just as he had painted it.—The old horse hanging his head over the stable door, and the kitchen wench in pattens, with her pail, twirling her mop. We were like Rip van Winkle we thought, and that everything must have remained asleep since he was there.

Driving on to Matlock, we halted at Saxton's Hotel, and sat about in that warm sheltered garden, and admired the pond of tepid water full of gold and silver fish; it was one of the amusements of the visitors to feed them, so the moment they heard a step on the gravel, they swam in a crowd to the bank, to see what they could get.

At Buxton, we had breakfast in the coffee room, where several tables were set for separate parties. At one of the tables, there sat a lady, so finely dressed, and so covered with jewels, that we thought she must be somebody very grand. When opportunity offered, we enquired of the waiter, who that lady might be? He tossed his head, and said she had no business to be there, but he supposed one person's money was as good as another's; she was the mistress of a travelling caravan, and nothing better than a cheap Jack! And he gave his head another expressive toss, and flung out of the room.

We returned home much better for the change, but in spite of the sunshine and the bracing air, and the lovely scenery, Sarah continued troubled, and in constant dread lest one of these days, she might have a mother-in-law. "It was of no use" she observed "to rattle her bones over the stones, for change of air and change of scene, while her mind all the while, was in a ferment and a tumult of uncertainty. "But man proposes and God disposes," and so it came to pass, that her fears of the mother-in-law were never realized.

The most enjoyable excursion we had that summer, was a day's picnic to the Forest, in the neighbourhood of Loughborough; when we carried our mid-day repast to the summit of Beacon Hill, and sat down to have it, under the shadow of the spreading beeches.

The villages were gay with flags, and folks in holiday attire; and every church steeple was trying to sound a note of gladness.

In the town, every bank and place of business was shut, for it was the Coronation Day of the young Queen Victoria (1838).

Our uncle, Mr. Sam Kirby, and a party of young people were with us, and we had games of play, and enjoyed ourselves as much as any young people could.

Indeed we might have sung the good old song—

All hearts were light, and eyes were bright, while nature's face was gay,
The trees their leafy branches spread and perfume filled the may.
'Twas there we heard the Cuckoo's note steal softly through the air.
While every scene around us looked most beautiful and fair!"

But I must not omit to mention a rather interesting visit paid to us in that same year, by Mr. and Mrs. Slight of Brighton, who made a stay of some weeks in the Friar Lane.

Mrs. Slight was my father's sister, and her husband (then Town Clerk of Brighton) had just been left in charge of a very large fortune, scraped together by a miser, a Mr. Biddles, a native of Leicestershire, who had lived in a garret in London, and denied himself the necessaries of life. The money he left, was to be held in trust by Mr. Slight for his relatives, young people, in the very lowest grade of life.

Mr. Slight took a carriage and pair, and drove to many of the villages round Leicester to hunt them up.

One lad was employed in the Mountsorrel granite pits, and we found him carrying stones upon his head. He was half an idiot and though he could not articulate a word to be understood, he began to make a noise with his mouth like the Mountsorrel bells ringing in full chime. Like most idiots he was very cunning, and once, when I was staying with my Aunt Slight in their country house near Brighton, this youth, whose name was James, served her a malicious trick.

There was a shooting party, and a number of gentlemen had been entertained at breakfast, and Mrs. Slight thinking that this said James would be much better out of sight, had given him his milk and bread by the kitchen fire. He was very sulky over it, and as soon as he had finished, went off into the fields.

By and bye, we began to prepare for the return of the gentlemen to dinner—(all of them Brighton worthies, and one an M.P.), but what a catastrophe was in store for us! My aunt's keys were missing, and nowhere could we find them. The bunch had been carelessly left hanging from a cupboard door, where the best china and glass were kept, and also the key of the cellar was safely deposited.

As idiots are generally crafty, my aunt's suspicions rested upon James, who had gone up the field, and no doubt she thought had taken the keys with him. And so it proved; he had not only carried them off, but had thrown them into the middle of a pond.

I need hardly say, we could not wait for them to be got out again, but had to fly off for the blacksmith, and be as quick as possible.

In all, there were about a dozen poor persons, relatives of the miser, who could lay claim to his bequest; and out of that number, there was only one, in whom we felt interested.

She was a little girl of about five years old, who had lost both father and mother in her infancy, and had been brought up by a woman in the village of Blaby, named Simpkin. This woman, a kind-hearted creature, was very sorry to hear that a fortune had come to her little Mary; and on her knees, she begged Mr. Slight to keep the money, whatever it might be, and to leave her in possession of the child.

Of course that was out of the question, and a heart-rending scene took place at our house, when the two had to part.

In a very short time, the young people, boys and girls, were got together, and carried off in a body, to be educated by tutors and governors, in Mr. Slight's own house at Brighton.

But it remained a matter of doubt, in my mind, whether the miser's money did any one of them any good.

LEAFLET XV.—London Orphan Asylum.

IN the Autumn of that same year ('38) Mr. and Mrs. William Kirby came down by easy stages from London, and paid us a visit. Uncle William was the rich uncle of the family, having made a handsome fortune in a very short time, in Wood Street, in the Coventry ribbon trade, and happily retired from business before it became depressed.

He was a man of leisure, but with a hobby, which for men out of business, is a very good thing. Having no family of his own, he had adopted the London Orphan Asylum, and talked of nothing else. Indeed, he knew every boy and girl by name, where they came from, and all about them, however many there might be. He was most

anxious that his nephews and nieces should see, and take an interest in, the Institution to which he was so partial, and induced me to accept his invitation and return with them to London.

It was a journey of twelve hours by the coach, the inside places of which were secured for us, so we had it all to ourselves. We started from the "Three Crowns Hotel" at eight in the morning, and drove into "Belle Sauvage" yard at eight in the evening.

In spite of the tediousness of that ancient mode of travelling, it was certainly more lively and diversified than by the railroad, where the passengers (save for their numbers) are of no more note or importance than a bale of goods, or a sack of potatoes.

Before we started from Leicester, a young girl had been placed under the special care of the guard, and whenever we caught sight of them he was making love to her, which love-making, we were afterwards told, ended in a runaway match. And, now and then, a person suddenly made his appearance on the road, and caught a parcel, or a bag of letters, or anything else that the guard might have to throw out to him.

And then we stayed half-way, probably at Northampton, and had a hasty dinner at an inn; so hasty indeed, that no one had time to eat it, for the horn almost immediately sounded in our ears like a clarion, and we had to scramble to our places again.

When we reached London, which seemed enshrined in a cloud of black dirt, a conveyance was waiting to take us on to Stamford Hill.

My uncle's house was in a green lane that ran out of Stamford Hill, and was like a country lane, bordered with trees and quickset hedges. It was a pretty spot, with paddock and shrubbery round, where we could walk in the shade, and be followed about by the Alderney cow. There was an invisible fence between us, but my aunt always had something to give her in the way of a *bonne bouche*, and would pat her downy ears, and talk to her as though she were a human being.

The houses in that neighbourhood were mostly detached, or semi-detached; and in the genteel suburbs of London, it is not the fashion to call upon, or even to take any notice of, those who live next door to you.

The only neighbours my aunt had were two pretty children, the little Clarksons, who used to earn a penny, by pulling out her grey hairs. The consequence was, that she soon had very few hairs left to pull.

At the back of the house, there was a garden well stocked with fruit, and on the other side of the lane, which used to be called "Hanger Lane," was a meadow with my aunt's pet pony, and my uncle's horses grazing in it. Of course the green lane has long ago disappeared, and the paddock and meadows have become a mass of bricks and mortar.

But the business of my uncle's life was the London Orphan Asylum, then at Clapton, and we visited it, two or three days a week; and on Sundays, attended the service in the private chapel there, which was reverently conducted by the chaplain, also head-master of the school. When the service was over, we stayed in the corridor between the two

dining-halls, and saw the children file in;—boys into the one, and girls into the other, and heard them sing a grace. It was an affecting sight, and my uncle was as much at home, as if he had been one of the orphans himself.

After dinner, we went upstairs to the infirmary, where the sick children were being nursed, and taken care of, by a Mrs. Cripps. My uncle invariably brought out some little delicacy to give to each one of the invalids, and fondled them all round, as if they had been his own.

The school-mistress for the girls was a Russian lady, a Miss Brandenburgh, and one day we had tea in her sitting room, and spent the evening in seeing the children at their games. When they had sung their evening hymn, and were gone to bed, we went up with Miss Brandenburgh to say "good night." It was a very large dormitory, and as all the little ones said "good night" at once, and wafted a kiss, the sound was like an arrow, we might have fancied one of Cupid's arrows, flying through the air.

My uncle dated his success in life, from the time when he began to care for the orphans, and used to say that he shared in the blessing that was promised by the Almighty to the fatherless and the widows.

He certainly *did* care, for he devoted himself to getting a situation for every child, and succeeded in a wonderful manner. I went with him to some of the largest places of business in London—Morley's, and Redmayne's, and Lewis and Allenby's, and numbers more.

And then we spent a few days at Wimbledon, the seat of Mr. Lewis, who was a Welshman, and a very fine fellow indeed. I don't know how many boys he said they had in Regent Street, and he never seemed to refuse another. The house was like a palace, and the dinner was served on silver. But it might well be so, for Mr. Lewis said to me one day, that he could never put too high a price upon his goods; if he were to ask a moderate sum, the fashionable ladies (here he made a nod towards my aunt) would not look at them; the more he asked "the better they liked them."

My uncle's house was furnished in true London style, with new and fashionable furniture. One day at dinner, a young gentleman, a nephew of my aunt's, suddenly disappeared; the back and hinder legs of the chair, on which he was sitting, had parted from its better half, and he was landed under the table.

It reminded me of a story told by a comedian, of an elephant on the stage, being in danger of a similar catastrophe, when he heard the hind legs whispering to the front legs, that unless they moved a bit quicker, they must soon be down.

During my stay at my uncle's, of course I saw many of the sights of London, and amongst others, Miss Linwood's needlework, exhibited in rooms in Leicester Square. The spectators were kept at a little distance from the pictures, by a slight mahogany balustrade, but they looked so much like paintings it was hard to believe that they had been done by a needle.

One, that of our Lord blessing the bread, was particularly good; and another, a group of young people standing round a log fire upon the hearth, and holding up their hands to screen themselves from the blaze, was so life-like, you could almost fancy you saw the lights and shadows flickering on their faces.

We had seen Miss Linwood in her own house in the Belgrave Gate, at Leicester, and in her workroom at work. She kept a school for young ladies, and Sarah and I used to go there, and take lessons in grammar, etc., from the Rev. Gimson Davis; and after that was over, we were allowed to go into the workroom, and read aloud to Miss Linwood, who was very dignified and of a great age, and wore two pair of spectacles at a time.

Mr. Bland of the New Street, was the dancing master, and once upon a time he gave a ball in the Assembly Rooms.

As soon as the children, his pupils, had gone through a number of dances, to the delight and admiration of their parents, Miss Linwood herself opened the ball for grown up people, and was very much admired. She wore a wig of jet black curls, and a neck of wax, slightly concealed by nets, and ribbons and laces.

But amid all the sights of London, what delighted me the most, and remains in my mind, "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever," was the view of the Thames from the terraced garden of the "Star and Garter" Hotel, at Richmond. The sweep of country as far as the eye can reach is so highly cultivated, and the scene so thoroughly and characteristically *English*, that I wondered then, and wonder still, whether there is any scene to surpass it in the world.

LEAFLET XVI.—Ramsgate and a Trip to Dover.

THE greatest friend I had out of our own family, was Mr. Ryley; but his circumstances were very much changed since we first knew him. His two daughters married, and took their respective fortunes with them, for they were inherited from their mother, and not under any control from their father, so he was left with a very narrow income,—so narrow indeed, that he was obliged to break up his house in the Newark, and go into lodgings. His valuable library was insured, but had to be dispersed, wherever he could get a room from his friends, to put it in.

His youngest daughter, who was married at Bristol, sent him a present of twenty pounds for a sea-side trip; and he was as delighted at the prospect, and in as good spirits as if he had been a boy of eighteen, and never known a trouble in his life.

It happened just then, that my father had taken lodgings at Ramsgate, and was there with my sister Catherine and myself, for the change of scene, and to try to dissipate his own depression of spirits.

So down to Ramsgate came Mr. Ryley in high glee, with his pocket book, to exhibit, and to make the gold within it rattle.

Ramsgate was as full of visitors as it could hold, but our landlady found a room for him in the "Plains of Waterloo" and we had nothing to do for the next fortnight, but to enjoy ourselves.

We had a drive every day to some pleasant spot in the neighbourhood; and these excursions were of double interest to me, as at that happy period I was deep in the study of botany, and searching for flowers and grasses and such like, in every hole and corner; and the chalk cliffs of Ramsgate afforded me a rich harvest.

One day, I was rash enough to step under the barrier that warned us off the dangerous cliff, to gather a bunch of red valerian, and drew upon myself a crowd of good-natured mothers, who were quite sure I should come to grief, and alarmed lest their little ones should follow my bad example. The beach was ransacked for seaweeds, and I was often frightened to see how far my sister Catherine would venture out on the low rocks, when the tide was down.

Mr. Ryley's mode of collecting was much easier than ours, for he found out a shop, kept by a Mrs. Allon, who not only sold the weeds neatly mounted upon paper, but also had written a book on the subject of the "Ramsgate sands, and what was to be found upon them." Mr. Ryley visited her shop almost every day, and was one of the best customers she ever had.

When we came indoors at night, it was a great business to spread out the plants we had brought home in the day, and lay them in blotting paper, to press under the mattress of the beds, that being the only place available for the purpose.

The gentleman got tired however with so much driving, and for the sake of a change, engaged a yacht or some kind of sailing vessel, for a day's trip to Dover.

It was lovely weather, but on that particular morning, there was a fresh wind and what the sailors called a "ground swell." We had the master and two men to attend to the boat, and at the last moment the master came and begged permission for a gentleman and lady with baby and nurse to be taken on board; there was plenty of room so they were not refused.

We [illegible]d at eight o'clock in the morning, and were to reach Dover [illegible]day's pleasuring, and to return at night. That was what [illegible] do, but the sea refused to give consent. We were tossed [illegible]ead of getting nearer to Dover, we were driven close to [illegible], where we saw some people walking on the top of the [illegible]t we knew they might be admiring our unsteady mode

[illegible]ng water at the sails to make them hold the [illegible], except giving us a slight shower bath.

Mr. Ryley and I were the only passengers not ill, and we had enough to do in dispensing drops of brandy and water all round. The baby, —fortunately a good baby,—was dandled about by the sailors, first one taking a turn at nursing, and then another. At last, when we had about given up any hope of seeing Dover, at about three o'clock in the afternoon we arrived, and went to the "Warden Hotel" for lunch. The invalids recovered at the sight of the good cheer, and we lost no time in exploring the town, and picking up a few plants from the Downs, and enjoying the sea breeze much more than we had done when we were on the water.

It was nine o'clock at night before we started for the return journey; but then, as if to make amends, the sea was as calm as a lake, the wind right way, and the moon so bright that every object was as light as at noon-day. We were glad enough to see Ramsgate and to pace once more its beautiful harbour; everything was so calm and still, an artist might have made an effective sketch, in contrast with Mr. Frith's faithful and graphic representation of "The Ramsgate sands at mid-day."

My uncle William wrote to ask us to break the journey home, by staying a few days with him, so Catherine and I agreed to accept his invitation.

We came up to London by the Packet, Mr. Ryley going to his Hotel, and my father returning to Leicester by the Midland railway, (then running round by Rugby as it had been driven to do, by the opposition of the Market Harboro' people.)

The quiet of my uncle's garden was very agreeable after the heat and noise of the steam Packet. But one afternoon, as we were strolling about amongst the ripe fruit, who should make his appearance but our friend Mr. Ryley; he had a little business he said to transact with me in private, upon which my uncle and aunt looked at each other in a very knowing manner.

The business turned out to be, that his pocket book would not rattle —in fact it was empty, and he hoped I should be able to lend him as much money as would carry him home.

Of course he was not refused; and then he came indoors, and my aunt had all the massive plate brought out to show him—presents that had been given to my uncle by young men once in the Orphan Asylum, and who had become rich; also the ornaments she had herself received from the same source. One of the boys had been placed with a gold-smith and pearl worker, and had given her a handsome brooch and pendant of his own manufacture. Mr. Ryley's admiration, of all these things, was not sufficient to satisfy my aunt; and to crown his offence, he suggested that if the salvers, candelabras, etc., were used *every day*, they would look a great deal better than they did.

Before he took his leave, he said we must have a day with him in town, as he wanted to take us to the British Museum, and also to call on his old friend and schoolfellow, Sir Frederick Pollock.

Accordingly, we went up to town, and met him as arranged at the British Museum.

Mr. Bennett, the curator, was most agreeable, and went round with us himself. The first thing he showed us, was the famous Rosetta stone, said to be a monument to one of the Ptolemies, and dating as far back as 196 years before the Christian era; it was a black-looking stone, not of any formal shape, with a sloping top, across which letters were inscribed. This inscription being in Greek characters, as well as in hieroglyphics, had given learned men the first clue to the interpretation of the latter.

After looking at many of the fossils, he took us into a private room and then brought out portfolios of foreign plants, particularly mosses.

The visit to Sir Frederick Pollock was however not forgotten, and we went to the office in Downing Street, as at that time he was in the Ministry; Mr. Ryley sent in his card, and in a few minutes Sir Frederick came out all courtesy and smiles, and the two old schoolfellows vied with each other in playfulness and fun; we were invited to Hampstead to a late dinner, but Mr. Ryley declined the invitation with affected scorn, saying that "the 'Cheshire Cheese' (a famous chop house), was the place for him."

LEAFLET XVII.—Botanizing—a New Plant Discovered.

SOME few months after our return home, I met with an accident, which would have been of little or no consequence, in itself, but by improper treatment became a serious matter. I let a small stand fall on the instep of one foot, and Sarah, seeing it swell to a great size, had leeches applied as soon as possible, and without waiting for advice; they did no good to the foot, and were pretty nearly the death of me; bringing on fainting fits, and nobody knows what else besides.

Sarah thought that brandy would of course restore me, but it seemed of no more effect than water, and I had to take very strong ammonia to bring me back to consciousness. It was a wearisome business to get better again, and many of the good old ladies who used to come to visit me would tell me, it was all over with me, as far as this world was concerned; to which, I always made reply "It may be so, God only knows, but *I am not dead yet.*"

For the benefit of the forest air, my father took part of a house at Thurcaston, and here I stayed for some months, with my good sister Catherine to tend me, a long-tailed pony to ride about upon, and a village maiden, able-bodied enough to groom and manage it.

The study of botany was an occupation as well as a resource, and the woods and lanes of Charnwood Forest were well ransacked for flowers; I had a scientific friend to help me, in Mr. Hollings, one of the masters of a public school at Leicester, and a chum of Mr. Ryley's.

He carried a tin box strapped round his neck, and would get it quite full of plants and mosses, and then bring them to me to examine with his microscope. One day, incautiously putting my hand into this box without looking first, I caught hold of a toad, so cold and so chill, it might have been related to the toad Belzoni met with in the Egyptian temple, and that he supposed must have been there at least a thousand years.

The botanical mania seemed infectious, for my cousin, Miss Kirby of Lubbenham, close to Market Harboro', began to collect plants, and sent me one she had taken out of the canal, and that proved to be a new British genus. It grew quite under water, and the stem, several feet long, was round, solid, and semi-transparent, but the flowers, something like the chickweed flowers, rose to the surface on long slender stalks.

It is of Indian origin, and from its power of holding a large portion of water, and slowly discharging it, is said to be employed like the Hydrilla, (an allied genus) in sugar factories, for refining purposes. Mr. Babington gave it a very long name—*Anacharis-alsinastrum* from *Ana*—upwards—and *chaira*—to delight, referring to the propensity of the flowers to rise to the surface. The rapidity of its growth was extraordinary; for in a short space of time, many of our rivers were completely choked by it.

The discovery of this new plant brought me into contact, and close correspondence with the Rev. Andrew Bloxam of Twycross, and with his assistance a flora of Leicestershire was proposed to be written, and very soon began to be compiled. There was a fair opening for such a work, as Dr. Pulteney's list revised for Nichols' History of Leicestershire (1795) and the poet Crabbe's "Account of Rare Plants" found by him in the Vale of Belvoir, were the only catalogues in existence.

It was three or four years before the flora could be ready for the press; and in that interval, several incidents occurred that cannot be omitted. Owing to the death, from old age, of our landlady at Thurcaston, the house was given up. This was a matter of much regret, as we had become acquainted with every cottager, and also were on very friendly terms with the rector, the Rev. R. Waterfield. He was a kind and agreeable man, and a clear-headed preacher. I can well remember one of his sermons from the words, "The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man," in which he argued out the doctrine, that every worldly good we enjoy depends upon God's presence with us, and is given to us directly from him.

Mr. Waterfield will not easily be forgotten, for he restored the church at his own cost; and also placed a tablet within it, to the memory of Bishop Latimer, who was a native of the parish.

An old-fashioned farm house used to be called "Latimer's House" and claimed the honour of being his birth-place (in 1470).

In one of his sermons before the King (Edward VI.) he describes his father as a yeoman, with a hundred sheep, and land enough to till, to keep half-a-dozen men; also he speaks of his mother, as a thrifty woman, and milking as many as thirty kine.

The tablet on the church wall has a medallion of Latimer upon it, and informs us, that he was burnt at the stake in Oxford, in 1555, and there "lighted a candle which shall never be put out."

A country life has many pleasures. It was a great delight to me to sit and watch the changing lights upon the hills, and to see the storm-clouds rise over the summit of "Old John," and then discharge themselves into the valley below.

In that neighbourhood, storms are often very severe, and one day, we saw a cloud of more than usual blackness, hanging overhead for some hours; at last it drew itself into shape, a little like a balloon or a bag, with the point hanging downwards; and with a report like the loudest artillery, something fell with great violence, into a field in front of us, and within a couple of hundred yards of a hay stack, under which, a party of boys were sheltering.

No doubt it was a meteoric stone, but before we had time to examine the place where it had fallen, (though there would have been little or no chance of finding it, as these stones generally crack in pieces from the expansion of the gases they contain,) rain came down like a deluge, and with such violence, that in the space of half-an-hour, the brook had swelled into a river, and flooded not only the meadows, but the village itself. For a short space it was like an island, and there was no egress at either end.

There was plenty of commotion and noise of talking, for the villagers turned out with waggons and horses to rescue and ferry over, any poor wretch who might have been caught by the water.

But there were other dangers besides the storms. One morning, we were strolling along in the grounds of Rothley Temple, my sister walking beside me, as I rode on my long-tailed pony, when in a few moments a fog fell upon us, so thick that we could not see our hands before us; we were in danger of mistaking our way, and also of getting into the water; we kept as close together as possible, and were obliged to trust ourselves entirely to the sagacity of the pony.

Our stay at Thurcaston was, in all, about twelve months, and we were sorry to return to the town in the spring. But before we left, we had the pleasure of witnessing the festivities of Plough-Monday. Towards evening, a goodly troop of plough-boys, in the costume of ladies and gentlemen, opened the back-door, and filed into the kitchen; they were bent upon enjoying themselves, and at once formed a circle, joining hands and beginning to dance a reel. We sat down, and quietly looked on, till they were tired; then when they had pocketed a shilling, (a large sum for those parts) they raised a shout, and wishing us "good luck" and "good-night," took their departure.

LEAFLET XVIII.—J. F. Bollings, Esq., and Mesmerism.

BIRDS as well as flowers had been a constant source of amusement to us in our village home; and in those forest-lanes we had the opportunity of watching them, and knowing what their habits were.

We had never heard before, the jarring notes of the goat-sucker, and it was a new thing to us, to watch the two birds in the twilight wheeling round and round the stem of a tree, making circles in quick succession, then diving and skimming away across the ground, and suddenly rising to perform unthought-of movements in the air.

Professor Macgillevray's edition of "Withering's Botany" was my field-book for plants; and his "History of British Birds" (then a new book), gave us all the information we wanted on that subject.

The old adage, "all things have an ending," is sometimes consoling, and at other times rather sad. We had many good-byes to say, and when we left the village a great many good wishes went with us.

We had not been at home long, before Mr. John Macgillevray, the Professor's son, paid us a visit.

He was introduced by Mr. Harley, a great lover of birds, and they had been together on a walking expedition to the Forest. Mr. Macgillevray was going out as naturalist, on an exploring voyage to New Guinea, etc., in Her Majesty's ship "Rattlesnake," and he undertook to bring me, when he came back, specimens of ferns and dried plants. A promise he faithfully kept. Before the evening was over, he began to fidget; and feeling in his pocket, declared that his purse was gone,—he must have dropped it among the bracken, on the Forest hills. Of course he wanted to borrow money, and my sister Sarah, who seemed attracted by him, lent him three soverigns, without any demur.

He and Mr. Harley left us at rather a late hour, and in boisterous spirits; but in the course of a few minutes Mr. Harley returned, and said my sister had been taken in, no purse at all had been droped, it was all a hoax!

Very soon, I began to feel the difference between the town and the country air, and to languish, as if I had no life in me; my father therefore looked round for another residence, out of the town.

This time it was nearer home, a cottage standing in a large market garden, opposite to the Racecourse, on the London road.

On the other side of the road stood the mansion built by John Biggs, where he and his sisters resided. They were very agreeable neighbours although they took a mischievous delight in trying to frighten us, by setting before us, the insecurity of that solitary cottage, and the imprudence of having no one in it at night, but my sister, myself, and the maid. And we did have one escapade with a burglar, but it happened at the race time, when we were gone down home, and had left the cottage locked up; two men got through the kitchen window, but could not, for bolts and bars, make their way any further. The market gardener

who came to gather vegetables for the early market, gave the alarm, and even caught hold of one of the men as he was emerging from the window, when a struggle ensued, but the thief made good his escape.

The gardener ran down at once to my father, to claim a reward for his bravery, and the service he had done us, when a rather witty colloquy took place between them: if he had caught the thief, my father shrewdly observed, it would have been worth so and so, mentioning a good round sum, but what ought he to be paid for letting him go?

Mesmerism was then very much in fashion, and one day Miss Biggs came to the cottage, fully bent on sending me into a mesmeric sleep; but she was mistaken, she could not do any such thing, and was obliged to give it up.

We took a walk together on the Racecourse, and she confessed with blushes, that Mr. Hollings was in the habit of mesmerising *her*, and she liked it very much indeed.

As we walked, I saw growing in a hole, made by one of the scaffold poles of the booths, a rare plant, *Myosurus-minimus*, or mouse tail, so called from the flowers forming a long and slender spike exactly like a mouse's tail.

Mr. Hollings was a very fine fellow, and very humane, although he did get me to trample on the spiders and beetles, etc., he wanted for his microscope, and that must be killed in a certain way.

The idea that he could send restless persons to sleep, or save them any suffering, highly delighted him; so he entered into mesmerism, heart and soul.

He invited us to come and see one of his patients, a young woman with polypus, and who could not get rest, for thinking of a coming operation.

When we entered the room, she lay in a helpless state, in a deep sleep. Mr. Hollings asked her if she saw anyone in the room, to which she answered, in her sleep, "Yes!" "Who is it?" was the next question, and she replied, "the Miss Kirbys." He soon after woke her, by flapping his handkerchief about her head, and when she came to her senses, she said she felt as if cold iron had been touching her. "There" said Mr. Hollings, "you see how she was affected, the cold iron was nothing but your want of faith in mesmerism!"

Mr. Hollings was then Vice-President of the Mechanic's Institute, and was in the habit of giving lectures. Natural history was his favourite study, and on one occasion, he chose for his subject the "Cephalopoda" or cuttle fish, and such like dangerous monsters of the deep, of which the audience knew little or nothing. However, with the aid of diagrams and his ability in explaining them, we came away more interested than we expected, and much better informed.

One of his previous lectures had been published, and was in everybody's hands; for it was very atttactive, being a purely local subject,—

"Leicester during the time of the Civil War," and with plates showing the breaches made by the Royalists in the town wall, and which were afterwards repaired with bricks and rubbish, as may still be seen.

Mr. Hollings used to come in nearly every evening; and one night after supper, he began to tell us, that he was teaching the Miss Biggs' Greek, and what apt scholars he found them, and how pleasant the lessons were to him. But he went on to say, that he had promised to hold a discussion with them, on the subject of religion; and asked Mr. Ryley to assist him with books, although he felt quite confident of his own powers, and of his ability to convince them of the error of Unitarian doctrines, and to bring them over to the Established Church.

Mr. Ryley took a very serious view of the matter, and declared it most unsafe to debate with ladies, who were sure to be victorious; for he added, with a significant smile,—"No man is a match for a woman, except at the altar, and depend upon it, that is the goal to which they will eventually bring you."

Perhaps as we are on the subject of Mr. Hollings and the Miss Biggs I might be allowed with the seven league boots, to forestall the next few years.

The ladies became proficient in Greek, and had been victorious in the religious argument, as Mr. Ryley had foretold; but by and bye, the typhus fever made its appearance at Stoneygate; and in Mr. Biggs' house, Annie the younger of his two sisters was attacked by it. Mr. Hollings came in one evening, with a very woe-begone face, to tell us the sad news: and he went on to say that during the last lesson in Greek, the candle had run down into a large winding sheet, and that Annie had looked up and said, "I don't believe it, see it has come to me, but it cannot be true." Alas! it was only too true, for within a few short weeks, she was gone, and the place that once knew her, would know her no more for ever.

The shock to the surviving sister was so great, that she completely lost her voice, and had to leave home, and travel about for six months, or more, before she could recover. Mr. Hollings was full of sympathy; for his nature was kindly and sympathetic to a degree; but it was easy to see where his sympathy would lead him, just where Mr. Ryley had foretold, namely—to the altar.

LEAFLET XIX.—Thomas Cooper and the Chartist Riot.

FOR many a long year, I may say for centuries past, the staple trade of Leicester has been the manufacture of hosiery in all its branches.

My father had served an apprenticeship, as we have said, in Mr. Pares' warehouse in the Newark; and in after life, carried on a prosperous business of his own.

He had built a warehouse, as we may remember, in the Millstone Lane, and his factory for wool spinning, was in the Redcross street.

New machinery was constantly being introduced; and one day at dinner, he told us that he would take us down to the factory, to see a carding machine, which would supercede the wool being combed by hand.

In these modern days, when the four quarters of the globe are brought within such easy distance of each other, wool is imported from every part of the world; but when we were young, it was not so, and the fleeces, that lay under a shed in the factory yard, were probably of home growth. Be that as it may, we stayed and watched the wool going through a number of processes, preparatory to its being spun. The steam-engine, at work somewhere out of sight, was certainly not out of mind, and wheels kept whizzing, and straps kept flying over our heads, in all directions, and we could not help wondering how day after day, and year after year, women and girls, could go on working in such a clatter of noise.

Fine threads of worsted kept coming out of the mouths of the frames, in a misty cloud, that looked almost like smoke; and the young people went along the room from one frame to another, and pushed it down into the baskets, set on purpose to catch it, for it was too light to fall of itself.

When the wool was thus spun into fine yarn, it was carried away to another building full of stocking frames, where it was woven as required, and according to orders.

In olden times, before there were any frames to be had, the inhabitants of Leicester, used to knit stockings by hand, in large quantities; and a pretty story is told, of how it came to pass, that their handy-work ceased to be wanted.

A curate, the Rev. William Lee, from the country, was paying his addresses to a young lady, who lived in Leicester; and whenever he came to see her, it troubled him to find her always knitting, for he fancied she took more interest in her work, than in what he had to say to her. So he devised a plan to stop the everlasting play of those knitting pins; and with a great deal of thought and trouble, invented a machine, that could make a pair of stockings in much less time than she could.

This ingenious invention was shown to Queen Elizabeth, who was asked to patronize it. But the Queen was not very warm in the cause, and said it would be a bad thing to take the knitting out of the hands of the poor people; but added, if Mr. Lee could make her a pair of silk stockings she might have something to say to him, and grant him a patent.

The silk stockings were duly sent. But alas for the hard-hearted Queen! she disappointed the hopes and expectations of Mr. Lee; and like most inventors, he died of a broken heart; while another man, obtained the patent for his discovery and carried off the fortune.

Those who live in a manufacturing town only know, the uncertainty of the working classes; and the readiness with which, on the slightest pretext, they throw themselves out of work, without any notice whatever. It is in fact, the vexed question of capital and labour, that is always in danger of cropping up.

And so it happened in Leicester about this time, the year, I believe 1842, that the stocking makers demanded an advance of wages, which the masters refused to give. Murmurings and threats followed, and by and bye a strike was the result.

The consequences as they always are, were disastrous; innocent women and children were left without bread to eat, while the men went about in groups from door to door, ostensibly begging, but in reality demanding money or food.

Satan can always find some mischief for idle hands to do,—and when a number of men are out of work, they fly to politics, and to the abuse of their betters, their rulers, and particularly those who are better off than themselves.

On the present occasion, the mob were Chartists; and at their head was the well-known Thomas Cooper, who possessed talents and powers of mind, far beyond the rest, which made him the more dangerous, for he was able to sway the men whichever way he pleased.

Sunday afternoon was the most convenient time for them to hold their meetings; and the Market Place they found best suited for the purpose. So there, a great crowd of the unemployed used to collect, and with plenty of hooting and shouting (which we could hear as we sat at home), listened to addresses from their leaders, which were calculated to urge them on to acts of violence; and when the speeches were over, the men would come tramping down the Friar Lane, half-a-dozen or more abreast, and make a great noise, that was intended for singing. The song was all about the Charter, and had a refrain of—

> Britains bold join heart and hand,
> To spread the Charter through the land.

We knew very well what the Charter meant—universal suffrage, admission into Parliament of poor men without any property qualification whatever, and a few more such comfortable doctrines.

As it happened, one of our maids called "Mercy," was a relative of Thomas Cooper's, and we noticed how very quick she was in closing the shutters, as soon as ever she heard the least noise or commotion. We hoped this girl would be a protection to us, and such might have been the case, as we certainly were not molested.

The excited feelings of the mob were brought to a crisis, by the fact of a contested election, just then coming on.

On the day of nomination, and while the members were on the hustings, and speeches were being made, a practical joke was played off upon Cooper.

A large tin extinguisher, made for the purpose, and fastened at the end of a long pole, was dropped adroitly over him, and completely covered him,—or as his opponents said, "put him out." Cooper, however, took the jest in good part, and almost immediately started a Chartist paper, calling it the "Extinguisher."

The next thing that followed, was a riot, dignified by the name of the Bastile Riot, because the workhouse was attacked, and all its windows broken. Sticks and stones flew freely about, and the police were no match for the mob.

The whole town was in a state of confusion, and the streets so crowded, that when at last a few of the ringleaders were arrested, it was difficult to get them along.

Cooper pushed himself into the justice room, and undertook to defend the prisoners himself; but the magistrates refused to hear him, on the ground of his not being a qualified lawyer.

Nobody knows what more mischief might have been done, had not a troop of horse, fortunately arrived from Nottingham, in time to prevent it. They drove the mob before them, and the worst of the rioters were safely lodged in gaol, and all anxiety speedily brought to an end.

We were very glad to hear some few years later, that Thomas Cooper had changed his course of life, and was putting his talents to a good purpose. After lying in prison and suffering great privations from insufficient food, and a miserable bed,—he rose above it all, and having educated himself in the most heroic manner, he earned a comfortable livelihood, by giving lectures on history and philosophy as well as on theology.

The story he has given us of his adventures in his "Autobiography" is both romantic and interesting; and in the little work he has more recently published, called "Thoughts at Fourscore," we see plainly how altered are his views, and his ideas of life.

LEAFLET XX.—The Town Plate Sold by Auction.

FOR some time before the Chartist Riot, agitation seemed rife all over the country, and a wave of Radicalism set in, that might carry everything before it.

In Leicester, the Tory Corporation, who had held office for many years unopposed, were rudely displaced, and a great outcry was raised against them, on account of their extravagant expenditure of public money.

The town was said to be a thousand pounds in debt, and it was thought necessary to sell everything up by auction, to clear off this liability. Even the dinner service, on which the annual banquet of the Mayor and Aldermen, used to be served, bearing the Town Arms on every piece, was brought to the hammer.

And the silver plate, that had belonged to the town for ages, shared the same ignominious fate,—even the mace, that had been carried so

many years to church, before the corporate body, was knocked down to a publican's wife. We happened to go into the Old Town Hall just as she had bought it, and was holding it up in high glee, boasting of the custom it would bring to her house. And she was right, we heard afterwards that it had been a very profitable investment, and made her fortune.

This sale took place as far back as the year '36, and under the new regime, in the same year, Mr. Ryley was made a magistrate.

In '43 Richard Harris was chosen Mayor, and very popular he was, having risen from the ranks of a stocking maker, to that of a rich manufacturer.

He was a self-made man, and at one time of life, had worked in the frame himself; but as soon as he was able, he procured a frame of his own, and exercised so much ingenuity and skill in the weaving of shawls and jackets, and vests and scarfs now called clouds, and showed so much taste in introducing bright coloured wools into them, that he quickly made his fortune; for the manufacture of such gay articles of dress, was quite a new thing, and took the fancy of the public.

Mr. Harris was as much respected as anyone in the town, for his gentleness and piety, and when he became the Mayor, there was a general rejoicing.

During the year of his office, the Queen and Prince Albert paid a visit to the Duke of Rutland, and he was invited, in his public capacity, to dine at Belvoir Castle.

The circumstance was so gratifying to the feelings of the working classes, that they crowded round his door to see him in his court dress, and with his sword by his side, get into his carriage. Indeed the crowd was so great, that it reached from the top of King street, where he resided, to the very bottom of the Belgrave Gate. The cheering and waving of handkerchiefs was very much like an ovation, and his progress might have been a triumphal procession.

Mr. Harris in his early days had been in my father's employ, and was so highly esteemed by him, as to have been appointed one of the executors, and trustees under his will. But after a number of years were past, he began to feel the infirmities of age, and on that account, withdrew his own name, and substituted that of his son, John Dove Harris, afterwards the Squire of Ratcliffe Hall.

Mr. Harris was very liberal, and during the time he was Mayor gave a succession of dinner parties.

Mr. Hollings came in to see us one evening as usual, and accidently told us, that on the next night, Wednesday, he was invited to dine at the Mayor's. But Wednesday, as it happened proved an unlucky day: for just as Mr. Hollings was going upstairs to undergo his ablutions, and to dress for the party, a friend dropped in from London, carpet bag in hand.

It was Mr. Ogle, an intimate chum from the Military College at Woolwich; and having a holiday for the next two or three days, he was come to spend it in the most pleasant way he could think of. But poor Mr. Hollings was at his wits end,—it was impossible for him to take Mr. Ogle on to the dinner party, uninvited,—and what was he to do with him? Fortunately, his wise old mother, Mrs. Hollings, came to the rescue, for when their guest had had something to eat, she posted him down to our house in the Friar Lane, saying she wanted him to do a little errand for her,—which was to carry a packet of mince pies of her own making,—and as she said "remarkably good."

So with the pies in his pocket, Mr. Ogle walked away,—and at parting, told his friend to enjoy himself, and not trouble about him, as he meant, to turn into the Theatre, and see what they were about there.

To our amazement, just as we were sitting down to supper, Mr. Hollings ran in, in a very excited state, and quite out of breath. In the course of a few minutes he told us, he had been to the Mayor's, where the house was in a blaze of light; and plenty of lackeys were in the hall to show him upstairs.

He found the drawing-room pretty full of gentlemen, but his host seemed rather confused at the sight of him, and running him up into a corner, pulled out a paper on which was a long list of names, and said in a low, but emphatic tone "I think, Mr. Hollings, you have made a mistake, and come on the wrong day—yes, I see you are down for Friday."

Mr. Hollings did not wait for another word, but in the twink of an eye, was down the stairs, and down the street—without heeding the young man who was sent to bring him back.

Misfortunes never come alone, and he found his mothers' door locked, and no one at home.

We were bound to give him something to satisfy the cravings of hunger, for as he told us, whenever he went out to dine, he made it a rule, to fast before-hand.

But as I have said misfortunes never come alone, and by and bye, in walked Mr. Ogle, who had been to the Theatre, and finding himself the sole occupant of the boxes, he had come out again,—for he declared that he could not endure any longer the staring he had to undergo.

"My dear fellow," said Mr. Hollings, "where are those pies of my mother's? did you bring them?"

"By Jove!" cried his friend, they are still in my pocket!"

And so they were, and being pretty well sat upon, could only be got out in fragments.

The next morning Mr. Ryley came in, looking restless and unhappy, and asked if I could drive him over that evening to Birstall Hall, as he had business with his friend Tom Smith. And then he said how sorry he was to have to tell us that Phillips' Bank had stopped payment. The firm was Clark, Phillips, and Smith, and he wanted to condole with Mr. Smith, and hear what he had to say about it.

So accordingly we went, and I drove about, while Mr. Ryley was paying his visit. When he came back he seemed angry, and said that Mr. Smith had confessed that his removal to Birstal Hall, and the furnishing it had undergone, was only done to blind the eyes of the public, and to keep up the credit of the bank a little longer. The Phillips too, were friends of Mr. Ryley's. But before many weeks were over, all the parties connected with the fallen bank had taken their departure, and were no more seen in Leicester.

LEAFLET XXI.—First Love.

WHEN Midsummer was come, it brought a great many invitations with it, and my sister Elizabeth and I, were carried away on a round of visits to aunts, uncles, and cousins, in Oxfordshire.

While we were gone, Mr. Palmer the solicitor and his wife had the benefit of the cottage on the London Road, and its garden of roses.

Mrs. Palmer was our best friend and neighbour, in every sense of the word. Indeed she was the only one endowed by nature, with that wonderful gift of "intelligence." which can never be acquired, but runs like an electric spark from mind to mind, and may be compared to the magical sign and countersign of freemasonry.

Amongst the relatives we went to visit in Oxfordshire, was a certain cousin George, who had a farm at Marston, near Banbury, and lived in the old manor house, a romantic place, with grassy walks under over-hanging shrubs, and evergreen trees. It was just the place for lovers, and when Elizabeth and her cousin George, began to stroll about in the moonlight to cool themselves after the heat of the day, it was evident what would come of it.

One evening, when the excitement of sheep-shearing was over, and the sun had gone down sufficiently to make walking agreeable, Elizabeth ran into the drawing room to me, rather bewildered, and looking every-where for her hat, which I pointed out to her was hanging all the while upon her arm. She tied it on with rather a coquettish air, and sauntered with her cousin out of the garden.

The path they chose for their ramble, was gay with summer flowers, and the wild roses filled the air with their fragrance.

There could not have been a more solitary and delightful place, or a more favourable opportunity for George to tell his tale of love—that tale which though so often repeated, can never lose its charm.

As I watched them from the window, it occurred to me that Elizabeth had her rose-coloured spectacles on, and was looking at George, as a hero of her own imagination.

He was looking remarkably well, and making himself very agreeable, and by the aid of that romantic disposition of hers, he succeeded in producing such an effect upon her, that before they parted, she had promised to become his wife.

The house at Marston was an old-fashioned mansion, and the rooms very large; the bed we slept on, (though sleep we had none) was massive and elaborately carved; it had belonged in earlier days to George IV., and been sent up from the pavilion at Brighton by Mr. Slight, when the furniture there was disposed of.

After we retired for the night, Elizabeth put her arms round me, and with many caresses, told me that George had made her an offer, and that she had accepted him;—he had, he said, loved her from childhood, and her love would be like the rising of a better star upon his destiny;—and he promised to cherish and watch over her with such tenderness, that the winds of Heaven should not blow too roughly upon her. It was the first tale of love Elizabeth had ever heard, and she drank it in, as flowers the dew of early morning.

The next day was market day at Banbury, and George said at breakfast, that he intended to call upon a friend of ours and invite her to come over and spend the day with us.

This was Mrs. Chesterman, a doctor's wife, an agreeable and well-educated woman whose society had been a source of pleasure to us, and with whom we had become on very friendly terms, during our stay at Banbury.

George came back from market well pleased with himself, for having done his errand so well. Mrs. Chesterman had accepted his invitation, and said she need not trouble him to fetch her, but should drive over in her own brougham; and then he stayed to luncheon, and drank her health in a glass of good wine.

Accordingly, at the time appointed, Mrs. Chesterman came; it was sunshine indoors as well as out, and we had a delightful day. The arrangements were those of a farm-house, but the dinner was more grand than usual, and consisted of two or three courses.

Miss Harby, the housekeeper, sat at the head of the table, and George at the other end: where he flourished the knife about and made a great noise in sharpening it, boasting all the time of his good carving. There was only one maid, the maid-of-all-work, to wait at table, and having more dishes than usual, she became confused, and seemed not to know what she was about. Miss Harby looked round at her, and said in a whisper—"plates,—bring some more plates," but the poor girl, more confused than before, set her arms akimbo, and replied loud enough for everybody to hear, "please ma'am there ai'nt none." Miss Harby was out of the room in a trice, with the girl and the plates too; and in another moment we heard the sound of their being washed in the kitchen.

Mrs. Chesterman enjoyed herself so much, that she arranged a day for *a pic-nic, in the following* week, to Edge Hill and Wroxton Abbey, and

offered to take me in her brougham, if George would drive the rest of the party in his own conveyance.

The view from Edge Hill was perfectly charming, and the place had a peculiar interest, from being the scene of the first battle that was fought between Charles the First's army and that of the Parliament.

Elizabeth and George seemed to prefer each other's society, to ours, and arm in arm, wandered away from the rest of the party. Mrs. Chesterman looked after them with a smile, and said, "I see which way the young folks are going; but mark my words—if it is not to be, they cannot alter the decrees of destiny, and then all this courting will go for nothing."

And she went on to tell me, how she herself, in her youth had been engaged to a cousin, and had given him all her affections, and would willingly have lived or died for him. But no! the fates were adverse; and relentlessly tore them asunder,—and in a lower tone, and pointing in the direction my dear sister had taken, she added, "*it may be so with her.*"

Prophetic words that gave me a kind of shock, as she uttered them; for I thought what grief a disappointment would entail, on such a gentle loving nature as Elizabeth's.

So the next opportunity I had of talking to George alone, I told him of my anxiety, and that in all probability their engagement would not be approved of by friends on either side, and that it might be the better policy, to slip into the little church belonging to the manor,—within a stone's throw of the house, and be married first, and ask their advice afterwards.

He would have been delighted to do so, but Elizabeth, who was only sixteen, held back, and refused to consent to what she considered a clandestine marriage.

Very soon we had to say good-bye, and for ever, to the pretty manor-house at Marston, and return to Banbury to finish our visits there, while George wended his way home to talk the matter over, and ask the consent of his father.

Is it not true that there is in the life of every man, one critical moment on which his future destiny depends, and which if lost, can never be recalled?

Elizabeth came home in a very poetical humour, and wrote the following ballad, leaning against a chest of drawers, after she had gone upstairs to bed.

The subject has this very year (1886) been brought under the notice of the public, by the oratorio performed before the Queen and Royal Family under the superintendence of Professor Listz.

"The Legend of St. Elizabeth of Hungary."

Her provision of bread for the poor miraculously turns to roses.

HOW beauteous on the mountains, the summer morning flings,
The gold and purple light, from off her dewy wings;
The stern old castle on the height is deck'd in beauty rare,
The merry song of birds, rings joyous thro' the air,
The fragrance of the waking flowers, comes stealing on the breeze,
That dances light and playfully, 'mid the rustling forest trees.
The Lady of the Castle rises with the early dawn,
And having pray'd, she looketh forth upon the glowing morn;
Then clad in meek simplicity with her small basket's store,
She gracefully descends, the rugged steep, once more,
Unto her daily task of charity as she was wont of yore.
Each floweret gay, that blooms along the mountain's craggy side,
To see the lady's beauteous face its petals opened wide,
And as she journeys onward, her fairy step, so light,
Scarce from the young and tender grass brushes the dewdrops bright;
Her thoughts are pure and holy, but an ungentle mate,
Has been decreed her early years, by policies of state;
Wayward and proud, within his scornful heart
No pious deeds of love have ever found a part:
He meets her now, upon the mountain side,
And the lady shrinks, and fears the woe that may betide.
In anger fierce he questions—wherefore her castle home
Without befitting pomp she leaves—ignobly thus to roam?
And what upon her arm so delicately white
Is that rude burden, that strange unseemly sight?
Alas! in terror from the lady's lips have false words quickly flown
Her dainty load's of roses—roses newly blown.
The Prince with angry grasp—the lady's basket breaks
And with distrustful thought the fragrant store he takes;
Yes—roses bloom within, roses so sweet and fair,
They fill with heavenly odours, all the breathing air;
They are so rich and radiant, as though an angel's eye
Had revelled 'mid their glowing folds and deep celestial dye;
Naught can a touch profane their beauteous forms deface,
Calm lie those magic roses, with superhuman grace;
A holy influence from out their petals flies,
To scatter blessings—blessings are mysteries!
Soft musings to the Prince's heart find their benignant way,
Moulding his harsh and stubborn will to their Diviner sway;
A gentle calm comes o'er the troubled sea
Of his unquiet mind—so sweet the ministry
Of those rare blossoms, newly pluck't from Eden's bowers
So pure a balm distills from their immortal flowers.

LEAFLET XXII.—Alas for the Ladies!

WHEN we reached home and found George there to meet us, his face told its own tale. As I had foreseen he had been met with many objections; first and foremost the cousinship, and then, the refinement, and nonsuitability of Elizabeth for a farmer's wife, &c., &c., however, his mother invited her to come and make a long stay with *her, that she might learn* all the duties that were requisite for such a *station in life.*

Accordingly, poor Elizabeth was sent away without delay, and with rather a heavy heart; to be taught the butter making, the pickling, the preserving, the shirt making, the laundry work, and nobody knows how many other things besides.

Mr. and Mrs. Palmer had enjoyed the stay in the cottage on the London road so much, that they would have liked to have remained there a little longer,—but we returned to it ourselves (Catherine and I), and soon found to our regret that Samuel Stone the Town Clerk had purchased it, and the piece of ground in which it stood for the site of a residence for himself and his family. He was very friendly and even allowed us to remain, while the grounds were being laid out, and the trees and shrubs planted; but as the carriage drive had to come over our very doorstep, we were obliged to vacate, and return to the town, to the old house once more.

Here we found a visitor, our cousin Ellen Slight, of Brighton, who was spending her holidays with Sarah; for though she was an only daughter, and surrounded with every luxury at home, she and her mother could not agree, and Ellen was then filling a situation as governess near Market Harboro'. She was a very pretty girl and by and bye a lover came on the scene, and the old story had to be told over again, in the wainscoted parlour in the Friar lane.

Mr. Beane, for that was the name of the lover, was a surgeon with a comfortable practice and house at Peckham. He had come down to Leicester ostensibly to visit a friend, another doctor, but in reality the object of his visit was to make Ellen an offer.

He was a handsome fellow, and Sarah and I noticed him, walking backwards and forwards in front of the house, several times and taking a survey of the windows; he told us afterwards he only wanted to know whether the cane blinds were good for anything; he was happy to say they were, and he should have some comfort in making love behind them without any fear of being over-looked. He stayed a week or more in Leicester and came courting to our house every day. Ellen was glad enough to give up her situation as governess, and returned to her father's house near Brighton to be married.

She had been married about twelve months, when she sent for me to come and pay her a visit. I was in very feeble health and wanted a great deal of care, but as Mr. Beane was a doctor, Sarah thought I might venture. Nor was she mistaken; I had every attention from Ellen and her husband, and used to go with him every morning, in the brougham, when he went to make his rounds amongst his patients.

One day, he offered to leave us both for an hour or so, at the house of an old lady, a patient whom he went to see every day whether she was ill or well.

So accordingly we went, Ellen taking her work bag under her arm, for she was busy with her needle in expectation of a baby. He introduced us to the lady, a Miss Jones, and after a little chat, with cake and wine,

he left us, saying he should soon be back to fetch us. But no such thing; a doctor, of all folks in the world, is the least to be depended upon. I could not walk any distance, and there was no cab within gunshot, so there we had to stay all day.

Miss Jones' dinner was laid in an inner room and we persuaded her to go and have it, while we anxiously looked out of the window, up and down, but no brougham was to be seen. Of course it came at last, but for the future, we declined to be left, to make a call on any pretext whatever.

Miss Jones was, what is commonly called hard of hearing; but she said, looking at me with a knowing look, —"You should never trust to deafness, but mind what you say before deaf people—they often, by some strange vagary of nature, can hear when they are the least wanted."

"There were two friends of mine calling here yesterday," she went on to tell us—"husband and wife, and when I asked them to stay to dinner, they held a little colloquy about it, and then I heard the lady say—"yes, we had better stay, for you know there is nothing at home but cold mutton." Of course they stayed, but before dinner was over, Miss Jones enquired about the cold mutton, and asked them if they were sure it would keep?

Mr. Beane's sister, Mrs. Churchill was out of health and came to stay with him for the benefit of his advice.

Her husband, Mr. Churchill was proprietor of the two large hotels (the Calverly and the Kentish) at Tunbridge Wells, and decidedly the most interesting person I saw during my visit to Peckham. He had risen from the ranks, and was a fine specimen of an English gentleman; but he was more generous than anyone I ever heard of, and Ellen was fond of relating his praiseworthy actions.

He had a fancy for carved oak furniture, and used to be on the outlook for it. So once upon a time, according to advertisement, he went to view some in the house of a doctor, who was going to be sold up; and it was so beautiful, that Mr. Churchill felt the greatest compassion for the owner, and thought what a pang it must cost him to part with it; so he waited for the doctor to come home, and then ascertained that he had begun his practice with a very small capital, and fallen into debt; and that fact had affected his health, and forced him into this sale. It was a good practice, and he believed if he could only free himself he should recover. Mr. Churchill sympathised with him to the full, and in the end, advanced such a sum on the security of the furniture as would set him at liberty from his responsibilities. The sale was therefore cancelled, and the young doctor was fortunate enough to continue his practice and be able to repay Mr. Churchill every penny that he had lent him.

I had many pleasant drives with Mr. Beane; he had a patient at Forest Hill, and often took me there; the lady was a native of the Cape of Good Hope, and would bring out a bottle of her favourite wine *Constantia.* One day he drove as far as Marlborough House, to

examine a youth for the navy, but unfortunately could not let him pass. The Duchess of Kent resided there in those days. I saw as much of the place as I wished; the wardrobes for the linen, and the domestic arrangements seemed to me perfect.

Mr. Beane used to talk away as we drove along, and once or twice he descanted on the advantages that bachelors enjoy over the married men. "While I was a single man," he said, "I never went home from my rounds empty-handed; a basket of new laid eggs, a new loaf, or a plum cake, or some such trifle would be sure to be put into the brougham; to say nothing of worked slippers, knitted socks, and all sorts of ladies manufacture, but now" he added, "I never see a vestige of anything whatever." Alas for the ladies!

LEAFLET XXIII.—Sight Seeing in London.

MR. HUDSON came to Pecham one day to dinner, and arranged to fetch me on a visit to St. John's Wood.

He had been left a widower with one little girl, he called Dolly, and a friend of his wife's, a Miss Cook, a native of Yarmouth, was his housekeeper and soon became his wife.

It was a modern house, and had a garden behind, kept in London fashion full of flowers by Henderson's men. Mr. Hudson was not a domestic man in the sense of being a home bird, for every evening he liked to go to some entertainment, or give a party, or go to one at the house of his friends; he was a general favourite, and a capital host.

One night, we crushed into a very hot room quite full of people, somewhere in Regent street, to see the Overland Route to India, which was certainly very well done, and a great deal more comfortable than taking the journey in reality.

Another time, we went to the Egyptian Hall, a *dirty*, *smelly* place, to take a journey up the Nile and pass all its rapids or cataracts in succession. We came away full of learning, for a gentleman waving a long stick, described the White Nile, and the Blue Nile, and told us how many miles the river was long, and how many wide, and informed us that the delta was so called from the Greek letter Δ (D); indeed he taught us so much for our money, that my head never ceased aching all the next day.

Then, we had to spend an evening at the Colosseum, with its cool corridors and its statues of divinities, whose worshippers have long since passed away. But by daylight we must go to the Polytechnic, to see the working of the diving bell, and to witness the power of the magnet in the wonderful Turk, whose head was always being severed from his body and yet remained upon his shoulders.

Mr. Hudson's parties were very gay, and the suppers, however splendid, were no trouble whatever to his house-keeper, Miss Cook, or to anyone else in the house. Everything was brought in tin cases from Vèry's, the confectioners in Regent street; and his men, not only waited at table but arranged it all, and spun the barley-sugar into plumes of feathers, and numbers of pretty devices, which hung suspended over the table, and sparkled in the gas-light like gold.

I have said these parties were very gay, for though cards and dancing were not allowed, there was plenty of talking, as well as music and singing.

At stated intervals we used to go and spend a musical evening, as it was called, at the house of a Mr. Mayo of Kilburn. The two drawing-rooms were thrown into one, and were crowded with guests. One of the daughters was an invalid (as was supposed, with curvature of the spine), and used to lie on an ornamental couch, and be covered with a satin and lace couvre-pied, that was most becoming to her complexion.

The musical performance began at eight; at ten, family prayers were conducted, and seemed to me strangely out of place; at twelve, supper was announced, when we left the invalid alone, and saw no more of her.

Every day, when the weather allowed, she was drawn out in a chair, and her sister would walk by her side.

Mr. Hudson was a performer on the piano himself, and had composed the music for several songs, "The Mariner views the beacon on high," etc., but Dolly had a voice deliciously sweet, and on the training of which no expense was spared. The gentleman who gave her lessons on the piano, was a most agreeable man; he paid great attention to Dolly, and they played and sang duets in concert. It was a pity that Mr. Hudson raised an objection to having him for a son-in-law, on the ground of his being a music master.

The most effective singer was a Mr. Cole, who never sung a note until the clock had struck twelve; and then could sway his audience as he pleased, and melt the whole company into tears. No one who ever heard him sing Moore's melody "Oft in the stilly night," could ever forget it.

Joseph Houlton was perhaps the most interesting young man at these parties; the expression of his fine eyes was very peculiar. He felt sure he had disease of the brain, and this idea preyed upon his mind, to such a degree, that before many months had elapsed, he brought his life to an end, by taking an over-dose of laudnumn.

His father, Dr. Houlton, was a botanist, and had obtained the silver medal from the Society of Arts, for presenting them with a dish of the prepared and cooked roots of the Stachys Palustris, which he called *Panace*, and hoped it would come into every day use as a culinary vegetable.

Miss Cook suddenly became very enthusiastic in the study of botany, and would have Mr. Hudson take us for a day to Kew; so he hired a *carriage from the livery* stables, and after making a halt at Hampton

Court for an hour or two, we went on to Kew. I was glad to see Sir William Hooker, whose British Flora had been my daily companion. He was walking in the gardens, talking to the Duchess of Cambridge and her daughter Princess Mary.

It is impossible to give any description of the beauty and variety of the vegetable world that was spread before us. The regal glory of the palms—or the fantastic shapes of the orchids, or the effect of the orange grove; in fact it was like fairyland to see with our eyes so many shrubs and flowers, that we had only read about in books. Here for instance, was the fern like the nest of a bird, and there, was another hanging from the branch of a tree, and looking like the head and antlers of a stag.

A bed of the waving Papyrus attracted our attention, and in a tank at a little distance was the lily, then but lately brought from the waters of the Nile, and named in honour of the Queen—"Victoria Regina." It was a treat indeed, but instead of one day, more than a month might have been spent agreeably, and with profit, in going from one house to another, and from one bed of flowers to another.

We have read of Jussieu and the botanic garden he laid out at Trianon, for the French king, Louis XIV., placing together his plants so as to make apparent to the students, his arrangement of the Natural System. The families of plants allied to each other were also put together at Kew; but in these modern days, when every country in the world is made to give up its vegetable treasures, the gardens of Kew must stand unrivalled.

On Sunday, Mr. Hudson attended Mr. Stratton's Chapel at Paddington. He was a very accomplished man, and I well remember an impressive sermon he preached about the holy garments to be put upon Aaron and his sons.—The ephod, the breast-plate, the mitre, etc.,—every article of the gorgeous dress was dwelt upon and brought home, in one way or other, as a type of Christ, and of his office as the Great High Priest that was to come.

LEAFLET XXIV.—A Prophetic Dream.

JUST as my visit to St. John's Wood was coming to a close, I received a letter from Miss Gregory, a niece of Mrs. Benjamin Kirby's, to tell me she was in Howell and James' work-room in Regent Street; but far too ill to work, and begging that she might return home with me, to be nursed and taken care of, in the Friar Lane.

She and her sister Maria had been left orphans, with a mere pittance, and their rich uncle, Mr. Hind, had apprenticed them,—one to a milliner, and the other to a dressmaker, in the hope that they would by and bye set up together, and maintain themselves in business. I did not refuse Miss Gregory's request, and she came down home with me, *if not, a day or two* before me.

Every one who has been out on a visit, however kind friends may be, must have experienced the delight of coming home; the freedom from restraint, the unexplainable sense of liberty, the comforts and above all the love that is waiting; all these I enjoyed to the full, and thanked God for it.

But I found dear Elizabeth drooping, and out of spirits. The Marston estate, with the farm and Manor House and pretty grounds, had been sold. George had hoped his father would have bought it for him, but no such thing; it passed into other hands, and he was thrown out, to find a farm where he could. He looked first at one, and then at another, but some flaw was always found that turned out to be a fatal objection.

Towards Elizabeth he showed but little consideration in the matter. She was often in tears over his letters, and well she might be; for he was always harping on her being too delicate, for the duties of a farm-house, and her education quite unfitting her for it. And then, he dwelt on the unsettled state of his affairs, which as he said, held out no prospect but a tedious, or it might be a never-ending courtship.

He wound up one of his letters by telling her, how young she was, and it was not too late to retract; and concluded by wishing to leave her plenty of time for consideration; so therefore, he added, she need not expect to see him at present. Poor Elizabeth! When after a long interval, he did come to visit her, she was in such a state of alarm, lest he should say anything unkind to her, that she shook like an aspen leaf.

It was impossible for this state of things to continue long; and in spite of her affection for him, she was at last driven to give him back his letters, and to set him at liberty. He went away in great irritation; and the next thing she heard about him was, that he was married.

Mrs. Chesterman had said it might be so, and so it was, the Fates were adverse, and alas! the lovers were torn asunder!

Mr. Hudson had seen me safe to Leicester, and stayed two or three days, making holiday; going out sketching every morning to the Abbey gardens, or canal meadows, with my sister Sarah.

We found my brother had been dangerously ill, and he was still in an emaciated state. The doctor had called upon Sarah, and told her that all he wanted was good support; so he dined every day at our table. Mr. Hudson and I found him there, looking very ill indeed, and almost as thin as a skeleton. It was the best thing to do, and he soon began to recover his strength, and by and bye got quite well.

As Miss Gregory occupied one spare room, and Mr. Hudson another, I slept for a few nights with Sarah, and it was then that she had a dream, which she never forgot, and felt certain would come true. She woke me up to tell me, that in her dream she had been carried off to prison, and tried in vain to make her escape. She was kept in prison for the remainder of her life, and "in fact, Mary," she said bitterly, "I forsee, *that I shall die in prison.*"

Is it not true, that there lives in the soul a prophetic principle, though we cannot tell from whence it arises? And it must, for ever, remain a mystery to us. We read in Scripture of prophetic dreams, both in the Old Testament, and in the New; and we receive what we read, in humble faith, feeling that the subject is beyond our finite powers. It is to us incomprehensible, but nevertheless it is true.

Poor Sarah dreamed the same dream three times over; and it was quite hopeless to convince her that such a thing could not be. Truth is stranger than fiction—and a number of years afterwards, when I received letters from her dated Woodhend House *Prison* (in reality Dr. Stilwell's Asylum for deranged ladies) how forcibly was I reminded of her dream!

At this juncture, poor Sarah was like Martha of old, careful and troubled about many things. Our father's health was slowly but evidently giving way, under the gradual progress of a painful disease, for which he was talking of undergoing operations.

Nor was this all, his spirits were very much depressed, in consequence of the many failures that were taking place in the houses of business in New York, and that caused him serious losses in the way of bad debts. Anxiety about his daughters, preyed upon his mind, and he began to think, that after all the care and education he had bestowed upon them, they might have to battle with the world, which he had always pictured to them as a hard and cruel world.

He took the idea into his head of disposing of the Friar Lane property during his lifetime, and accordingly had several offers for it, and gentlemen to look over it. Sarah was very angry, and would never give her consent to leaving the house, or having it sold on any condition whatever; in fact, she was as violent in her opposition to this scheme, as she had been to the proposal of having a mother-in-law.

In the end, her father gave way, and it was well for us he did so. The subject which had caused so much altercation was laid upon the shelf, and never alluded to afterwards. But she had another trouble that was, as she expressed it, eating into her heart like a canker.

One of her younger sisters was of a franzy temperament, and could not brook the control of an elder sister, so every now and then, there would be an explosion of passion, and after it, the two would remain silent and estranged for several days. I was devoted to Sarah, and could not allow a fault in her, while I loved the younger ones as much as if they had been my own children. Of course, there were faults on both sides, but how difficult it is, for an elder sister to have the rule over the household, and keep all its members in harmony.

All this time, poor Elizabeth was fretting and blaming herself for want of patience with her cousin George, when there was really no blame attached to her whatever. She became subject to violent fits of toothache, that kept her awake at night, and did her health a great injury.

It was during one of these fits, that she wrote the following ditty, standing, as she generally did, against a chest of drawers :—

OF all the miseries that befall
Us mortals here below,
The toothache is the worst of all,
We luckless wights well know.

It brings a thousand knawing pains
From out one little tooth,
Each hapless nerve it rudely strains,
And makes us cry forsooth.

I'm sure if stubborn Pharoh had
His teeth all set off aching,
He would have been uncommon glad,
To send the Jews off packing.

If patient Job had been annoyed
With this most trying evil,
He would have sent those friends of his
All three unto the Devil.

And think at famous Waterloo,
If all our soldiers bold,
Had been so sadly out of luck
As to have taken cold.

And with the Duke of Wellington,
All had ticdoloreux,
I'm sure the Frenchmen would have won,
And made no more to do.

Alas ! no ghosts at dead of night,
Their station by you taking
Are half so bad as when your tooth
Is obstinately aching.

In vain from side to side you turn,
'Tis not a bit of use,
In spite of all, the pain will keep,
Still getting worse and worse.

Sometimes it jumps from tooth to tooth,
A savage pastime making,
Until in your despair you think,
Of Prussic acid taking.

And then it stops—and now you think
Surely 'tis gone at last,
Oh what a vain delusive hope,
How quickly it is passed !

For up it starts—with wondrous glee
Its barbarous game to play,
Saying "good soul, be quiet now,
I shall not go till day."

LEAFLET XXV.—The Sick Room.

BUT I must return to our domestic affairs, and give some account of Mary Ann Gregory, who had come back with me from London, and who lay ill at our house. She was so grateful for the attention she received, and for such a home as ours to come to, that she used to say the London workroom appeared to her like Purgatory, and the quiet bedroom in the Friar Lane like Paradise.

She told us many things about the hardships of the shop girls and workwomen in town, who had no friends to go to, on the Sunday. In some cases the doors would be locked behind them, and they were obliged to find a place of shelter, or walk in the streets all day. She spoke most feelingly of the kind efforts made by Christian ladies, and said a room had been opened for the young people, where tea and refreshments were to be had, and a lady or two would be always there to meet them, to say a few words of kindness and comfort. Mary Ann corresponded with one of these ladies, and used to read her letters to us.

As she seemed to be making little progress towards recovery, we asked Dr. Noble to call and give an opinion on her case. He told us at once that it was hopeless, she might continue in that same state for months; but her strength must in the end give way, and that, in plain English, she must die of starvation. She was suffering, he said, from Mesenteric Consumption, and therefore, whatever food she might take, was not assimilated into the system, and could do her no good. It was a bad report, and fell upon us like a sentence of death; but we did what we best could under the circumstances, and engaged a nurse (and a very good nurse too) to attend to her night and day, and tried in every way to keep up her spirits.

Her room was at the top of the house, and opened into a large landing well-covered with matting, and with a window at either end; one looking into the street and the other into the garden. When she became too ill to come down stairs, she used to sit at the window at the garden end, and enjoy the sight of the flowers, and have her meals on a little round table, that stood there for the purpose beside her easy chair.

She was a pious good girl, and never murmured; indeed, as she said, how could she complain, when she enjoyed that "peace which passeth all understanding," and had a sense of God's pardoning mercy through His Son.

It was a great comfort to her to receive daily visits from the Rev. Edward Vaughan, Vicar of St. Martin's, and indeed it was to us all. During the whole time of her illness, he never failed to come and read to her, and pray with her, and to cheer and console her, as he so well knew how. More than once, he brought his sister with him, and administered the Holy Communion in the sick room, my sister Sarah and the nurse, being invited to join them.

Miss Gregory's life came slowly to an end, and she was laid to rest in the graveyard of St. Martin's, beneath the windows of the vicarage house. At the time, we wished that a stone might mark the spot, and Mr. Vaughan suggested the text—"For in Thee the fatherless find mercy" should be carved upon it.

Mr. Hind, the rich uncle, was proprietor of slate quarries at Swithland and Groby, and to him we looked for the stone; no stone however was forthcoming, and it was well that it was so; for in these days the churchyard has been made into a garden, and the gravestones taken up and merely used to pave the pathways through it.

But good man as Mr. Vaughan was, even he could not avoid having enemies; he was chaplain to the Wyggeston Hospital, the chapel of which occupied the street on one side of the churchyard leading to the Townhall Lane. The inmates of the hospital were about twenty-four old men and women, and Mr. Vaughan read the service to them every morning and evening, and visited them in times of sickness.

For these services he received a stipend from the funds of the hospital. But when the Radical movement became very strong, and very unreasonable, he was persecuted, and even burnt in effigy before St. Martin's School, next to our house in Friar Lane. We were highly delighted, when, after some law proceedings, Mr. Vaughan came off victorious, and instead of having his stipend reduced, it was positively increased to the comfortable sum of three hundred a year.

LEAFLET XXVI.—The Head of the House is taken.

FOR some two or three years past, my father's mind had been so depressed that it was painful to be with him, and we seemed bowed down with a sense of evil, and under a cloud, although we did not know what for. Before he became too ill to travel, he took several trips, in order if possible to dissipate his sorrowful forebodings.

Fortunately for us the lines of railways were being opened up and down the country. The first was from Manchester to Liverpool, and my father drove by easy stages, with Sarah and myself through Derbyshire as far as Manchester, and then took us on, by train to Liverpool.

The line was also opened to Ambergate, *en route* for Matlock, and we went on by conveyance to Matlock, and stayed a few days at the hotel there.

He was also fond of driving to the villages round Leicester, where we used to take tea in the village inn, and spend the evening in a botanical ramble. He was a great admirer of the beauties of nature, and used to say: "How calm and tranquil are these woods and meadows, and how

soothing is the effect of this lovely sunset, but the human heart is not tranquil, it is torn and racked with anxieties, and tossed like the waves of the sea."

The year 1848 was a very eventful year for us. My father underwent several operations for the stone; Mr. Paget, the surgeon, persuading him that by the use of some recently introduced surgical instruments, he would suffer but little pain and inconvenience.

At first, we hoped this process would succeed, and that he might rally for a time at least, but these hopes were soon dashed; the morphia and other opiates that were administered to him affected his brain, and he scarcely knew what he said. The Queen's palace at Balmoral was being built, or had just been built, and his mind seemed to dwell upon that fact, and he could talk of little else.

One day he asked for the newspaper, and got into the easy chair and put on his spectacles to read it, but alas! we saw that he held the paper upside down.

The same nurse attended to him, who had nursed Miss Gregory, but Sarah was indefatigable in her attentions to him. He always took me for my mother, and said how glad he was, I had come back to be with him now he was ill, and he hoped I should not go away, any more. Indeed he never seemed to like us out of his sight.

Saml. Stone, the Town Clerk, had been for years the family lawyer, but as it happened he had not made the will.

Mr. and Mrs. William Palmer, the solicitor and his wife, had as I said before, occupied our London Road cottage for three weeks, or so, while Elizabeth and I were gone visiting in Oxfordshire. As compensation for this pleasure and accommodation, Mr. Palmer begged to be allowed to make the will, and so it happened that Mr. Stone had not been consulted about it.

The twenty-eighth of October, 1848, was the date of my father's death, and I can never forget the panic we felt, when the head, and pillar, of the house was gone.

We were surrounded by a number of kind friends, but how little can any human helper do, at such a juncture as this. We seemed to stand apart from all the world, and to depend upon each other, and upon God.

My brother came to the bedside, and took the cold and clammy hand in his, and as he stooped down and kissed it, we forgot every past offence and grievance, and felt as one family united in the bonds of love.

In the present day, there is a great deal of talk about funeral reform, and preventing the relatives, for economy's sake, from showing as much respect to the departed, as they otherwise would do. But the custom is certainly very trying for the bereaved ones to sit indoors, behind the closed blinds, for a whole week or so, until the funeral takes place.

I could not bear it, and in spite of the natural repugnance to see or be seen, I had a hired carriage, and drove out every day into the country, keeping the windows shut, and myself out of sight, until we had cleared the town.

We were left in the hands of four trustees, Mr. Whetstone, perhaps the shrewdest and most thrifty man in the town; our uncle, Mr. Samuel Kirby, of the firm of Paget and Kirby, bankers, who could calculate money to a fraction; Mr. C. B. Robinson, of the gas works, a kind hearted and good man, but who knew nothing whatever of the manufacturing business; and Mr. John Dove Harris, who was apt to look on the dark side of things, and thought it his duty not to give us too much encouragement as to the future.

Mr. Palmer, the solicitor, one of our kindest and most valued friends, was present to meet them; and the first thing they did, was to fall upon him about the will.

It was an oversight they said, not to have had a clause inserted, to protect them (the trustees) from loss, while holding the stock and disposing of the machinery. And so from the want of that clause, they declined to run the risk of any delay in the matter; and after some debating, decided it would be best to consult the family lawyer, Samuel Stone, and put the affairs into his hands.

Sarah was really very unhappy at the turn things had taken, but put a bold front on it, and addressed the gentlemen to this effect: that she hoped they would not trouble themselves about her, or consider her in any way, for she was going to be married, and that very soon.

We all looked astonished at this assertion, and wondered where the bridegroom would come from.

"You need not look so surprised," she said, "see, this piece of needlework I have in my hand, I am doing for a chair in my own drawing room."

Whereupon Mr. Robinson gave a low whistle, and a titter went round the table.

Our father's will was a fair one, though decidedly in our favour, that is, in favour of his daughters.

The furniture and effects were left unreservedly to us, and we were to have the use of the house, and a stated income for the next two years. By which time, the property might be realized, and was to be divided between us; our brother taking an equal share.

The two years' residence, free of rent in our own house, was of the greatest benefit to us, and saved us from innumerable difficulties.

Mr. Vaughan was at our elbow, as our friend and counsellor, and certainly the promise "cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it again after many days," was amply fulfilled in our case.

We had taken a stranger in, sick and afflicted, in the person of Miss Gregory, and a blessing seemed to follow.

We had a great many friends and acquaintances, and each one had some suggestion to make, or some advice to give us, but all were agreed upon one point,—that it would be more advantageous for us, to leave our native town, and seek our fortunes elsewhere.

In cases of bereavement, how often this is the case, that any movement (no matter what or where) is considered a gain, and calculated to do the bereaved ones good.

My disposition was by nature passive, and the idea of being uprooted from the spot where we had lived all our lives, was most repugnant to me.

"In the multitude of counsellors, there is wisdom," says the old proverb; but the old proverb is not always right, and happily we escaped being led away by it.

The offers we received were too numerous to recount, and all prompted by the kindest motives.

First, came a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Beane, who offered to find us a comfortable house at Peckham, at a reasonable rent. Next, Mr. and Mrs. Hudson begged us to settle near to them, in the suburbs of London, where society and books were to be had more readily than anywhere else.

Then, the relatives of Robert Hall wrote to Sarah, urging us to come to Bristol, where they assured us we should find everything we wanted, and, in conclusion, they reminded us of our mother's great friendship for Mr. Hall, and hoped on that account we should not refuse to come.

At this juncture too, Mr. Palmer the solicitor, was as busy as a bee, collecting information about Southampton, where he had friends to whom he could give us an introduction, and whose letters he brought us to read.

Another friend called to recommend Lymington on the South coast, and held out many inducements to choose that place as a future residence.

While another lady sent us such beautiful views from Scotland, that she was certain we should not be able to resist them. Nor was Wales forgotten; and we were pressed to move to Swansea, as being the cheapest and most delightful place we could find.

Happily, the fact of our having a home in Friar Lane for the next two years, prevented our rushing about, hither and thither on the spur of the moment. And when Mr. Vaughan paid us his next visit, he unconsciously put an end to all further thoughts of removal. He came to ask Sarah, as a favour, to take his little girls off Mrs. Vaughan's hands, for two hours every morning. She was far from well, and felt unequal to the task of teaching them herself, at present, whatever she might do by and bye. And then a fair stipend was offered and accepted, and an arrangement made, for Sarah to go to the Vicarage from ten to twelve every day.

The old adage says, "it never rains but it pours," and so before Christmas was come, Mrs. Palmer called, to ask if Catherine could go and take charge of the three little ones, children of Mr. Fullager, the surgeon, in Belvoir Street, who had just lost their mother. Accordingly she did so, and this led to a morning engagement that continued many years.

Elizabeth and I were thus left much alone together, and we soon began to plot and to plan for book-writing.

Mr. Ryley's library was at our service, and we began to collect materials for stories from the Classics, and to adapt them for the young.

The tale of "Achilles" and the "Siege of Troy," of "Cupid and Psyche," of "Niobe," and several more are related in simple language and in short words. This little book was afterwards offered to Mr. Bosworth, in Regent Street, who bought the copyright; and published it. I believe it is now out of print.

LEAFLET XXVII.—First Introduction of Mr. Uwins.

THE year after my father's death, was a very wet year, and on the cavalry week, in September, it seemed almost like the Deluge.

It was an eventful week for us; Thomas Uwins the Royal Academician, who had been a school-fellow and a life-long friend of Mr. Ryley's, came down to Leicester to see him.

On this first introduction of Mr. Uwins' name into my narrative, it is perhaps desirable to say a few words about him, and the various appointments he held.

He became an Academician in the year 1838, and his diploma happened to be the first, that was presented to the Queen for her signature.

He was also an active member of the Sketching Society, in which the Queen took great interest. The members met once a week at each other's houses, when the subject for the evening was given by the host; the sketches were finished in the course of two hours, and were left behind to become the property of the host.

The drawings however, used to be forwarded the next morning for Her Majesty's inspection, and on her expressing a wish to possess a drawing by each one of the artists, a set was offered for Her Majesty's acceptance, and Mr. Uwins' sketch of "Cupid and Psyche" was chosen amongst the rest. And afterwards, he had the honour to receive an order from Her Majesty, to paint a picture from the subject of his sketch, as a birthday present for His Royal Highness Prince Consort, then on a visit in Germany; and it was duly forwarded to him, in a box of polished mahogany, lined with velvet.

On the resignation of Mr. Eastlake, afterwards Sir Charles Eastlake, the keepership of the National Gallery was conferred on Mr. Uwins. He also accepted the office of librarian to the Royal Academy.

On one occasion when he was paying us a visit in Friar Lane, he spied a two volume folio edition of Calmet's "Dictionary of the Bible,"

containing the plates we were so fond of looking at as children. He declared them to be a treasure, and carried them off as such, for the benefit of the Academy students.

In the year 1843 he was one of the artists who received a command from Her Majesty, to paint the frescoes for the Garden Pavillion of the Buckingham Palace,

The pavillion is a small edifice standing on an eminence, and overlooking the ornamental water.

The principal apartment is an octagon, and opens on each side into another room of smaller size. The roof rises into a dome, divided by eight ribs, and in each compartment is a circular opening with sky back-ground; on the west side representing midnight, and on the east, the approaching dawn.

A rich cornice runs round the room, and below the cornice are the eight lunettes containing the frescoes by eight different artists; and a tablet over each, has inscribed on it, in gilt letters, the passage of the poem which has suggested the painting below.

All the subjects are taken from the same poem—Milton's "Comus."

Mr. Uwins, being an early riser, was often on his ladder and at work, by seven o'clock in the morning.

The Queen was also an early riser, and she and Prince Albert, would often stroll in, and take a look at the fresco; then they would have a run up and down the slopes, hand in hand, like any other lovers, and afterwards turn in again to the Pavillion, and perhaps honour Mr. Uwins, by entering into conversation with him, in the most affable manner.

He was a devoted admirer of the Queen, and used to say, that Her Majesty always said the right thing to everybody, and always at the right time.

To these interviews in the Pavillion, Mr. Uwins attributed the fact of his appointment (quite unsolicited), as Curator and Surveyor of the Queen's pictures. (an appointment rendered vacant by the death of Sir Agustus Caldcott.)

The Prince Albert was no less a favourite with Mr. Uwins than the Queen; and he told us rather an amusing anecdote of the Prince, which happened while His Royal Highness, was dining with a party of Academicians.

One of them, who had lately returned from China, was descanting on the power of imitation as developed in the Chinaman; and in proof of it, he related, how he had ordered a pair of trousers to be made, and sent an old pair for a pattern. When the new trousers came home, to his dismay, he observed that a patch had been put upon them; and then he saw how it was; those sent for a pattern had a patch behind, and the Chinaman had carefully copied it on the new pair.

There was some laughing at this tale, but the Prince, not knowing the meaning of the word "patch" (as he had only been in England a short

time) looked from one to another, and said with great simplicity—"but what is a patch"? The joke was at once explained to the Prince, who then joined heartily in the fun.

Mr. Uwins had kept up a correspondence with Mr. Ryley ever since their early days at school, but was ignorant of any change having happened in his circumstances, the fact having never been mentioned by him.

Therefore, on his arrival in Leicester, he went at once to the old house in the Newarke, expecting to find him there, but was directed on to his lodgings in the Friar Lane.

Mr. Ryley, as usual, was spending the evening at our house, and was fetched away to receive his friend.

About ten o'clock, however, just as we were going to bed, Mr. Ryley came back in a fuss, to say, he had undertaken to entertain Mr. Uwins to breakfast, and what was he to do? He had nothing suitable to set upon the table, might he bring him to breakfast with us? And then he added a few words about his agreeable manners, and his talents as an artist.

Sarah, delighted at the prospect of entertaining an R.A., was astir much earlier than usual, and by the time appointed a substantial breakfast was spread in the dark old parlour, ready for the guests.

Mr. Ryley, full of fun and nonsense, ushered in Mr. Uwins, with sundry humourous speeches about their mutual schoolmaster, "Old Crole," as he called him, having whipped them both, and made them very good boys.

Mr. Uwins was rather elderly, but so courtly in his manners, and so agreeable, that it was impossible not to like him. Indeed, Sarah took such a decided fancy to him, that the thought flashed into my mind: "Why, here is the *bridegroom* dropped down from the clouds!"

LEAFLET XXVIII.—The Leicestershire Flora.

A FEW weeks after that romantic and prophetic breakfast, the "Fine Art Society" opened its first exhibition in Leicester, at the Town Museum, on the New Walk; when Mr. Ryley, taking advantage of the occasion, wrote to his friend Mr. Uwins, and asked for the loan of one his pictures, on the plea of its doing the society good. Accordingly, he sent a very delicately painted picture of "Lear and Cordelia," the scene where the old king is holding the feather to her lips.

Sarah was so delighted with it, that she immediately wrote to thank the artist for the pleasure he had given to so many persons in general, and to herself in particular. To this note, he replied in the most flat-

tering terms, and suggested that if we were in town in the spring he should be most happy to see us, and to chaperone us to the Royal Academy, and show us all the pictures that were worth looking at.

Meanwhile, Mr. Hudson had married Miss Cook, the lady who for so many years had kept his house. He wrote to Sarah very soon after his marriage and invited us both to come to town, and spend a fortnight with them in May, when the Exhibition would be opened. Sarah was very glad of such an opportunity of meeting Mr. Uwins again; and when May came round, she and I went to St. John's Wood together.

A day or two after our arrival, we received our presentation copies of the "Leicestershire Flora," from Messrs. Crossley and Clarke, of Leicester, through their London publishers, Hamilton, Adams, & Co., and it gave us much pleasure to know that it was fairly launched, and to look leisurely through its pages.

The illustrative notes had been contributed by Sarah herself, in the hope of enlisting the interest of some readers, who cared little or nothing for the science of botany, and she attempted to show the connecting link between our native species and the beautiful exotics to which they are allied by the natural orders.

Much valuable information was gleaned from different sources, and many curious legends of plants were mentioned, having some special interest attached to them; as, for instance, the Rose of Jericho, St. Mary's Flower, or "the Holy Rose," so called, because it is said to have blossomed at the moment of our Saviour's birth.

It is a small annual growing on the plains of the Red Sea. After flowering, the leaves fall off and the branches, becoming dry, curl inwards and surround the fruit. The draught shrivels it up into a ball, bearing some resemblance to a rose; and the winds tear it up by the root, and drive it over the arid sands, till it falls upon some damp spot, or into the sea, where its pods burst, and scatter the seeds, which would otherwise have perished in the desert.

On reading the account of this flower, Elizabeth wrote the following lines—

A small sweet flower there is
That when its fragrance hath gone by, doth use
To gather up its branches, and embracing
Its little tender seedlings, give itself
With simplest faith and love, to the rude winds,
That with uncertain steerage, track the air
O'er land and desert—for it may not bloom
Till it have 'lighted on some pleasant spot,
Where the green earth shall woo it with soft smiles,
And summer nurse it into life again.
And thus it is
In our life's wanderings; we come upon
Some strange and dreary passage, and we gather
Our 'rapt thoughts from out the gloom, and then away
Till we have come into a glorious land
Where joy hath gone before us, and the heart
Puts forth again, the tendrils of its love.

But to return to our London visit. Mr. Uwins had kept himself informed of our movements, and soon made his appearance, and carried us off with him to the Royal Academy.

He had a picture there of Psyche returning from the Infernal Regions, with the casket of beauty; but he did not point it out to us, though I saw it and admired it; on the contrary, he rather directed our attention elsewhere, to Edward Cooke's sea views, as fine as those of Stanfield's, to Mr. Ward's pictures, and to a landscape by an artist of the name of Williams, the colouring of which seemed to delight Sarah very much.

We spent a pleasant morning in the Academy rooms, and Mr. Uwins took us back to our own door, and went in, and fixed a day when he should come over again, and fetch us, to pay him a visit at Kensington.

Joy and happiness are dealt out to us by drops, and certainly at this time, we were drinking in pleasure drop after drop.

On the day named, Mr. Uwins was with us as early as ten o'clock in the morning, and we rambled on foot, through Kensington gardens, to his house at the corner of the Victoria road.

While we were resting ourselves, he asked if we would like to have luncheon, whereupon I enquired what time he dined, and when he said "five o'clock," I declared I couldn't live as long as that, without something to eat; so we had luncheon, and then he took us in next door, to call upon Edward Cook, R.A.; and invited Mr. Cook and his two sisters, to come in and join us at dinner.

Mr. Cook had been to Italy, and pretty nearly everywhere else, and his house was full of curiosities, and works of art; which he brought out, and showed us with the greatest courtesy.

When we were tired of being indoors, he took us to see the hothouse and fernery, where the water from a fountain was always sprinkling the ferns, and keeping them moist.

At five o'clock, we assembled at dinner, Mr. Cook and his two sisters, Mr. Uwins and his two nephews—James and Henry, who resided with him, Sarah and myself.

We were a merry party, Mr. Uwins making himself agreeable to Sarah, and Mr. Cook making himself agreeable to me, till I felt overpowered with compliments, and fine speeches.

After dinner, when we ladies were alone, in the drawing-room, Miss Cook was unwise enough to boast of fondness for Mr. Uwins, and went so far as to hint, that his attentions might, by and bye, lead to something more—she hoped to an offer of marriage.

Poor Sarah bore it all with heroic fortitude, but as soon as she had an opportunity she whispered to me, that she did not believe a word of it, Mr. Uwins was *her* Mr. Uwins already, and no one else should touch a hair of his head!

We were escorted back to St. John's Wood rather late in the evening, and in a few days our visit was ended, and we returned home to Friar Lane.

At this time, Mr. Vaughan's children, Agnes and Ellen, were very often at our house, and were a source of great pleasure and happiness to us.

One day, little Ellen came to see us and stayed for dinner, and her pretty engaging way quite fascinated us. A dressmaker was at work, in the nursery upstairs, and Sarah sent her dinner to her; by and bye she asked the maid, who had returned and was waiting at table, if *she*, meaning the young woman at work, would take any more? whereupon Ellen crept close up to Sarah, and whispered in her ear "Miss Kirby, do please tell me, who is Miss *She*, and where does Miss *She* live"?

Amongst all the friends, by whom we were surrounded, our old nurse, Ann Burbidge, ought not to be forgotton. She had married well, that is to say, a well-to-do pawnbroker (of the name of Hall), and he had died and left her in comfortable circumstances, living in a house of her own, at the top of Sparkenhoe Street.

In those days, there was a brick-field on either side of Sparkenhoe Street, but now, it is a well-built street of good houses.

Mrs. Hall, as she liked us to call her (and no longer Ann), was quite an original and very blunt. When we went to condole with her on Mr. Hall's decease, she said naïvely, "Ah yes! its always a bad job to lose one's husband, let him be what he may; but I shall miss him most at dinner, there's nobody now to pick the bones!"

She took my brother in to lodge with her, and as she had nursed him when he was a baby, she thought as much of him, and paid him as much attention as if he had been the Prince of Wales.

Ann was often blunt even to rudeness, but as we knew her so well, and how valuable her services had been, we did not mind her jokes.

One day, we were picking ripe fruit in her garden, when she turned abruptly to me and said, "So, so, Miss Mary, I've been told you're going to be married, but I don't believe a word of it. I can tell you when you will be married—just whenever you can find anyone to have you!"

Poor Ann was foolish enough to take another husband, "a gentleman, this time," as she told us. But it is to be feared, he was not so amiable as the pawnbroker, and that instead of picking the bones *for* her, he used to find many a bone to pick *with* her.

LEAFLET XXIX.—Mr. John McGillivray.

SARAH had kept up a correspondence with her quandom friend, Mr. John McGillivray, and his lengthy epistles used to be dated from H. M. Ship "Rattlesnake," to which expedition he was attached as naturalist.

But one day she received a very affectionate letter from his mother in Aberdeen, who returned the three sovereigns that Sarah had lent her son, with many expressions of gratitude; and in the postscript she added this bit of news—"that in April '48 her son had left the ship, and was now married and settled at Sydney."

Sarah's quaint reply to Mrs. McGillivray was,—"she was glad to hear of her son's welfare, and thought it better for him to be married at Sydney, than to be murdered in New Guinea," for which place he was bound.

Every one knows how much quicker the summer goes than the winter; so August was come, and Mrs. Vaughan had taken the children into the country; when Mr. Uwins wrote to say, that his holidays were about to begin, and that he meant to spend them with us in the Friar Lane.

Accordingly, on the last week in August, he alighted at our door, with portmanteau and painting apparatus, camp stool, and easel.

We enjoyed his society very much indeed, and several pic-nics were immediately planned for sketching purposes. One of these pic-nics was to the Monastery of St. Bernard's, rather a long drive from Leicester.

We were conducted round the rooms, and into the chapel by Brother Zavier, and had a peep into the burial ground, where one grave was ready dug, and a monk was standing by it in profound meditation.

Mr. Uwins wished to make a sketch of the Calvary, so went out into the grounds, and sat down among the shrubs, at a little distance from it.

As soon as he began to draw, the superior of the Monastery, a fine-looking man, in a white flowing serge gown, fastened round his waist with a cord, came out and stood by him, to see that all due respect was being paid to such a sacred spot.

He, however, entered into conversation with Mr. Uwins, and told him that he had sowed thirty acres of wheat, with his own hands; and he went on to say, what an exhilirating employment it was to cultivate the ground, and how it showed the wisdom of the Almighty to have appointed such an occupation for man.

The day was so fine, and the air so clear, we could see a long distance, and had a very pleasant drive home.

For the next few days, the lovers, for such I may call them, contented themselves with expeditions on foot; when Mr. Uwins made a water-coloured drawing of King Richard the third's corner, on Bow Bridge; and another of the Mount with its group of tall and slender trees.

We had to go in through a public-house yard, and to sit in its garden, in no very enviable spot.

The Abbey and the meadows in the neighbourhood, were duly visited, *and several sketches* made.

But we came up the Oxford Street, and were passing the door of Mr. Flowers, who, on account of his talent with pencil and brush, was called "the Leicester Artist," Sarah took Mr. Uwins in, and introduced them to each other.

He stayed some little time, looking at the pictures on the walls, and one large one upon an easel, being painted in oils by Miss Wheatley; but he liked the best, a portrait of Mr. Flowers' little daughter, in walking dress, with the bonnet framing her pretty face, and her spencer thrown open in front. I need hardly say that "the little daughter" has long since become a wife, and the mother of a family.

But one evening, Mr. Vaughan came in, and proposed a pic-nic to Bradgate Park. Mrs. Vaughan was staying with her mother, Mrs. Rose, at Rothley Temple, and it was arranged, that we should call there first, and that Mr. Vaughan should go on with us to Bradgate.

Two sketches were made in the Park at Bradgate; and then we drove round by Groby Pool, and halted on the Groby Road while Mr. Uwins made another drawing of an old slate-quarry. This picture, and the one on Bow Bridge, were both exhibited in the Royal Academy.

In one of these sylvan glades, the proposal of marriage was made, and Sarah's cup of happiness seemed full to overflowing.

As Mr. Uwins' holidays came but once a year, he was naturally anxious to have his wedding trip before they should be over; he therefore took an affectionate leave of us all, and returned at once to town to make his arrangements for the important event.

But before that event happened, our four trustees paid us a final visit, and Samuel Stone laid before us, the exact state of our father's affairs, which he had had in his hands, and considered now to be wound up.

Only one thing remained to be decided, the freehold in Friar Lane where we had been residing for the last two years, and it was for us to say what should be done with it. And then Mr. Stone enquired if any one of the young ladies, would wish to take it at the valuation put upon it, or whether it should be thrown into the open market.

Sarah being the eldest, had the first offer of it, but she declined on the ground that she was about to be married, and should decidedly object to have her portion locked up in bricks and mortar, particularly as the buildings were old, and would want as much repairing as a tin kettle.

That being settled, Mr. Stone appealed to me, as I came next in age. I replied "yes," I was willing to have the property on one condition, which was, that Elizabeth should join me, and take an equal responsibility and an equal share in it.

And so it was finally arranged, and as soon as possible, the freehold was conveyed to us, in our joint names.

Mr. Stone was then instructed by Sarah, to make a deed, by which her property would be settled upon herself, and thus enable her to make a will.

While all this business was going on, Mr. Uwins was lounging in an easy chair, and taking his nap. Mr. Robinson turned and looked that way, with an expression of face that implied—it was like an old man to be asleep, while his wife was busy with the lawyer.

In a moment Sarah was up in arms, and said sharply "you may *look*, but if he were twice as old, I would marry him." Whereupon Mr. Robinson pretended to be making the calculation, and gave one of his low whistles.

Nothing more remained to be done, but to prepare the trousseau for the bride. We congratulated her on her good fortune, and one and all looked forward to the coming marriage with unmixed feelings of delight.

LEAFLET XXX.—Mr. Uwins' Marriage.

MR. UWINS was away about a week, and on the Tuesday after his return to Friar Lane, the wedding took place, September 17th, 1850, in our own Parish Church of St. Mary's.

The ceremony was performed by our friend Mr. Vaughan, of St. Martins, whose church we regularly attended.

In consequence of our being comparative strangers at St. Mary's, an amusing incident occurred, owing to the ignorance of the clerk. He evidently considered Mr. Uwins too old for the bride, and more than once pushed him on one side, and tried to get my brother (who was going to give her away), into his place; but for the interposition of Mr. Vaughan, no one knows how the affair would have ended.

The happy couple left Leicester by the mid-day train, *en route* for Paris. But as the carriage stood at our door that was to take them to the station, they did not escape the shower of rice and old slippers, which is foolishly supposed to bring "good luck."

The little Vaughans, however, were so jealous of the bridegroom, that instead of sending him off with any good wishes, they hoped he might be shipwrecked, and Miss Kirby come back again without him.

When Sarah was gone, the question arose, what to do about the children. I could not undertake to go every day to the Vicarage,—so as the mountain could not come to Mahomet, Mahomet had to come to the mountain,—and it was arranged for them to come to me at home, every morning from ten to twelve.

This was a happy time for the children; their coming made our house very lively; and the weeks slipped so quickly away that the Christmas holidays came before we were ready for them.

Mr. and Mrs. Uwins had promised to come and spend them with us in Friar Lane, and we were fully expecting to see them, when I received a letter from Mr. Uwins, so playful and so characteristic, that I cannot forbear quoting a few sentences.—

"My dear Lady Mary,—

Take warning by your sister's example, and reflect deeply on the dependent state into which marriage is sure to plunge you. Sarah has been calculating on the pleasure of a visit to-morrow to the good town of Leicester, and lo! her husband's business comes in and says no! Could you bear such frightful contradiction? surely all the world leaves town at this vacation, and why should I be stopped in my pleasant schemes? I am all the world's servant, and must stay two or three more posts in town, to receive and answer letters which all the world will have to consider on its return.

The uncertainty of our movements must prevent your putting yourself to any trouble in the way of preparation, we will give you all the notice that post can convey, but after all may arrive at Friar Lane without any announcement."

But they did pay us the promised visit, and a happy Christmas we spent.

Sarah had a great deal to say about Paris, and the sights they had been to see. She had not forgotten the Botanical Gardens, but thought they did not excel our beautiful Kew.

Mr. Uwins who had seen so much of foreign life, remained faithful to England, and to country life. The country he said "was the place for inspiration—the dear delightful country, where there is no noise, nor smoke, nor any of the ceaseless annoyances of a great city."

During their stay with us, Mr. Uwins made delicate chalk drawings of Agnes and Ellen Vaughan (perfect likenesses), and presented them to his wife, as a Christmas Box.

Before they left us, Mr. Uwins made me promise to come to Kensington, and visit them in May, when the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park would be open.

Accordingly, at the time appointed, I went. But had only been there a day or two, when Sarah came into my room, early one morning, with a letter in her hand, and said that she and Mr. Uwins had promised to spend a few days with Mrs. S. C. Hall (some distance out of London), to meet Macready, and a number of other celebrities; and this letter was to remind them of their engagement.

It would not do to disappoint Mrs. Hall, and they must go—but she told me, that a nephew of Mr. Uwins' had come up from the country, to consult a medical man about his hearing, so she should leave me to take care of him.

The nephew was the Rev. John Uwins, of Caius' Cross, Gloucestershire, and a very thoughtful man. In his opinion, we should have to give account of every idle word, therefore he weighed well what he had to say, before he spoke. However, we soon grew to be good friends; he made himself very agreeable, and the time did not hang heavy on our hands.

He took his leave before Sarah came back, but left her a handsome book as a present "Peterman's Atlas of Physical Geography."

The next morning, another visitor came in to breakfast; he also was a country clergyman, the Rev. R. Cattermole, and very busy he was, going about amongst the booksellers; for he was editing a number of volumes, of the "Sacred Classics," prose and verse, and very valuable volumes they are.

He had a family of children, and said feelingly, although the clergy were esteemed so *rich*, it was quite a mistake, it was as much as they could do to get fed, and he was obliged to dig the ground and plant his own potatoes for the benefit of his household. The same thing is happening every day, as we may read in the papers. But the hardship at the present time is not in a clergyman having to dig the potatoes, but in not having enough potatoes to dig.

LEAFLET XXXI.—The Exhibition of '51.

THE Exhibition in Hyde Park, was the principal topic of the day, and Mr. Paxton's name was in everybody's mouth.

We had more than once been to Matlock, and stayed at Saxton's Hotel; and on one of these occasions, we had joined a party, and driven over to Chatsworth, for the day.

It was a good day's work, to see all the rarities of the gardens, but the plant that attracted most attention was the water-lily of the Nile, named after the Queen, Victoria Regina. Towards night, the petals begin to unfold, at first pure white, then rose-coloured, and at last, deep red. The air is scented with their delicious fragrance; when the flower fades, it goes under water to ripen its seeds.

Mr. Paxton, who was at the head of the gardening staff, had erected a glass house on purpose for it, and there we saw its beautiful flowers, lying wide open on the water. The glass house for the lily was the admiration of all the visitors to the gardens, and deemed a great step in advance of any hot-house seen before; but it was more than this; in fact it became the model for the Crystal Palace, in Hyde Park.

The Prince Consort, who was the originator of that building, was very desirous that the competition for it, should be thrown as open, and unrestricted as possible.

Mr. Paxton was not early enough in the field, and when he submitted his plan for the building to be of glass, there was some one else who considered he had a prior claim; and the difficulty seemed at first sight insurmountable.

All difficulties, however, gave way before the novelty, and great economy, of the material proposed, as compared with any other; and Mr. Paxton's plan, in the end, was accepted.

It was as the Duke of Devonshire once observed in public, he was always successful in what he undertook, and had never been known to fail. On this occasion, he far surpassed the most sanguine expectations of his friends and supporters, and received the honour of knighthood in recognition of his services.

Such was the lightness and airiness of the structure he had raised, that the effect on entering it, was like stepping into an enchanted palace; and it would have caused us little surprise, had we seen the fairies themselves, peering from among the trees over-head, or dancing round and round in the spray of the fountains.

The motto of the Exhibition had been chosen by the Prince, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." And most appropriate it was, since from every quarter came treasures, to this great store-house, and here was peacefully represented the progress of the human race, in commerce, science, industry, and art.

The Queen records in her diary "that the sight was magical, and filled the mind with devotion more than any service could possibly do."

Well might Her Majesty write "that it was a day never to be forgotten for joy and happiness."

Nor will the nation ever forget that to the Prince Consort they are indebted for having projected and carried out, the scheme of this great "Peace Festival."

Mr. and Mrs. Uwins had, of course, been present at the opening, when the Queen and the Prince Consort went through the ceremony, in true royal style; but I was contented to go in, on the five shilling day, when I had a chair, and was carried in it upstairs and downstairs, in a most luxurious manner.

There was so much to see, and so many things to look at, and Mr. Uwins called our attention, first to one thing and then to another, until we were well nigh bewildered. And then he would make a pause, and point out the articles of virtu—the bronzes and the sculptures, by his friends.

The recumbent figure of "Eve with Satan whispering his temptation in her ear," was much admired, and there was another figure of "Eve, the first mother," sitting with her infants, Cain and Abel, in her lap, and brooding in profound reverie, over their future destiny.

A number of persons stood in admiration, round the "Greek Slave,"—while "Una and the Lion" was equally popular. But Mr. Bell's "Babe in the Wood," in white marble, with a foxglove hanging overhead, took my fancy so much, that I longed to carry it away with me. Then there was a figure of "Psyche" very delicate and beautiful; and a fanciful subject of "Cupid and his Mother," and many others, not forgotten, but were I to enumerate them, the page before me, would become too much like a catalogue.

We were in the Exhibition nearly all day, until our eyes were tired of seeing, and well they might be, for the wares of the whole world were spread out before us.

It would be impossible for me to enter into a description of them, but suffice it to say, that in this endless and somewhat dazzling variety, there was something to please the taste of everybody, and not one person could leave the building ungratified, or without coming to the conclusion that the "Great Exhibition" was a complete success.

My next treat was a visit with Sarah and her husband to the Royal Academy. Mr. Uwins was exhibiting a large picture of "Ulysses in Calypso's Isle, yearning to return to his wife, and to his home"; but there was a smaller picture of his that was far more simple and attractive, called "The Parasol."

The scene was the Bay of Naples, intensely blue, and on the shore was a group of children holding a parasol of their own making, (in the shape of a handkerchief tied by the corners to four sticks) over the head of a handsome girl, of the true Italian type, to screen her from the blazing sun.

But the most interesting picture there, and the most truly pathetic, was Mr. Ward's "Royal Family of France in Prison."

The King (Louis XVI.) is lying on the sofa, evidently in despair, and having given up all hope of escape; the Queen, Marie Antoinette, is by her husband's side, ostensibly working, but her eyes are fixed on him all the while, with an absorbed and painful expression; the aunt Elizabeth, with her knitting pins, and bright coloured wools, is sitting at the table, against which the Dauphiness is leaning; while the Dauphin, a sweet looking child, is on the floor, with his battledore, and the shuttlecock in his hand, intent on mending it by putting a new feather in it.

The contrast between the royalty within, and the brutal men acting as guards, without, was strikingly depicted, and called forth in the spectators every feeling of pity.

This touching picture had, I believe, been much admired, and purchased by Her Majesty.

As my holiday did not extend beyond a fortnight, a great many pleasures had to be got into that small space of time.

Mr. Uwins was anxious to make my visit as gay as possible, and to my great delight, gave an evening party, when I had the opportunity of seeing a number of his friends, all of them R.A.'s.

Mr. Uwins often said, that an artist, to do justice to his art, must think only of agreeable subjects, and it seemed on that evening as if such were the case, and dull care to have gone quite out of existence.

There was neither music nor cards, for the entertainment of the guests, nor were any needed; for the conversation never flagged, nor did the happy sound of merry voices ever cease. No society, that I had ever been in, was so easy and delightful as this, where each one of the persons present contributed something to the gaiety and wit of the whole.

Mrs. Bell, the sculptor's wife, was certainly the belle of the party; she was a fine handsome woman, with a low dress, and an apology for a sleeve —a mere strip of ribbon and lace upon her shoulder. I did not wonder at the admiration of the gentlemen, nor at their hovering about her, like so many moths round the candle. For, as the poet says:—

"She had a bosom as white as snow,
And knew how much it was best to shew."

Sir William Ross, amongst the gentlemen, was perhaps the most amusing. He was always looking at me with one eye shut, and the other open, and I was told, that was the proper way to ascertain what sort of picture he could make of me.

His portraits on ivory, are indeed works of art; and it was not surprising that his sister, Mrs. Dalton, by copying them at a reasonable rate, could make a handsome livelihood.

While talking to Sir William Ross, how little did I think, that every Sunday he was attending Mr. Montgomery's Chapel, (Percy Chapel) and hearing Mr. Gregg read the service. I heard afterwards, that Sir William was very popular amongst them, that he would always hold a plate at the communion and all the other collections; and as he carried it into the vestry, he used to strike up the tune himself, and begin, in a cheerful voice, to sing the Doxology.

Mr. Redgrave, who had so much to do with the School of Art, was bantered about his love for smoke colours, and his wife fully agreed with what was said, and assured us, the walls of their house were so dim, that she had to feel about for the chairs, and then had hard work to find them.

Mr. Redgrave was in the habit of introducing the figure of his wife into some of his pictures, "the poor relation," I believe is one, and the likeness is so true to nature I could not help recognizing it.

Mr. Ward, so well known and admired for his faithful representation of the "French Royal Family," confessed to a weakness for liking to hear what the visitors to the Academy said about him; so he loitered about near to his pictures, for the purpose of catching any stray remarks; but from his own account he was no exception to the rule, that listeners must never expect to hear any good of themselves.

Mr. Uwins could also give an instance of this, and related it to us.

He had visited Bordeaux, and stayed at Medöc during the season of the vintage; and worked from six in the morning until the day declined, upon his picture "The Vintage," and yet, when it was exhibited, he saw two ladies at Marlborough house, pause before it, and heard one say to the other, "It is very evident *that man* has never seen a vinyard."

When the evening came to an end, and the goodly number of guests took their departure, I felt that in the course of my life (however long it might be) I could never hope, again, to be brought into association with such a brilliant company.

LEAFLET XXXII.—Manuscript of the Discontented Children taken to Messrs. Grant and Griffith's.

MY fortnight's holiday seemed to fly and to come to an end almost before it had begun. It was even as the old song tells us:—

"Softly falls the foot of time
That only treads on flowers."

In the Friar Lane, the home-life was going on at the same jog trot pace, but Elizabeth had begun a story for children, and I must needs set to work and help her.

As August came in very hot, and in the heart of the town very close, we began to sigh for a breath of air, and a few sea-breezes.

Mrs. Vaughan had taken her family, baby and all, into the country, and it was a good opportunity for us to shut up our house and go out too.

We saw an advertisement in the "Times," and replied to it; and as it happened, it proved very successful.

Some ladies who had a school at Eastbourne, wished to open their house, (the Grove) to a few lady-boarders, during the vacation of five weeks. As the terms were reasonable, and the prospectus of the school seemed to us sufficient reference, we agreed to risk it and go.

Accordingly the old house in the Friar Lane, was shut up, and we all three went to London together. Mr. Hudson was at the Euston Square Station to meet us, and to carry off Catherine to spend her holidays in St. John's Wood. And it was well he did so; there being room only for two boarders at the Grove.

We were very glad to see Mr. Hudson, and after a hurried "how do you do," and "good-bye" to him, Elizabeth and I drove on to Kensington, where we were going to spend one night, on our way to Eastbourne.

When we reached Mr. Uwins', it was their dinner hour, and so far so good; but by and bye, we had quite a storm of reproaches to undergo.

Sarah declared she had the worst possible opinion of advertisements, and scolded us in no measured terms, for having answered one; while Mr. Uwins joined in the chorus, and ended by telling us we knew nothing whatever of the world, and he should not be surprised if we found ourselves in what he called a "mess."

However, despite these prophets of ill, we had a good night's rest, and set off early in the morning, with our manuscript of the "Discontented Children and how they were cured"; and offered it to Mr. Griffiths, the publisher, in St. Paul's Churchyard. He was very polite, and promised to read it speedily, and to write to us to the address at Eastbourne.

The plot of the story was quite an original one. The squire's two children, Charles and Agatha, were full of discontent, at having so many *lessons to learn,* and so many sums to do, and envied the Gamekeeper's

children—John and Nancy—who were going into the wood to gather cowslips; and carried their envy so far, as to wish they were the Gamekeeper's children themselves.

But John and Nancy were quite as naughty, and thought if they were but the squire's children, they should have nothing to do but to play.

The fairy "Content" took a novel way of giving them all a lesson, by transforming them as they desired, the one into the other. But it did not make them happy, as the story goes on to tell.

At Eastbourne, we found several ladies were at "The Grove" before us; and amongst them, a Miss May, whose brother was a Q.C. and who seemed to be a little like a lawyer herself.

The house stood in its own grounds, and belonged to a lady of title, who until quite recently had been residing there herself; it was large, and thoroughly comfortable, as were all the domestic arrangements; and we esteemed ourselves fortunate to have escaped the trouble and worry of lodgings.

But in those days, Eastbourne was a country place, with plenty of trees and cool meadows, where now, bricks and mortar are the prevailing element. The very cornfield, with its narrow path, across which we used to walk to get to the sea, has an imposing row of houses built upon it, and boasting the name of "Cornfield Terrace."

Before the end of a fortnight, we heard from Mr. Griffiths, who wrote and offered us a certain sum, (the usual rate of payment) for the copyright of the manuscript in his hands, "The Discontented Children."

Our experience had been very limited, and our ideas were rather inflated on the subject. But fortunately we consulted Miss May; who represented the difficulty experienced by most writers, in selling their manuscripts, and begged us, on no account, to refuse Mr. Griffiths' offer.

We took her advice, and our first original story book was to come out at Christmas.

The visit to Eastbourne was a very pleasant one, and rendered more so than it otherwise would have been, by the fact of Dr. Forbes Winslow and his wife (the father and mother of the present doctor) being there for a holiday at the same time. We soon became acquainted, and wherever we went, on the beach or on the Meades, they would be pretty sure to join us.

There were many nooks and shady places, and in these we used to sit and listen to the doctor's recital of the adventures he had had with deranged persons, his patients; and he gave us a description of his establishment at Hammersmith, and made me promise to go and see it.

September was now come, and Mr. Uwins wrote to us, to say his holiday was about to begin, and he thought as we were in such good quarters at the "Grove," he could not do better than join us; and by the same post came a letter from Sarah to the lady of the house, wishing her to make the necessary arrangements for receiving them.

But lo and behold! "He that will not when he may, when he will, he shall have nay," says the old proverb, and on the present occasion, so it came to pass. The house was full, and the lady's reply was, that she could not take them in.

We had to go from one end of Eastbourne to the other, before we could find them a suitable lodging; and as we chased up and down, we laughed in our sleeves at the poetical justice they were receiving, for the undeserved rating they had given us.

Mr. Uwins' society was very delightful; and he found many clumps of trees, and lovely spots upon the Meades, fit subjects for his pencil; and as he worked away with pencil and brush, it was a pleasure to us to sit upon the grass and watch him paint and hear him talk.

At the end of five weeks, we all returned to Kensington together, much refreshed by the country air and sea breezes. And in the course of a few days, came Dr. Winslow to remind me of the promise I had made him, to dine at his establishment at Hammersmith.

He fixed a day, and was kind enough to fetch me in his carriage, promising Sarah, as we drove away, to take the greatest care of me, and see me safe home again.

I confess to feeling rather nervous, on sitting down to table with a number of convalescent lunatics, ranged on either side, and a tall waiter (quasi keeper) at the back of every chair.

A lively conversation was kept up by Mrs. Winslow, the doctor, and myself, at one end of the table, and the house-surgeon, who sat doing the honours, at the other. Although looking from one face to another, was a sad spectacle, and impressed me with the idea, that melancholia was the prevailing malady.

There was one gentleman, however, who seemed very merry, and wore as many rings and trinkets as he could well carry. He began to smile and wink at me, which I did not much like, but the doctor, in a low tone, gave me to understand that his mania was thinking every woman he met to be in love with him.

On retiring to the drawing-room, some of the ladies went with us, but we saw no more of the gentlemen.

The ladies stayed only a little time; and then Dr. Winslow took up his parable, and discanted on his favourite theme, "the mind."

He was a pious man, and much regretted that religion (though of a distorted kind) should ever have to bear the blame of driving anyone to despair.

He took a common-sense view of mental diseases, and said that though old writers assure us, relief for the troubled mind, may be found in pruning trees, or digging flower-beds, he did not consider that sufficient —no, it was not so—there must be something exciting enough to carry the mind quite away from itself, and to divert the thoughts altogether *into a new channel*—an opera, or a good play, or even the sight of a *balloon ascent might*, he believed sometimes have arrested the hand of *a suicide.*

LEAFLET XXXIII.—"Living or Dead."

IN spite of all the pleasures of London, and the gay life at the sea-side, we were glad to come back to Friar Lane, and the jog-trot employment at home.

The little Vaughans, who had returned from their visit in the country, received us with open arms; and we met with a great many of little Ellen's "bear's hugs," as she was apt to call her embraces.

Both she and her sister Agnes were good, affectionate, and dear children, though now and then the "blue blood" in their veins, would make itself apparent. On such occasions, we used to banter them about pride, and the equality of the human race, and raised the question—

"When Adam dug and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman"?

On one occasion, in particular, did the blue blood show itself. The children had come back from a public meeting of the "Church Missionary Society," and instead of telling us what they had heard, or anything that was good, they burst out into passionate indignation, because they had been placed upon a bench, side by side with some children they looked upon as inferior to themselves in rank.

At this unexpected sally, we looked very grave, and declared we must write a book about pride, and how it generally goes before a fall. In a moment, that brought the children to their senses, and they begged and prayed us on their knees not to do anything of the kind, or at least, if we did, to promise that their names, Agnes and Ellen, should not be in it.

They forgot, as many other people do, that a book is not done in a day, for they kept enquiring nearly every morning, if the book about pride was ready.

However, in course of time, we did write a child's story book on the subject, calling it by the name of the heroine "Julia Maitland," and on the title page stand the fatal words—"pride goes before a fall."

When Christmas was come, Sarah and her husband, came and spent it with us.

There were several invitations waiting to be accepted; but the party most interesting to us, on account of the children, was one at Mr. and Mrs. Vaughan's, where a Christmas-tree formed a very prominent part of the evening's entertainment.

It yielded a present for everybody, and as the children had had a hand in making many of the fancy articles suspended from its branches, they were almost wild with delight.

When the holidays were over, and they got to work again, the thing that excited them beyond all bounds, was making a birth-day present for their mamma, in the shape of a Pedlar's basket.

It was a real basket, lined and quilted with pale blue satin, and full of every imaginable thing, that a pedlar can be required to carry—but all in miniature—so small indeed that little fingers only could have manufactured them.

Mrs. Vaughan admired it so much, and thought it such a curiosity, that she covered it with a glass shade, and gave it a place on the drawing-room table.

The early part of that year was wet and cold, and the influenza was very prevalent in the town. For some weeks the children were laid up with it, and I went more than once to see them in their nursery.

Little Ellen had lost none of her wit, and confided to me in a whisper, that they liked being ill very much indeed, because, she added with a saucy nod, "while we are poorly we get plenty of *jam*."

The next holiday we had, was spent at the farm house of Mr. Beaumont, Kirby Muxloe, and we took little Ellen with us.

It was indeed a fine treat for her; and her pleasures began with the early morning. The Postman used to march down the village street, blowing a horn, to give notice that he was there, and out ran the folks to see if he had brought them any good news; and out of bed would jump Ellen, and run to the window, to ascertain if there was anything come for her.

Her Mamma had sent with her, a packet of "Dover's Powders," to be taken as soon as she was up, but by some magic, the fairies always carried the powders away, and they could never be found, when they were wanted; this did not spoil Ellen's appetite, and at breakfast the marmalade was pronounced quite as good for her health, as the Dover's powders.

Then every morning, we had a a ride on a donkey, Ellen riding pillion fashion behind me, and holding on, with her arms round my waist; all donkeys are stupid animals, and this one was no exception; we once came to a stream of water, and the donkey, after staring at it well, set his fore feet firmly together and refused to move;—of course I dismounted, but Ellen declared she would not be beaten by a donkey, so she sat firmly on, while some field-labourers came to our assistance; in vain they thumped it, it was of no use, and at last quite out of patience, they took up donkey and Ellen and all, and carried them across to the other side.

We enjoyed the holiday very much, and when it was over, the farmer offered to drive us to the station (about a mile off), in his market cart, and with his mare. As there was no other conveyance to be got, we thought it very kind, and accepted his offer.

There we sat, all ready dressed and with our boxes standing in the hall; we thought the time very long, when in ran the farmer's son, quite out of breath, with the pleasing intelligence that they had been racing after the mare all that while, and had only just been able to catch her.

"*Of course* the train is gone" said the young man, "but no matter, *I will undertake to* drive you into Leicester myself, and if you *have missed the train,* we shall be there nearly as soon."

And so we were; but when we got into the town, little Ellen's blue blood began to tingle,—"what if anyone should see us"? how dreadful that would be! She believed in the distance she *did* see her papa, but as she said gaily, "he wont see us, he looks another way."

We only laughed at her, and said she might have been a knight, and afraid of losing her spurs.

We came home laden with botanical specimens, and the donkey had been a great help to us, by taking us into fields and lanes, that we could not otherwise have explored.

The dog roses were just then the flowers I was making a study of, and there seemed to be no end of their varieties; some had hairy leaflets, and others were quite smooth; some with very large bracteas and others without any at all; some having thorns as hooked as the bill of a bird, and others with them straight; and so on through a dozen or more of the roses, we brought home in our hands.

There is a legend about the rose, the Queen of flowers. It is said in the first instance to have been pure *white*, until Cupid, capering about amongst the gods, upset a cup of nectar upon it, which changed it to *red*.

The summer was soon over, as it always is, and when the autumn came on, the question was raised whether it might not be the best, for the children to have a governess in the house, and so avoid the daily exposure to wind and weather.

The children made the most violent opposition to the change, and Agnes was quite naughty about it; but at last, a German lady was engaged, who could perfect them in French, as well as in her own language. And by and bye she arrived, and took up her abode at the Vicarage.

The vacancy, caused by the children leaving us, was quickly filled up. A young cousin came to us as weekly boarder, and another lady was glad to join us for two hours every morning.

Added to this employment, the book-writing was going steadily on, and a story suitable for a magazine, was begun, called "Living or Dead."

It was related to us as founded upon fact; an artist had been sent for, to make a drawing of a lady, supposed to be dead, but who was only in a trance; she was so beautiful, that he fell in love with her, and took a sketch of her for his own study. And all through the tale, she keeps appearing to him, or as *he* thinks the apparition of her, until he becomes so bewildered, that at last, he is suspected of being a madman.

We had rather more leisure for writing than hitherto, and as subjects for new stories were always presenting themselves to us, a number of "beginings" were made, and laid aside for a more convenient season.

This happened to be a very good thing, as then we were never at a loss for something to work from, and by and bye, we were pressed for time by the publishers.

LEAFLET XXXIV.—Choosing a Wife.

ONE afternoon, as I was sitting comfortably reading in the easy chair, in the dark old parlour, my brother came in, looking well and very radiant.

He had been taking a holiday at Scarborough, in an hotel boarding-house, and was come to tell me, he had met so many pretty young ladies there, that he did not know which he liked the best. He ran over the names and virtues of several, one after the other, until the number was narrowed to two.—Which of the two should he choose for a wife?—for a wife was the object he had in view. They were equally attractive, which should it be?

We talked over the one with dark hair, and saucy manners; and the other fair as a lily, with brown hair and hazel eyes, and cheeks like the the bloom of a peach.

"She was so innocent," said my brother, "that when I tried to make love to her, she did not seem to understand what I meant." Yes—there could be no mistake about it, this must certainly be the one;—but how was he to set about the wooing?

When they parted at the Railway Station, he said a few honied words about hoping to meet again, but she had made no response, or given him any encouragement; what could he do? I advised him to write at once, and ask her to receive his addresses; and so he did.

Of course the postman became a more interesting person, than he had ever been before, and after what appeared to us a long time, he brought the answer.

It was to the effect, that the young lady regarded him as a friend, but had so many acquaintances already, that she did not wish to increase the circle.

My brother was inclined to despond, for what could he do next? I reminded him that "faint heart never won fair lady," and said his best plan would be, to take the train, and go and see her as a *friend.*

Accordingly, as soon as he could leave, he took the train for Huddersfield, and arrived safely at his destination.

He found a large party of Wesleyan Ministers in the house, for there had been a Conference at Huddersfield close by, and all these gentlemen had come down to be entertained and to sleep at the house of Mr. S—, on Crossland Moor.

My brother was entertained too, and after supper had to listen to a number of extemporary prayers; for the ministers took it in turn, one after the other, to pray.

He was made very comfortable, and accommodated for the night; and the next morning, quite foreign to his nature, he got up early, and went in quest of his lady love.

He found her in the drawing-room, with an apron on, and a duster in her hand. But to all his attempts at love-making, she only laughed, and said that it was quite contrary to the bargain made—which was to look upon him as a *friend.*

Things did not however, remain long in this cool state; my brother went backwards and forwards several times, and sent her handsome presents, which she did not return. And very soon it became an understood thing, the two were betrothed.

Her brother came down to Leicester to see the town she was going to live in, and that all was right; and I undertook to entertain him in the Friar Lane house.

Unfortunately, I had mentioned in a letter to Sarah, that he was coming, and while we were enjoying ourselves, and in the middle of tea, the omnibus stopped at the door, and in walked Mr. and Mrs. Uwins; looking as severe as you please.

They had thought it highly improper for us to entertain a young man, of whom we knew little or nothing, and therefore had come down "in time" to prevent his remaining all night.

It was a very mortifying circumstance, and I don't know what we should have done, if our old friend, and nurse, Ann Burbidge (with whom my brother was lodging) had not come to the rescue, and by giving up her best bed, solved the difficulty.

The objectionable young man won Mr. Uwins' heart by his gentle manners and his good looks; and had it been possible, he would have liked to make a portrait of him, for one of his pictures, in the character of "St. John."

The course of true love is said never to run smooth: but I am happy to say my brother's wooing came to a satisfactory ending; and that the wedding took place early in the following year (1852).

It had been very pleasant to me to help him in the search for a suitable house, and to assist him in the choice and arrangement of the furniture; and I was quite ready to give the bride a warm and hearty welcome, and certainly, I never saw a more lovely or lovable bride.

LEAFLET XXXV.—The Fates are adverse to Elizabeth and her lover.

THE fact of the little Vaughans (Agnes and Ellen) being transferred from our care to that of the German governess, did not cause any interruption in our intercourse or friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Vaughan, and we spent many pleasant evenings at their house.

But the most merry parties were at Mrs. William Palmer's, who lived then in the corner house of the Crescent, where there was a good sized garden, walled in, and extending part of the way up Trinity Street.

One warm evening in September, we were invited there, to meet a number of young people, and to have an out-door entertainment.

I never was fond of parties, and so persuaded Catherine and Elizabeth to go without me.

I was quietly pasting down botanical specimens, in the breakfast-room upstairs, when one of the maids came running in, to say there was a fly at the door, and that the man declared he had received orders from Mrs. Palmer, not to go away without me; and he was prepared to wait any time, until I made my appearance.

There was no alternative, and so without anymore to be done, I got ready, and went.

The out-door entertainment was a great success, and we enjoyed ourselves more than I can tell. The garden was lighted up with lamps, suspended from the shrubs and trees, and the air was so warm and balmy, that we felt no inconvenience whatever, which is indeed a wonderful thing in this damp and uncertain climate.

A charade was being acted, like a play, and there were so many lawyers and so many doctors to take a part in it, that it seemed a very long-winded concern. The word chosen was *injury*, and the second syllable *jury*, called out a vast amount of talent; the foreman of the jury, and one or two special pleaders had so much to argue, that we thought the case would have to be "adjourned" till the next day. The jury, however, thought better of it, and brought it to a close.

The last act was the word in full, when in trooped the whole force; all the performers making their appearance in a wounded condition.

A doctor came hopping in on one leg, and with the other strapped up, as if it were hopelessly useless; heads were bandaged, and arms were in slings, while Mr. Palmer himself was led in, with his eyes so turned up, that nothing was to be seen but the whites, and feeling about with his hand as if he were perfectly blind.

After the play was over, a sumptuous supper came next, and we were all very merry indeed.

Mr. Catlin had just then been in the town, exhibiting a party of North American Indians, or Red Men, as they are not inappropriately called.

As soon as supper was over, Mr. Hollings and the rest of the gentlemen, started up and said they would dance the war-dance, for our edification; so one seized the bread-basket, and turning it upside down, began with a table spoon to beat time, and to caper about, lifting up first one leg and then the other, and stamping them down again, like a pavier's rammer; they all found something to make a noise with (even the fire-shovel came in useful), and they performed their antics so much like the Indians, that we were nearly deafened, and begged them to give over.

It was a regular frolic, and no easy matter to bring them back to common sense; and for such steady folks as we were, it was very late indeed before we alighted at our own door.

The warm days of autumn soon came to an end, and we were in the darkness and dreariness of December, when an event happened that was to change the whole current of our lives. Another leaf was about to be turned over in our history, and we were to wander away from our old home, with all its pleasant associations, to strike out a new path amongst strangers, and in a county quite unknown to us.

But we believe that nothing comes to us by chance, and that all our goings are ordered by an over-ruling Providence.

The immediate cause of this unexpected change, was the veritable "Cousin George." His wife had only lived a short time, and for the last twelve months or more, he had been a widower.

To my great astonishment, he began to make overtures to Elizabeth, to allow their previous engagement to be renewed. He did not appear on the scene in person, but commissioned his brother, who was generally at our house on market days, to make the request for him, and let him know the result.

The love, that Elizabeth had once cherished, was easily re-kindled. All her affectionate feelings were called into life again, and the prospect of a reconciliation was only too enticing.

So it happened on one of the fair days in December, that a visit from her cousin was arranged for, and according to appointment he came.

He was much altered in appearance, having had more experience of life, and seen some sorrow; but he was the same George, and as he sat at dinner and began to flourish the knife about, and make a great noise in sharpening it, I was reminded of the party at Marston, and of poor Mrs. Chesterman. I say *poor*, because soon after that party, she had accidentally set fire to the flounces of her dress, and been burnt to death.

When dinner and dessert were over, I retired, and Elizabeth, and her cousin were left together.

I was afraid things might not end well, for it was evident that she felt out of harmony with him, and it seemed to me impossible there could ever be any accordance between them.

I cannot say what really did take place, but as soon as he was gone, Elizabeth ran upstairs to me, in the breakfast-room, and throwing her arms round my neck, burst into a paroxysm of weeping.

It was some time before I could tell what was the matter; but by and bye, between her sobs, I could distinguish the words "No Mary, I can never love him! and I will not try to marry him!"

LEAFLET XXXVI.—We agree to leave Leicester.

IT was difficult to know what advice to give; or how to proceed in such a dilemma. But Elizabeth seemed to be firmly persuaded of what was the right course to pursue, and sat down at once, and wrote a note to her lover, begging that the engagement might be considered at an end.

Before this note was posted, Mr. Vaughan came in, and said in his very kindest manner, that if Elizabeth had made up her mind to withdraw her promise, she must, in fairness to her cousin, lose no time in letting him know, and setting him at liberty; so we all were agreed, and the note, by common consent, was despatched.

And then, Elizabeth proposed to leave home for a little time, to recover the shock, and to avoid being brought into daily contact with his family.

Mr. Uwins' home at Kensington was the first place to suggest itself, and Sarah appeared the most suitable person to act as chaperone, and to divert Elizabeth's mind, by providing for her the little gaiety she needed. But alas, we were all wrong!

Mrs. Uwins took quite a different view of the matter; she blamed Elizabeth for what she had done, and went so far as to write to her cousin, and invite him to come to Kensington to be married.

This foolish step entailed on dear Elizabeth so much worry and vexation, that a serious illness was the result, and I had to get her home as best I could.

Her nerves were altogether unstrung, and as she lay in bed in a state of the deepest despondency, I could not help wondering what would become of us.

All at once, a bright thought flashed into my mind; had not Dr. Winslow impressed upon me the fact,—that great depression might often be alleviated, if not cured, by the counter-acting power of excitement?

Fortunately, at this moment, Mr. Galer with Miss Fanny Reeves, and a company of opera-singers, were come into the town, and advertised a succession of performances to take place at the Theatre, under the most distinguished patronage.

Here was excitement, and at any rate it was worth a trial.

We had never seen the inside of a Theatre in our lives, but what did that matter! It might do Elizabeth good, and that was all I thought about.

The tickets were taken, and we went to the door of the Theatre in a fly. The opera was "Fra Diavolo," and the delicious voices, and sweet music, carried Elizabeth quite away from all her troubles, and made her forget her grief.

She went again and again, and heard the opera of "La Somnambula," and several more besides.

But her fixed idea was, that we must leave Leicester, and settle in some other county as far distant from our own as possible.

That was her only chance of recovery; and if I would only say, I would take her in the spring, she would promise to get well, and do anything I liked.

The dropping of water, will we know, wear away the stone, and so by degrees I became reconciled to the idea of a removal.

An unsettled time followed; for I felt how great and responsible an undertaking it was to leave the home of our childhood, and to make our way with strangers, among whom we should not see a familiar face.

Morning and night, I studied the Book of Joshua, and sought guidance from above; for the feat I had before me seemed to me, as difficult as the taking of Jericho might have been, and would I thought, require almost a miracle to insure its success.

Elizabeth was still in a very precarious state, with her nerves entirely unstrung; and in spite of the inclement weather, and snow upon the ground, she would every morning beg me, for her "life's sake," to get away as soon as possible.

We were not all three going together. For a long time past, Catherine had been earnestly desiring to go abroad, and see the world, so here was the opportunity; and it was proposed that she should go to Paris, and perfect herself in the French language.

Thus, I undertook the whole charge of Elizabeth, and felt it most desirable that our first resting place should be in the house of a medical man; one to whom we might apply for advice, in case of more serious illness.

But the first thing to be done, was to secure a tenant for our own house in the Friar Lane.

It had been a doctor's house for many years before we lived in it, and it was to become a doctor's house again; for Mr. Paget, the surgeon, offered to take it on a lease; and after some parleying we accepted his offer, and agreed to vacate by Lady Day.

As soon as this piece of business was transacted, we were in the situation of Columbus, when he had destroyed the boat behind him, and left his companions no chance of return.

But where were we to go? With the map before us, we ran over all the counties in succession, and fixed upon Norfolk, as being the most promising, the most hospitable, and the most musical.

So we settled that Norwich should be our future home.

Quite unexpectedly a way was opened for us into a doctor's family, residing in Norfolk, at a place on the coast, called Wells-upon-the-Sea.

Dr. Young, for that was his name, had once had a large country practice, but his health had recently failed, and he wished to meet with a lady boarder, or two sisters, to supply the deficiency in his income.

Mr. Buck, a surgeon at Leicester, had been born at Wells, and his father and mother still resided there. He had been an apprentice, and then an assistant to Dr. Young; and he came to see us, to answer all our questions and to give us every particular.

He assured us, we need not feel any hesitation in going, and said that Mrs. Young was a very original person, and a relative of Admiral Nelson, on which account she received a pension.

On the favourable information Mr. Buck gave us, we opened a correspondence with Dr. Young, and began to receive letters from him.

LEAFLET XXXVII.—A Ghost Tale.

ONE evening, in the gloaming, I sat in the dark old parlour, meditating on what lay before us.

Everything was in a state of preparation for our departure, and a great deal of luggage was ready packed, and only waiting for us to fix the time for starting.

But there was the farewell to be said to Mr. Ryley, and as I looked back and considered how much we were indebted to him, in the matter of education, and for the use of his valuable library; (which he took such extreme care of, as often not to allow us to cut the books open, but obliged us to read between their pages, with the assistance of the paper knife,) I wondered we could go.

How could we bear to say "good-bye" to him, knowing that we should not see him any more? And what would become of him in his solitary lodging, without his having anyone to go in every day, as we had done, and pay him a visit.

I was thinking over all this, when a gentleman sent in his card, and was almost immediately shown in. I saw by the card that it was "Mr. Tingle" from "New York;" and then, I remembered hearing that in young days, or rather in days of old, he had been a beau of my mother's, and even engaged to be married to her.

He was a fine-looking, middle-aged man, but when I came forward to speak to him, he seated himself on the nearest chair, and said I must give him a few minutes to recover himself. The sound of my voice had upset him, and past memories had come back upon him, with such power, that he trembled with excitement. He was glad the lamp was not lighted, and that no one else was in the room to see his weakness: but he very soon won my heart by the warm and hearty manner in which he talked of my mother, then Miss Bentley.

The day for their wedding, he said, had been very near at hand, when a sister of his had come on a visit to Leicester, and succeeded in making the breach between him and his love.

He laid all the blame upon his sister, for having enticed Miss Bentley, to go with her to have their fortunes told, by an old sooth-sayer, who professed to be able to read future events, and to know what was about to happen.

The wizard, after many incantations and cunning arts of sorcery, aprized Miss Bentley, that she would never marry the gentleman to whom she was engaged, and who had dark hair and dark eyes; but she would marry a fair complexioned man, with light hair and blue eyes.

That, Mr. Tingle said, "did the mischief," for he jumped to the conclusion that the fair haired man was Mr. Kirby, whom he had always looked upon with a jealous eye. Now his suspicions were confirmed; and of course he flew into a passion, and nothing that Miss Bentley could say, would convince him of his error, or prove to him that such was not the case.

High words ensued, and the dispute waxed so hot, that it ended in the lady handing him back his letters, and his portrait, and wishing him a very "good day."

At this point of the story, Mr. Tingle almost frightened me by the excitement into which he threw himself.

In the heat of that quarrel he had left England, and been away ever since.

For two years, he had taken up his abode with the North American Indians, the "Red Men," as they are called—and became an adept in in all their ways and habits. Then he had lived in New York, and applied himself to the study of medicine.

There happened, at that time, to be a terrible outbreak of small-pox, and he was very successful in preventing his patients from being disfigured, by getting them to wear masks of wax upon their faces; these he made himself, and quite excluded the air from the skin. He was an interesting man, and a great talker; but I thought how true is the old proverb, that "a passionate man is little better than a madman."

He stayed a long time, and all his conversation was about his lady-love. And he went on recounting first one, and then another of her good qualities, and said how much he admired her for what, in common parlance, is called "pluck."

And then I told him a story I once heard from her own lips, and that did show, she had plenty of what he called "pluck."

She had an uncle in London, in the merchant shipping business, who had two sons in the office with him, and two daughters. He was a Mr. Bentley, and on the death of his wife, he sent at once to Leicester for his neice (afterwards my mother), to come and stay with his daughters. It was a large house, with a drawing-room upstairs and a kitchen under ground.

The servant was Irish, and one morning, she was cleaning the candlesticks by the fire, while my mother stood at the dresser making the puddings for dinner. All at once, they stood still and listened. For there had been a most piercing shriek, and now came another.

What could it be? The young men had gone out after breakfast, to the office with their father, and the two young ladies were in the drawing-room. What could it be?

My mother ran to the kitchen door to see, but there, coming down the stairs, was a figure, like the ghost of her dead aunt; the face as white as marble and bound up in grave clothes. The first impulse was to get the kitchen door to, and shut it out. But no! the ghost was in the kitchen, as soon she was, and stood in the doorway.

The Irish maid crept into the cupboard beside the fire, candlestick and all, and called lustily on the Virgin Mary, and every saint in the calendar, to come and help them—while my mother, turning round, took a survey of the ghost. In another second, she had snatched up a heavy rocking chair, and thrown it with all her strength at the figure before her, saying—"if you are a man I will murder you, and if you are a spirit, God knows what will become of you!"

Of course, she saw no more of the ghost, which proved to be one of the young men, who had hidden himself, and then dressed up in his mother's night clothes; and with his feet, and hands, and face, made deadly white with chalk, had meant to give everybody in the house a good fright.

Fortunately the rocking chair had struck him on the shin, and as a little punishment for his wickedness, he was unable to walk for weeks after.

He was a wild youth, and before very long had to be sent to sea.

Part the Second.

The Musical—the Hospitable—and most promising County of Norfolk.

Contents of Leaflets :—

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LEAFLET XXXVIII.—Amongst the Relatives of Admiral Nelson.

AFTER Mr. Tingle's visit, nothing of any importance happened. We had hired some rooms in the house of Mrs. Scaife, who lived with an only son, a little higher up the street.

She gave lessons in music, and also took a lady to lodge with her; and was glad to let the attics to us; fortunately they were dry, and spacious enough for the purpose we wanted them, which was to store away the best part of our furniture, and leave it behind us.

But even then, there would remain so many things that we did not want, that we should be obliged to have a sale, to get them off our hands.

For Elizabeth's sake I did not stay to see any of the household gods disturbed; for the most important thing to be thought of, was getting her away without any serious breakdown in the shape of a nervous illness.

But we afterwards heard from our sister Catherine, all particulars of the sale, and were pleased to find that a few articles, relics of Robert Hall, were much in request, and fetched a price far beyond their value;—to wit, an old easy chair, ticketed "Robert Hall's chair;" a Tea-pot, "out of which Robert Hall used to take his thirteen cups of tea;" and even a battered old hat, "Robert Hall's hat;" these were all looked upon with veneration, and sold for twice as much as they were worth.

It was on one cold morning in March (1855), between six and seven o'clock, when all the town seemed asleep, and with scarce an eye (we mean a shutter) open, we two, Elizabeth and I, rode up to the Midland station, and were met there by our cousin John, who had undertaken to accompany us; and felt, as he said, some curiosity to see the sort of place we were going to. His father considered himself too old to be our chaperone, so had brought his son to act in his stead.

When we were in the train, and it began to move, I looked out, and saw my uncle driving his shandry-dan home again; then my heart sank within me, and I felt as though we were taking leave of our very last friend.

The journey before us, was nearly a day's work, for the railway did not extend further than Fakenham, about ten miles short of our destination "Wells-upon-the-Sea."

But every arrangement had been made by Dr. Young before-hand, and a carriage and pair was in readiness to take us forward, while the luggage was sent on by van.

There had been no snow at all in Norfolk, so when once over the border, we saw no more traces of it; though the sky was intensely blue, and the weather-cocks persistently pointed one way, namely, to the "East."

Elizabeth's spirits had been rising ever since we left Leicester behind us, and when at last we reached Dr. Young's, and drove in at the garden gates, she whispered to me that "it would do!"

We were shown into a handsome drawing-room, with a south aspect and looking into the garden. And Dr. Young and his wife came in at once to receive us.

He was a tall stern-looking Scotchman, but very courteous, and begged us to arrange everything, even the hours for meals, to suit our own convenience.

The drawing-room was to be our private sitting-room, and as he said no one would ever intrude upon us there; but we were to board with the family. And he opened a door on the other side of the hall, and showed us another room, which corresponded with ours, and where the table was already laid for dinner. Four o'clock was the usual hour, but of course we had unavoidably kept them waiting; therefore, with as little delay as possible, we made our toilet, and sat down.

Dr. Young was a gentleman, and knew how to set us at our ease, and to dissipate our restraint; so I took courage, and thought that after all, Elizabeth might be right, and that "it would do."

The next day was Sunday, and in the afternoon, John was driven over to Lord Leicester's Park, at Holkham, by Dr. Young, in the carriage he used in his profession, and which he called his "pill-box."

After that, we saw very little more of John, for early in the morning he was to go back home again. But on his going up to Mrs. Young to wish her "good-bye," she seized him by the button-hole, and wanted to know what he had come for? She had supposed it was to make himself useful, and to take care of the luggage, but as one half of that, had gone wrong, and was understood to be at Norwich, it was clear he had not troubled himself to look after it, so what on earth *had he* come for?

As soon as we were a little settled, the writing was brought out, and a Christmas story for Mr. Griffiths called "The Talking Bird," was worked at, and pushed a little forwarder.

As soon as we were tired of writing, we put it away, and at one o'clock had luncheon in the room opposite, and after that, Elizabeth was invited to go for a walk with Miss Young; while Mrs. Young was only too delighted to take me off for a drive, in a carriage she had invented herself, and called the "comfort." It was very easy going, for it was built with the axle in the centre, from wheel to wheel, precisely on the principle of the present dog cart.

Mrs. Young was the most original person I had ever met with, and talked all the way about her connection with the family of Horatio, Admiral Lord Nelson.

And before a week had passed, she had driven us both over to Burnham Thorpe, the place where he was born, and taken us into the church where his father was once the Rector, and shown us the font, in which he had been christened "Horatio" after his god-father, the first

Lord Walpole. And then she pointed out the streamlet, along which he delighted to sail his ships, and the bare stems of the trees beside it, up which he loved to climb and fancy they were masts.

In the churchyard many of the Nelson family were buried, but what struck us as peculiar was, that everybody in that parish, must have claimed some relationship to "Horatio, Admiral Lord Nelson," and however distant it might be, his name figured upon nearly every stone.

Then Mrs. Young drove on to the house of Lady Bolton, the widow of Sir William Bolton, who had been knighted by Nelson on board ship, after one of his victories.

And here, we saw a touching portrait, life size, of Nelson, taken after the accident at Teneriffe, that cost him an arm.

Mrs. Young was never tired of talking about Nelson, and certainly no man was more beloved than he, whether on sea or land, for though he was as brave as a lion, he was as gentle as a lamb.

We heard a great many anecdotes about him.—He was never behind hand, but made it a rule to be always a quarter-of-an-hour before hand. He used to say, to that quarter-of-an-hour he owed everything in life.

As we drove home, Mrs. Young related the interviews she had had with Lady Hamilton, whose beauty captivated everybody around her. Mrs. Young declared that her voice was so powerful and so clear that when she sang, one day after dessert, every glass upon the table thrilled, and gave out a ringing sound.

Lady Nelson's devotion to her husband, went for nothing before the charming person, and fascinating address of Lady Hamilton; and even Mrs. Young herself, looked very leniently on the lightness of her character, and had become one of her adherents.

But alas, for Lady Hamilton! She was cruel herself, and led Nelson, contrary to his nature, to commit a cruel action. And in spite of the good offices, which Mrs. Young said, she had rendered to the British Navy, by supplying them with water during their stay in Naples, she died in poverty, and her services were allowed to pass unrecognized.

Nelson is, however, remembered by the Nation with gratitude, and will ever continue to be so. The day of his victory at Trafalgar is commemorated every year by a banquet, and his flag-ship is still decorated with garlands of laurel, and triumphant banners.

LEAFLET XXXIX.—Holkham Hall.

THE drive from Burnham was rather a long one, and it was dinner time when we reached home; for we always dined at four, and tea made its appearance punctually at six.

After tea, we used to write for an hour or so, in the drawing-room (our own room), and then spend a very pleasant evening with the family.

Mrs. Young began by teaching me how to play at back-gammon, or if we did not play, Dr. Young would read or recite in his own tongue, passages from Burns and other of his favourite poets. And really, no one can enter into their full effect, except they hear them in the Scotch dialect.

Dr. Young had seen a great deal of the world, and was full of information. In his young days, he had a passion for the sea, and thought his hopes were gratified when he obtained an appointment as surgeon in the Navy. But to his disgust, peace was soon after proclaimed, and the crew paid off. He then entered the East India Company's service, and in one of their vessels encountered a terrific storm, when he was in fact wrecked, and had to swim for his life; whereupon he thought Providence did not favour his scheme, and therefore gave it up.

One afternoon in the week, a niece of Dr. Young's (who was at a boarding-school in the village), used to come and spend her half-holiday with him.

She was a little Scotch girl named Jessie, and would sing in such a pathetic manner "Ye Banks and Braes," and other ballads, that, on more than one occasion, she made us cry.

Miss Garwood was the name of the lady who kept the school, and she sometimes came down with a lantern, to see her little pupil safe home.

Her society was very pleasant to us, and occasionally we spent an evening with her, and had a pretty good gossip, after the pupils were gone to bed.

But Mrs. Young had a visitor, who stayed a week or more, and amused us very much.

He was a brother of hers, a Mr. Bolton, or as everybody in the house called him "Tom Bolton." He was a Suffolk squire, and his ideas of gentility were quite different to anything we had ever heard before.

He told us in the most serious manner, that he was a *gentleman*; and gave as the reason—that he had never done anything (meaning a stroke of work) in his life, and not only that, his father before him never had, and to go still further back, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather never had, therefore he considered that he must be a *gentleman*.

He liked to have a chat with us, but as Dr. Young would not allow him to come into our room by the door, he would come round to our window, which opened on to the garden, and stand there till we could talk to him. Fortunately, the aspect was due south, and a high wall protected us from the east; but over this wall, rose the church tower with its weather-cock, always pointing *one way*.

The garden was all turf, with beds of spring flowers, and rose by a gradual ascent, to a long terraced-walk, that was separated from a field of green corn only by an invisible fence.

To get us out on this walk was what Mr. Bolton liked, and as we paced (or as he used to call it "parded"), backwards and forwards there, he could talk more freely, and tell us about his dear wife, whose name was Lucy.

He was a fine specimen of an English squire, and loved horses and dogs *ad libitum*. But he said one day, that he could afford to lose everything he had in the world,—house and land, and all else beside,—if only he had his Lucy left him, he should not complain, for with his Lucy, alone, he could be happy.

One morning at breakfast, Mr. Bolton proposed an excursion to the park, and the church at Holkham, and as the distance was not more than half a mile, he offered to walk with Elizabeth, if Mrs. Young would bring me on, in the "comfort."

The church with its old weather-beaten tower, that had served as a beacon at sea, for many a long year, was first visited, and we climbed to its summit and looked all round; on one side, were miles of sea, which Mrs. Young informed us extended to the North Pole, and on the other we looked down upon a few houses, hardly to be called a village, and the Park.

Every tree in that quarter of the world, is stunted, and the houses are built so close to the ground, that they seem as if they were trying to bury themselves in it; and even the chimneys are afraid to peep out, lest a sudden gale of wind should sweep them away.

Lord Leicester and his family were from home; and by a stroke of good fortune, we were enabled to go over the Hall in a very luxurious manner.

As we were sitting near the entrance, sheltering ourselves from the wind, a waggonette full of gentlemen, drove up to the Hall door. Mrs. Young and Mr. Bolton came forward at once, and shook hands with them; for it seemed they were well acquainted.

The party consisted of Mr. Overman (one of Lord Leicester's principal tenants), his son, and a number of young men, farm pupils.

They invited us at once to join them, and we went over the house together.

There was a beautiful likeness of Lady Leicester (by Hayter) standing in the garden by the side of a fountain, towards which she holds her child, a little in the style of Vandyke's portrait of Lucia Comitissa de Carlile. And there were a few valuable pictures by the old masters of the sixteenth century. One by Bassano, of "Christ bearing his Cross," esteemed a rarity, was a little in the style of Rembrandt.

But the gem of the place was a room called "the Claude room," and all around it hung his rich and mellow landscapes.

These valuable pictures were protected by silken curtains; and as the curtains were drawn, and they were exhibited one after another, it was impossible to say which was the most attractive, or which we liked the best.

Very little is known about Claude Lorraine, who was born in the year 1600, and made his first appearance in Rome, as the servant of Agostino Tassi, a landscape painter of some repute; but Claude soon eclipsed all other landscape painters, in the management of light, and aërial perspective.

The National Gallery has an excellent collection of his works, but the room at Holkham seemed to us particularly attractive.

Elizabeth's spirits were more cheerful than I had yet seen them since we left Leicester, and she looked so much better that I felt thankful we had made the venture and come into Norfolk.

Mr. Bolton considered us under his special care, while Mr. Overman was as kind and polite as possible, and the young gentlemen vied with each other in making themselves agreeable; so that all together we had a merry time of it.

Mrs. Young had stayed behind in the Park, and we found her sitting in her "comfort" waiting for us. When we joined her, she said there was still one more thing we must see—Mr. Coke's monument.

So we walked a little way under the evergreen oaks, until we came to it.

It was a solid block, standing on a pedestal of steps, and bearing upon it the inscription to Mr. Coke. But at each of the four corners of the pedestal, stood a group of animals, large and life like; one group was oxen, and another sheep, and so on.

When we reached home, we found that we had been looking at this monument every day; for on our drawing-room mantle-piece, there it stood, enclosed in a glass case, in the shape of a narrow necked bottle, with a wide base.

Mrs. Young's ingenuity had carved it, with its groups of cattle at the corners; and by some process, we could never guess, had let it down bit by bit, through the narrow neck and put it together at the bottom of the vase.

Her accomplishments were varied, and of an unusual kind. Many of her water-coloured drawings, hung upon the walls; but she could make a capital likeness of anyone she chose, without the aid of pen or pencil, only give her a piece of paper and a pair of scissors and she would astonish you with her powers.

One day, when her scissors were at work, a lady said to her in a taunting manner, "there is one thing you cannot do—a high wind." But she did do it, and a very faithful representation she made of it. The trees are all blown violently one way, and a group of ladies and gentlemen find it difficult to stand, or to hold their hats upon their heads, while the poor little dog looks in danger of being carried away by the breeze.

Soon after the trip to Holkham, Mr. Bolton took his leave; and very sorry we were to have to part and say "good-bye," for he was so friendly, we felt as if we had known him all our lives.

LEAFLET XL.—The Dunes of Norfolk.

ONE day, we took a walk up the straggling street of Wells, and saw many traces of its having been a convenient and favourite place for smugglers. We passed by many trap doors and steps leading into dark cellars, and were glad to emerge from this street on to the quay; which ran along some distance by the side of the sea, or rather an arm of the sea, where barges and small craft were lying at anchor.

We observed to Mrs. Young, that there was not sea enough here to satisfy us; we wanted the sea, the open sea; and so with her usual good nature, she promised to drive us to Holkham beach, and show us the Dunes of Norfolk, which, she said, would give us some faint idea of the sandy desert. And then she told us that several persons had lost their way on those desolate hills of sand, and begged us to be careful how we ventured amongst them.

She kept her word, and in the course of a few days drove us in the "comfort," as she called her carriage, to the sea-beach at Holkham, and set us down there, while she tried to find a warm spot to shelter in; for though the sun was brilliant, and the sky without a cloud, the air was as sharp as a razor, and keen enough to cut us through.

The shore was perfectly flat, and stretched on and on, for miles, while in the distance a long line of white foam told us that the tide was coming in.

It was with some surprise that we perceived a solitary bathing machine, and a row of houses that had evidently been built for the accommodation of visitors, if any could be found to stay in such a weird and out-of-the-world spot.

The Dunes were quite different to anything we had ever imagined. We saw before us a soft shifting bed of sand, ever moving, and forming itself into a number of loose hillocks, that are the sport of the wind, which can change and drive them about at its pleasure.

We walked along the desolate shore for a little distance, and then turned into the labyrinth of hills, which covered a goodly space of ground, and seemed to block us in on every side; indeed, we found it no easy matter to get out again.

We wandered about till we were tired, and still before us, and behind us, and all round us, were these wild and savage Dunes; and as far as we could see, a waste of barren sand, exactly like a desert.

At last, from the top of one of the hillocks which we climbed with some difficulty, we saw Mrs. Young waving a signal to us, in the shape of a white handkerchief, tied to the end of her whip.

We were glad once more to take our places in the "comfort," and had had quite enough of the Dunes.

Mrs. Young was always anxious to give us every gratification in her power, and, as we jogged along home, she proposed to have an evening

party. I was only too glad of the opportunity of seeing a few of the young people of that neighbourhood, and undertook the expense of the entertainment if she would undertake the trouble.

So a programme was soon made and the invitations sent out.

Amongst the guests was Lady Bolton's youngest daughter, Mary, a fine handsome young woman of masculine type; and with her came a cousin, a Mr. Girddlestone, still at college, but taking his holiday at Burnham. He was very musical, and sat down to the piano, and to a flowing accompaniment, whistled instead of sung his song.

Mrs. Young was in her element, and set us all to play at a number of romping games, even to forfeits and turn the trencher.

Dr. Young did not make his appearance in the drawing-room, but sat at the head of the table at supper, and made himself very agreeable.

He was at all times an invalid, and more or less irritable, and had forgotten the wise old saw, that warns a man "never to expect in this life more than one good wife, one good friend, one good servant, and one good horse."

Mrs. Young was a second wife, and he did not seem very happy with her; they generally took very little notice of each other. But one morning, at breakfast, they had a war of words about a strip of ground in the garden, which Mrs. Young declared she must have sowed with lucerne, for the use of her pony. The doctor forbid her doing any such thing, and the strife between them waxed so hot, that Mrs. Young abruptly left the table, and going upstairs, locked herself in her own room.

We could do nothing to mend matters, so prudently held our peace; but became seriously uneasy when the lady of the house did not appear all that day, and all the next; we began to fear she might be faint and hungry, for though her little dog came regularly down for his dinner and went up again, looking the very picture of despair, yet no meals were taken to his mistress, and she remained, save for this faithful dog, forsaken and alone.

We feared we should see no more of her for ever; but no such thing, she appeared one morning at breakfast, as blithe as if nothing had happened; and, after looking round, with a nod and a smile, sat down to the table, and observed, "is it not funny? I'm not a bit hungry, and yet I have had nothing to eat."

There was no end to Mrs. Young's eccentricities, or to her ability for doing things, that ladies as a rule cannot do. I might premise that she had a bedroom to herself, and it was quite a curiosity shop. She had sawed off the bed posts, and reduced the poor bedstead to a stump; and then all manner of tools were lying about, an anvil, and amongst the rest, a shoemaker's last, for she made her own boots and shoes, and would often say, as she bid us "good night"—"don't be alarmed at any noise you may hear, I begin to work as soon as it is light, and to-morrow morning, I am going to sole a pair of boots."

Miss Young was her step-daughter, and invaluable to her father, but had a lover in the distance. One day, she went out walking as usual with Elizabeth, and said she had something to tell, and to consult her about; and then she drew a letter out of her pocket, and after reading it to her, asked her what she should say in reply.

It was in fact a love letter from a young gentleman—and the renewal of an offer he had made before and without success. For Miss Young had boarding-school ideas on the subject, and thought that a lady ought to say "no" more than once, before she allowed herself to say "yes." She had therefore written a second discouraging epistle which she also pulled out of her pocket and read.

But Elizabeth, who had just had so much bitter experience of a lover, and love-making, begged her to stop, and consider well what she was doing; and not be in a hurry and throw away the affectionate regard of a true-hearted man, who was sincerely attached to her. And so it came so pass that Miss Young listened to these words of advice, and destroyed the cruel letter she was prepared to send, and wrote another, giving the gentleman permission to call and see her.

Of course he immediately accepted the invitation, and at supper that very night, made his appearance.

But poor Elizabeth had miscalculated her strength; the sight of the lovers was too much for her, and she retired in tears, to weep the best part of the night.

This fretting went on for some little time, and she began to look very much the worse for it. Dr. Young's kindly nature was touched by her distress; and though it would be a great loss to him, to let us go, he advised me to get away as soon as possible, and take her on to Yarmouth.

LEAFLET XLI—Experience in Yarmouth.

OUR stay in Dr. Young's house had been like a happy visit, and we missed none of the comforts of our own home. Four months had quickly passed away, and it was with some anxiety that I looked forward to a change.

It was July, and as it happened Miss Garwood was going to spend her midsummer holidays at Yarmouth, and we might all travel together.

Elizabeth was quite as restless and impatient to get away from Wells, as she had been at our first starting, to get away from Leicester. It would have been impossible for me to hold her back, and therefore (though with a heavy heart) I consented to join Miss Garwood on the journey to Yarmouth.

But Dr. Young had been considering the matter of lodgings, and was so convinced of their uncomfortableness, that he put an advertisement

in the Yarmouth, and also the Norwich papers; in the hope of meeting with a private family in which we could reside.

The answers from Norwich, were laid aside for the present; and there was only one from Yarmouth, to which we replied.

The family we wrote to, were distantly related to the authoress of "Mothers of England," etc., and such being the case, we expected to meet with refined and educated people.

But here, we were to be met with a disappointment. As if to prepare us for an emergency, and to arm us at all points, two lady friends of Miss Garwood's, gave us the address of the lodgings they were themselves in the habit of going to, at Yarmouth, and which they assured us were very comfortable.

We did not anticipate wanting this address, but it was fortunate we took it with us.

Before we left Dr. Young's, we had a stroll in the garden, along the terraced walk, by the corn field, where the corn, though still green, was coming into ear; the cruel east wind had kept everything back, and though it was the first week in July, the shrubs and green herbs looked as if it were March. I had been watching a large oriental plane tree, hoping to see its bell-like catkins hang down by their long and slender threads; but it refused to gratify me or to put forth any of its shining and tropical-looking leaves.

The time was come for us to leave all familiar sights and sounds behind us, and to say goodbye for ever to them, and to the friends we had made at Wells-upon-the-Sea.

We started with Miss Garwood and another lady, in the large omnibus, that ran so many times a week to the nearest station; and as we left, a crowd of well-wishers came to see us off, and to bid us "God-speed."

The house at Yarmouth to which we were going, was on the quay, a pretty lively situation; but when we arrived we found the mistress away from home, and not expected to return for the present. And as if that were not enough to discourage us, our host, who was the master, went on to say that she would bring a visitor back with her, for a stay of a few weeks; and that she must occupy the bedroom, which had been engaged for Elizabeth.

My room was but small, and perhaps looked smaller than it really would have done, had we not come from Dr. Young's large and airy house; so I enquired where Elizabeth was to sleep, when our host pointed to a chair with cusions in it, that stood by the side of my bed, and which, he observed, could be pulled down, and very well made to answer the purpose of a bed!

His behaviour was uncourteous enough to remind us of the conduct of Mr. Murdstone towards his little step-son, David Copperfield; and between ourselves, we used to speak of him by that name.

But he gave us still another shock; for like a goose that he was, he said he had altered the dinner hour to three o'clock, as he thought by so doing, we should avoid suppers altogether.

"No such thing," was my reply to this inhospitable speech, "you can dine at three o'clock, or what o'clock you please to fix, but I am not going to bed without my supper."

To this he made no answer, but put on his hat and walked off, leaving us in doubt, whether we should open the luggage at all, or walk off too.

As soon as he was gone, we put on our bonnets, and went down to the beach.

How different it was from the beach of the present day! There was no parade, with its comfortable seats at every few yards distance, but a tract of soft sand, that came almost up to the house doors, and was like a waste of moist sugar, and about as easy to walk upon; for we sank in, at every step, and might with advantage, have used our hands to help our feet up again.

But we were well repaid for the trouble of getting to it and thought the sea, at Yarmouth, more attractive than anywhere else,—so gay, and so covered with boats of all descriptions. The walk, and the fresh breeze, revived our spirits, and we stayed out until three o'clock, the newly appointed dinner hour.

It was a meagre dinner, compared to the true Norfolk fare we had been accustomed to, but that would not have mattered, had we not experienced the same kind of feeling towards our host, as though he were in reality, Mr. Murdstone himself.

There was no doubt in my mind that this place would not suit us, or as Elizabeth expressed it, "would not do."

Mr. Murdstone was evidently not at his ease, and wrote to his wife to hasten her return. So in a day or two, she arrived (grumbling at having to come home so much sooner than she intended), and bringing her sister with her. Matters grew worse instead of better, as they generally do when there is a bad beginning.

Of course Elizabeth had no sleep on that miserable chair-bed, and when she was worn out with its hardness, and came and lay down beside me, we could do nothing but talk, and think what was best to be done.

My supper was always made a bugbear to me; our host enquiring in a quasi-insolent tone, what I should choose to take? and on my answering (as I always did), cold meat and bread, he would go out of the room, and send the servant in, with a slice or two upon a plate; leaving poor Elizabeth to go without, or to feast upon dry biscuits, for she was too timid to follow my example.

But Sunday came round, the day of rest, and we two poor jaded and anxious mortals, stayed at home in the morning, and sat reading in the drawing-room.

All at once, our host flung open the door with a bang, and coming in, glowered at me exactly like his name-sake, Mr. Murdstone.

He informed us that he had brought his wife out of church, in the middle of the service, faint and hysterical; and went on to say he knew

what had caused the attack—it was ourselves. We were, in plain English "too much for them."

This was just the point I wished to bring him to, and I immediately offered to cancel any engagement that had been made between us; and to leave as soon as possible. And so it was agreed; our host retired, and the matter seemed to be at an end.

But I secretly resolved not to take another meal in the house, but to leave it at once, before it would seem to him possible for us to get away.

Going into the bedroom, we put on our bonnets, and packing our night-gear into as small a compass as possible, and carrying it under our cloaks, we came out, and I locked the door behind us, and put the key into my pocket.

As we descended the stairs, and made our escape into the open air, I could not help laughing in my sleeve, and thinking it was as good as a play, and very much like "an elopement."

LEAFLET XLII.—The Vicar of Yarmouth and his Easter Offerings.

WE did not stay to look behind us, but turning into one of Dickens' immortal "Rows," away we went, across the Denes, (another waste of sand) to Miss Garwood; and found her ensconced in a cheap, but tolerably comfortable lodging, and preparing to have her dinner. We had a bit with her, and then all three sallied forth to the address of the lodgings, in the Regent's Road, that we had so fortunately taken with us.

We found the landlady, Mrs. Lutid, at home; and as it was rather early in the season, her rooms (all in apple-pie order) were unlet. She gave us a hearty welcome, and said that her husband, the captain of a trading smack, was out at sea; and she felt very dull without him, and should be glad of something to do.

Every room in the house bore witness to Captain Lutid's profession, for it was decorated with ornaments and nicknacks, that he had brought home with him from the East.

There was only one set of rooms, so that we had the house to ourselves; for Mrs. Lutid and her mother had accommodation at the back, and did not interfere with our department.

I was glad to meet with such a place, and at once engaged it for a fortnight.

We went back to tea with Miss Garwood, and came to our own lodgings that very night to sleep.

The next morning, I had to fetch away our luggage; and I begged Elizabeth, who looked very poorly indeed, to wait on the beach while I went on that disagreeable errand, and not to run the risk of any further agitation. But she would not consent, and insisted on going with me in the cab.

I rang at the front door bell, and took the maid servant with me upstairs, to collect, and to put into our trunks (which had never been unpacked) the few things that lay about, and when that was done, sent for the cabman to fetch them down; there was nobody at home, so placing on the hall table, a sealed envelope containing a card, and the payment due for the time we had been there, I got into the cab, and we drove away.

The Vicar of Yarmouth at that time was Dr. Hills, afterwards a Colonial Bishop; and our friend Mr. Vaughan of St. Martin's, had, it appeared, been writing to him, asking him to look us up, as for the time being, we were his parishioners.

This brought Dr. Hills to call upon us, almost before we were settled in our new abode.

He made himself very agreeable, and told us that our opposite neighbour Dr. Dunn, was a friend of his, and if we were in any need of a medical man, he hoped we should send for him.

After Dr. Hill's visit, several ladies, and amongst them, Mrs. Dunn, came in and made our acquaintance.

Dr. Hills, was so much beloved by his parishioners, that it had become with them, a sort of hero worship; and we were assured that his Easter Offerings, far exceeded in value the whole income of the living.

And the year afterwards, we witnessed for ourselves how it was, and saw a sight that we can never expect to see again.

We had settled in Norwich; but came over to Yarmouth on a visit, for Easter Week; and on the Monday we went into the church to carry our own small gift to the Vicar, as some recognition of his kindness to us, as well as of the great comfort we had received from his ministry.

But when we entered the church, there was such a crowd of persons, we had to wait some time to get near him; and then had the pleasure of observing the cordial way in which his offerings of gold and bank-notes, were being showered upon him, and noted too the gracious manner of his acknowledgments.

While we were at Mrs. Lutid's lodgings, we did very little with the writing, but were out of doors nearly all day, sitting on the old jetty, or in any bit of shade we could find on the beach.

But Elizabeth, instead of improving in health and spirits got decidedly worse; and one night had a severe attack of illness that frightened me very much. Indeed so much, that though it was only four o'clock in the morning, I dare not wait any longer, but decided to send across the road for Dr. Dunn.

But who was I to send, and where was I to find the messenger? Delay might be dangerous, I must go at once and see.

In haste, I descended to the kitchen, or rather to the living room as it was called, and looked about for some sign of a human being. There were three or four doors, and I opened first one, and then another, till I perceived a steep and narrow staircase, leading up aloft; there was no door, at the upper end, so on reaching the top, I found myself at once in the landlady's bed chamber, where she and her mother were fast asleep in bed.

Mrs. Lutid got up without a murmur, as soon as possible, and went across the road to fetch the doctor. In a few minutes, Dr. Dunn arrived, wrote his prescription, and gave it to her, with instructions to knock up the chemist, at the corner of the road, and then wait, and bring the medicine back.

It was a terrible time of anxiety, when the minutes seemed to be hours; but "confidence in the doctor is half the battle, and goes a long way towards the cure;" and we were not mistaken in the skill of Dr. Dunn.

After keeping her bed for a few days, Elizabeth was pronounced convalescent; and during her short illness, we had, (thanks to Captain Lutid and his trading smack) every article we required, of far better quality than we could buy in the shops—the arrowroot, the cocoa, the coffee, the tapioca, and even the perfume, that was freely sprinkled about, were all delicious.

Dr. Dunn thought we were in clover at Mrs. Lutid's, but I felt the inconvenience of being in lodgings, and not able to have a plentiful supply, or a sufficient variety of food; in fact, we could not keep a good table, such as we had enjoyed in our own home, and at Dr. Young's. How was it possible?

So I began to make enquiries, and at the Circulating Library, I was told of a boarding house, within a few doors of us, called "Dene House," and I found that Mr. Slowman who kept the Library and News Room, was himself the proprietor.

Elizabeth was still very feeble, and wanted all the support she could have, and I determined to lose no time in getting away from lodgings.

So that very evening, we went together to call on Mrs. Slowman, at "Dene House."

It is very like an old Moorish Palace, and covers a great deal of ground, there are few if any windows in the front, but most of them look into a large garden at the back, where we saw a vinery, and plenty of drooping trees, that formed an inviting shade. The house seemed to have been built in patchwork fashion, for the public dining room, and what might be called the public drawing room, were only divided from each other by a row of pillars, supporting a heavy beam overhead.

Mrs. Slowman, the lady of the house, was young and pretty, but as if her appearance needed any improvement, she had just undergone the torture of a new set of teeth, and frankly observed "that at present, she could hardly use them, so was dependent on soups and the tenderest of meats."

This I thought rather a fortunate circumstance for Elizabeth; but when we went upstairs and saw the two bedrooms, opening one out of the other, that were offered us, I hesitated no longer; for I saw at a glance, that the larger of the two, (with three windows in it) would be all that we required.

Mrs. Slowman was quite willing to accommodate us with a sofa and a writing table, and anything else we wanted. So the engagement was made for a month, and then for as much longer as we liked.

We were to take our meals at the public table; but our own rooms were comfortable enough, and in the large one now fitted up like a drawing room, we could go on with the writing, and also receive our callers.

I expected Dr. Dunn would be pleased to hear of the change we were about to make; and rejoice to know that his patient, who required good living instead of physic, would have the benefit of a public table, and far better fare than she could have in lodgings.

But no such thing; the idea was fatal to gentility, and the "blue blood" was up in arms.

"What! sit down to dinner with anybody, you don't know who! It is not to be thought of!" And so he took the trouble to go to Dene House, and tell Mr. Slowman the engagement could not stand good.

He argued that Elizabeth's state of health was too delicate, and advanced a number of other reasons (none of them the real one) why we should be let off.

Fortunately for us, Mr. Slowman refused to cancel the agreement, and remained obdurate, in spite of all Dr. Dunn could say.

The only way of obtaining our release was to pay down the month's money; but even that would not satisfy Mr. Slowman, for as he said, he wanted *ladies* who would draw other ladies, and do his house good.

LEAFLET XLIII.—Old Crome's Picture of "Household Heath."

MRS. Lutid's apartments were, as Dr. Dunn had said, "genteel and highly respectable," and more comfortable than lodgings generally are. But still I felt thankful to leave them; for I knew we should be starved to death in the matter of food; and it would have been rash indeed, to impoverish our resources by providing such joints, and such dinners as we required.

I was therefore glad to sit down to a well-covered table of soup, and fish, and flesh, and fowl, at "Dene House," even though it might be at the expense of a little gentility.

There were a goodly number of guests, as many as could sit comfortably at table; but I noticed that we were received by them with something like black looks, and the cold shoulder. The lady who sat next to me, was a large handsome woman, of the Yarmouth type; and was evidently rich, for she moved her back about, so as to give me to understand that she was quite as good as I was.

This cool reception came from Mr. Slowman's folly, in relating at the dinner-table, on the previous day, the visit of Dr. Dunn, and what he had said about our being "too genteel" for Dene House.

But I was thankful to see that Mrs. Slowman, who presided at the head of the table, and was being punished by her false teeth, took Elizabeth under her special care, treating her as a confirmed invalid, feeding her with tit-bits, and the best of everything; so that when we retired to our own room, the first thing Elizabeth said to me was, "I am sure it *will do*."

We lost no time in idling, but set to work, the next morning, hard and fast with the writing, and made a beginning of one story if not of two.

Before we left Wells, we had forwarded our manuscript of the "Talking Bird," to Mr. Griffiths, our publishing friend in St. Paul's Churchyard. It was accepted, and to come out at Christmas.

The plot was as original as the "Discontented Children," but not quite so simple. A tiny old woman, who is in fact a bad fairy, offers to two little girls, the gift of a bird that can really talk, and tell them all that is going to happen. One of the little girls refuses the bird, but the other secretly gets it, and hides it; and then it answers all her questions and tells her whatever she likes to know.

But instead of the knowledge she gains doing her any good, it always brings her into disgrace, and entails misery upon her.

Thus, the moral of the story shows the wisdom of our being kept in ignorance of what lies before us; and proves the truth of the saying, "that Heaven is too merciful to let Fate cast her ominous shadow upon us, before the needful time."

We corresponded two or three times a week with Mr. Ryley, and had done so ever since we left Leicester; and in one of his letters he told us about "Old Crome," the "Norwich Painter," as he called him, and said one of his pictures was in Yarmouth, and we must be sure to see it.

Accordingly we made enquiries, and finding it belonged to a Mr. Yetts, called at his house, and requested permission to look at it.

Mr. Yetts was an elderly gentleman, very courteous, and extremely proud of possessing such a valuable picture as this; for he informed us that it had been offered to the National Gallery for three hundred pounds, but he thought it was worth double that sum. And certainly we agreed with him and thought so too.

The subject was "Mousehold Heath," in the neighbourhood of Norwich. Miles and miles of heath, and nothing else; and yet the interest of that picture never flags, for the eye is carried on and on, to

the horizon in the distance, and the sky is so clear, and seems at such a height, that we thought what a delightful place it must be for pic-nics, and for kite-flying; and we felt as if we should like to fly one ourselves in that boundless space.

We paid Mr. Yetts more than one visit to look at his "Old Crome;" and I wrote to Mr. Uwins, and told him what a fine picture it was, and hoped it might be secured for the National Gallery. He regretted very much that his infirmities would not allow him to come to Yarmouth to see it, but corresponded with Sir Charles Eastlake on the subject; and we were glad to know that it ultimately became the property of the Nation.

By degrees, we settled down in our new quarters, Dene House, and made a number of acquaintances. In the afternoons we received our callers; and among the rest, it was not very long before Miss Titsell, the lady who had turned her back upon me at dinner, tapped at our door, and came in with a smile, bringing us, as a peace-offering, a packet of gingerbread.

She was a native of Yarmouth, and had bought a house at Southtown, close by; which was being furnished and got ready for her. She hoped one of these days, we should walk over with her to see it; but she wanted us that very evening to go with her, to the sands—that part of the sands we used to call Mr. Peggotty's, because we had seen a boat lying there up-side-down, a little like his house.

Just now, there was an encampment there, of heavy Infantry, waiting to embark for the Crimea; for it was at the time of the war.

Of course we were very glad of Miss Titsell's escort, and as we walked along in the gloaming she became more friendly than before.

The sight upon the sands was well worth coming to see; although we hoped never to witness such war-like preparations again.

The numbers of men, the cannon, the heavy guns, with their gun-carriages, and more interesting still, the horses, standing in long rows, face to face, and fastened only to the chain that divided them. They were so quiet, and seemed so perfectly sensible of what was going to be done with them, that we could well understand how easy they were to manage.

Miss Titsell was most anxious to see all that could be seen, and began to peep about, and even went into one or two of the tents; but when we saw the flutter of a woman's garments, we withdrew, and wished our more courageous friend "good evening."

The air of Yarmouth seemed to agree with Elizabeth, and she was getting better every day; it was a great comfort to me not to be encumbered with house-keeping, and I hoped she would have enjoyed the interval of rest. But no such thing; nothing could reconcile her to the fact of our not being in "a house of our own," and she set herself to look at every house in the town, that was either to let or to sell.

Miss Titsell was very good-natured, and fond of going over houses, so would often go with her on these expeditions; once they brought home the news of a house to be sold—for what do you think? only three hundred pounds!

Elizabeth was quite certain it would *do*; for at the back, there was a room with a bay window and a balcony, where you might stand and enjoy what is called "a sea view." But it was of no use, I could not be tempted to go and see it; for nothing, as I told her, would induce me to settle in such an undesirable spot.

Yarmouth is a very cheap and convenient place for single ladies with small incomes, particularly if they can live in lodgings; so there is a great preponderance of the female element.

One such lady resided permanently at "Dene House," in her own apartments; and occupied the large private drawing-room, large enough to hold a great number of persons. And once upon a time, she issued invitations for an evening party, and in due form sent us one.

We were glad to accept it, hoping to meet some of the élite of the place.

But to our astonishment they were all ladies; eighteen or twenty ladies, all of Yarmouth!

Some of them were pretty enough, and musical enough, and we had plenty of singing, and even playing on the harp; but oh, the monotony, —the utter want of excitement,—the tediousnes of that evening, is a thing never to be forgotten!

Our engagement with Mr. Slowman had more than once been renewed, and we were come to the end of September; and yet I wished to stay another month, in the hope of seeing the sea luminous, which rarely happens till quite late in the autumn. We had given one of the beachmen a gratuity, to let us know whenever this phenomenon did happen; and as he had faithfully promised to call us at any hour of the night, we agreed to wait for it, as patiently as we could.

LEAFLET XLIV.—"The Sea A-fire."

THE boarders at Dene House were pretty stationary, but there was one lady who made it a practice to study the advertisements in the newspapers, and to make a change of residence whenever she saw any place to be had, she thought more advantageous than the place she was in.

It was the regular "Micawber spirit," always looking out for something "to turn up."

She was a middle-aged lady, without more flesh upon her bones than sufficed to cover them; and when she first made her appearance at table, she looked more like a mummy than a human being. And we did not

wonder at it, for she informed us, that she had come all the way from Clifton, near Bristol, without a break.

Of course it was as Dr. Dunn had predicted,—a mixed company, mostly ladies. But there was one exception, a relative of our host,—a Mr. William Slowman; who arrived one day with his wife, from Birkenhead, where he held an appointment in the docks. He was a great talker, and made no secret of his past history; indeed, he rather boasted of having begun life with nothing in his pocket, and made his own way in the world. And he related an anecdote about himself, that made a decided impression upon us.

When he applied for his first situation, there were he said, more than a hundred applicants for him to compete with; and when the committee signified their acceptance of him, he could not forbear asking them, how it was, that he, without any patronage, had been chosen over the heads of so many?

And he was surprised when they told him, that his courteous manners had won the day; for out of all the number of men they had had before them, he was by far the best behaved. "So you see," said Mr. Slowman, laughing, the old proverb came true, "manners make the man," and in my case, "manners made my fortune."

Our sturdy friend, Miss Titsell, was always ready to escort us, whenever we wanted her assistance, and on the occasion of an equinoctial gale, we were glad enough to avail ourselves of it.

I have said that in those early days, there was no parade, and but little or no barrier, to break the force of the waves; and we were obliged to take advantage of any shelter we could find, and go very cautiously to work to get within sight of the beach, where every house was boarded up, and every crevice stopped with clay.

The sea was like a raging lion, and it made us tremble when the water rose like a column to a great height, and dashing round the corner of the Bath Hotel, rolled in an overwhelming torrent down the street. We held fast to some railings, and did not venture to come out of our hiding place; but very soon had seen enough of this fierce and furious gale, and feeling our own impotence, made our way back as best we could, and were very thankful to find ourselves safe at home again.

A short time after this rough walk, Miss Titsell left Dene House for her new home at Southtown; which she assured us was a much warmer place than Yarmouth. And one afternoon, she fetched us over to see her, and to show us all her new furniture; and then we drank her health, and wished her much comfort and happiness in her new abode.

It was a pleasant visit and we were glad to part in so amicable a manner, considering the churlish way in which the acquaintance had begun.

Every night we were expecting a summons from the beachman, who had promised to let us know whenever the sea was luminous; and night after night we listened and waited up as late as we could, hoping he

might come. It seemed to me, that we were a little like the medical man, hardly daring to go to bed, lest he should be called up out of his sleep, to some urgent case that would brook no delay.

At last, however, came the welcome knocking at the front door, and there we found our faithful beachman waiting for us, and come to say that the sea was all "a-fire" if the ladies wanted to see it.

Mr. William Slowman was at our beck and call to escort us; and off we went in a party to the old jetty, which was quite crowded with people, though the darkness overhead prevented our seeing their faces. But our expectations were not disappointed; for indeed the luminous sea was a grand spectacle, and worth sitting up all night to see.

The waves as they came dashing against the posts of the jetty, or creeping up the sands, or coming into contact with the fishing boats, were all ablaze with light.

The sea was covered with boats, and at every blow of the fisherman's oars, a jet of light was struck out of the water, and the drops of foam as they fell, looked like a shower of diamonds. There were numbers of persons walking on the beach, and wherever they trod upon the sand, or took a handful up, and let it fall again, sparks were emitted as brilliant as from a blacksmith's forge.

Of course, is was phosphorus that made the sea "a-fire," as the beachman called it. And we had to explain to the people we were with, that this substance exists in the bodies of millions of tiny creatures living in the water, and who possess the power of giving it out, and lighting up the waves.

It was as late as the first week in November, before we were gratified by the sight we had been waiting for; and now I felt as if there was nothing more to keep us in Yarmouth.

Mr. and Mrs. Slowman returned to their home, and the number of boarders was rapidly diminishing. The days were short, and the evenings very cold, and we wanted a fire in the public drawing room; there was to be sure always a scuttle of coal standing ready for our use, but being inlanders we did not know how to use it; and generally contrived to put the fire out. If we rang the bell, which we did once or twice, the maid only appeared with a smile to say, how sorry she was, but there were no more sticks.

Necessity is said to be the mother of invention, and in this case it certainly had the effect of sharpening our wits. A widow lady and her daughter, thorough Londoners, who had never exchanged a word with us before, now came to our assistance, and proposed to join us on the beach, and help us collect the bits of stick, the old corks, or anything else we could find that would burn. And so we did, and our fire-lighting became a laughable affair, and almost worthy of the simplicity of David Copperfield.

But by and bye, our stay at Dene House came to an end, and the last day we spent there happened to be Sunday, which we both observed with more than usual solemnity.

God is not far from any one of us, seeing that in Him we live and move and have our being; but we desired to seek his special guidance for the morrow; when we were about to leave our present moorings, and to plunge into the unknown and untried world of Norwich.

We attended the service at the fine old parish church, and had the pleasure of hearing the vicar, Dr. Hills, preach. He looked very ill, and we were afterwards told that he was much distressed in consequence of the young lady, to whom he had been for some little time engaged, having broken her troth.

Providence was the subject of his sermon; the text being taken from the history of Baalam and the fact particularly dwelt upon that all through the wanderings of the Jewish people, the Angel of the Lord was present with them, to lead them onward, or to stop up the way before them.

It was a comforting sermon, and concluded with the assurance that those, who put their trust in the Almighty, need fear no evil, since He has promised never to leave them, and to be their guide even unto death.

LEAFLET XLV.—Norwich and the Cathedral.

NORWICH was a large city, and a wide berth for us to go to, without knowing a soul, or having any introductions whatever; save the address of two or three persons, who had answered the advertisement, which Dr. Young, some four months ago, had inserted for us in the Norfolk papers.

When we arrived in Norwich, we left our luggage at the Railway Station, and getting into a cab directed the driver to Miss Larke's, at the top of St. Giles' Hill; for she was one of the ladies who answered Dr. Young's advertisement; and had mentioned in her letter, that she accomodated the Miss Huntingtowers in her house, as parlour boarders for some time; so we thought she would be the most likely person to receive us.

As we rode along, I was glad to see that we were going up and up hill, until we must evidently be on the highest ground in the city.

We got out as we neared Miss Larke's, and set the cab at liberty. A plate upon the door, informed us it was a "ladies' school," and it occupied two lofty houses, with gabled roofs and tall narrow windows, and stood so near to St. Giles' Church, that I thought in all probability, one of the houses had formerly been the vicarage.

We rang at the bell and went boldly in; and as we stood looking for a moment at the old-fashioned entrance, Elizabeth whispered, "O for a house! do take a house! a house of our very own!" But I only laughed at her importunity, and began to parody King Richard's cry, "A horse, a horse! my kingdom for a horse!"

It was not to be thought of at present, it behoved us to be prudent, and bide our time; we must husband our resources, and give ourselves a little time to recover from the heavy expenses incurred in leasing and remodelling the house we already had at Leicester.

Unfortunately, my inexperience had led me into a lawyer's office, conveniently near, on the opposite side of Friar Lane, and to ask the lawyer to let, and then to make the lease of the house for us. But alack! we received such a bill, that it swamped all the rent we might receive for the next twelve months to come!

To return to Miss Larke's; the respectable looking servant, who had let us in, ushered us upstairs into the drawing-room, and after asking us to be seated, left us.

Of course, we looked round with some curiosity; it was a pannelled room, large and square, and with two windows and two doors in it, and we noticed the old-fashioned brass locks, like those we had been used to from our childhood.

In a few minutes, the maid returned with a tray of cake and wine, and setting it down on the table, begged us to help ourselves, saying that Miss Larke was at dinner with her young ladies, in the next house, but would be at liberty almost immediately; and desired us in the meantime, to make ourselves at home.

We waited with no little anxiety, and by and by the door opened, and in came Miss Larke—a stout middle-aged lady, slightly deaf, but with a benignant expression of countenance and very cordial manner.

Then for a little time we played at cross purposes. She had been advertising, that very week, for a lady as teacher in the school, and it was difficult to make her understand, that we were not come in answer to her advertisement. She had forgotten all about Wells, and the letter she wrote to Dr. Young, but said she would call a neice, Miss Cook, who lived with her, and perhaps she might remember something about it.

When at last, we made our errand clear, Miss Larke said there was only one small double-bedded room on the top landing, at liberty just then, but she begged we would remain with her, until we found something better, for she had a poor opinion of hotels, especially for young ladies.

The Miss Huntingtowers, she told us, had occupied that drawing-room, and the bedroom out of it, which she had now taken for her own use; and until the holidays were come, she did not think it possible for her to disarrange the furniture, or make any change.

She obliged us to have some refreshment, and encouraged us to turn out, and look round; if perchance we might meet with a more comfortable berth, than she had to offer us; and then, she directed us where to find Miss Redgrave, another lady whose address we had brought with us; and as we came downstairs she followed us to say tea would be ready for us when we returned, and the bedroom, the only one she had vacant, should also be prepared.

There was something so frank and genial in Miss Larke's manner, that I took to her at once, and told her that we should remain with her for the present, at any rate, though I had some difficulty in persuading Elizabeth to consent.

Away we went, down St. Giles' first, to take a peep in at the shop windows, and then on to Miss Redgrave's. But the house was gloomy, looking into a confined garden, and so close to St. Stephen's churchyard, that I felt thankful we were on the top of St. Giles' Hill; and induced Elizabeth to be satisfied with what Providence had sent us.

On our return to Miss Larke's, we found a good fire, and the tea waiting for us; altogether the room with its shutters closed, its curtains drawn, and the lamp lighted, looked very snug and cosy; and Ann was there ready to attend to us.

Nobody knows, how much the comfort of a house depends upon the domestics, and from the very first, "Ann" attached herself to us, and thought nothing was too good for us.

The first night spent in a new place, and under entirely new circumstances, must always be attended with uncertainty, and have a disquieting effect on the mind. In my case, a great responsibility lay upon me, and had not "the boat" been burnt behind us, it is just possible we might have run back to it for shelter.

Miss Larke devised a plan to divert us, and to break up our melancholy thoughts; she introduced her two little nieces Blanche and Naomi (about five and six years old), to us, and asked permission for them to remain with us for an hour or two to amuse us with their innocent prattle, and to play a game at dominoes.

The company of these children was a relief, and proved acceptable to us making the time pass quickly away.

The next day, we were surprised to receive a visitor, Mrs. Bolingbroke. She had had a letter from her sister, who lived at Ibstock in Leicestershire, to tell her we were coming to Norwich, and she must "hunt us up." Accordingly she had made enquiries and was come. We had friends and relatives, living at Ibstock also, so there was plenty for us to talk about.

Mrs. Bolingbroke lived in a handsome house in St. Giles' Street, and her husband was a magistrate, and a public man; a niece, who was like a daughter, resided with them; and they had besides, two nephews, married and settled, both engaged in the staple trade of the city, manufacturers of crapes and tweeds, and all sorts of fancy woollen goods.

On Sunday, the first of our sojourn in Norwich, we walked to the Cathedral for the afternoon service. It was a long way and all down hill, for the Cathedral was at the extreme lowest, and we were at the extreme highest point of the city.

The service was a musical one, and in those days when Dr. Hinde was Bishop, there was no sermon, nor did we feel any need of one; for the singing seemed to come from heaven and to draw our hearts thither-

ward. One boy (Fairbank) who sang the solos, had a voice so divinely sweet, that the whole congregation was touched by it; and we ourselves felt an emotion hitherto unknown.

His clear ringing notes seemed to rise into the very roof, and to touch the span of every arch, as they rolled along and were lost in the spacious nave.

We soon made a friend of Dr. Buck, the organist; and found that his wife's brother had kept a school in Leicester, next door to our own house in Friar Lane, and that our brother had been one of his pupils.

Dr. Buck spoke of the Bishop as a very learned man, and a contributor to the Encyclopædia Britannica; but there was, he said, a little romantic story about him. During one of his visits to the South Coast, he had fallen ill with fever or some such dangerous complaint, and was nursed through it by a young woman, whom out of gratitude as well as love, he afterwards married. He had never brought her to the Palace, and Dr. Buck said no one in Norwich had ever seen her. His visits to the South Coast were punctually paid, and before we left the city, he had resigned the see.

As soon as Professor Sedgwick came into residence as a Canon, we went to the Cathedral for the morning service, and heard him preach.

In that sacred edifice, it was always cold, for the Dean and Chapter would not allow the gas to be introduced for fear of fire, so there was no sufficient means of warming it. The Professor seemed well aware of the fact, and prepared himself accordingly; making his appearance in the pulpit in a fur cap, fur cuffs, and a fur collar round his neck, and even then, he hardly looked as if he were warm enough.

He read his sermon, but the leaves were not fastened together, and his fur cuffs, every now and then, sent a few pages fluttering over the pulpit side; he was not however discomposed by the occurence, but just glanced over, as if to see where they were going to.

I believe he wore two pair of spectacles (as we had seen Miss Linwood do at Leicester), one pair quite high up on his forehead, seemingly in reserve, and only to be pulled down if required.

Professor Sedgwick was a general favourite, and much respected and beloved; everybody knows how industrious he was, and what an amount of writing his "geological works" must have involved. But he was up in the morning early, and had made a great many strokes with his pen before anybody else was awake.

We heard an amusing anecdote about him, that was very characteristic.

He used to go out walking on the roads, long distances, with a knapsack on his back and a hammer in his hand, to examine any stones or heap of stones that might take his fancy.

One day, in a lonely spot where two roads met, he was hard at work breaking stones by the way side, when a carriage and pair was pulled up close by him, and a lady put out her head, and beckoning to him, asked

him if they were "right for Norwich"? Of course he gave her the information she wanted; when she put a shilling into his hand, saying with a smile, "thank you, my good man!"

It was not very long, before the Professor met at an evening party, his generous friend, who had given him the shilling, and going up to her, he shook her heartily by the hand, and begged her again to accept his thanks.

We had had the pleasure of seeing Professor Sedgewick, when he came to Leicester, with two other Professors—Whewell and Airy, on a geologizing expedition to Charnwood Forest.

Mr. Ryley, and Mr. Harley, and a number of gentlemen joined them at Mr. Allsop's, who lived at the Brand, near Loughborough, and acted as guide.

Professor Sedgwick, when he saw the rocks, declared that they were entitled to be called mountains, and pronounced the whole district to have been an Oceanic valley. He was very enthusiastic in the pursuit of knowledge, and he and several courageous members of the party, allowed themselves to be wound down into one of the coal pits, in the cradle, used by the men for ascending and descending; but our friend, Mr. Ryley, was too prudent to join them; he looked over the edge, and saw them safely down to the bottom; then wishing them "good luck," turned on his heel and was gone.

LEAFLET XLVI.—Music and the Arts.

OUR nearest neighbours were the Rackham's, an old Norfolk family of solicitors, living in their own house at the top of St. Giles' Street,—indeed so near to Miss Larke's, that we could look in at each others windows, and might perhaps, by a stretch of the arm, have shaken hands on our own door steps.

The family consisted of Mrs. Rackham, the widow, her daughter Ellen, (a capital chess-player) and a married daughter, the wife of Mr. Henry Smart (well-known in the musical world.)

Mrs. Smart had two or three children with her, and was as handsome a woman, as one could wish to see, and as agreeable. Mr. Smart was engaged up and down the country, setting up organs, and such like business, and his famtly only saw him now and then.

Mr. Henry Smart was afterwards knighted, as Sir James Smart had been before him.

The Queen, from early days, was a patroness of music, and fortunately had the skill and scientific knowledge that made her Majesty's approbation of so much value.

Sir James Smart was Master of Ceremonies, and conducted the orchestra on many occasions. He paid the Queen the compliment of regarding her as a first-rate judge; and was known to say, that if the performers were at all at fault, Her Majesty's ear would detect the blunder.

We have every reason to hope that the Royal College of Music, founded by his Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales will do much for the musical education of the people, and that England in respect to this divine art, will be able to hold up her head among the nations.

Mr. Rackham Senr. had been one of the first proprietors of the Norwich Theatre, and consequently his family held a number of silver tickets that carried them in free.

We reaped great advantage from these tickets; for Mrs. Smart always let us know when anything worth seeing was going to be performed, and we used to go in a body.

One time, Mr. Galer and the Opera Company we had heard at Leicester, gave several operas, but Elizabeth was so excited with hearing Norma, that all the night, her head was in an agony of pain, and she was laid up on the sofa for several days.

And once we all went to see Othello. The part was played by a man, who was really a black, and might have been a Moor; but his performance was so ludicrous, that in the most tragic scene, the murder, we laughed so much that we were obliged to come out, lest we should get into trouble.

The evening parties, under the superintendence of Mrs. Smart, were perfectly delightful. And here, we met the artist, Mr. Downes and his wife, who lived at the corner of Bethel Street.

Mr. Downes was a portrait painter, and had a studio in the public building called "Novare's Rooms," because Mr. Novare and his family held dancing classes in the large room below.

Mrs. Downes had a great talent with her pen, and was fond of magazine writing.

By and bye we became such friends, that we could go in an afternoon to the studio, and read aloud any lively piece that we were writing.

Once, we wrote a humorous account of what would happen a hundred years hence; how the men would be thrust out from all the professions by the women, and even the government of the country would be carried on by women; and in the Houses of Parliament there would not be a man to be seen.

We had a good laugh over this paper, for it was suggested that at certain intervals, the usher of the House, must enter, and pronounce in a clear voice the omenous word "Babies." Then what a commotion there would be, and how many of the honourable members would disappear into the lobby, and remain for a time absent.

Mrs. Downes who had two little children, gave us a story of her own, on the evils which result from young women leaving their babies, to take situations as wet-nurses. It was well written and very tragic.

A pretty young girl, named Jenny goes to service in London.

She soon finds an admirer, to tell her of her beauty,—a gentleman, a real gentleman,—and very soon too, she falls a victim to his passion.

Her confinement takes place in a Union Workhouse; and the nurse there, holds before her the temptation of taking a place as wet-nurse.

So Jenny's baby is consigned to the care of a widow woman, while she herself is installed in a grand mansion, to nurse as her own the son and heir of the owner.

All goes well, till one evening, when, as she is hushing the little one to sleep, before laying him in his cradle, there comes a tap against the window pane, and she sees the widow standing outside. She stealthily uncloses the shutters, and hears a summons for her to come if she would see her child alive.

The baby in her arms is startled, and refuses to settle to sleep. What should she do? She goes to her mistress's room hoping to find her, but alas! her master and mistress are both gone out to dinner.

She has seen the workhouse nurse many times administer a drop of laudnum upon sugar, to a sleepless infant, and she snatches up a bottle that stands conveniently on her mistress's table; with trembling hands she pours some drops into a spoon—the baby is soothed at once, and soon asleep; and then Jenny without a sound makes her way through the open window, and closing the shutter only partially, so that she may return,—she flies across the Heath to the widow's cottage.

Alas! It is too late,—in vain she presses the child to her bosom—the little head is too weak, it falls helplessly away; and her baby with a sigh is gone!

Then, the widow urges Jenny to return, and again she comes in sight of the mansion. She pauses as she sees a light streaming from the window through which she was intending to enter.

What is it? Her heart almost ceases to beat with fear, when she sees her master there, and her mistress holding the child in her arms; while the doctor has his finger on the little one's pulse. At a glance, Jenny knows that the child is dead, and feels that she has killed it.

Without a moment's delay, away she speeds once more to the Heath.

There is no hope for her! What will become of her? She thinks, as she stands on the edge of the pond, and looks at the smooth water.

Another second, in her despair, poor Jenny has thrown herself into that glassy pool—a few circles rise and form themselves upon the surface, and she is drawn beneath it, and all is still.

That very morning, a fine gentleman on horseback, comes cantering across the Heath; as he nears the pond, his dog, Hector goes towards it to drink; his master calls him back, but coming nearer, sees that the dog is dragging something heavy to the bank. The gentleman dismounts, and with his whip begins to stir the tangled mass before him.

"O God! It is a woman!" He exclaims—as he draws the wet tresses from the face.

Why does his own face grow so livid? Why do his trembling hands drop the lifeless burden? Why do his white lips utter the name "Jenny," in so terrified a whisper?

Why indeed!—He is the father of Jenny's child!

LEAFLET XLVII.—Norwich Churches as they used to be.

AT one of Mrs. Rackham's parties, we met Mr. and Mrs. Sedwgick; he was the incumbent of our parish church of St. Giles; but under the delusion that the people there did not like him, he became very hysterical whenever he made his appearance before them; it was his custom therefore, to exchange duties with other clergymen in the City and so it happened that we generally had a supply.

One of the most popular preachers we had, was the Rev. — Morse, who was very clever and very eccentric. We heard him read the lesson in the third of Daniel, and when he had read—"cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltry, dulcimer, and all kinds of music," once over—he thought that was enough, and in the future verses merely said, "the aforesaid instruments"; and he did the same thing with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, for after the first mention of them, he passed them over as "the aforesaid gentlemen."

The following anecdote was related by Mr. Morse himself, and is very characteristic of him:—

In his own parish, there lived a tailor (Wilkins), and one day his wife waited on the vicar, to beg him to come and see her husband, who she said was in a very low way, and had made up his mind to drown himself.

Of course Mr. Morse promised to come, and lost no time in keeping his word.

He found Wilkins sitting "all in a heap," as the saying is, on a chair in the bedroom, which was scrupulously clean, and had on the bed a spotless white quilt.

"Well Wilkins, what's this I hear about you—that you are bent on drowning yourself?"

"Well Sir, that's about it, I can't bear to live any longer."

"Wilkins, I'm shocked to hear it! Indeed I am! But do you know the *state of the river*? The most abominable sludge floating on the surface, to say nothing of the abominable mud at the bottom! What a thing it would be for you to throw yourself in there! Then the men

would come with the creepers (rakes) and pull you out—a shocking mass of filth,—dropping all along the passage—up these stairs—goodness, only think of it! And to be laid on this bed! On this white quilt! In this very room, where we are sitting now! Why Wilkins, I could not have believed it of you! I cannot tell you how shocked I am at the very idea—you drowning yourself indeed! Faugh!"

"O Lord, O Lord! sir! What *am* I do?

"What *are* you to do? Why *hang yourself to be sure.* You can put on your best clothes, you can do it in this very room—no dirt—no smell—no soiling of this white quilt—all clean—all quiet—all comfortable!"

"But sir, *I don't want to hang myself*, I could not do it!"

"I should think not Wilkins. I hope not, nor drown yourself either. So let us hear no more about it—but make yourself cheerful and happy, and never frighten your wife by talking such nonsense again."

It ought to be said that the Rev. Morse had been educated for a surgeon, and in this case, at least, his treatment of the patient was successful.

In Norwich, these were days of darkness with regard to the churches. They were only open for morning and afternoon service, and closed at night; and with the exception of St. Peter Mancroft, they were in such a state of forlornness, that they looked as if they had remained untouched ever since they were built.

One Sunday evening we thought we could hear the tinkle of a bell; and at once set out on an expedition to find, if possible, a church open.

We followed the sound into Pottergate Street, and oh! What stones we had to stumble over! The pavement was as rough and as difficult to walk upon, as any stepping-stones could be, over a brook, in a country lane.

We found the church open (St. Swithin's), for some charity sermon, and as we entered, there certainly was a scent, as pungent as though St. Swithin himself had been buried in it.

The reason was apparent when we perceived the pews to be all lined with rushes, held in place by cross bands of more rushes still.

We declined to go into any of the pews, though a door was held open for us; but made our way to a clean new bench, with a back to it, standing in the middle aisle for the old folks to sit upon.

The Vicar, Mr. Cavell, was in the reading desk, and it distracted his attention to see two such smart folks as we were, in that conspicuous place, and on that bench; but in vain he sent the clerk to tempt us into a pew, we declined, and remained where we were.

It is hardly necessary to say how different the churches are in these modern days; when they all have been restored, and every one is open for evening service.

Though our stay at Miss Larke's remained an open question, we had a great number of callers; and amongst others Mrs. Wrigg, the wife of

a clergyman, who had two churches, and two parishes in the city, and lived in a large house at the top of Bethel Street.

Mrs. Wrigg brought a niece with her, who was on a visit, and whose relatives, we found lived at Wigston, close to Leicester.

This young lady attached herself to Elizabeth, and used very often to call, and go for a walk with her; and as I was unable to go any distance on foot, I was glad to find a companion for her in the matter of walking.

Mrs. Wrigg was of the Puritan school, and quite a character. When we returned her call, and were shown into the drawing-room, we found her on the hearth-rug half buried in a clothes flasket; which circumstance she explained by saying, "the wash-woman had just brought home the linen, and that she made it a rule, at once to air the shirts, and to examine all Mr. Wrigg's buttons!"

By and bye we saw a good deal of Mrs. Wrigg, and became more and more convinced of her Puritanism.

On one occasion, we met her at a tea party, with a piece of work on her knee, in the shape of an unbleached calico garment (such as Dorcas is celebrated for), which well-nigh covered her, and part of the carpet besides.

We had not been at Miss Larke's more than five weeks, when we received a letter from our sister in Paris, to tell us she was falling into ill-health; for neither the food, nor the mode of life agreed with her, and she wished to come home to us as soon as possible.

There was of course, no room for her at Miss Larke's; and I believe Elizabeth was secretly glad of the excuse to look out for other apartments, where we could have the required accommodation.

Unfortunately, I had a bad cold and was staying indoors, to try to get it better; but Elizabeth took a walk round, in search of a place likely to suit us.

She was not long away; and brought me the news that she had been into a pretty new house, on the Unthanks Road, where she had seen that there were rooms to let, and was quite delighted with them.—The parlour in front, was very nicely fitted up, as were the two bedrooms upstairs, and the landlady was such a good woman, and so civil, and willing to do everything for us herself, and to furnish our table, so that we should have no trouble, or loss of time in marketing.

It seemed tempting enough, and so in an evil hour I consented to make enquiries of Mrs. Bolingbroke if she knew anything about Mrs. Hawkes,—for that was the landlady's name.

As it happened, we were going to an evening party there, and I took the opportunity of getting all the information I could upon the subject. But I was not successful, for nobody seemed to know her.

Mrs. Bolingbroke's large rooms were well-filled with guests; and several of the ladies we met that evening, afterwards called upon us at Miss Larke's, and Norwich did not seem so far from Leicester as we had

imagined; for the familiar name of some mutual friend was almost sure to be mentioned, and form a topic of conversation.

December was getting on, and Catherine was to be with us for Christmas; and as we must have accomodation for her, I went and saw Mrs. Hawkes, and engaged her rooms on the Unthanks Road, not, however, without some misgivings. For although everything looked pretty and bright, she had too much cant upon her tongue for me to feel any great confidence in her.

Her terms were sufficiently high to allow us all the comforts we required; and it never entered our heads to think that we should be stinted. So in spite of doubts and fears, and danger signals in the way, we went and took possession of her rooms.

Alas! It was but a second edition of the experience we had had with Mr. Murdstone at Yarmouth.

The wretched fires, and cold rooms, gave me an attack of bronchitis, and before we had been in the house a week, I gave notice that we should not remain there any longer than we were obliged.

LEAFLET XLVIII.—Jenny Lind.

CHRISTMAS came in bright and frosty and our sister had arrived from Paris, bringing with her, as we imagined, a soupçon of foreign ways and manners.

She was dissatisfied, as we all were, with the accommodation at Mrs. Hawkes', which was all for show and nothing for comfort; but we tried to make the best of our sorry quarters.

The cold was intense, and there were no comfortable shutters to close behind the smart crimson curtains, and keep out the frost; and the fireplaces were so blocked up with what are called "dogs," that if I had sat on the fire itself, I should have felt very little heat.

Our friend and surgeon, Mr. Pitt, came every day to see me; and his wife brought their two sweet children,—Richard and Carry, to call upon us. We gave them, for a Christmas Box, a copy of the "Talking Bird" (then just out), and as their mamma got tired of reading it to them, they positively set to work and learnt it by heart.

But a new dilemma arose this Christmas week; we received a letter from Leicester, from Mrs. Scaife, to tell us her son had been advised by the doctors, to try a change of climate, as they feared he would go into a decline; and that she had made up her mind to go with him to New Zealand. Of course our furniture would have to be removed before she left; and she hoped we should be able to make another arrangement.

She thought a great deal about us, and offered to look out for another store-room for us if we would let her.

We laid her letter aside for consideration.

As we were talking it over, with rather serious faces, up came Miss Larke's "Ann" bringing the two little nieces, Blanche and Naomi, to have tea with us.

When we had taken our leave of them at their Aunt's, as they hung about us, with their caresses, I had promised them this visit; and they declared how delighted they should be to come and see us, in what they called our "smart lodgings."

Ann left them to spend the evening with us, and was to fetch them at eight o'clock. Before she went, I told her how uncomfortable we were, and in reply, she said Miss Larke's house did not seem like the same without us, it was so dull she did not know what to do; if we could only come back how glad she should be, and she was sure Miss Larke would be quite another creature.

Then, I told her we could have our own furniture; and wished her to bring us word, when she came to fetch the children, whether Miss Larke would endeavour to accommodate us.

The evening passed quickly away; there were many riddles to solve, and when they asked us one we could not guess, they crowed again with delight. The easy ones, like the following, did not afford so much merriment, as to puzzle us was half the fun—

> "The two first letters are of the masculine gender,
> The three first are of the feminine gender,
> The four first are a brave man,
> The whole word is a brave woman.—HEROINE."

And then, the dominoes came out, and we played a game, with as much interest as though we had been children ourselves.

Soon after eight, Ann arrived, and I could see by the expression of of her face, that she was bringing us good news.

Miss Larke offered to give up the drawing-room, and the other rooms on that floor, and also to let us have the use of the dining-room below. And though there were four or five maid servants, yet Ann declared she should not let any one wait upon us, but herself.

So the very next day, we walked down and made an arrangement with Miss Larke; and as there would be more furniture than the rooms would hold, she agreed to store the rest for us, in one of her large dry cellars.

Then Mrs. Scaife's letter was answered satisfactorily, and the upholsterer at Leicester was written to, and desired to see the furniture safely packed, and off by train for Norwich.

Before we left Mrs. Hawkes', Jenny Lind paid a visit to the city, and gave a concert in St. Andrew's Hall; such a fine old Hall that is not to be seen any day or in any other place.

When Jenny Lind had made her first appearance at the Italian Opera House, Lablache observed "that her soft piano way of singing was quite unlike anything he ever heard before;" and Her Majesty records in her Journal "that the purity of it was indescribable."

On the present occasion the tickets were a guinea, and half-a-guinea each, but it astonished us to find how the taste for music drew the working classes there, even though they had to put something in pawn to raise the money.

Mr. and Mrs. Hawkes went, as a matter of course, and Mrs. Hawkes told us she knew a man who had parted with his Sunday clothes, and his boots, for the occasion.

Elizabeth went with a party of friends, and was highly delighted; though Dr. Buck said Jenny Lind was never quite at her ease before a Norwich audience.

During Bishop Stanley's life she had been his guest, and always entertained at the Palace.—But now he was gone, and when, for the first time, she came to the Cathedral and saw the spot where he was buried, she paused, and burst into tears.

A simple slab of black marble marks the spot, and lies in the centre of the nave, under the light of the western window, which, in the time of the Civil Wars, had lost its stained glass. Bishop Stanley much desired its restoration, and had said it would never be done in his life-time, but he hoped it might be done for his monument, when he was no more. And so it was.

LEAFLET XLIX.—Mrs. Opie.

IN due time all our furniture came to hand without injury; and we felt quite at home again, when we saw our own carpets on the floors, our own pictures on the walls, and all the familiar objects that we had been used to from our childhood, once more restored to us.

To have the use of our own chairs and tables, gave a great impetus to the writing, and we began a story, the plot of which had been suggested to us by what had passed before our eyes since we left home.

It is called the "Bundle of Sticks, or Love and Hate," and portrays the history of two families,—one having all the advantages of being united; while the other is torn to pieces by dissension; though in the end they are all brought round, and made happy, as it is only proper they should be.

The manuscript was forwarded to Routledge & Co. and was accepted, and in due time published.

We also ran through another book for children, and sent it to Edinburgh to Mr. Thomas Nelson, for his approval.

It is called "Truth is always best," and as soon as it was out, we were surprised to find how quickly it sold.

Amy the naughty child in the story tells a falsehood, and is driven from pillar to post to conceal her fault. A pearl necklace is missing, and nowhere can it be found. The truth is, Amy herself takes it out of its box, and carries it in her pocket to a Christmas party, where she wears it round her neck. In the romping game of forfeits, it gets broken, and all the pearl beads lie scattered on the floor.

At the end of the tale, poor Amy is sent away from her indulgent grandmamma, to a school where the governess knows how to keep her in better order, and to cure her of her fault.

The story seems so real that two or three children ran after us in the street, to ask in the most innocent manner, if we would please to tell them which school it was that Amy had been sent to?

With Miss Larke too, the book was very popular, so that she bought all the presentation copies we could spare her, and then ordered more.

"It gets the little ones on so nicely with their reading," she said, "for instead of wanting to give over, they are so eager to know what comes next, that I find it difficult to get the book away from them."

Our sister Catherine had not been long with us at Miss Larke's, before she received a letter from Mrs. Vaughan, requesting her to come to the Vicarage, and take the children under her care.

The German governess had never been able to gain their affections; and at the end of the year had given up the situation.

She was quite willing to respond to Mrs. Vaughan's invitation, and agreed accordingly to accept it.

But she did not go before we had arranged with Mr. Jarrold for his "Plant Book," and she made us some pretty botanical drawings for it; Miss Bolingbroke undertaking to do the rest.

Nor did Mr. Ryley forget us; indeed we corresponded with him two or three times a week, and if we found any difficult point that we could not unravel, he would always consult his books and send us a clear definition of what we wanted. And more than that, he made several pen and ink sketches of tree-ferns, and the different species of palms, and still further, sent us a parcel of books, that he thought might be useful to us. In fact, he was our sheet anchor, and like a walking dictionary.

Just when we were at our very busiest time, we received a visit from Mrs. Young, who had lost her husband, and came to us in widow's weeds. She was prepared to stay a few days, and wished to join us, and pay her share of expenses, either at Miss Larke's, or anywhere else we pleased.

As it happened, a regular deluge of rain set in as soon as she arrived, and for the three or four days she was with us, it never gave over. We felt truly thankful that at Wells, our drawing-room had been so private;

and that we had never been exposed to her loud voice, and uncouth ways; very soon our heads began to ache, and when she did leave us, and take her departure, all idea of joining her was at an end.

But she settled in lodgings very near to us; the drawing-room floor was occupied by a single lady we knew something of, and Mrs. Young was obliged to content herself with the room below. When evening came on, as she sat alone she began to feel the solitude irksome, and the thought struck her, that the lady upstairs must feel solitary too; a little society would do her no harm, so upstairs went Mrs. Young, and without any ceremony, opened the drawing-room door, and said she was come to keep "her ladyship company." Of course the intrusion was immediately resented, and "her ladyship," as Mrs. Young had called her, rang the bell, and ordered her well-meaning visitor to be shown out.

One day, as we were making a call on Mrs. Bolingbroke, a lady there told us that Mr. Thomas Jarrold, who managed the publishing department of that firm, lived at Thorpe, a suburb of the city, and she thought we ought to pay him a visit. So I proposed to Elizabeth to walk down to the shop in London Street, and enquire after him.

Of course she was willing to go, but her timidity with a publisher had more than once been something painful to see.

When we reached the shop, we were shown into a room, like a counting house, while a messenger was sent upstairs to find the Mr. Jarrold we wanted; and as Elizabeth stood trembling in every limb, and holding herself upright on the top of her umbrella, I rallied her on her appearance, and compared her to Jacob leaning on the top of his staff.

Mr. Jarrold was soon with us,—a small quick man, with very sharp eyes, and a pleasant expression.

He knew our children's books, and liked the style of them.

And then he fetched a small volume called the "Observing Eye," and said he wished to continue the volumes as a series, so if we had anything to suggest that would do, he should be glad.

I proposed at once the subject of "plants," and we agreed to begin, and get some chapters ready for him to see; and he promised to walk up St. Giles' Hill, and call upon us very soon.

The business part of our call being over, he sat down and we had a little chat about Norwich, to which city, at present, we were strangers.

He could not go so far as George Barrow had done, and say there was no place in the whole world like Norwich, but he did say there was no town able to compete with it in literary associations. And then he enquired what sights we had seen; and talked about Mrs. Opie, and directed us to her house, at no great distance.

On our way home, we made a little détour, and went to see it. The house was of red brick, and had nothing interesting about it, except the fact of Mrs. Opie having lived there. At that time, men were at work widening the street, and I believe the house was shortly afterwards pulled down, though one street still bears the name of "Opie Street."

Mrs. Opie was the daughter of a physician, Dr. Alderson, and born in Norwich, where she held a good position in society.

She had a poetical mind, and a natural love for the beautiful. It is a pretty idea, to think of her lying in her cot, listening to the sound of church bells, and fancying as she gazed up into the blue sky, that those sweet bells were ringing in heaven.

And I might say that the intense blueness of the Norfolk sky, and the extreme clearness of the air, favours the idea of being able to look up and up and up, so high, as to peer into the celestial regions.

Her husband, Mr. Opie, was the son of a carpenter, at Truro, but showed his talent for portrait painting at a very early age, by taking the likenesses of his relations. He was taken into the service of Dr. Wolcot, known as Peter Pindar, and sent by him to London with an introduction to Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Here his study was the favourite resort of many wealthy ladies; but as he did not flatter them enough, they ceased to patronize him; and consequently he turned his attention to historic painting instead. "The Death of Rizzio" is one of his well-known pictures.

His marriage raised him very much in the social scale, and urged him on to improve himself in art, until he became a professor in the Royal Academy.

Mrs. Opie's married life, however happy it might be, was of short duration. After a union of nine years, Mr. Opie, who had conquered every difficulty, and become the successful man of genius, fell into ill health and died.

When a widow, Mrs. Opie still continued to live in Norwich, and alone, save for the portraits of many friends that hung round her room, and were her choicest treasures.

They had of course been painted by her husband, and as day by day she regarded them with affection, she was prompted to address them in verse. In one of her lays (which were published under the title of Lays of the Dead) she says:—

> "My solitude is peopled—Precious Art!
> I am alone—the fireside vacant now,
> Once filled so happily. But when I gaze
> On you—Art's fair creatures, I no more
> Seem desolate and left."

Mrs. Opie's stories used to be in fashion when we were young, but have become scarce, and are now difficult to obtain. Her tales about lying, called "Lying in all its branches," are very true to nature, and when once read are not easily forgotten.

LEAFLET L.—Carnival of St. Valentine.

ONLY those who have lived in the quaint old city of Norwich, and seen the performance themselves, can form any idea of the Carnival that is kept on St. Valentine's Day.

For a week beforehand, the shops are crowded with papas, mammas, aunts, uncles, and cousins; all bent on buying something in secret, and carrying it home, hidden up under their coats or cloaks, without anyone being the wiser. Thus, fancy articles and all manner of things are smuggled into the houses, then tied up in parcels, perhaps in a dozen papers or more, and having a string as long as a kite's tail.

As soon as it is quite dusk, St. Valentine begins his gambols—bells and door knockers seem to go mad, and yet not a soul is to be seen at the doors; for the game is carried on, to all intents and purposes, by St. Valentine himself, or else by some of the inhabitants of the spirit-world.

The first such fourteenth of February we were at Miss Larke's, and Ann was indeed in a state of excitement; standing behind the front door to answer the knocker, and yet not able to see, or to catch anybody.

We had been in the place so short a time, that of course we laughed at the idea of having any valentines, and it was a sort of triumph to Ann to bring up to our drawing-room, first one thing and then another, and set them before us with the assurance, that we were "quite wrong," and that we saw now she was "quite right."

The most amusing valentine that came, was for Elizabeth, and touched upon her weak point,—"*a house.*"

It was a house made of paste-board, and had a little woman in one doorway, and a man in the other; and when the weather was fine, or going to be fine, out came the woman; but when it was going to rain, she went in, and out came the man.

The verses that accompanied this valentine, betrayed the sender to be no other than Mrs. Downes. The many advantages of such a house were duly set forth, and best of all, the impossibility of quarrelling with her husband, for when he is out she is in, and when she is in he is out.

A great many tricks are played by St. Valentine. One gentleman we knew, had first a brick, and then a stone, and then a pair of his own old slippers come tied up, made into large parcels, until he at last lost his patience, and said the house-keeper might keep, for herself, the very next of his presents; she kept him to his word, and took in for her own use, a beautiful silver tea-pot.

The excitement, as well as the amusement of that day, suggested the following legend of St. Valentine's first appearance in the city of Norwich; and as it is not very long, I take the liberty of inserting it.

The Child's Legend of St. Valentine.

"IT happened one afternoon—a long, long time ago, in the month of February, when the birds were just thinking about building their nests, and the snowdrops and the crocuses were beginning to lift their heads above the ground—it happened one afternoon that two children, a little boy and a little girl, were trudging along the footpath over Mousehold Heath.

Now whoever knows anything of Norwich, that quaint old city, with its narrow streets, and its tall peaked houses, knows also that Mousehold is a large breezy common, lying close beside it. A famous place it is for pic-nics in the summer-time, and for little boys and girls to ramble up and down, and gather heath and wild flowers.

But in that month of February there were no wild flowers to be seen, though there might be by and by. The violets had not opened their eyes; the wild bee lay safe in her nest, too cunning to venture out; and the dormouse had not finished his nap in his house by the side of the hill. They knew very well that the winter did not mean to go yet, though he had taken up his mantle of snow from Mousehold. The east wind was still having it all his own way, and every morning he scattered the hoar-frost, like pearls, upon the grass.

But the little boy and girl did not mind the east wind the least bit in the world. Indeed, to see how they scampered about, and what fun they had on that lonely heath, you would have thought they did not know what either cold or fear meant. As for the cold, they were well defended from it—the boy with his fur coat buttoned up to the chin, and the girl with her comfortable pelisse and sealskin bonnet. And as for fear, to be sure the little girl glanced every now and then over her shoulder, at the shadows of evening that kept creeping on, nearer and nearer; but she would have been ashamed to confess she was afraid, particularly to her brother, who was going to be a soldier, and was as bold as a lion. Still she could not help showing some sign of fear, for there certainly was a man, or something that looked like a man, following them in the distance. It was very odd indeed what happened to this man; for sometimes he would disappear and she could not see him at all, but the next minute when she turned round to look, there he was, quite close up, and his merry blue eyes peeping over her shoulder. Then Edith, for that was the name of the little girl, crept closer to her brother, and whispered to him, "O Horace! how much longer will it be before we get home?"

"Why surely you are not going to give up yet?" said Horace, striding along at a fine rate; "I could walk a dozen miles further and not be tired."

"But I am a little girl, and little girls cannot walk so far as boys. I begin now to wish we had gone home in grandmamma's coach," and she cast a timid glance over her shoulder.

"I should not have enjoyed it half so much as walking," cried Horace; "I see no fun at all in being shut up in a coach. Here, give me the gingerbread to carry; we shall soon be home now."

"I should like a piece of gingerbread very much, if I dare stay to eat it," said Edith, as her brother tied a string to the bag and slung it over his shoulder; "but," added she, sinking her voice to a whisper, "I am so afraid of that man behind us."

"What man?" cried Horace; "I am not afraid of any man."

"But he gets so very near sometimes, and then he seems such a long way off," continued Edith, quaking with fear, "and now, I believe he will catch us!"

"Never mind if he does, I shall like it all the better, there will be someone for us to talk to. Now then, where is the man?" and Horace made a dead stop and turned round to look.

By this time, the figure that had so frightened poor Edith was come to within a few yards' distance. He was a beggar, no doubt, by his ragged clothes, for his jacket was in slits, and his hat so battered and worn, he must have had it a great many years. But when you looked in his face, it was not at all disagreeable; he was quite young, and his eyes were so blue, and had such an expression of fun and mischief, that Edith wondered how she could ever have been afraid of him.

"Good morrow to you, my little lady and gentleman," said he, very politely, and raising his battered old hat, with the air of one, who, let him be dressed as he may, knows how to behave himself.

"Good evening, sir," replied Horace, making him a bow in return—for Horace was a little gentleman, every inch of him.

"You are out rather late to-night," continued the stranger, as they all three began to walk on together.

"Yes, we are," returned Horace; "we have been spending the day with grandmamma, who lives upon the Heath, and uncle Harold said we might walk home if we liked; and I did like, and so did Edith, but we stayed to play, and then it came on dusk. I hope uncle will not be angry," added Horace, as if he were not much afraid.

"You are a great deal better off than I am," said the stranger; "I have no uncle Harold, and no nice home to go to."

"No home! and where do you mean to sleep?" cried Edith, in astonishment.

"Just where I can find a place to shelter me, and a roof of any kind over my head," replied the stranger.

"But you will want more than a roof such a night as this," said Horace, thoughtfully.

"O yes," cried Edith, as the bright picture of her own comfortable home rose up before her; "you will want a good blazing fire to warm yourself, and something to eat and drink, and a bed to sleep in—O yes! you will want a great many things besides a roof."

"So you think, my pretty little lady; but for a poor beggar-man like me, a handful of straw in a hovel is quite as much as I can expect."

"Straw in a hovel!" exclaimed Edith, in a tone of horror.

"Yes, but farmer Grynde will not let me sleep in his hovel any longer: I do not so much mind, for there were holes in the roof that let in all the rain and snow. But it is too sharp a night to sleep on the Heath, so I must hunt about for a place to lay my head in."

"How cruel of farmer Grynde!" cried Edith. "Do, Horace, let us run back and ask him to allow the poor man to sleep in his hovel again, I dare say he would, uncle Harold knows him quite well."

"I can think of a better plan than that," said Horace, who had been trudging on without speaking a word. "Do you know, Edith, that great empty room in the garret, where we go and play sometimes when it rains, and we cannot run in the garden?——"

"O yes! yes! to be sure I do," interrupted Edith, who jumped to a conclusion in a moment, "to be sure I do—the poor beggar-man can sleep there, for there are no holes in the roof, and he can sit and warm himself beside the kitchen fire, and we can give him plenty to eat and drink. O, do let us make haste; how I wish we were at home!"

"You are capital little people," said the stranger, with a twinkle in his eye; "but perhaps your papa will not like you to bring home a ragged beggar-man like me. He would not think it respectable, and he might be afraid I should steal something."

"We have not a papa," said Edith; "we have only uncle Harold, who lives in that great house, with a garden that goes down to the river, and the peacocks that stand one on each side of the gate."

"And he is Mayor of the city, and rides in his coach," said Horace, rather proudly.

"But he will be very glad to see you, I am sure," said Edith, turning her bright merry face to the stranger; "he tells us we ought to do good to some one every day of our lives."

"And we shall be doing good to you, shall we not?" asked Horace, quickening his pace, for he was eager to give the poor man something to eat, and see him warming himself at the fire.

"O yes, a great deal of good! I have not had anything to eat since yesterday morning."

"Have not you? O, Horace, give him some gingerbread," cried Edith, pulling at the bag that hung from her brother's shoulder. "It is quite our own, do eat some of it," said she to the beggar; "grandmamma gave it to us to take home and make a feast with. We always make a feast when we have a holiday."

"But if I eat up your gingerbread, there will be nothing for you to make a feast of," said the beggar.

"Never mind, we can easily go without it, can't we, Horace? Poor man! I am so sorry you have had nothing to eat since yesterday morning!" But the poor man, for such he seemed to be, did not stay to argue the matter; he began to eat up the gingerbread as if he liked it amazingly, and did not stop until every bit was gone, and the bag was quite empty.

Horace, it must be confessed, looked rather blank at this sudden disappearance of the feast that was to be. He was not a greedy boy, but he dearly loved gingerbread, and had not reckoned on the beggar-man having such a ravenous appetite.

"There! that has done me good!" said the stranger, throwing away the empty bag; "and now we shall see what else you have in store for me."

"I have one thing more in store for you," said Edith, laughing, and feeling in her pocket—"see, here is a silver penny, and Horace has one just like it; uncle Harold gave them to us on his birth-day, and we are saving them to buy something with at the fair. I will give you mine, and so will Horace. You will like to give this poor man your silver penny, will you not, Horace?" But to judge from the expression of Horace's face, he did not quite like to give the poor man his silver penny—that is, not all in a minute. He was not so impulsive as his sister, and he wanted to buy a new top at the fair. But his heart was full as warm and generous as Edith's, and it only wanted for him to look again at the beggar-man's ragged jacket, and battered old hat, to bring the silver penny out of his pocket.

The stranger took the silver pennies as readily as he had done the gingerbread, and chinked them together in his hand, as if he enjoyed the sound of so much money. As he did so, he fixed his clear blue eyes upon the children with such a merry look, that they could not keep from laughing. In fact, they felt so light-hearted that they began to dance and sing, although they were getting tired, and it was freezing very sharp.

There was another wonderful thing about this beggar-man. He had a great deal of hair that hung curling on each side of his face. Every now and then, when the moon came from behind a cloud, these curly locks shone like gold; his ragged clothes would seem to be gone, and he had on a splendid mantle that glittered as if it were covered with precious stones. But it must have been the reflection of the moon upon the grass; for the next minute, there he was, with his jacket all in slits, and his battered old hat just the same as ever.

And now they left the Heath behind, and came to one of the great gates that led into the city. The porter knew the children very well, and let them pass in a minute, though the gate had been shut at sunset. But he did not like the looks of the beggar-man at all, and he told him to stand back, for it was against the law to let him in at that time of night.

"O, but we know him! we know him!" cried Edith and Horace in a breath, and forgetting how short a time the acquaintance had lasted: "he is coming to sleep at our house, and uncle Harold will be very angry indeed if you do not let him through." The name of uncle Harold had some effect, certainly; but the porter was of a quarrelsome disposition, and was going to argue with the beggar-man through a little loophole in the gate. How long the argument would have lasted it is difficult to say, if the porter had not found out, at the end of his first speech, that the beggar-man was gone.

"Ah, that is right," said he, taking a sip at a flask that hung from his girdle; "I thought I was a match for that beggar-man."

But he was mistaken: he had not been a match for that beggar-man, who, somehow or other, had got through the gate, though it was barred and bolted, and was now going over the bridge, with Edith on one side of him, and Horace on the other.

How very late it was! The stars were beginning to peep out of the clear frosty sky, and the moon shone forth in all her glory. This helped them to find their way, for there were no gas-lights then—no one ever thought of such a thing; but here and there you saw a lantern suspended by a rope across the street, or met a link-boy running before his master with a torch in his hand. It was a welcome sight when the great house in the garden was seen close by, and the peacocks cut out of box-tree that stood one on each side of the gate.

The moment the children reached home, Edith ran straight into the room where her uncle was sitting. "O, Uncle Harold!" cried she, "here is a poor beggar-man who has nothing to eat, and nowhere to sleep, and we have brought him home with us, and we want to know whether he may sleep in the empty room upstairs, and whether he may warm himself at the kitchen fire, and whether we may give him something to eat and drink, and whether—" and here Edith stopped, quite out of breath and unable to say a word more.

Uncle Harold was just going to have his supper—for people had supper early then. As for tea, it had not come into fashion, nor tobacco either, which, between ourselves, was a very good thing. Nothing was thought of in those days but good English ale, and a tankard of ale covered with foam stood by his side. Then as to eatables: it would sound more like a dinner than a supper if I were to tell you what stood upon the table. There was cold turkey and venison pasty at one end, and a round of beef, like a tower, at the other. Then there were cakes of barley bread on a wooden platter, and three wooden platters were set ready for uncle Harold and the children to eat on.

"Poor man! where child?" asked uncle Harold, who was taken rather by surprise.

"He is outside the door, uncle," cried Edith, impetuously; "he was out on the common with nothing to eat and nowhere to go, and we could not help bringing him home with us, could we, uncle? we could not leave him there all by himself, to die of cold, could we, uncle?"—and Edith contrived to climb on the arm of her uncle's chair, and from thence into his arms,—"Could we, uncle?" repeated she, putting her little cold face against his.

Uncle Harold did not say a word. He put Edith aside, and taking his knife, he sharpened it like a razor, and began steadily to cut slice after slice of the beef and to lay it on the platter before him, till he had heaped enough on it, you would have thought, to satisfy a dozen beggars. Then, giving it to Edith, "Here!" said he, "take this to the poor man, and let him sit by the fire and eat it."

The beggar-man stood by the kitchen fire and warmed himself. The huge logs blazed upon the open hearth, and as he basked in their ruddy light he looked more handsome than ever. He made quite a sensation in the kitchen, in spite of his rags, and his being a beggar. Peggy, the old housekeeper, who sat spinning in the corner, could not keep her eyes off him; and David, the coachman, who was as fat and lazy as his own horses, woke up from his nap, and did not go to sleep any more for the whole of the evening.

As for the children, they were in high glee, and ran in and out of the kitchen, as Peggy said, like dogs in a fair. To see the poor man warm himself,—to see him eat the slices of beef and drink the spiced ale that Peggy had prepared for him, and then to wonder what uncle Harold would do with him, and whether he would let him sleep in the empty room upstairs. All these things kept them in a state of excitement, and made Edith forget her long cold walk, and Horace that his silver penny was gone and that his gingerbread was all eaten up.

The beggar, meantime, was enjoying himself as much as if he had been a king. He was making the most of his good fortune as he had done of the gingerbread, and ate so ravenously that his platter was soon empty. Edith carried it back to the parlour, and uncle Harold sharpened his knife and heaped it up again.

It was good fun for Edith to carry the platter backwards and forwards, and she and Horace took it in turns. But really there seemed no end to the beggar-man's appetite, and the round of beef disappeared as if by magic. Uncle Harold laughed, and heaped the platter higher than ever: it was not a little that would tire out his hospitality, and he liked to have people enjoy themselves, be they who they might.

At length even the beggar-man was satisfied, and then he pushed away his platter and began to talk.

Peggy, who was very inquisitive, asked him his name and where he came from. And he told her, with a twinkle in his eye, that his name was Valentine, and that he came out of the country. He had heard a great deal about the famous city of Norwich, and he wanted very much to see it.

As he spoke, a blaze up of the firelight made his hair shine like gold, and his jacket look like a mantle of precious stones, just as Edith had seen it on the common. But then the fire went down, and there the beggar-man stood, with his jacket in slits, and his battered old hat on the floor beside him.

It was high time for the children to go to bed, but they could not possibly do it till they had peeped into the kitchen, to take a last look at the beggar-man; and to see David go upstairs, with a lantern in one hand, and a bundle of straw in the other, to make up his bed in the attic.

How delightful it was to think that the poor man would not have to sleep on Mousehold Heath, or in farmer Grynde's hovel, that had holes in the roof! Edith and Horace went off to bed with their hearts full of joy, even to overflowing, It was the sweetest of all joys, that of having made a fellow-creature happy!

And in truth, Master Valentine, considering the manner in which fortune had treated him, was very happy indeed. He began to talk, and laugh, and make such fun in the kitchen, that nothing could be like it. He chucked Peggy under the chin, danced the hornpipe on the great hearthstone, told funny stories that made David hold his sides for laughing, and was pronounced to be the very best company that ever came into the house.

What a merry rollicking fellow he was, with his twinkling blue eyes, and his mouth that seemed as if it could not keep from laughing! No one would have thought he was a poor beggar-man, and had just had a narrow escape of making his bed among the furze on Mousehold Heath. But this delightful evening was brought to a close, by uncle Harold ringing his bell, and desiring David to show the beggar-man into the attic, and be sure to bolt the door, and take away the candle. He could not think what they meant by making such an uproar, and wondered what it was all about. "La! bless you, Sir!" replied David, "it's only Valentine,—he's so funny!"

David did as he was bid, showed Valentine into the attic, bolted the door, and took away the candle. But when his master was gone to bed, and there was no one to see him, a strange feeling of curiosity made him creep up to the attic and peep through a crack in the door. How very odd it was! David felt terribly frightened: he had taken away the candle, he was sure, and yet, what was the meaning of that wonderful light that streamed through every crevice? The attic was illuminated as if it had been a palace, and—oh, wonder of wonders!—David held his breath as he took another look. What was the meaning of Valentine, not a beggar-man asleep on a bundle of straw, but a beautiful youth, dressed in a mantle of precious stones that shone like little stars? That was where the light came from. And his hair was like waves of gold; and his eyes, oh how they sparkled, and their blue was like the blue of heaven! And the attic was full of the most beautiful toys you can possibly imagine. It was as if all the shops in Norwich had poured out their contents at his feet. There were dolls, and work-boxes, and story-books, and puzzles, and skipping-ropes, and rocking-horses, and hoops, and bats and balls, and tops, and nine-pins, and I should be out of breath if I were to tell you half the things that lay piled upon the straw; and what was more extraordinary still, every toy had a name upon it, and David could read the words, "HORACE," and "EDITH," in large letters.

"Why, good gracious!" cried he, his surprise reaching its height, "if there is not one for me!" But no sooner had he spoken than everything disappeared. In a moment the light went out, and the toys were all gone. Valentine, with his mantle of precious stones, and his hair like waves of gold, had vanished, and the beggar-man lay sleeping on the straw as if nothing had happened.

David ran downstairs quicker than ever he had done before in his life, and rushed into uncle Harold's room to tell him what a wonderful sight he had seen. Uncle Harold was fast asleep, and it took some time to wake him. But when he was awake,

he only laughed, and did not believe a word about it. He told David to go to bed, for he saw very well how it was,—he had had a little too much ale, and it had got into his head. It was of no use trying to convince uncle Harold: he was very obstinate, and would never believe anything that was not quite matter of fact. So David went off in high dudgeon, very angry at not being believed, and vexed that all the beautiful things he had seen should have vanished away, without his getting one of them.

The next morning, the first thing, David went to the attic, unbolted the door, and looked all round for Valentine. But no Valentine was there!—how he had got out was a mystery, but out he certainly was. David hunted and poked among the straw, hoping to find that some of the toys had been left behind. But there was not a single trace of them, and, disappointed beyond measure, he went to search the premises through, hoping to discover where the wonderful beggar had hidden himself. But the beggar had not hidden himself anywhere. He was gone, vanished away, and no doubt had taken his beautiful toys with him. By and by, Peggy came down, rather brisker than usual, and the first question was—"Where is Valentine?" And uncle Harold rang his bell, and asked, "Where is Valentine?" And Edith and Horace, the minute they were dressed, ran down stairs, crying out, "Where is Valentine?"

Ah! where is Valentine indeed! David could not tell: he had searched every hole and corner, but Valentine was never seen again.

It was a very melancholy day for everybody. Uncle Harold was sorry the poor beggar was gone, and was haunted by the fear that he might lose his way, and die of cold and hunger, Edith and Horace were inconsolable. They had been planning to buy him some new clothes, and to get uncle Harold to build him a house, and let him live in it the rest of his life as happy as a prince. There was no end to the grand things they intended to do for Valentine. But, alas! Valentine was gone, and there was no one now to do good to, or to make happy.

But dull days sometimes brighten up, and end merrily after all; and so it was with this fourteenth day of February. Just as it was getting dusk, every one was made to jump by a loud knocking at the door—so loud indeed, that Peggy, who was rather cross, wondered, as she went to open it, that it did not break it down. And it did improve her temper to find that nobody was there: only a great parcel was flung against her, into the hall. What could it be? There was no need to wonder long. Any one could see in a minute, that it was a wax doll, with blue eyes and curly hair, and that it had the name of "Edith," in large letters, written upon it.

Peggy had not got to the parlour door before there came another knock—and this time it was a great thing, she could not imagine what. But David cried out that he had seen it before, that it was a rocking-horse for Horace; and sure enough, the name of Horace was written on it. And then, bang away at the door! and this time it was a paper bag full of gingerbread. And then, knock, knock! Oh the door was gone mad! In came a purse full of silver pennies! And again, the door! the door! run, David, run! This time it was a fur cloak for uncle Harold, and a new gown for Peggy. And at it again—bang! bang! more furious than ever; and this time it was a woollen comforter for David. And then, knock! knock! one had need stand with the door in one's hand; and this time it was a parcel of sugar plums and a bag of nuts. Who can bring them? Not a human being is visible! The knocker goes of its own accord! hark, how it thunders away! And here are nine-pins for Horace, and a story book for Edith, and uncle Harold is violently excited, and Horace and Edith dance about, and scream for joy, and scamper backwards and forwards to the door, like wild things. There never was such a night known before! And in all Norwich there never was such a night known before! The whole city was in a tumult; the knocker of every door worked away like mad. People rushed into the streets, and stared about them in bewilderment, but they could not see anybody: not a child, from one end of the city to the other, but had such beautiful presents, they made its heart leap for joy. In they poured in one continued stream; knock, knock! bang, bang! was ever any thing like it? Oh, the dolls with curly hair! Oh, the puzzles, the work-boxes, the story books, the bats and balls, the tops, the nine-pins, the rocking-horses! All the shops in Norwich must have emptied themselves into the streets that night! And the tricks, and the mischief, and the fun—the presents that lay close

under your nose, and were snatched away before you could reach them; the great parcels that looked so big and heavy, and were filled with nothing but sawdust; the witty verses, and hundred and one odd things that came in as well; the recipes that told you so gravely how to make pancakes of paper, and plum puddings of straw—that turkeys were to be stuffed with snow, and basted with moonshine, and that roast beef must be eaten with sugar plums! And the clamour of voices, and the shouts of laughter, and the running, and the scrambling, and the jostling! The streets filled with men, women, and children, all in a whirl of excitement! Old men as grave as judges scampering after parcels that seem to run as fast as they do! How they stumble about on the stones! And wigs fall off, and bald heads glisten in the moonlight—and spinning-wheels stand still, for there is no one to turn them—even Granny is out with the rest, and babies lie screaming in their cradles, and doubling their little fists, but there is no one to take them up—and the pot on the fire boils over and over till it has quite spent itself, and the pastry in the oven is burnt to a cinder. And on, on, keep the knockers at the doors—and on, on, keep the presents and the fun! Hurrah! hurrah! what a merry night it is!

But better things happened than these. Whatever spirit it was that presided that night, it was a good and kind one. Its gifts dropped into many an abode of sorrow and want. Many a poor shivering wretch rejoiced in the possession of a rug to cover him and keep out the cold---many a hearth burned brighter—many a table was better spread—many a ragged child came out next day, warmer and better clad— and many a widow's heart was made to sing for joy. And people said that every now and then they caught a glimpse of something glancing by them in the dark, of a glittering mantle, and the waving of some locks of gold: it was but a moment, and then it was gone, and nothing was to be seen but the houses with their peaked roofs, and a beggar-man all in rags making off in the distance.

It could be no one but Valentine! so Edith and Horace declared, and so everybody has ever since believed. It could be no one but Valentine! he loved the kind old city where they treated him so well—and he loves it still. Every year, on the self-same day, just as it is getting dusk, he comes loaded with his presents to pay it a visit. Then the same game goes on. Then the knockers work away like mad, and the bells never give over ringing a minute. Then people run to the doors and stare about them —but nobody is to be seen. Then papas and mammas, aunts, uncles, and cousins, are in a whirl of excitement. Then all the shops in Norwich pour their contents into the streets, and tricks are played, and parcels hop about as if by magic, and children rush backwards and forwards like wild things. And, better still, the same kindly spirit drops its gifts into the dwellings of the poor and sorrowful. The hearth burns brighter —the table is better spread—the abode of misery is cheered up—and the lonely and desolate are made happy. Then each generous feeling is called forth, and love and good-will walk abroad, and diffuse themselves through every heart. Then, according to the Legend, those who watch may catch a glimpse of something glancing by them in the dark, of the glittering mantle and the locks of gold. But when they look again it is gone, and nothing remains but the houses with their peaked roofs, and a beggar-man all in rags making off in the distance. Hark! hark! the door! the door! Who can it be but Valentine?"

Our interview with Mr. Jarrold, and his proposal for a book, to be one of a series, called the "Observing Eye," gave quite an impetus to our work, and we soon ran through a few chapters about plants.

It was very easy to do, for I had the botanical knowledge at my finger ends; and Elizabeth had such fluency in writing that the sentences seemed to flow from her pen as readily as the pearls and diamonds drop from the mouth of the fairy, in the fairy tale.

Mr. Jarrold was thoroughly in earnest over his "Observing Eye" series, and did not keep us waiting many days; but came in, just when every chair in the room had an open book upon it. However, we found him a seat, and he said, looking round, he thought we were very busy,

but he had not forgotten us, and had thought of a title that would just suit us—"Plants of Land and Water."

We were very pleased with it, and complimented him on his skill; and then, I brought out a copy of the "Flora of Leicestershire," and told him what pains we had bestowed upon it, and how we had searched, again and again, through Sir Thomas Browne's "Religio Medica," for information and for pious sentences to insert as mottoes; and said we must do the same thing again for the "Plant Book."

We knew that Sir Thomas Browne had in his day, a house in Norwich, and that his botanical garden had been called the "Paradise of Plants," and I thought his weakness for witches gave a zest to his works, and made them all the more interesting.

Mr. Jarrold, before he took his leave, invited us to come over to Thorpe, where he resided, and spend an evening with him; which we gladly agreed to do provided he had no party to meet us.

The hamlet of Thorpe lay quite at the other end of the city, and at such a distance from St. Giles', that the visit involved a fly there, and a fly back.

It was a charming place, and Mr. Jarrold's house stood on such high ground, that when we turned round and looked at the city in the distance, with all its lamps lighted, it was more like a giant caterpillar than anything else, with its back rising into hillocks and falling into hollows.

Mrs. Jarrold received us very politely, and presided at the tea-table, with her two little girls.

After tea, we went into the drawing-room, that was a fine room, and panelled with cedar; but we soon came back to the best fire, and the comfortable sofa drawn up to it.

And then, Mr. Jarrold began to talk about books of Natural History, and how much good they were calculated to do.—Bishop Stanley's two volumes on birds, were full of interest, and would lead many on to the study of ornithology.

The Bishop had been very much beloved, and had done more, he said, than any man in Norwich, to break down the divisions of caste; and to draw the several religious bodies into harmony with each other. He was always glad of the opportunity, which the Bible Society afforded him of meeting the dissenting ministers, and received them cordially at his table, and conversed with them as freely as with his own clergy.

Norwich had been rather famous for peace-making Bishops,—to wit, Bishop Hall, who desired to come into the church like "Noah's dove, bringing the olive branch with him."

But he had fallen on evil days, and was most cruelly treated, and sent to the Tower, with other good Bishops, in the days of King James I.; and such was the state of the nation, that these pious men had to be taken down the Thames in the dark, lest the mob should tear them in pieces.

It is hardly possible to look back without a shudder upon those troublous times; when the Cathedral of Norwich was desecrated, and everything sacred dragged in the mire.

Here is the Bishop's own account of the scene before him,—"What work was here! What beating down of walls—what tearing up of monuments—what pulling down of seats—what wresting out of irons, and brass, from the windows and the graves—what demolishing of curious stone-work—what tooting and piping upon the destroyed organ pipes! And what a hideous triumph on the market day, when in a profane procession, all the organ pipes, vestments, copes, surplices, service books, and singing books, were carried to the fire and burnt in the public market-place; a lewd wretch walking first, dressed in a cope, and with a service book in his hand, imitating in impious scorn, the tune and the words of the Litany!"

In spite of Bishop Hall's courage and meekness, he was not allowed to remain in the Palace, or continue in his office, but was rudely driven out of house and home, and obliged to take refuge in a cottage at Higham, where he lived in retirement and pious meditation to the end of his days.

After spending a very pleasant evening at Mr. Jarrold's, we returned home about nine o'clock, and as we drove through the city, we looked out upon it, with renewed interest, and thought of the many exciting scenes that had been witnessed there.

LEAFLET LI.—Dr. Lindley.

WE had by this time, made several valuable acquaintances, and received a great many invitations.

Among others, one from Mrs. Barwell in Surrey Street, who told us she was a sister of Mrs. Redgrave of Kensington, (wife of the R.A.) and that her sister had written to her, to come and see us.

Miss Barwell, her daughter, had a charming voice, and was hesitating about coming out as a public singer; but Jenny Lind discouraged the idea, and it was given up.

On the evening we spent at Mrs. Barwell's, her large rooms were crowded; and the drawing-room presented the appearance of a music hall, and held as many people. The chairs were set in rows, one behind the other, and a programme of the evening's performance on delicate pink paper with a border of lace, was handed to each one of the company, and we had music to our heart's content, both vocal and instrumental. Miss Martineau, a relative, and I believe the last of the family of Harriet Martineau, was there, quite an elderly lady, in a good sized cap, tied under her chin.

Introductions were not in vogue, as the guests were well acquainted with each other; but as we were strangers, we had to find out for ourselves who the people were.

Mr. Field, (who was Mayor the following year) and his wife were there; he lived in the next house, and very soon we were invited to a party there.

At Mr. Field's, we were very glad to meet the Rev. Kirby Trimmer, grandson of Mrs. Trimmer, authoress of the immortal "Robins."

In our childhood, this was one of our favourite books. and it has gone through a great many editions.

The young robins, Dicksy, Pecksy, and Flapsy, are taught good ways, and good manners, by their parents, the father and mother robins; and children, as well as little robins, may learn many wise lessons, and wise saws, for nursery use.

Mr. Trimmer was a confirmed bachelor, a very amusing man; and told us some laughable anecdotes.

He gravely warned us against standing to look in at the shop windows; and said he had been cured long ago, by having stood some few minutes before a jeweller's, looking at his wares, and trying to find a seal. "And then" said Mr. Trimmer, with indignation, "only think of the impertinence of the shopman, when I went inside, he told me he could see what I was looking for; and at the same moment brought out, and set before me, a tray of wedding rings!"

Mr. Field had taken to himself a second wife, but during the term of his being a widower, Miss Lindley, sister to Dr. Lindley, the botanist, had kept his house, and since then had retired into a tiny cottage, where we paid her a visit.

It was very pretty, because she had it furnished with articles, small enough to fit her rooms, and all made of bamboo.

After our first visit, I was rather shy at going again, for she always had her window wide open, let the weather be what it might; and told us, she followed the example of Lindley Murray, who thought his life depended on an open window and a good fire.

Dr. Lindley was a Norwich man, and the son, I believe, of a gardener. In the course of the summer, he and his family, consisting of his wife and daughter, and his son with a young lady to whom he was engaged, took a furnished house for a month, within three or four miles of Norwich.

It was quite in the country, and Elizabeth and I were invited to spend a day there. We took a fly and went, but unfortunately the weather was most provoking. All out-door sports were in readiness for us, the archery ground was set,—the boat upon the lake waited for its occupants, —but the rain fell so heavily, and so persistently that it was impossible to venture out.

We had just finished Mr. Jarrold's book about plants, and it was well for us, we had, for the great doctor's influence was not calculated to encourage any work except, like his own, of the most scientific kind.

So without much sympathy we were shut up together all day, and played at spilikins,—a game unknown to us before; but the whole party sat round the table, and with pins for weapons, threw about little bits of wood, like very fine matches.

I suppose there was no "elective affinity" between the great doctor and ourselves; for we felt constrained, and not at our ease in his presence; but dwelt with pleasure on the thought of the agreeable letter we received from Sir William Hooker, when the "Flora of Leicestershire" came out; and of the sympathy he had expressed when any local effort was made to interest the public in the study of plants, or to make that study popular.

We had carefully looked through Dr. Lindley's valuable work "The Vegetable Kingdom," and were indebted to it, for the information about the Red Sea taking its name from a weed (one of the algæ) of a deep red colour, that extends and dyes the water for more than two hundred miles, when it ceases, and the water becomes as blue as before.

This information we inserted in Mr. Jarrold's volume of the "Observing Eye," and were glad to know that he was so well satisfied with what we had done for him, as already to have bespoken another volume, for the same series, but on a different subject,—"Caterpillars, Butterflies and Moths."

And I might add, that our rich uncle, Mr. William Kirby of Stamford Hill, was one of our patrons, and used to order five-and-twenty copies of any book of ours as soon as it was out, and give them away, as prizes or presents to the children in the London Orphan Asylum.

LEAFLET LII.—General Windham's Ovation.

WE remained more than three years with Miss Larke, in a state of happy security. And all the time, her school kept on increasing and she became more and more prosperous.

She was always ready to accommodate us, and our being with her did not prevent us from having as much company as we liked.

Mrs. Kirby who had been my brother's pretty bride, and was still as young and blooming as a peach, came up and stayed a fortnight with us, and was delighted with the quaint old city and with the reception she received.

She was very much admired, and Dr. Buck, as he took a turn or two with us, up and down the nave of the Cathedral, enquired confidentially, where we found so many sweet looking girls? For no one believed her to be a married woman.

Miss Larke's niece, Miss Cooke, had a brother an active young man, and he was always happy to escort us to any of the concerts, or public entertainments, when we wanted him, and he seemed quite *au fait* of St. Andrews Hall, and was able to get seats or tickets, or to do anything for us we required.

The very first evening of Mrs. Kirby's arrival, she and Elizabeth were carried off by Mr. Cooke, to one of the concerts at the Hall, and Mrs. Kirby declared the sight of the audience was so dazzling, that it quite equalled the sound of the music.

I never ventured there more than once, as the choruses of so many voices were most over-powering, and when they rose and began to sing they drove me out.

Going into company so much as we did, we felt it incumbent on us to have a few parties in return. And on one occasion, when we were expecting a goodly number of ladies and gentlemen, we received by the morning post, a note from our cousin John to say that he was intending to come and see us, and hoping we should be able to accommodate him.

About three o'clock on the same afternoon, Ann came knocking at our drawing-room door, to say, a young gentleman had arrived, and she was sure, from the sound of his voice, that he must be a relation of ours. Of course, it was our cousin John.

And it was rather a fortunate moment for him, as he had the opportunity of seeing and making himself agreeable to all our guests.

Of course there was some bantering and quizzing, as to the purport of his visit; but as we did not seem in any excitement over it, and as nothing came of it, there was no food for fancy, and it soon passed away.

It never rains but it pours, and so we had more visitors still from our native town of Leicester.

These were our old and valued friends, Mr. and Mrs. Palmer; and as the season was very hot we went over to Yarmouth and met them there.

It happened to be just after the Rugeley poisoning case, that had been so exciting to the public, and the criminal Palmer, had undergone the last penalty of the law.

Our friend, Mr. Palmer, had lost his mother, so he and his wife were in deep mourning; that circumstance and the name upon their trunks, roused the curiosity of the cabman, and he beckoned me aside, to ask with baited breath, "if that lady and gentleman came from Rugeley, and were any relation to——."

No wonder the cabman faltered, for the criminal was notorious from one end of the country to the other.

The love of money is, as we know, the root of all evil, and it was this, that urged him on to crime. There was no excuse on the score of ignorance, for he was a surgeon, and an educated man; but he was fond of the turf, and he and a friend named Cook, had racing transactions together. Mr. Cook's horses were winners at more races than one and

filled his pockets with money. Here was the temptation; for the other thought by putting his friend out of the world, he could appropriate the money, and relieve himself from debt.

The evidence was entirely circumstantial, but Providence brought to light, first one thing and then another of a suspicious character, until the Jury had no choice, and returned the verdict "Guilty."

The weather was bright and sunny, and Yarmouth as gay as possible. On the first day of our friends arrival, Mr. Palmer declared his intention of "running over," as he styled it, to Lowestoft, to see some cousins; saying as he went, that there was plenty of time, and he should be back to dinner.

But dinner-time came, and tea-time came; and we waited and expected him by every train, and still he did not come.

At last he returned, very much exhausted, and as black as if he had been up the chimney.

On his arrival at Lowestoft, he found his cousins just starting off on a pic-nic, and had joined their party.

This drove him too late at night for any train save a coal train, and as there was no alternative, he rode back by that; and we saw what the consequences were.

The great heat suggested to us a visit to Gorlestone Pier,—a place always cold and windy, even in the most sultry weather.

We knew that an omnibus went backwards and forwards, for the accommodation of the visitors, but could not induce Mr. Palmer to enquire the time of starting, so when we had walked to the Market Place (a full mile), in the heat of the sun, there stood the vehicle with no horses attached and for what we knew, it might stand there a couple of hours longer. However that might be, we preferred to get inside and take our chance as to the waiting.

As soon as we were safe in, Mr. Palmer darted off, and was lost to sight. By and bye we became (woman-like) anxious to know what had become of him, and his wife was haunted by the dread of our having to go without him.

"But all's well that ends well," and we found ourselves safe and sound on Gorlestone Pier. The wind was both high and cold; so *high* that we could hardly stand upon our feet; and so *cold* that we did not let the omnibus go without us; but at the end of a quarter-of-an-hour were ready to return.

As the sea keeps receding more and more every year, from the shore at Yarmouth, it has been supposed possible that terraces of houses may be built at Gorlestone, for the benefit of the visitors, and that it may even become a rival of its neighbour Yarmouth. But the fierce wind must, in that case be coaxed into a better humour, and bound over to keep the peace.

Our next excursion was to Burgh, to a Water-Frolic, that takes place every summer, at the juncture of the rivers Yar and Waverley.

The day was brilliant, and the scene before us, was most animated and gay. Steamers had brought up their living freights from Yarmouth, and were moored to the banks, while the river itself was well-nigh covered with pleasure boats, and pleasure seekers.

There were boat-races, when every now and then a shot was fired to give notice of the start; but the principal amusement of the day seemed to be, for the lads to be making love to their pretty young lasses.

On our return to Norwich, we were just in time to witness the ovation bestowed upon General Windham, by his fellow-citizens; for he was a native of Norwich, and had come back from the Crimean War, covered with glory. He distinguished himself on the field of Inkerman, but it was at the final assault of the Great Redan that he achieved the distinction of a *hero*.

On his entrance into Norwich he was received in the most enthusiastic manner; a laudatory address was presented to him by the Mayor and Town Council; and in the evening a grand banquet was given to as many as seven hundred guests.

Our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Palmer, with Elizabeth and a cousin of theirs, drove in a carriage, to view the procession on its entrance into the city, and kept in its wake, until they were tired of the acclamations of the crowd—the ringing of bells, the firing of salutes, and the music of the bands.

LEAFLET LIII.—Our Adieu to Mr. Uwins.

WHAT a happy and glorious place will be the new earth, which the meek are to inherit, and in which there shall be no more death.

Poor Mrs. Uwins had to bear the penalty of having married an old man—there was no escape. In the course of nature, she must weep her last farewell, and see him carried to the tomb.

When his illness incapacitated him from any exertion, and obliged him to relinquish all his appointments, he gave up the house at Kensington, and retired to Staines.

Sarah had a friend there (one of Mr. Wyon's daughters from the Mint) who rather induced her to take a house that was to let, just opposite to her own.

It was not a happy move, although it was done for the best. It carried Mr. Uwins away from his old associations and tried friends, and though the country air, (if such it could be called) might be a gain, nothing could compensate him for what he had left behind.

He was decidedly dull, and as soon as he was settled in the new house, we received an urgent request to come up, and pay him a visit.

So Elizabeth and I took advantage of a holiday train that ran for one fare, and allowed us to stay a fortnight. It was a terribly long time on the road, so long indeed, that we thought we should never get there. And when at last we arrived at Shoreditch, a station we had never seen before, we thought what a dreadful place London was, and that it must have become twice as black as it used to be. We had then to rattle off in a cab, and to start again from the Victoria Station for Staines.

No wonder that our heads ached, and that every bone in our bodies ached too.

But as soon as we alighted at Mr. Uwins' door, and went upstairs, and saw the change that time and illness had made in him, we forgot everything else, for we felt it was our last visit, and that when we once more bade him "farewell," it would be for ever.

He did not venture downstairs, but all his meals were served in the drawing-room, his study and bedroom being on the same floor; and once a day, when the sun shone, and the air was warm enough, he would be helped down, and put into a bath chair, and drawn out for a ride.

The roads were all gravel and grit, and made such a grinding noise, I did not wonder at his choosing, as often as he could, to be taken into the fields, or on to Staines Common, where he had the right of putting in an animal to graze, and where he pointed out to us, a little roan-coloured calf, that he called his "farming-stock."

One day, as we came in from a visit to the Common, we were met by a very stout and brusque lady, who shook hands, and claimed to be an old acquaintance; but she was obliged to introduce herself, and to my astonishment, I found her to be the invalid, Miss Mayo of Kilburn, who had lain for so many years upon a sofa, suffering from what was thought to be curviture of the spine.

She reminded me of the concerts we used to attend at her father's house, with Mr. and Mrs. Hudson; but when I enquired how it was she had recovered, when her friends took for granted she never would, she laughed, and told me that her sister, who used to walk by the side of her bath chair, had eloped with, and married the servant-man, who used to draw it, and so she thought it was high time for her to abandon the chair, and to find her feet.

Staines is a place where boating is in perfection, and Mr. Uwins was most anxious to take us on the river, and show us "his swans," and some of his favourite bits of nature. Sarah and the doctor together, however, prevented him carrying out his wishes, on that point, saying the damp and the cold from the river, might be fatal to him.

How true are our Lord's words to Peter, and how they may be almost universally applied.

"When thou wast young, thou walkedst where thou wouldest, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shalt carry thee, whither thou wouldest not."

A visit to Norwich was what Mr. Uwins longed for, but it was quite an impossibility.

He talked a great deal about Miss Gurney (the sister of Mrs. Fry) who had, he said, been a great friend of his, during a stay he made in Edinburgh.

At that time, when he was quite a young man, he was engaged in taking likenesses in chalk. "Making old women young, and ugly women handsome," was, he said, his daily occupation, and on this innocent deception, all his reputation depended.

Miss Gurney used every argument she could, to induce him to come to Norwich, where, with her introductions and support, he would have done exceedingly well

But Mr. Uwins assured us, that a dream he had about his mother, altered his plans, and changed the current of his life.

He saw her, in his dream, lying on her death-bed, and it so distressed him, that he could not remain any longer away; but packed up his traps, and came to London.

After his arrival, his mother lived but a short time, and Mr. Uwins never returned to the North.

His love of nature remained as strong as ever, and a basket of flowers coming from a friend at a distance, caused him much pleasure. They were kept as long as a leaf remained, and then he observed that though the flowers must wither, yet not so his love, for the giver.

One Sunday, Mr. Wyon from the Mint, came over to see him, and was most cordially welcomed,—Mr. Uwins declaring that though he had abandoned every active employment, and London knew nothing of him, yet to hear from, or to see a friend from town, was one of his greatest enjoyments.

Feeble as he was, his brush was not wholly laid aside, and he amused himself by painting from his study window, the landscape before him—a bridge over the Coln (a tributary of the Thames). And when the easel and palette became too cumbersome for him, he resumed the practice of water-colours; and when increasing weakness obliged him to relinquish his drawing, rather than part with his pencil, when his hands could not hold it, he retained it in his mouth.

How painful it was to say the last "good-bye," but we had to do it; and the great consolation was, that Mr. Uwins was a godly man, and could look the grim visage of Death in the face unappalled, for he could say in the words of David, "Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

I think it is Old Humphrey, who has a chapter, on what he calls "Mitigations," and a very good chapter it is.

He was laid up with a sprained ankle, and did not know before, the number of appliances or "mitigations," there were at hand for his relief nor had he any idea of the number of friends he possessed, who were always ready to keep him company, and do him good.

So it was with us; we had our "mitigations," and our anxiety about Mrs. Uwins was much alleviated by the good neighbours she had,

particularly those next door, and by the excellent servant she had, who was a friend as well as a servant, and tended Mr. Uwins with the utmost care, such as cannot be bought with money, but springs from real affection.

Alice was a native of Melton Mowbray, and had been taught in the Sunday school, by our friend Miss Latham, who gave all the girls that came into her class the most careful religious training.

When Sarah was married, and Mr. Uwins' old servants declined to remain under a mistress, I had engaged, and sent her up two, and of these Alice was one, and she had been there ever since.

Mr. Uwins had outlived by a year or so, his old friend and schoolfellow Mr. Ryley, who had assisted and encouraged us so much with the writing, that when he was gone, we felt quite lost.

When we had wanted information, he had never failed to give it, and to him we always applied, to solve our difficulties, and to explain our most knotty points.

At the end of a fortnight, we returned to Norwich, to fulfil our engagements with the writing. We finished the two books we had in hand; one called "Aunt Dorothy's Story Book" (so named in honour of Miss Larke, whose name was Dorothy) and the other a religious tale, called "Lucy Neville and her Schoolfellows," suggested by the sight of Miss Larke's young ladies, filing into church, or down St. Giles', for a walk, in regular school fashion, two and two.

We never had any intercourse, or spoke to one of these young ladies, but still they put ideas of boarding school into our heads, and caused that book to be written.

During our short visit to Staines, we had made many friends; and two of them (ladies) came down to Norwich to see us, and we went to Yarmouth together. They allayed our anxiety, and consoled us about Mrs. Uwins, by assuring us that she was surrounded by persons who were ready, at any moment, to go to her, and render all the assistance it was possible to give.

In spite of Mr. Uwins' illness, she was at work with her pen; and one day, coming suddenly upon a dress she had worn upon the happy time of her marriage, she wrote the following lines:—

Garments of Praise and Garments of Heaviness.

WHEN I remember that I wore a dress,
Some 'special thing, upon some great distress,
And the great memory of the sorrow brings
The trivial thought, of the more trivial things—
A weakness the heart spurns. I change my ways
Into the Hebrew singer's. Straight are brought
"Garments of heaviness," before my thought,
And that redeemed from trivial. So in joys,
When thronging thankfulness, my heart employs,
When crowding mercies fill my blissful day,
And brooding happiness returns to stay,
When the heart cannot utter its delight,
When the full spirit to the brim is light,
I call my daily garments "Robes of Praise."

LEAFLET LIV.—The Organist, Dr. Buck.

WE became on very friendly terms with a lady, a Miss Firth, who lived with her aunt in the Crescent; and was very fond of music, —indeed so fond, that she did not allow a word to be spoken in her drawing-room, while the piano was being played upon.

In the matter of music, Dr. Buck and Miss Firth were agreed, and it was a bond of union between them.

Miss Firth attended the morning service at the Cathedral, every Sunday, and was a great admirer of Dean Goulburn. She told us what a very clever man he was, and that he was busy collecting and translating some ancient works, by the founder of the Cathedral.

But she delighted to hear him preach, and said the great charm lay in his manner, and in his calm musical voice, that no one could fail to hear, and what he said was so plain, and so much to the point, the most simple listener, could not help understanding it.

We spent an evening at Miss Firth's, and met Dr. Buck, who was very agreeable and full of animation. He talked much about his choir boys, and said the good ladies in the Close, often called him to account for their behaviour, but he should like them to know, that whenever a boy stayed out at night beyond a certain hour, he was obliged by law to be whipped, and he himself had to whip him; but he added with a shudder, that he had only once inflicted the punishment, and should never forget it, one stroke was enough for him and then he dropped the rod, hoping never again to use it.

At Miss Firth's party, we also met Miss Catherine Hansell, one of the Canon's daughters from the Close. And she was so nice looking and so agreeable, that we fell quite in love with her, and became staunch friends.

The same evening, we met for the first time, the Rev. Cyprian Rust, to whom we were afterwards indebted for much social pleasure, and with whom we have continued to correspond ever since.

Within a few days, he and his wife called upon us, at Miss Larke's, and invited us, to an evening party, to meet the Rev. Turner, Vicar of St. Peter Mancroft, and nobody knows who beside.

It was a very merry party. Mr. Rust and Mr. Turner were both such great talkers, that whichever got the lead (that is the first word), tried hard to keep it, and to have his say out, before the other could begin—Mr. Rust for instance, in the full tide of talk, would see his neighbour trying to get a word in, when he would turn to him, and say with the utmost *sang-froid*, "stop a bit my good fellow, and you shall have the next turn."

Mixing so much in musical society, and hearing, as we did, so many sweet voices seemed to inspire Elizabeth with the desire to write a story about music; and when we were told that Dr. Buck had been a choir boy himself, and had fallen in love with a daughter of one of the Canons,

this was plot enough—so "Mark Warren" was begun, and forwarded as soon as finished, to the Editor of the "Quiver," then the Rev. Teighnmouth Shore, for his approbation.

Persons who live at an easy distance from the coast, and particularly those who have passed their lives in the midland counties, are often tempted to pay the sea a visit, when they had much better stay at home.

And so it was with us; with Easter week came a cheap issue of tickets for Yarmouth, and we could not resist investing a couple of shillings on the occasion.

This world is all change, and change again, and nothing remains as it used to be. Dene House was no longer open to boarders, but occupied by a medical man.

The air we found much too cold for us, and the wind almost cut our heads off. So after we had spent the Sunday, and the Monday, and seen Dr. Hills receive his Easter offerings, we returned to Norwich, and were thankful for our warm and comfortable quarters at Miss Larke's.

After that escapade, the March winds kept me very much indoors, but in spite of the cold, I walked one day, about noon, with Elizabeth and a party of friends, on to the Castle Hill, to see an eclipse of the sun.

The air was so clear, that there was really no need to blacken our noses with the bits of smoked glass, that were so freely handed about; for we could see perfectly with the naked eye, particularly as the opaque shadow of the moon covered more and more of the sun's surface.

It was an annular eclipse, and lasted twelve minutes; and when the shadow was fully on, there was but a narrow circle of the sun's light left. The darkness was like evening twilight, and so great, that we could hardly recognize one another, and a kind of awe-struck feeling pervaded the crowd, so that their voices fell almost to a whisper.

No wonder that the animals are alarmed and have even been known to die of terror at the sight; and no wonder that the savage tribes used to fall upon their knees, and cut themselves with stones, while they besought the Heavenly bodies, to desist from their unseemly combat.

Our visit to Yarmouth, at Easter-time, before the bitter east winds were abated, had rather set us against its cold beach for the present; so when the hot weather came, we made a little excursion to Cromer instead.

In those palmy days, no railways reached the place, and we had a lovely ride by coach, through Aylsham and some picturesque villages, and in spite of four restive horses arrived safely at our destination.

LEAFLET LV.—Donati's Comet.

IT was just Midsummer, and considered too early for the Cromer season to have fairly begun; so we had the choice of lodgings, as well as many other things, and settled ourselves in a good house in about the centre of the place, but so near to the perpendicular edge of the cliff, that there was only a gangway of some few yards between us.

Fortunately the weather was calm, and there was no fear of high tides, and furious seas to undermine and submerge us; for many kind friends in Norwich, had told us, how unsafe the land is on this part of the coast, and always in danger of being swallowed up by the waves.

After tea we went down to the beach, and walked on the fine, firm sands, where many persons were driving and riding about; but there were no noisy bands of music, or thumping drums, to disturb our peaceful meditations.

Pleasant as it certainly was, I preferred for the future, to keep on the top of the cliff, and amuse myself by looking on, and seeing others enjoy themselves, for the descent by zig-zag paths ending in a number of steps, was not easy enough for me, and I found great difficulty in getting up again; so with the camp stool, I consoled myself on the height, and fell back on the old adage, that "one tumble is enough."

Nothing can be more breezy and delightful than the cliffs, with their undulating surface, and nooks that remind us of the sunny south, full of flowers and ferns and purple heather.

Of course we could choose the carriages and donkeys we liked best, and drove with a pair of these useful long-eared animals, until we had exhausted all the parks and rides in the immediate neighbourhood.

The trees at Felbrigg,—the beeches and the silver firs were particularly fine. But Northrepps' Cottage, or the Hermitage as it is called, had more than a usual interest for us, as being the residence of Miss Gurney, so well known in the city as well as in the county, for her energy of character, and benevolence.

The situation of Northrepps is very picturesque, lying as it does in a deep valley opening towards the sea. The woods and grounds about it were a sheet of flowers, and quite pink with rhododendrons, giving out their most delicious perfume.

It was a grand thing to be able always to return in our carriage and pair, by a different route. And once, after driving down a long lane, completely overshadowed with foliage, the driver stopped and told us we were come to the Lion's Mouth; but we saw no vestige of, or resemblance to a lion, and could gain no information as to the reason for such a name.

The donkey boys spoke the pure Norfolk dialect, and sometimes we could not understand a word they said, so had to lay the money on the palm of our hands, and make signs with our fingers, what the fare was to be.

By this time no doubt they have learnt to speak English, and their morals may have been corrupted, but when we knew them, they certainly were very honest and never took any advantage of us.

On Sunday afternoon, we attended the service in the parish church, and were surprised to find its chancel in ruins, and as we made our way through the fallen and broken pillars, we thought we might have been going to enter some pagan temple. Since that time the church has been restored, but these remains of the past dark ages, which have lain there some two hundred years, we believe lie there still.

The church was full of worshippers, and the service, particularly impressive, for after the reading of the second lesson, a number of persons from different parts of the church, some from the gallery and some from below, gathered round the font, and with great solemnity, were publicly baptized, before going, as we were told, to Norwich Cathedral to be confirmed.

We had a great wish to see the sun rise, as well as to set upon the sea, and I believe Cromer is one of the few, if not the only locality, where this can be done. It was June, and the days were at the longest, so we had to rise at three, to have any chance of seeing the dawn of light upon the water. But we manfully put on shawls and tippets, and sat at the drawing-room window, and watched the whole proceeding.

The sunrise was most glorious, and I was quite as well satisfied with the beauty of the brilliant colours, and their changing tints upon the sea, —I might say *better* satisfied, than I should have been, at the top of Mont Blanc.

Before we left Norwich, we had made an agreement with Mr. Downes, that we should each keep a register, day by day, of the thermometer; and we found Cromer to be as much as five degrees cooler than the city. Notwithstanding this, the sky was so full of electric clouds, that every time we came out of doors, we were caught in a slight shower of rain, accompanied by vivid flashes of lightning, and the sound of thunder rolling away in the distance.

The principal event of the year '58, was the appearance of Donati's Comet, that spread its flaming tail half across the sky. We watched it night after night for at least six weeks, and saw that the tail (not unaptly called the brush) was subject to constant changes of form—at one time, like an ostrich feather being carried gently through the air, but another time, as if a fierce wind were blowing upon it, and dividing it into two parts, with a dark space between them. Its length was computed at fifty millions of miles, and its breadth at about ten millions, though the weight of it, might be, according to William Herschel, an affair of pounds or even ounces.

This comet is probably a periodical visitor, and in the course of two thousand years, may be expected to return, and again adorn our skies.

The ninth of October, we are told, was the date on which the comet approached the nearest to our earth; and as we stood looking at it with awe and wonder, we thought of what Dr. Lardner had said, in his lectures

on astronomy, that it was neither impossible nor improbable for our earth, at some remote period, to meet her fate in the embrace of one of these fiery bodies.

Were this to be so, the world and all that is therein, would be burnt up, as it is prophesied it shall be; and out of the ruins may spring that new earth, which the meek are to inherit, and to which all good people are earnestly looking forward.

LEAFLET LVI.—Our Visit to Staines.

MRS. UWINS was now a widow, and having taken the house at Staines on a lease, was still residing there.

Her drawing-room windows looked into the ornamental grounds and garden, of Mr. Wyon's married daughter, Mrs. Hall; and this pretty view seemed to have been a great attraction for Mr. Uwins, for he had made a drawing of it in water-colours, with a peep of the river, and the pleasure-boat with Miss Wyon rowing herself about in it.

Sarah was not long before she wrote to us, to come and stay with her, and was rather urgent on the point, of our taking up our abode with her altogether.

So once more, we had to perform the dismal journey to Shoreditch.

We found her cheerful, and very well in health, but soon began to feel that it would be ruin and destruction for us, to accept her offer of joining her in house-keeping;—for her eccentricities, as it was, nearly drove us to distraction.

All the plate was stowed away and carefully locked up, and one spoon was made to do the work of half-a-dozen; but that was a small matter, the real grievance was—we could not get sufficient food to satisfy our Norfolk appetites.

In the early morning we were at "starvation point,"—we knew quite well her habit of lying late in bed, and had tried to provide against it, by bringing with us a good packet of tea,—but no sooner did Mrs. Uwins find this out, than she quietly took it away, and locked it up; and so we were no better off than before, and were obliged to wait till ten or eleven o'clock without any breakfast.

And when at last she did make her appearance, nothing could be done, and nothing could be had, until family prayers were over, which service, under such circumstances, was most unpalatable to us.

Dinner was served at one—no matter what the hour of breakfast. But alas, for the dinner itself! No wonder we looked and felt decidedly the worse for the change of diet; but in our diplomacy, attributed it to the difference between the London and the Norfolk air.

At length, one day as we were going off for a walk, a Mrs. Brown, a doctor's widow who lived next door over-took us and told us plainly, that we should do no good at all by staying there, for she felt more than convinced—indeed quite certain, that poor Mrs. Uwins was going out of her mind.

She said moreover, that we should be starved to death, if we remained, for she perceived in this short time, a great difference in our appearance, and assured us, our good looks would soon be gone.

The idea of Sarah going out of her mind, fell upon us like a thunder bolt, and yet we felt it to be true.

It was a terrible straight to be in; what should we do? What was it our duty to do?

Mrs. Brown was a middle-aged woman with much experience, and she advised us to get back home as quickly as we could, and quietly wait there, the course of events; saying she was on the spot and would let us know what went on, from one day to another.

The next morning, therefore we announced our intention of returning to Norwich; and so strange are the moods and tenses of the human mind, that Sarah went out and bought a quantity of eatables,—meat and cakes, and even fruit, including a very fine bunch of grapes, and packed them in a good sized basket, saying, they were for us to take, and eat upon the road.

We were glad enough of so welcome a supply of food, and long before we reached Norwich, the basket was empty.

Unhappy as we naturally felt to leave Mrs. Uwins, with such a future looming over her—and ourselves too, yet it was impossible not to be thankful to get into our own comfortable quarters, and to see our good Miss Larke again.

Of course we watched, with the greatest anxiety, for the postman, and the arrival of letters from Staines. We heard very regularly from Mrs. Uwins herself, and were relieved to find that she had set herself to the task of writing a memoir of her husband.

The facts related in it are few, but two good sized volumes are made up, of Mr. Uwins' letters from Italy, mostly addressed to his two brothers; these were on foreign paper and in very small writing, so it was no easy task to copy them for the printers.

The two volumes were published in '58 by Longman & Co., but being on the half expense and half profit system, Mrs. Uwins derived little, if any pecuniary benefit.

LEAFLET LVII.—Giving the New Year a Welcome.

THE old year was coming to a close, but we had never in our lives, paid him the compliment of sitting up to see him go out, and his successor come in; although at Leicester, we had often been kept awake, on that very night, by the pealing of the bells, and also by a party of serenaders under our windows, who called themselves the "Town waits." And we were up before it was light, to attend a meeting to usher in the New Year with prayer and praise.

This time however, we had no choice; for Mrs. Rackham and her daughters—Ellen and Mrs. Smart, walked in about nine o'clock, and said they had come on purpose to help us give the New Year a welcome.

So Miss Rackham and I had a game at chess, which lasted till after the clock had struck twelve, and Mrs. Rackham had run down stairs to set the front door open, for the spirit of the Old Year to make his exit, and for the spirit of the New Year, as she said, to come in.

She wanted to make an engagement for the next New Year's night, and for us to promise a return visit. But it was out of the question, and so uncertain is human life, that very soon afterwards, Mrs. Rackham was seized with an attack of sickness and faintness, and died rather suddenly of disease of the heart.

Then Mrs. Smart returned to London, and the family was broken up; the house with its pleasant garden, we knew so well, speedily changed hands, and a medical man,—a Mr. Fox, with his young wife, came to live in it.

They were musical, and very agreeable; and we spent several pleasant evenings with them.

Here we met Mr. Colman, M.P., who took an interest in every effort that was made for the good of the working classes; and on one occasion he was there, when the whole party of the city missionaries were entertained and regaled with what might well be called a banquet.

Books and engravings lay about in profusion, for their amusement, and a portfolio of my dried ferns was placed upon the drawing-room table, and they were much admired, and very carefully handled.

Mr. Fox played remarkably well upon the organ; and before very long, he was induced to undertake the office of organist at St. Giles' Church; for here too, there had been a change.

Mrs. Gurney, of Earlham Hall, the Banker's widow, although surrounded by suitors, had fallen back upon a young curate, she had known in bygone days, and preferred to marry him.

The Rev. Sedgwick had resigned, and in his place came Mrs. Gurney's husband, Mr. Ripley. Thereupon the church underwent a renovation;—a very fine organ was purchased, and everything done to beautify and improve the place, that money could purchase.

Mrs. Ripley made herself affable to everybody; and it was through her influence that Mr. Fox was persuaded to play the organ at St. Giles'.

Miss Larke and her young ladies occupied three or more of the pews; and on account of her deafness, she was always there, and marshalled her pupils into their places, fully half-an-hour before the time.

We used also to attend the services, and could not help noticing how quickly her school was increasing;—so much indeed was this the case, that it became a necessity for the children to occupy the bedrooms over our first-floor apartments; and being naturally full of fun and frolic, a fine noise they made in getting up and going to bed, so that our drawing-room windows rattled, and we ourselves were shaken in our chairs.

Under these circumstances, Elizabeth became more and more importunate for a house of our own; and when on St. Valentine's night, the rooms overhead, seemed to be full of riotous spirits, she declared she could remain there no longer; but that we *must*, let it cost what it might, have a house of our own.

LEAFLET LVIII.—"A House of our Own."

ELIZABETH'S favourite walk was on the Unthanks Road; and though a very wet morning succeeded St. Valentine's Day, she marched out, armed with cloak and umbrella, to look for a house.

She was fortunate enough in seeing one to let, and immediately went in and secured the refusal of it, till the next day. Her mind was so fully bent upon that one object, she could think of nothing else, and the writing had for the moment to be laid aside.

Happily the rain clouds cleared away, and the sun was shining, when I went the next morning to see, and to decide upon the cottage on the Unthanks Road.

It was semi-detached, and too small to hold much of our furniture; but that did not matter; it was prettily situated, and with pleasant views on every side; in front, we looked across the road into the Rev. Hoste's garden, all turf, and trees and shrubs; and from the side windows we could see down a long vista of road, becoming more and more narrow; and rising in the distance into rather a steep hill, bordered on either bank with tall trees, so that I used to compare it, to a Swiss landscape among the valleys of the Alps.

To Elizabeth's great joy the cottage was taken, and it was delightful to her to be told that we could enter any time we liked; for the lady who occupied it was anxious to get away to France as soon as possible, for the benefit of her daughter's education.

Miss Larke was quite as good to us on our leaving, as she had been on our first arrival.

She walked up with me to look over the cottage, and also would accompany us to the sale of goods and chattels, that almost immediately took place under an awning at the back of the house.

She had a weakness for old crockery, and bid for every lot of cracked basins, and odd pie dishes, as they were brought forward. We sat and looked on; having more furniture than the cottage would hold, we had no need to purchase more.

Our friend the surgeon, Mr. Fox, who occupied Mrs. Rackham's great old house, came forward, and begged us to accept an empty room or two, as a store place; and we were glad to make use by and bye of what he had kindly offered.

And so it happened, that we very soon found ourselves in our new house, or as Elizabeth loved to call it "a home of our own."

It was very prettily fitted up throughout, with pale green paint and papers; and was certainly much warmer and more comfortable than we expected.

We had scarcely got into it, and could hardly be said to be in apple-pie-order, when in the gloaming, the Rev. Cavell made his appearance. He was our friend of St. Swithen's, or as we liked to call it, "the church of the rushes"; and now we had come to live very near him, indeed just opposite.

We found him very agreeable, and gave him a hearty welcome; remembering how we had thwarted him, by refusing to go into one of his fusty old pews. He had the reputation of being the most kind-hearted of men, and he well deserved this good opinion.

He had been called in, to console a widow, who had been left with a large family of small children, and who was so desponding, that her friends feared she might not be able to rally.

His cheerful society roused her from her melancholy, and in the end, she became his wife.

One object of his visit, was to enquire whether we were the "Mary and Elizabeth Kirby" who had written the child's book "Truth is always best;" for it was sent the other week, to one of his little girls, as a valentine; and he had taken it up, after his wife had gone to bed, and not been able to lay it down again, till he had read it to the end.

He asked a great many questions about the plot, and how far it was founded upon fact; but he seemed to look upon the inventive faculty required for book writing, as a thing altogether beyond his reach.

The other object, was to invite us to a party for the Friday in the following week.

I began to make excuses, and said that by retiring to that cottage, we hoped also to retire from the world. But as he did not seem inclined to look upon that as reasonable, I ventured to hint that Elizabeth being out of health, and much knocked up, it was much better for us to keep quietly at home; then, Elizabeth herself immediately perked up, and

declared it would do her a great deal of good; and that she should enjoy it very much.

So I had to yield the point; and all hope of staying at home and being quiet, was at an end.

It was no exaggeration on my part to say that Elizabeth was unfit for exertion; as she was suffering from an abcess under one of her arms, and being attended by our friend and doctor, Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Fox was also a friend of ours, and it happened that his wife came to the cottage to see us, and to enquire after Elizabeth, at the same time that Mrs. Pitt was there, and a rather amusing scene took place.

When Mrs. Pitt saw Elizabeth in great pain, she said she must hurry home immediately, and tell her husband, that his patient required his attention; and as soon as she was gone, Mrs. Fox rather mischievously observed that *her husband* was the best doctor in Norwich; and that she should send him up at once, to see what could be done.

Elizabeth made no objection whatever, saying that between the two, she had hopes of being well, in time for Mr. Cavell's party.

So both the doctors came at once, one with a box of salve, and the other with a plaster. They were very agreeable to each other, and made a little fun about "the *case*," which might have been performed on the stage.

However, Elizabeth, being thus doubly well attended to, contrived to get better in time, and donned in her white muslin, went off with me to the party.

The rooms were quite full of company when we arrived; and being strangers, Mr. Cavell settled himself for a time beside me, and then introduced a Mr. Greaves, who also had no lack of conversation.

There was plenty of music and singing; and as I looked across the room, I saw Elizabeth talking to a tall fine-looking man, evidently a clergyman; and then he came and said a few words to me about Leicestershire being his native county; but Mr. Greaves was still talking at my elbow, and I hardly understood what was said.

I enquired of Elizabeth, if she knew who it was she had been talking to; and she, like Sir Humphrey shooting in the dark, said he was a doctor, and she believed his name was Mr. Gibson, and that he might be the father of the little girl who had been singing very sweetly "Kathleen Mavoureen."

And so the evening went on, and Mr. Cavell took me in to supper, and we had a merry time of it; but I soon perceived how pale Elizabeth began to look, and on the plea of her illness, we left much earlier than usual, lest she might suffer for it on the morrow, and I might be blamed by the doctors.

But little did I imagine, as the gentleman she had mistaken for Mr. Gibson, came forward to say "good-night," that he was no other than Mr. Gregg, and to be my future husband.

LEAFLET LIX.—Rev. H. Gregg.

IN spite of Elizabeth's feebleness, we were hard at work for Mr. Nelson, and sent him as many as a dozen short stories at once, for his periodicals, as well as a little book called "Things in the Forest;" which has in it the account of a soldier being lost in one of the dense jungles of Ceylon, through his own folly in trying to catch a peacock, and so getting himself entangled, and not able to find his way back. He was trespassing on the domain of beasts, and birds, and reptiles, and had a great many narrow escapes from encounters with them.

Mr. Nelson wrote to us very often, and sent us some beautiful French books, for a present. In one of his letters, he told us he meant to stay a night in Norwich, on his way through from Edinburgh to London, and should call upon us.

Of course we were on the look out for him, and very anxious to see him.

Early one morning, almost before breakfast was over, we saw an unmistakable Scotchman come up the steps to the front door, and naturally came to the conclusion that it must be no other than Mr. Nelson. But no! The card said, "Mr. James Blackwood, Paternoster Row."

He was certainly a Scotchman, and a publisher. He wanted to know if we had any manuscript on hand; and we showed him a story that was fortunately just completed, called "Lucy Neville and Her School-fellows."

He looked it through, and seeing it was a religious tale, he said, for many years he had taken an interest in Sunday Schools, and thought the book might be very useful, and suitable for prizes. So he put it in his pocket; and almost immediately we received the proofs, and then a dozen copies.

We saw nothing of Mr. Nelson, and were rather disappointed on that account, but he sent us his cheque for "Things in the Forest," and also for the "Italian Goldsmith," the story of Benvenuto Cellini, the famous sculptor and goldsmith, also a musician.

Earned money seems always the sweetest and best of any; and we were glad to find a ready sale for our manuscripts, and also to put the profits into our pockets.

For some time past we had been in the habit of taking tea, one evening in the week, with Mr. and Mrs. Rust, who lived in the Crescent; and when the nights were dark, we often carried a lantern across Chapel Field, rather to the amusement of Mr. Rust; for we had the idea (erroneous, no doubt) that the gas in Norwich did not give much light, compared with the gas at Leicester, which was under the superintendence of our friend, C. B. Robinson, Esq.

The evenings at Mr. Rust's, were very enjoyable, and we generally had them all to ourselves. But once or twice, a curate of Mr. Wrigg's

came in, a Mr. Wiltshire, and we recognized him at once, as the gentleman we had seen at Cromer, with his sweetheart,—so proper a young lady, that like Harriet Byron (see Sir Charles Grandison) she had always her mother, or her grandmother by her side.

But that unfortunately did not drive away the storms of thunder and lightning, and like ourselves, the lovers were constantly driven by heavy showers, to take shelter where they could.

Mr. Wiltshire was a pious young man, and had put himself at the service of the Church Missionary Society; who according to his wish sent him out to South Africa, as Mr. Rust said, "to teach the Hottentots,"—and we saw him no more.

But being as usual, one evening in the Cresent to tea, I noticed an extra cup set upon the tray, and innocently enquired if Mr. Wiltshire had come back again.

Mr. Rust said "no," but he was going to have a guest, he was sure we should like; for he was moreover, a native of our own county; and no other than Mr. Wrigg's new curate, the successor of our friend Mr. Wiltshire.

To my surprise, when he came in, who should it be, but the gentleman we had met at Mr. Cavell's, and Elizabeth had mistaken for a doctor. And now, he was introduced to us, in a proper manner, by our host, as the Rev. Henry Gregg.

Mr. Rust happened to be in a very mischievous mood that evening, and so was I; and together we made a great deal of fun of the poor curates going "courting," and drew a picture not at all to their advantage.

Mr. Rust said they always chose their wives for their pretty faces, indeed a pretty face was all they thought of, and never cast a glance at the shoes down at heel—or the stockings full of holes—or the dresses pinned together with darning needles— and then, when married, expected to find these self-same ladies the best of housekeepers, and the most economical of managers.

We had lent Mr. Rust a magazine, borrowed from Miss Firth, on purpose for him to read some article it contained; and when we rose to say good night, Mr. Gregg came forward, and asked if he might be allowed to read it too. And so I let him take it, only saying that we were under a promise to return it the next day.

Of course when the next day came, Mr. Gregg called with the magazine, and sent in his card; for Elizabeth and I happened to be in the other room busy with hammer and nails.

Mr. Gregg made himself very agreeable, and said he had heard we had a new book just out called "Lucy Neville," and if we would lend it to him to read, how much obliged he should be.

He seemed quite disposed to stay and have a little chat, and there was plenty to talk about; for he had been at Hoby two years, as curate, and knew quite well Frisby, and the favourite haunts of my childhood.

As he left us, we told him he might keep the book as long as he liked, and so he went away with it in his pocket.

The next time we saw him was one afternoon, when he and a friend, the Vicar of——, came in together.

A German missionary who had been collecting money from all good Christians in England, to build an English chapel in Berlin, was come to take tea with us, as he had been used to do in days of old, in the Friar Lane. And so they all three took tea together.

The Vicar of——was in a very quibbling humour, and began to argue and dispute the point, as to whether St. Paul really meant, or really felt what he said, when he called himself "the chief of sinners." Our German friend looked grave, but Mr. Gregg in a very serious manner rose, and said "there was no doubt the Apostle's confession had been perfectly sincere; and he was able to sympathise with him to the full,—and to say as he had said that he was the chief of sinners."

Mr. Gregg's simplicity impressed us all, and the German pastor shook him warmly by the hand, by way of approbation, while his companion seemed decidedly out of favour.

LEAFLET LX.—A Visitor for Easter.

LIFE is made up of a chain of circumstances, that seem purely accidental, but that yet have an important bearing on our destiny.

When Easter came, and everybody was taking holiday, we had a friend from Leicester, a Miss W., one of the young ladies who used to come and read with us, in the Friar Lane.

She was very pretty, and could make herself agreeable; and on the first evening of her arrival, as we sat round the fire, I proposed to have two parties during the week she was with us; in order that she might see a few of our Norwich friends.

The young lady had no objection, but shaking her glossy ringlets, made the proviso, that for her benefit we should invite some single gentlemen, and not have all married couples.

Whereupon, I mentioned Mr. Wrigg's curate, Mr. Gregg, as the only one we knew well enough to ask.

After a little discussion, Miss W. carried her point; and when Monday morning came, Elizabeth and I set out together to invite Mr. Gregg.

He had very pleasant rooms on the Earlham Road, and we found him sitting at his desk, as we supposed, writing a sermon.

He was very friendly, and readily accepted our invitation; and we gave him the option of the two evenings, Wednesday or Friday, whichever would be most convenient to him.

And then, we began to talk about Leicestershire, and after we had gone over a few of our old haunts, he told us that within the past week, he had lost an aunt, to whom he was much indebted for having encouraged him in his studies, and in everything else that was good; and he should never hear from her again, or receive any more of her kind presents,—her silk handkerchiefs, or her plum cakes with coins of gold inside them.

On our way home, we had to pass very near the house where the two younger nieces of Mrs. Wrigg had settled themselves; for the elder one, who had been Elizabeth's friend and walking companion, had taken a situation and was gone.

We had only seen these young ladies once before; and that was on the occasion of their calling to tell us, that their uncle had a curate out of Leicestershire, and to invite us to go with them, and hear him preach at St. Michael's Coslany. They said, how attractive he was, and that many of the poor people in the parish, were being drawn to the church.

But we declined to go, and descanted at some length, on the folly of the young ladies making the curates so conceited. But our words seemed to have but little or no effect; and the curate's praises continued to be sung all the time they were with us.

And now we went in to see them; and the elder of the two accepted our invitation to the party.

When Wednesday evening came we had as many guests as could sit at table; and everything went off merrily and well. Miss W. looked very charming; but Mrs. Wrigg's niece, wearing over her pretty white shoulders, an Indian scarf, woven with threads of gold, was decidedly the belle; Mr. Gregg did not however, put in an appearance.

On Friday we had an equal number of visitors, and Mr. Gregg came in, in good time for tea. I set Miss W. a chair beside him; thinking of course, as her uncle lived at Rotherby, she would have plenty to say about Hoby, and Rotherby and Frisby, and all the poor people and gentlepeople those villages contained.

But no such thing; she very soon came whispering up to me to say, she could not get on with Mr. Gregg, for she did not know what to talk about. Of course, I had to change places with her and come to her assistance.

We opened a conversation on the book he had borrowed "Lucy Neville"; and after a few compliments had been passed upon it, he said he should like to send a copy to his sisters, if we could let him have one.

And so he called the next day, and we had the pleasure of seeing him many times, without having any idea of an attachment.

We know it to be a fact, that marriages are made in Heaven; and so it is, when two persons intended by the "higher powers," to come into that sacred relationship to each other, meet in the social circle, they are drawn, as if by an invisible hand, or supernatural sympathy, together.

And so it was—everytime Mr. Gregg and I met, we felt that mysterious influence—call it what you like—I will call it *love!*

LEAFLET LXI.—Mr. Gregg makes me an offer.

ON the highest authority we are told, that "love is of God," for "God is love"; and therefore we cannot estimate too highly the joy and happiness of loving and being beloved.

One fine morning in May, Mr. Gregg came in, to call at the cottage, and I had an instinctive feeling of what he was going to say, and that he was about to make me an offer of his heart and hand.

And so it came to pass—and he had not been long with me before words were spoken, and vows exchanged, which were to bind us together for our lives,—or more correctly speaking "until death should us part."

And then he said he could not allow any promise of mine to stand good until I knew something of his past history—as for instance that his family, though much respected, were in humble life; but here I interrupted him to say, that if we loved each other, (which we certainly did) it could not signify whether his family were rich, or whether they were poor; so that matter was for ever set at rest. And he went on to tell me, he might have been in the same position himself, had he not been guided to Nottingham, and gone with some of his friends to the opening of Trinity Church; at which service he was so much attracted and impressed by the preaching of the Rev. Davies, that a new world seemed to open up to him; and he was led seriously to think of going to college, and devoting himself to the work of the ministry.

The word "College" was the key-note for a little discussion of what is required of the young men, and I expressed an opinion, that the test of Latin and Greek, which seems such an insurmountable barrier, is but a good five-barred gate put before them to try their perseverance and their skill.

He smiled at the comparison, and said it was all very well for ladies to think so, who knew nothing about the difficulty of passing an examination, and having the Greek and Latin books opened at random, and laid before them to read.

But he wanted education; and to get it he did the best thing he could do under the circumstances; he went to London, and set to work, reading hard, early and late, and availing himself of the libraries within his reach.

And so anxious was he to catch the first streak of daylight, that he paid a small sum to a poor woman to call him, as she went to gather her water-cresses, by pulling a bell so contrived as to ring in his room.

He spent some few years in study, and during part of the time undertook the office of scripture-reader in one of the poorest parishes in London, St. Peter's, Saffron Hill.

Unfortunately, just then, the cholera broke out, and swept away numbers of the poor in his district. But he did not forsake them, and every day visited the sick and dying. He thought the crowded and dirty

state of the houses fostered the disease, for he often was at a loss to find a place clean enough to put down his hat.

The only precaution he took for his own safety, was the free use of camphor, and he certainly escaped infection.

This period of his life was not a pleasing one to dwell upon, and he passed on to the time of his entering King's College, and taking his associate's degree.

And then he spoke of Dr. Jelf the Theological master, and with pride and affection of the professors Maurice and Dr. Trench, nor did he forget the singing master, Dr. Hullah, whose system of teaching was so good.

He was ordained by the Archbishop Sumners, of Canterbury, and soon afterwards became curate to the poet, the Rev. R. Montgomery.

He fully appreciated the advantage of being associated with such an accomplished man, and thrown into the best society in London; for he often went to parties and assemblies with the ladies, Mrs. and Miss Montgomery, which he said did much to rub off the effects of his country life and rustic manners.

He held this curacy for some six years, when to his great regret, the death of Mr. Montgomery, brought the engagement to a close.

He had become warmly attached to him, and felt certain that many of his ailments were caused, if not his end hastened, by the adverse criticisms of his works, which from time to time appeared, and seemed to prey upon his mind and to depress his spirits; had success, and a full measure of praise been awarded him, he believed his life might have been prolonged to a good old age.

I was unwilling to let Mr. Gregg go and could have wished to keep him talking on all day; but the interview, which seemed to us so short, had in reality lasted a long time and he was obliged to depart, quoting as he went, his favourite adage "duty first and pleasure afterwards."

The next few weeks were indeed, a happy time, and I saw him every day.

His curacy with Mr. Wrigg was I knew, coming shortly to an end, and I felt anxious for him not to take another, but to find a living, and be his own master, and enjoy a permanent home.

He had a staunch friend in Wells Charlton, the Squire of Brooksby, and one day received a letter from him in such scrawling writing, that the direction could not easily be read; so it had been handed about to Newark and Nottingham, and several other places beginning with "N," until some postmaster, sharper than the rest, had written across it "try Norwich."

Mr. Gregg left the letter with us to decipher; and it proved a very important letter indeed.

It was to apprise him of the death of the Rector of Brooksby, and to express the wish that if it were possible he would become the Rector [illegible]. And then a postscript was added, more important than the

letter itself, as postscripts generally are—to the effect that he advised him "to look about for a young lady to come with him as his wife—and who knows? perhaps to buy the living for him."

Elizabeth seemed to me to be very fond of this letter, and after she had read it over and over again, she came to the conclusion, that *together* we must certainly buy the living, and make Mr. Gregg Rector of Brooksby.

The idea was so exciting to me, and involved so great a weight of responsibility upon me that I could not sleep, and lay thinking and thinking night after night, until pain in the head and sickness set in and became so distressing, that Elizabeth was determined upon my seeing a doctor.

It was a critical moment in my life, and I dreaded the leeches and the blisters, and the opiates, that a doctor might perchance administer to me.

And then I thought of Elizabeth, when she lay ill at Kensington, and very much in the same state of sleeplessness as myself; and how Mr. Uwins had sent to his homœopathic friend and physician, Dr. Quin, and how, after taking his little white powder, she had gone to sleep.

That was just what I wanted, and as Dr. Quin was an impossibility, I began to think of the only homœopathic physician in Norwich, Dr. Holland, and proposed that he should be sent for. He came without delay, and expressed concern that he had not been sent for before, as he considered I had already been too long a time without sleep.

Dr. Quin's reputation was well-known to him, and it could hardly be otherwise, as he stood at the head of the profession, and had been physician to the Duke of Cambridge, and several members of the Royal Family.

At Kensington, I had seen him more than once, and been attracted by his affectionate manner to Mr. Uwins, for with his arm round his friend's neck, they had come into the room together, like the devoted brothers, David and Jonathan.

In my case, Dr. Holland was very skilful, and his little white powders composed, if they could not send me to sleep. The sickness he said, was the result of congested brain, and ordered the room to be darkened, and the house to be kept as still as possible.

And then, as I lay in a state of half insensibility, I heard the sound of sweet music, and had a vision of Mr. Ryley, standing close beside me, and telling me in a distinct voice, to draw *him* to me,—and not to be afraid.

I knew very well who he meant; and that he wished to signify his approval of my intended marriage with Mr Gregg.

On leaving Leicester, I went to say good-bye to Mr. Ryley, when he told me that he had no parting gift to offer me, but while he lived he should never cease to pray that Providence might send me a good and a gentle husband, to take care of me and screen me from the hardships of the world, which I was so little able to bear.

No doubt his prayers had been heard, and were about to be answered.

Dr. Holland came in and out two or three times a day, and represented to me how desirable it was for me to shut my eyes and see no more visions, but to keep that poor aching head as quiet as possible, lest after all it might refuse to get better, and what would then become of Mr. Gregg, and his prospect of becoming a Rector?

I listened to all the doctor's good advice, but wilful woman will have her way, and the next time I heard Mr. Gregg's voice in the parlour, I slipped on a dressing-gown, and was soon downstairs to meet him; and found an excuse for this act of disobedience in the fact that his soothing words were as beneficial as an opiate, and calculated to do me quite as much good.

Mr. Gregg had been in the habit of regarding every action of his life from the highest point of view, and now expressed the deepest gratitude to the Almighty for bringing us into the same mind, and by the arrangements of Providence making us one.

But I did not forget the doctor and his strict injunctions about keeping quiet; so after this comforting speech I bade Mr. Gregg good-bye for the present, and went back to bed again, and lay as still as a mouse.

LEAFLET LXII.—Prospect of Brooksby Living.

BEFORE I was ill, I had been to see Miss Larke, and to take a last leave of her. She was suffering from acute bronchitis and keeping her bed without any hope of recovery, but as happy and peaceful as a child. It was the first time in her life she had had a doctor, and said archly that if she could not live without one, she did not think she should live with one.

The poor old lady had no cause for complaint. She had reached the age of seventy-five without having had a day's illness, and now like a shock of corn fully ripe, was being gathered into the granary of Heaven.

Her faithful "Ann," who had been in her service for fourteen years, was very kind in coming to nurse me, and stayed at the cottage for a whole week.

One night, as she was sitting up, the nightingale struck up a loud melodious song, and Ann, who had never heard one before, could not believe it was a bird; so she went out to see, for it was Midsummer, and as light as day; and there sat the nightingale on the trees opposite, pouring out, and continuing to pour out the sweetest and most delicious music.

Owing to the good nursing I received, the skill of the doctor, and the quietness of the cottage, thank God, I did recover from that dangerous

illness; and so considerate was Dr. Holland, and so anxious to spare me unnecessary excitement, that he volunteered as soon as we were ready for the wedding, to take me to church in his own carriage, and give me away himself; and then he added with a nod "in that case you know, nobody else will be wanted."

At this eventful time, we received a letter from our sister Catherine that contained a piece of unexpected news.

We were in the habit of writing to her very often, and the more so since she had left Leicester and gone to a greater distance from us; for Mr. Vaughan had some time ago given up the living of St. Martin's to his brother, and removed to the vicarage of Harpenden, near St. Albans.

Then our sister had resigned the post of governess to Agnes; and through the introduction of Mrs. Uwins, had taken another situation in the family of a rich Quaker, where the salary was high, and the duties were comparatively light.

The letter now come to hand, surprised us with the tidings that she and a foreign gentleman (who resided in the house as tutor) had become engaged to each other; and that he was going back to Switzerland, his native country, to make ready a home for her as his wife.

The news was rather startling, but we looked upon it as a Providential circumstance, that just now, when our movements were uncertain, she should have met with the best protector a woman can hope for—a husband, and have the prospect of so much happiness in the future.

We congratulated her on the fortunate event; and felt relieved from considerable anxiety on her account.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth had not been idle in making enquiries about the Brooksby living, and her letters to the lawyers had been flying through the post, like so many arrows through the air. And she had begun to discuss the subject with Mr. Gregg himself, who felt delighted at so fair a prospect opening unexpectedly before him.

He was in ignorance of our resources, and never for a moment anticipated our being able to lay down the sum required for the living.

But Brooksby was the very parish in all England, he would wish to have, and to be brought again amongst the people who were attached to him, and whom he knew so well. Like many clergymen, he understood little or nothing of business, and did not care to enter into the discussion of pounds, shillings and pence; indeed after his marriage, the whole management of the money matters devolved upon me, and he never wished to know anything about them.

He chose rather to dwell on the fact of our happiness, in being knit together like "a threefold cord," which cannot easily be broken.

But Elizabeth was impatient to get things settled; and as soon as she thought it prudent to leave me, away she went to Leicester, to Samuel Stone, the family lawyer, and put the affair into his hands; telling him, that she held herself quite ready and willing to sign con-

jointly with me, any deed of mortgage that might be required on the Friar Lane property. And then, she stayed at my brother's in West Street, until the arrangement had been made, and the important business successfully carried through.

Miss Gregory (sister to the Miss Gregory who died in our house) returned to Norwich with Elizabeth, and undertook to remain at the cottage, to keep her company, and to assist her, when the time came that we might have to move.

We were indeed a happy party, for I was now well again, and assured by the doctor, that unless I met with some powerful excitement, there was no fear of a return of such an illness.

Miss Gregory soon became very friendly with Mr. Gregg, and wanted to see his church, and to hear him preach, and thought we had been very remiss in not bestirring ourselves to do so before. So I was tempted on Sunday morning to have a fly and drive there, leaving Elizabeth behind, as she wished to hear his farewell sermon, which would be on the following Sunday.

St. Michael's Coslany was a fine old church, and had a beautiful peal of bells; it was in a black situation, down in the depths of the city, far beyond my walking powers; therefore we told the flyman, to be at the door, at the close of the service, to take us home.

We were shown into a pew in front of the reading desk, and as we had said nothing to Mr. Gregg of our intention to come, we noticed that he looked rather pale and surprised when he raised his eyes and saw us. The sermon was a good plain sermon, and decidedly comforting; the subject being, the hold the christian has upon the promises of God, and of deliverance from evil; for the text was that passage in Job, "He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee."

It was very well we had ordered the fly to fetch us, for long before Mr. Gregg had come to the end of the sermon, we heard a rattling noise of hail and rain, like so much shot, upon the leaden roof overhead.

When the service came to a close, we found our faithful cabman waiting for us at the door; and though the porch was full of ladies, tucking up their flounces, and opening their umbrellas, we stepped nimbly through the crowd, and were gone, without giving them time to satisfy their curiosity.

LEAFLET LXIII.—The Gipsy's Prediction.

ON the first of August, 1860, as early as eight o'clock in the morning, we had a very quiet wedding, in the little church of Higham, a hamlet of Norwich, and a mile-and-a-half from the cottage, although I suppose we must have lived in the parish.

I was taken by Dr. Holland, according to his promise, in his brougham, and with a pair of fine horses, while in the second carriage, came Elizabeth the bridesmaid, and Mr. Gregg.

The incumbent, the Rev. Hoste, was ready waiting for us; and he laid the ring upon the book, and everything was done, as Mr. Gregg observed, "properly and in order."

As we stood at the altar, I felt an overpowering sense of gratitude to the Almighty, for having protected us from so many dangers, and guided us through so many difficulties, and now "He had set our feet in a large room."

Since those days, Higham church has been restored, which was then a very forlorn place. Bishop Hall was buried in the middle aisle, near to the pulpit, and the stone that marked the spot had a hideous skeleton sculptured upon it, but let us hope it has long ago disappeared.

We spent the honeymoon at Yarmouth, in apartments that Elizabeth and Miss Gregory had secured for us.

Before we had been there many days, Mrs. Young, who was living in Yarmouth, made her appearance, to congratulate us. Since her husband's death, she had been like a rolling stone, and certainly not gathering any moss.

After drifting about in lodgings in Norwich, until she was tired, she had taken a house in Chapel Field; a pleasant promenade with broad walks, and fine old trees, having seats round them. She furnished the house very comfortably, and overcame in a clever manner, the only annoyance she had to meet.

The field being an open play place, the children used to congregate in the front of her window, and carry on their games. Mrs. Young never reproved them, or said a word to drive them away, but she would station herself at the door, and stand like a statue, fixing her eyes first on one child and then on the other, until she had regularly stared them down; they soon began to move off, and in the end she had no more of their company.

But she grew tired very soon of house-keeping all for herself, so had sold everything up by auction, and was now come to settle—if she could —in lodgings at Yarmouth.

She seemed rather reckless, and informed us that her hopes of a fortune had been dashed. She had sunk a hundred pounds, in taking out a patent for her carriage, named the "comfort," and found she should derive no benefit whatever from her invention, but that another person had improved upon it, and would carry off all the profits.

Yarmouth is a gay and merry place, and before we had been there a week, a Regatta took place; and it was something to see the crowds arriving by the excursion trains, and all in holiday attire.

The boats were advertised to start at twelve, and as Mr. Gregg was fond of boating, he was quite ready to go long before that time. Having a maid with me, I persuaded him not to wait for me; and so off he

went; and to my terror, I saw him at the far end of the Jetty, in such a dense mass of human beings, that I wondered how he would make his way out, and dreaded lest the Jetty might give way, or (more silly still) lest he should be crushed to death.

Guns kept on firing, but no boats were seen to start, and it was nearly two o'clock when I walked down with the maid, to a seat on the Parade; then bang went the final signal, and off shot the boats with the swiftness of an arrow. The excitement and shouting that followed, was indeed uproarious.

Mr. Gregg was soon by my side, and found a place for us on the beach, more private than on the Parade, and there we sat together, and watched the last of the sports, which was called the "duck hunt," and I thought more exciting than the race.

A seaman in a small boat, played the part of the duck, and was allowed so many minutes grace; then a number of other seamen in their boats pursued him, and tried to pull him out; but it was not to be done, for he was like a duck, and the more duckings he got, the better he seemed to like it.

Before we left the sands, two handsome young gipsies came up to us, and offered to tell us our fortunes, if we would only cross their palms with silver; we declined the honour, and so as they moved off, one of them looking back, threw a random shot, and foretold that the "*bride* would be the longest liver."

A favourite amusement of Mr. Gregg's was going into the photographer's room (a mere boarded shed upon the sands) and having our likenesses taken; it was just the proper time for such a performance—and first one would not do, and then another would not do, and a great many had to be taken, before the right one came, that would do.

Such is the difference between the *then* and the *now*, that these portraits, faithful as they were then, cannot now be recognized.

But the most important event of all, was Elizabeth coming over one day with Miss Gregory, and bringing the legal document she had received from Samuel Stone the lawyer; and after making a flourishing little speech to Mr. Gregg, she presented it to him as her gift, and greeted him as the "Rector of Brooksby."

Then came congratulations, and a pressing invitation from Brooksby, from Mr. and Mrs. Charlton of the Hall, urging him to come down there, and get instituted; and as there was no Rectory house, for us to go to, they expressed a hope that we would stay with them, while we were looking out for a residence.

This kind letter elicited a very courteous reply; and at the end of a fortnight, we bade good-bye to Yarmouth, and our daily excursions on the water, and returned once more, and for the last time, to our pretty cottage in Norwich.

In that short interval, it had been re-let, and we must be prepared to give it up on the twenty-ninth of the next month, September.

Yov see old Scarleit's pictvre stand on bie
Bvt at yovr feete there doth his body lye
His gravestone doth his age and death time show
His office by thes tokens yov may know
Second to none for strength and stvrdye limm
A scarebabe mighty voice with visage grim
Hee had interd two qveenes within this place
And this townes hovse holders in his lives space
Twice over: bvt at length his own tvrn came
What hee for others did for him the same
Was done: no dovbt his sovle doth live for aye
In heaven: tho here his body clad in clay

But first of all, Mr. Gregg must go down to Peterboro', and see the Bishop (then Bishop Davies.)

He arrived at the Palace, just at the right moment, when he happened to be at home, and disengaged; and was instituted in due form, kneeling between the Bishop's knees.

Then they had a little conversation about Brooksby and the neighbourhood, and the Bishop said, he had once thought of living at the Hall, as being the central part of the diocese.

The dues were heavy to Mr. Gregg's great disgust; and then he proceeded to Leicester, to get the papers for induction from Archdeacon Boney, who also wanted fees.

Mr. Gregg sent me a drawing from the wall of Peterboro' Cathedral, that may be considered as a curiosity.

It is the figure of an old sexton who died in the year 1594, at the age of ninety-eight. He stands with keys in his hand, and shovel and skull by his side.

The lines beneath the picture are in such old English, as to be difficult to understand.

The Cathedral has been restored, but we believe this ancient memorial of the sexton has not disappeared.

From Leicester, Mr. Gregg went on to Brooksby Hall, to his friends the Charlton's, and was inducted into the living by the Vicar of Frisby, the Rev. W. Jones, and remained Sunday over to read himself in.

There is only one church bell, but Mrs. Charlton's little girls kept on ringing it some long time, in honour of the event.

The kind invitation for Mr. Gregg and myself to stay at the Hall, while looking out for a house, was gladly accepted, and he returned to Norwich only to make the necessary arrangements.

It was the first of September, a fine bright day, when we bade adieu to Norwich, and took the journey down into Leicestershire, our native county.

Part the Third.

The Return into Leicestershire and Married Life.

Contents of Leaflets:—

Brooksby Hall—Shooting Parties—The Home at Syston—The Vicar and his Carpet Bag—An Unexpected Visit from Mrs. Uwins—A Preacher from Norwich—Christmas at Brooksby—The Postman's Knock—A Painful Journey—Consultation of the Doctors—Mrs. Uwins' Dream Fulfilled—A Village Mob—Good Intentions Frustrated—Melton Mowbray—The Kingfishers—A Public Testimonial to Mr. Latham—Sea Breezes at Hunstanton—The Church Congress at Leicester—Days of Sadness—Brooksby Spire Struck by Lightning—High versus Low—Mr. Gregg and the Burglar—Conclusion.

LEAFLET LXIV.—Brooksby Hall.

ON reaching Brooksby, we received the most cordial and hearty welcome, not only from the Squire and his family, but from everybody we saw; for Mr. Gregg having been for two years curate at Hoby and Rotherby, knew every one of the inhabitants of the three villages.

And the best of it was, they all loved him; and on his leaving, which was a great trouble to them, they had put their pence together, and purchased for him a parting gift, in the shape of a writing desk, with a brass plate upon the lid, to tell him that it came with much affection, from "the poor of Hoby."

The Hall at Brooksby was a very charming place, surrounded by fine old trees, and meadows full of grass, so thick and so different from the Norfolk grass, that I positively had to stoop down to feel of it, before I could believe it was grass at all.

Mrs. Charlton was an attractive and beautiful woman, with a soft peach-bloom upon her cheek, and clear fascinating eyes. She had plenty of ready wit, and her manners were frank and genial.

She had a number of little girls, as pretty, and light and agile as so many fairies; and these were the fairies who had rung the church bell on Mr. Gregg's arrival.

And to make it still more lively, a goodly number of guests had been invited, and were staying in the house to meet us.

One was a lady friend from Cambridge, and another a gentleman from near Lincoln, of the name of Shaw, a retired M.D.; but the most lively of the guests was Mr. Jones, the Vicar of Frisby, who used to walk over most evenings, and join us at the dinner-table, and remain in the drawing-room until rather a late hour.

Like all old houses, there was a myth of a ghost attached to the Hall, and Mr. Jones used to do all he could to foster the romance, and make the most of it.

One night, just as we were going to break up, he began one of his tales, and no one must move until he had finished it.

He had the skill of a comedian, as well as the talent of a story-teller, and could always produce a great effect upon his audience.

In a low tone, he began with a description of his father's house in Wales, which opened into the churchyard; there was a conveniently long path from the garden-gate to the church porch; and on this path Mr. Jones (then a young man) used to "pard" backwards and forwards, while in the act of composing his sermons.

On dark nights a farthing rush-light, used to be set in one of the windows, that he might have some clue to guide him home.

One very dark night, he was "parding" as usual, with his head flung backwards, and his hands in his pockets, when all at once, he was startled by the sound of breathing,—who could be there? who could it be?

He fought vigorously against the feeling of distrust, and walked resolutely on, but it certainly got louder and louder, and nearer and nearer, there was no mistake, and Mr. Jones confessed, as a matter of prudence, to drawing a little nearer to his home.

(At this point Mr. Jones got up and began to walk about, and ran his fingers through his hair, as though he would have it stand on end.)

But there came a clank of chains,—could it be one of those unclean spirits who dwell among the tombs, and no man can bind, no not with chains? And with a great deal of acting, he tried to make us believe that it was.

But then, just as he was about "to cut and run"—as he expressed it —came the welcome bray of an ass! And here he suddenly gave such a sonorous bray, that it took us all by surprise, and made us start off our seats.

What an absurd ghost! And what more ignoble spirit could there be found to scare him?

This story came to an end amidst a thunder of applause, and in another minute the story-teller had said good-night and taken his departure.

Mr. Jones was a great talker, and Mr. Gregg a good listener, so they agreed well together.

Brooksby was a parish of grass land, eight hundred acres or more, and the inhabitants were for the most part farm labourers; and on this account Mr. Jones was always pressing upon Mr. Gregg, how desirable, and how profitable it would be for him to fill up his time with other duty.

Mr. Gregg heard all he had to say, over and over again, with perfect coolness, and at last replied, that he had the warrant of scripture for staying at home and taking care of his wife; and then he brought out a small pocket bible, and read a text which nobody present knew anything about, or at least, did not remember.

"When a man hath taken a new wife he shall not go to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken," (*Deut. 24*, v. 5.) and with that, the argument ended.

When Sunday came, the service was in the afternoon, and the little church was full to overflowing; and God forgive me for feeling proud of my husband, and the geniality of the people towards him.

In the evening, we had sacred music, and Mrs. Charlton's sister, Fanny, whose voice was as clear and loud as a professional's, gave us some very good singing.

The next morning, I walked over with Mr. Gregg to Hoby, and called upon the Miss Simpkin's, who had been most kind to him while he was a curate there, and whose brother was churchwarden at Brooksby. They were quite of the old school that is fast dying out.

Before the introduction of the new Poor Law, they had been accustomed to dispense the parish pay at their own door; and how much

better it was for the poor! For the old and infirm were always invited into the kitchen, to be fed, as well as comforted.

Another of the friends of Mr. Gregg's I had to see, was Mr. Hames, the Squire at Rotherby Hall. And some little time after, when we were settled in a house of our own, we had to drive over to dine there, and spent a most agreeable evening with his family and a party of friends.

In those days, agricultural depression had not been heard of, and plenty crowned the board.

The entrance-hall at Brooksby was spacious enough to accommodate any number of guests; and a ball must be given to the tenantry on the Squire's estates, in honour of the new Rector.

A band of music of the antique kind (in fact, a church band) with violins, and bass viols, and cornets and drum, was stationed in a convenient place,—the hall cleared of its great billiard table, and every other obstacle;—and some hundred or more persons, dressed in their Sunday best, were waiting for us, when we walked arm in arm into the hall.

The band struck up a merry tune, and everybody seemed to be in the best of humours. Of course I had not danced since the days of school—but no matter, it was arranged to have only country dances, suitable for country people—so, hands across and back again, down the middle and up again, was to be the order of the day.

The Squire's lady was led off by Mr. Gregg, followed by the Squire and myself. Certainly it was the most simple and enjoyable fête imaginable.

The company dispersed sometime before twelve o'clock, and went off in very high spirits, having given three cheers for the Squire, and ditto for Mr. Gregg.

We learnt afterwards how it was that Mr. Gregg could trip so well on "light fantastic toe."

When he was in London, curate to Mr. Montgomery, he had felt awkward and countrified at not knowing how to dance, as he used to accompany Mrs. and Miss Montgomery to assemblies and parties where dancing was in vogue.

So he determined to learn, and took lessons from an accomplished Frenchman, who happened to reside in the Percy Chapel district, and earned a livelihood by his teaching.

Nor was dancing the only accomplishment Mr. Gregg attempted while residing in London; he had taken some lessons in music, and on rare occasions, we could get him to play a few tunes on the piano.

He had a soft musical voice, but always preferred to sing sacred songs, and to conclude with a Gregorian chant or two from the old book he had used at College.

LEAFLET LXV.—Shooting Parties.

AFTER the ball, several shooting parties were arranged for, and expeditions to the Squire's preserves at Thrussington and the neighbourhood.

To one of these parties, Dr. Noble was invited, and it would have been a pleasure to me to meet him again; for I had known him from the days, when as a school girl, I used to stroll about the garden of the Frisby Vicarage, with his mother, and listen to her praises of her sons.

But alas for the uncertainty of human life! He had not returned from a tour in Spain, as was expected; but bad news had come instead.

The Asiatic cholera had broken out in the hotel, where he was staying, and without fear, he had been willing to try his skill upon the patients; but in his zeal for their good, the pestilence had seized him, and with numbers more, he had fallen before it.

He was one of those daring practitioners, who think but little of infection; and on one occasion quoted the fact, that in the hospitals in the East, men had been bribed to sleep in the infected beds of cholera and plague patients, and yet had taken no harm.

After a day's sport at Thrussington, the Squire brought two of his friends in to dinner, a Captain Haycock and his brother.

The contrast between them was very great. The one who was a farmer was so shy that he would have preferred to remain in the stables, instead of coming to dine, or to see the ladies, had our host permitted him; while the Captain, who had lately returned from India, was full of life and spirits. He was hardly reconciled at present to losing his myriad of servants, and being obliged in some measure, to wait upon himself.

And then, he described a dance, and the splendid dresses of the ladies, glittering in jewels; but said that in spite of every precaution in the shape of curtains, he had seen the floor of the ball-room completely covered with the beautiful wings of butterflies and moths; such as are only met with here, in cabinets; so much are these insects attracted by the light of the lamps.

We took several drives to the villages round Brooksby, and were on the look out for houses.

There was one to be had at Kirby, though we did not take it, as the dead country had no charm for me; but we did an unexpected stroke of business there, and one that we never regretted.

A gentlemen who was about to leave the village, wished to dispose of his pleasure-boat, and on very easy terms, handed it over to Mr. Gregg.

It was a new source of amusement, and we went out on the water every day, as far as the canal locks would allow.

There were two pair of oars, but the Squire being rather random, Mr. Gregg preferred to use one pair only, and manage the boat himself, and he taught me how to steer.

The Squire had two or three narrow escapes of an accident. One day, he jumped into the boat and flung himself on the seat, without looking where he was going, and fell head first backwards, with such a bump, that if his hair had not been very thick indeed, his skull might have suffered from a good bruising.

Another day, when we were nearing the bank, he did not wait for us to come close up, but made a leap, and found himself up to the middle in mud; it was he said "no matter," and scrambled out, and with his pocket knife, began to scrape himself down, laughing all the time, and begging us not to tell his wife, and then he should not mind.

That September was a glorious month, for the corn was being gathered in; the land about the Hall was all pasturage, but once we got amongst the reapers.

They instantly came to the Squire for "innings," and offered him the sickle; he quietly put his hand in his pocket and gave them some silver, but not so Mr. Gregg, he took the sickle, and amidst the cheers of the men began to reap.

Yes, thanks to his Aunt Martha, he knew how to do all kinds of farm-work; and that knowledge was a great advantage to him through life.

But now, Dr. Shaw began to complain of being ill, as he said, from the rich puddings and pies; and for a few days he did not make his appearance. He was keeping his bed, and wanted the piano to be played in the drawing-room below, that he might be soothed and entertained, while he could do nothing.

Mr. Gregg was, however, very much gratified to find that he liked to hear the airs, that I could play, from Mozart's Operas, better than the dance and polka music of the young ladies; for it so happened that we had been without a piano at the cottage, and Mr. Gregg was not aware, until after we were married, that I could play at all.

Mrs. Charlton was never very long without a surgeon in attendance, and this was Mr. Robinson of Syston.

He had been a friend of Mr. Gregg's at Hoby, and of course we enquired about a house; when he informed us, there would be one to let at Syston, that might do, as it was out of the village, on the Barkby Road.

We had already driven over to Melton, and found there was no house to be had there, except in the Market Place, and that was out of the question. And now, Mr. Charlton drove us over to Syston, in the waggonette; and though the village seemed to me a wild and uncouth place, I had to make the best of it, and consented to live there, in the house on the Barkby Road.

LEAFLET LXVI.—The Home at Syston.

IN this fleeting and uncertain world, how soon can joy be turned into sorrow, and gladness into mourning.

One morning, as Mr. Gregg and I were sitting in our own room,—which was spacious enough, and furnished with all the appliances of a library, we heard a scream, that made me start up in alarm.

Mr. Gregg tried to persuade me there was nothing the matter, for he dare say it was only "the girls," (the name by which he generally called Mrs. Charlton's handsome sisters).

However, we came out on the landing to see, and met Mrs. Charlton coming up the stairs to us, in great agitation, with her hands clenched, and her face bathed in tears.

Bad news had come, though it was some minutes before we could understand what it was.

It appeared that a note had been brought up by train to say that Mrs. Charlton's father had fallen down in a fit, on the platform of the railway station next to Nottingham.

Poor Mrs. Charlton seemed unable to control herself, and kept on repeating the words,—"I know he is dead—You know he is dead—I'm sure he is dead;" until her husband came, and put his arm round her, and proposed that she should lose no time, but get ready at once, and go with her sisters by the next train, in the hope of seeing their father alive, or at all events of knowing the worst.

Then came the scramble and hurry and preparation; but their things were soon got together, and they were quite ready to start by the time the train came in.

Mr. Charlton was to stay behind, and Mrs. Charlton, in the midst of her grief, begged that we would remain with him for the immediate moment; especially as our sister Catherine had arranged to spend the following day with us, and she would not like her to be disappointed.

Catherine arrived as we expected; but her visit to Brooksby, glad as I was to see her, was at a most unfortunate moment;—"When the lights were fled, and the garlands dead, and all the guests departed."

The news received by the morning's post that Mrs. Charlton had been too late to see her father alive, cast a gloom over the household; still the Squire received our sister most cordially, and tried to make her visit as pleasant as he could, and both he and Mr. Gregg stayed at home, to help me entertain her.

September was drawing to a close, but we could not enter the house at Syston, till the tenth of October (old Michaelmas); and as our furniture was coming by train to Syston, Mr. Gregg proposed that we should go there and receive it; and see it stowed safely away into a spacious loft, that belonged to the house we were going to enter.

And so we did, and were accommodated by the landlady with rooms, as lodgers, meanwhile.

Elizabeth came to us here, and the pleasure of meeting her was great indeed; we were once more together, and I felt able to bear anything, and to do anything, if only she were beside me.

But her visit was only a brief one; our present lodgment, was really a makeshift, so it was advisable for her to go to Leicester, and stay the while with our brother.

We also went for the day to Leicester, and called upon Mr. Stone, the family lawyer, who shook Mr. Gregg warmly by the hand, and congratulated him on being made a Rector.

We walked next into the Friar Lane, to our old house, and called upon Mr. Paget, whose lease was coming to an end.

He gave us a very hospitable reception, and though the rent was barely due, he opened his desk, and handed us the cheque for it, which we did not refuse.

As we had still a few days to spare, Mr. Gregg thought it a favourable opportunity for taking me into the Vale of Belvoir, to spend the time with his own family.

His mother was a dear good woman, and they were all extremely kind and attentive to me, but the absence of many of the comforts, I had been all my life accustomed to, made me feel ill at ease.

Very shortly, we came back to Syston to superintend the arrangement of our new home;—and what an enchanted spot *home* is, and in our case how highly was it appreciated.

The poor forlorn village after the city we had left, seemed as nothing, and the barn-like church, with its stove-pipe right across it, or the curate with his hammering voice, seemed as nothing. We were together the "threefold cord," as Mr. Gregg had called us. And it was enough, since love spread our table, and presided at our board.

LEAFLET LXVII.—The Vicar and his Carpet Bag.

THE first question asked by those who settle in a new place (particularly in a village) is this—What about the clergman?—Is he a good man? And then follows another query—is he a pleasant man? For religion being grafted on a crab-stick, the two are not necessarily combined.

The Vicar of Syston was the Rev. Edward Morgan; and when we arrived, he was on the continent.

A farmer in the village,—Farmer Bennett, whose services with horse and cart, we had been glad to enlist, told us that when the Vicar was first appointed, evangelical clergymen were scarce; and a crowd of the

parishioners met him half way on the road to Leicester, with flags, and a band of music, to give him a cordial reception. But by this time the people had become tired of him, for he was very old, and had been Vicar nigh upon fifty years.

And then we heard a good word about Mrs. Morgan, whose death, some few years back, had been felt as a great loss, both to rich and poor.

Mr. Bennett went on to tell us, that whenever the Vicar found himself in any perplexity ("muddle" was the word) he always took up his carpet bag, and departed.

At the present moment he had come to a dead lock with the Wesleyans.

He had been conducting meetings, for united prayer, in the church school-room, and on his invitation, the Wesleyans had attended them; but when the return invitation came, and he was asked to join them in their meetings, conducted by their own ministers, in their own room,—here was the difficulty.

What could he do? He could not go, and he could not refuse; so had discreetly taken his carpet bag, and was off to the continent.

Before we were well unpacked, or had fitted the things into their new places, we had as much as we could do with the manuscripts and proofs.

The editor of the Quiver had accepted the musical story of "Mark Warren"; and it was coming for correction, almost by every post; also, another tale called "Living or Dead," which had been sent, on Mr. Gregg's recommendation, to Mr. Stevens, editor of the "Family Herald," was coming too.

And besides these, two or three manuscripts had to be finished for the Religious Tract Society,—"Steps up the Ladder," and "Dame Buckle and her Pet Johnny," so altogether we were very busy.

But in spite of this, we had to go and spend a day at Humberstone, where Mr. and Mrs. William Kirby were down from London on a visit, and where there was a regular family gathering.

With my brother and his party came our sister Catherine, who was staying in Leicester with them, and making preparations for her marriage; for it had been arranged that Monsieur Coulin should come over to England at Christmas (his holiday time) and after having the wedding in London, take her back to Switzerland, to their new home.

Accordingly, when Christmas came, my brother, and sister Elizabeth made the journey up to town, to her wedding; when he gave her away, and Elizabeth acted the part of bridesmaid.

Unfortunately, it happened to be most severe weather, and Elizabeth caught a chill, and had an illness, and kept her bed for some weeks, after she got home.

Of course we had neither Dr. Quin nor Dr. Holland to fly to, but Mr. Gill, one of the village doctors, was a very pleasant little man, and with his care and attention (to say nothing of his composing pills) brought her round.

There was no such thing as being dull at Syston, for Mrs. Charlton was always coming over in the waggonette, to see us, with either her sisters, or her children. And when she spent the evening with us, I used to be called upon to perform upon the piano, for the entertainment of the company in general, and Mr. Gregg in particular.

About five o'clock one afternoon, as the days were getting lighter and longer, I saw a stooping figure with carpet bag in hand, pass the window, and stop at the door.

It was the Vicar, just come from the railway station, and so anxious to shake hands with the new comers, that he had not yet been home.

His appearance was unprepossessing, but his greeting was so cordial and so kind, that I felt at home with him at once; and despite his unpopularity in the place, and his many strange vagaries, we were fast friends as long as he lived.

LEAFLET LXVIII.—An Unexpected Visit from Mrs. Twins.

SPRING was fairly come, and we had the benefit of living out of the village, on the Barkby Road; which in those days, had neither factory nor houses, to spoil it, but was a pleasant green lane, bordered on either side, with trees and hawthorn hedges.

Our front windows looked across the lane, into our own orchard, planted with an avenue of apple trees, bearing very fine fruit of several different sorts, and now in full blossom. A broad gravel path down the centre of the orchard led to an arbour, where we used to sit, and enjoy ourselves.

And our Norwich friends Mr. and Mrs. Rust came down to see us, and we spent a day at Brooksby together.

That was very delightful, but Mr. Rust would not make himself easy without going to Leicester, to see the old churches, and all the sights that were to be seen there;—as for instance, the curious old wall near St. Nicholas Church, called the Jewry Wall, which is more than eight feet wide, and built of Lydian bricks, evidently by the Romans.

Also the place bearing the name of the "Holy Bones," in reality the site of two small chapels of which two arches are left, and look like ovens, blackened with fire.

The superstition lingers that saints and martyrs have been burnt there; but more probably pagan sacrifices have been offered, and that may account for the quantity of large bones, that have been dug up, and are no doubt the remains of animals offered on the altars.

Mr. Rust was very much interested in the Holy Bones, and also in a tesselated pavement, of Diana and her stag, (that we went to see in a cellar in Northgate Street) which has since been removed to the Museum.

Mr. and Mrs. Rust were going on to Derbyshire, where he had undertaken to do a clergyman's duty for a month, and to live in the Vicarage house. He expected it would be very pleasant, and gave us a pressing invitation to come there for a holiday.

However he was soon disenchanted, and wrote us word that the parish he was in, was six miles from any railway, and double that distance from a town, and that unless he went out and foraged the country round, he did not see how or where, the supply of food was to be obtained. The Vicar had left a full larder, but Mr. Rust observed, they had come to their last joint of meat—a leg of mutton, and unless they could catch a sheep and kill it, they should not have a leg to stand upon.

So of course we declined to add to their troubles, and felt ourselves better off at home.

But one afternoon, I was roused from my siesta, by a carriage driving up to the door, with a lady inside, and a trunk on the roof.

And when I ran out to see who it was, I was surprised indeed, to find Mrs. Uwins, in a state of excitement, almost amounting to trepidation.

When she caught sight of me, she said hurriedly, with some confusion "You here! How is this? I heard you were ill and not likely to live, so I have come from Staines to see, and would not wait for the train to bring me on from Leicester, but took the first conveyance I could find."

We were very glad to see Mrs. Uwins, who was looking remarkably well, but Mrs. Brown's prediction flashed into our minds, and we felt a suspicion that her words might be coming true.

And our suspicions were more than verified, for after tea, as she sat upon the sofa resting herself, she began to tell us how she was persecuted by the Earl of C——, and that in the disguise of a cabman, he drove backwards and forwards, in front of her house, all day long, watching for a favourable opportunity to carry her off,—indeed on the previous night he must have been successful, had not the Almighty rained down from heaven fire and brimstone for her deliverance, and she added, it ran along the ground, as we are told it did in the days of old.

At this juncture, she looked first at me, and then at Elizabeth, and reading the expression on our faces, stopped short in her story, and nothing could induce her to say another word.

She was sane again in a moment; and when Mr. Gregg came in, and spent the evening with us, no one could be more agreeable than she was.

And she asked him as a favour, to mow a path for her in the orchard, in the cool shade, by the hedge side, where she could walk backwards and forwards on the turf, in preference to the gravel.

He was only too glad to oblige her, and she used to take her walk there for an hour or more every day without being disturbed.

She had a taste for composition, and had just completed a poem, that we very much admired; it was the story in blank verse, of the Exodus of the children of Israel, from Egypt. Unfortunately it was one of the things she afterwards burnt.

The weather was sunny and showery and windy, and as the trees blew about, the following lines had suggested themselves to her, and she read them aloud for our benefit.

The Trees Clap their hands.

THE silver sound of rain upon the leaves,
A thousand similes the fancy weaves.
Soft music, tinkling rills, ringing from fairy lands
Of tiny bells. The clapping of small hands,
As if the trees, within the woods, rejoiced.
The floods did clap their hands, the trees their hands
Did softly clap, as when the prophet voiced
The coming of the Lord. The Lord shall come
Like rain on new-mown grass, like showers on lands;
And earth break into singing. So the woods
Sang to our ears that day. So, to our eyes
The beech trees clapped their hands. To us, the floods
Did clap their hands. To us, the singing rise,
And brought those joyful words into our memories.

LEAFLET LXIX.—A Preacher from Norwich.

IN many respects it was very pleasant to have Mrs. Uwins with us, but every day, the stubborn fact of her derangement, became more apparent.

She was always late at the breakfast table, and regularly offered the excuse, that My Lady this—or My Lord that,—had been conversing with her, and so hindered her time, and prevented her from getting dressed.

One day, an old friend came from Leicester, who had known us from our childhood, when to our amazement, Mrs. Uwins took up the vase of flowers that stood in the centre of the table, and flung them, water and all, into the fireplace, saying—"here Mary, wine, bring her some wine." And after the wine had been adminstered, she bustled our friend upstairs to her bedroom, where they remained locked in, all the afternoon; indeed for the whole of the time she had to stay.

Something of this sort was happening every day; until I became so uneasy that I could not rest at night, for fear of an accident, in the shape of a pistol being fired off, or a window flung wide open, and the sight of Sarah throwing herself out.

Elizabeth and I considered what it was the best for us to do, under the circumstances, and we both agreed that we were not strong enough to grapple with the situation.

So we consulted our uncle, and our cousin John, and asked them to give us their help, in the event of Mrs. Uwins becoming so much worse, as to need restraint; but after they had retired to the great dining-room, and talked the matter over between themselves, they came to the conclusion to decline any interference; as they observed (with perfect truth as we afterwards found) the trouble, and the risk, and the outlay of money would be on the one side, and no profit and no thanks on the other.

The only thing for the immediate moment, that we could do, was to persuade Mrs. Uwins, to go back again to her home at Staines.

And so she did, but refused every offer we pressed upon her, of having a lady to return with her, to live with her and take care of her.

The anxiety however was almost, if not quite, as great, after she was gone, as while she was with us; but her letters came most regularly and rather comforted us.

In one, she thanks us cordially for the profound wisdom and truth of our advice (respecting the lady we wished her to have) but declared she was busy at work, and had no need of a companion.

And by way of illustration, she related the fable of the silkworm, who stays at home, shut up in her cocoon, but all the while working for the benefit of a future generation. "And now," she added, "I must go on steadily working, and if I have dropped a stitch in my work, I must pick it up again, and not undo all I have done already."

Such was the style in which she wrote, and therefore we rested on our oars, and continued to hope, although it was almost against hope.

But June had come, and Trinity Sunday was at hand, when the curate's engagement at Syston, would expire, and he was about to leave.

We were invited to spend an evening at the Vicarage; and when tea was over, Mr. Morgan walked round the garden with me, and pointed out with some pride, his crop of currants and gooseberries and other fruit.

And then he began to say, that he wondered what he should do with so many services on his hands, and no curate; on which I boldly proposed he should ask Mr. Gregg to help him; it seemed quite a new idea, for he looked slyly at me and said "Mr. Gregg is a *rector* you know, and I am only a poor *vicar*, so I should be under him and that would never do."

However on Saturday night, after he had been to Leicester, Mr. Morgan called at our house, and begged Mr. Gregg, as a favour, to take at any rate, one of the services for him on the next day.

And nobody can tell, what a comfort it was to us, to hear Mr. Gregg preaching in Syston Church.

I might say these Saturday evening visits and the Sunday engagements, went on regularly, week after week, and month after month, for more than a year.

At church, we sat by invitation in the Squire's pew, and one Sunday to my great delight, my brother and cousin John, came over from Leicester, and joined us there.

Mr. Gregg was going to preach the annual sermon for the Missionary Society, and two ladies (of whom I was one) were to hold the plates.

It was a simple service, and the village folk were very attentive; but I can never forget the solemn manner in which the sermon was brought to a close.

Mr. Gregg said it was not for him to know the circumstances of those he had been addressing,—whether or not they were able to contribute anything towards the society for sending teachers into heathen lands, in the hope of saving souls—but he could say to each one before him—however poor he might be—that he had a soul of his own to save, and now was the day of salvation; and begged him not to delay, lest he might perchance see multitudes coming from the east and the west, and the north and the south, and find *himself* cast out.

The Squire who accommodated us with his great square pew, was Mr. Moore, and told us frankly, that he did not want it himself, as he never went to a place of worship.

He was a gentleman, and lived in a large house on the village green, but his habits were rather peculiar,—as for instance, he was fond of sitting up at night till a very late hour, we supposed reading or wrapt in meditation.

One night however, or rather in the small hours of the morning, he had an adventure that excited all the inhabitants of the place.

As he sat by the fire smoking, in what might be called his study, he heard a mysterious footstep in the room overhead; it startled him, but he was sure he could not be mistaken, and cautiously came into the hall to look.

Yes—there on the mat, at the foot of the stairs, he saw a pair of heavy boots, as if they had been carelessly thrown down; and their owner he knew could not be far off.

So without giving any alarm or making any noise whatever, he stealthily returned to the study, and opening the door of a cabinet, took out a Spanish rapier, an old-fashioned weapon that was kept there as a curiosity.

With this in his hand, he mounted the staircase, and met the man he was in search of, carrying away a sword that belonged to him.

Without hesitation he plunged the rapier into the poor fellow's side, who almost immediately fell fainting and wounded at his feet.

Of course the village was roused, and the doctor had to be sent for; and as soon as it was light enough, the culprit was carried off in a cart, on a straw bed, to the Leicester Infirmary.

When he was able to be moved, he had to undergo a sentence of imprisonment, but he had been found to be a deserter and was fetched away with an escort.

Mr. Gregg had become popular with the parishioners, and they were anxious for him to continue taking the services all the winter; so they bestirred themselves to get the church lighted with gas, in order that he might be able to have an evening duty.

Mr. Adcock alone declined to subscribe, on the ground that it was a bad thing for the boys and girls to have light enough to look at each other.

Fortunately for us, Mr. Gregg had been to Leicester, and bought a pony and carriage all complete; so that he could drive to Ratcliffe or Ragdale or wherever else he was wanted.

But just about this time a number of clergymen who were esteemed popular preachers, undertook to go from place to place, and give a service in the Parish churches; they were called "home missionaries," and the Rev. Evans, of St. Stephens', Norwich, volunteered to be one.

He came down to Syston, and we went to meet him, and take tea with him at the Vicarage. He was by no means a stranger to us, and we fully appreciated his ministry; and had been in the habit of attending his church as long as we could be accommodated with a seat, but not being parishioners, we were obliged to give up our sittings to some new comers, who were.

The service he conducted that evening was a great success, and drew a large congregation.

He was so clear in the divisions of his subject—so eloquent—and best of all, so affectionate,—that I can remember what he said as if it were but yesterday.

There were, so to speak, three links in the chain of his argument—the Grace of *God*—bestowed upon *man*—through *Jesus Christ* (see *Cor. I.* v. 174).

And though his discourse was very much longer than usual, no one seemed weary, and no one's attention seemed to flag.

And before he concluded, he said he would relate an anecdote of what happened under his own eyes; and his hearers might find the application of it after he was gone.

He was coming home from London to Norwich, by the mail coach, and as it was before the time of railways, he was going to travel all night. Before starting, and while they were still in the hotel-yard, he heard a colloquy between the guard and one of the outside passengers, to the effect that the guard must be sure to wake him at Dereham or some mid-way place, and set him down there; for he was not going all the way to Norwich.

Of course the guard said he would; but the man not satisfied with that, made him promise over and over again, to give him a good shaking and rouse him from his slumbers.

In early morning, the coach arrived safely at the end of the journey, and the first thing Mr. Evans heard on alighting, was a string of violent

abuse, and when he looked to see what was the matter, this very outside passenger was doubling his fist at the guard, and threatening him in no measured terms, because he had brought him all the way to Norwich, instead of setting him down at Dereham.

And then Mr. Evans waited for a minute to hear the guard's reply, which was this—"Indeed sir, it is not my fault, I shook you, and did all I could to wake you but you *would not wake.*

LEAFLET LXX.—Christmas at Brooksby.

THAT winter was very severe, but we went by early train to Brooksby, and spent Christmas Day at the Hall.

There was morning service in the church, and we had the pleasure of seeing all the farm-labourers present, most of them with their wives and children.

Mr. Gregg gave to each of them a Christmas-box, in the shape of a bottle of red Tarragona wine; and those with thrifty wives made it last them a long time.

But a Christmas treat was in store for the little ones at the Hall. All children prefer to play with a grown up person, provided he can accommodate himself to their child-life; and in the evening the children were in an ecstacy of delight, at getting Mr. Gregg to play with them.

The room was very large and gave plenty of scope for their proceedings; and as Mrs. Charlton and I sat talking over the fire, and not appearing to know what was going on,—we were amused to see Mr. Gregg stretched all his length on the sofa, with a white pinafore tucked under his chin, by way of a bib,—he was personating a sick child, and little Augusta was standing over him, with wine glass and spoon, giving him his medicine.

And when this had been taken, she suddenly ran up to her mamma, and throwing her arms round her neck, exclaimed, "Oh mamma, I have but one friend, in the world, and that is Mr. Gregg!"

One of Mrs. Charlton's handsome sisters, came down that Christmas on a visit to Brooksby.

She was nick-named the "Empress" on account of her fine face and stately figure. The gentleman, to whom she was engaged, came to see her, and stayed some little time, and made himself agreeable to us all.

They wished to be married in the pretty little church, close at hand; but Mrs. Charlton said she had too many sisters to begin with weddings, and declined, though I tried to persuade her to consent.

The Empress with all her beauty, wanted discretion, and began to play practical jokes upon her intended.

She had worked a birthday present for him in the shape of a pair of slippers, but when he thought he was going to receive them, she pretended they were not finished, and that he must wait for them a little longer, and then in another minute produced them, and said it was "all a hoax."

He did not like it, and told her, he had rather she did not lie, even in joke, or he should never know when to trust her. But she would not be easy without more tricks; and after he had gone back to London, she telegraphed to tell him she was dangerously ill, and he must come to her without delay.

This foolish act broke the engagement, and prevented her lover from wishing any longer to make her his wife.

Her letters and presents were returned, and every effort to renew the correspondence failed.

She even took a journey up to town, and paid him a visit at his office, and on her knees besought his forgiveness. But it was all in vain, he was quite obdurate and repulsed all her advances.

Let this be a warning to all young ladies, not to play with edged tools in the shape of falsehood and foolery.

LEAFLET LXXI.—The Postman's Knock.

THE long cold month of January was past, and St. Valentine's Day came in very differently to the fun and frolic of Norwich; but still we had a show of bright coloured crocuses in the garden, and a scent of violets filled the air.

The village postman is always an important personage to be looked for, and expected every day with interest,—for nobody can tell beforehand, what a day may bring forth.

One morning he brought us a letter from Mrs. Uwins, that rejoiced our hearts, and made us think that all her troubles, and ours too, were coming to an end.

She informed us, she was about to marry an artist, holding an excellent position, and who had been a friend of Mr. Uwins'.

Elizabeth was to act as bridesmaid, and instructed to come to Staines without delay, and not to trouble about her dress, as that would be provided, with the bridal trousseau at one of the court milliners.

Of course Elizabeth was very happy to accept the invitation; and in spite of the cold February morning, we both went with her to the station and saw her off for Staines.

The next day Saturday, we had a line, to let us know that she was safely come to the end of her journey. And then she says,—"the bridegroom is

rich, keeps his carriage, and is making good settlements. The wedding is fixed for Friday."

On reading the cheering news, we determined to make a feast-day of Friday, and to have plum pudding, and a regular treat of nice things.

But our exhiliration did not last long; by Tuesday's post, we had a letter, the contents of which came upon us like an earthquake, or the explosion of a bomb. It ran thus—

"DEAR MARY,—

To my horror, I find Sarah's wedding is all a 'South Sea Bubble.' It seems hardly possible, when she told me the bridegroom said this, and said that,—it was no such thing—it was the voices which she fancies she hears, and believes they come from him,—that have hatched up the plot.

He has never made her an offer, or written to her, or been near the house, so is quite innocent of guile. I want to have a comfortable person to take care of her, but she will not hear of it—nothing will do but a husband; and of all manias the marrying mania is the worst.

Last night, we opened the boxes of wedding clothes—they are only fit for a bride,—it was a heart-aching business to look at them; but such is life! There were two bride cakes,—and would you believe it? Sarah locked herself up in her own room, cut one of the cakes and ate a good slice of it."

For myself, I hardly knew what step to take, and felt it impossible for me to proceed without the advice of a friend. It was a delicate matter in which to involve Mr. Gregg, and I wished to spare him as much as I could; so I made a confidant of my cousin John, and talked the affair over with him, and asked him what would be the best thing for us to do.

He seemed very much concerned, and kindly said, "let Mrs. Uwins come and stay with us for a time, that we may see how she goes on."

This was indeed, a most welcome invitation; and before the end of a week, the house at Staines was shut up, Elizabeth was at home again, and Mrs. Uwins in good hands and safe keeping.

To have Elizabeth back again repaid me all the anxiety I had suffered. We felt we could not be happy apart, and that to be separated would be a living death.

But it was a good thing for us just then, to have our attention taken off our trouble about Mrs. Uwins, and our minds fully occupied with the book writing.

The story of "Mark Warran" had run its course through the "Quiver," and we had forwarded to the Editor, the opening chapters of another tale, entitled "Deepdale Vicarage," and were waiting for his reply of "yes" or "no."

But one morning the post brought the three first chapters in print with the pleasing intelligence that "more copy was wanted."

We contrived together to weave the plot, as we went along; and Elizabeth had the original faculty so strongly developed that it was but little trouble to her, to write the chapters week by week, and we ran before the printers the whole of the numbers through.

Many of the characters in "Deepdale Vicarage" were drawn from life;—the big Countess herself had an original in a Squire's lady in the neighbourhood, who frequently drove past our house in the great family chariot.

And the boy Phil, with his eccentricities, was in reality a doctor's son who could not be made to learn either Latin or Greek, but used to carry a bag of ferrets about with him; and when he stopped at our door to enquire how we were, never failed to enquire whether we had any rats that he might be allowed to catch.

The two churchwardens,—Simon Crosskeys, and his coadjuter, were real churchwardens, and but slightly exaggerated characters.

These personages have long since passed away, and the whole band of officials connected with the country churches have undergone a sharp process of revision.

While we were still at work on "Deepdale Vicarage," we were putting the finishing touches to an exciting tale for the "Family Herald," called "Cecy's Marriage."

The moral of which is, that a mother must never expect any comfort from a spoilt child, but try to bring up her daughters in the way she intends them to go.

Our friends used often to cross-question us about the way we had of writing together, as if we were not two persons but one. Elizabeth's reply was always the same—that she could knock in a nail, but it required Mary to clench it.

LEAFLET LXXII.—A Painful Journey.

MRS. UWINS made a long stay in the country with her cousin John, and we were most grateful for the kindness shown her; and felt how true is the old adage—"a friend in need, is a friend in deed."

There was a great deal of going backwards and forwards to visit her, and we heard from her nearly every day; and although we perceived every now and then, that her mind was not quite evenly balanced, we began to hope that it might recover.

During one of her flying visits to us, I drove her over one Sunday to Brooksby Church, to hear Mr. Gregg preach. She admired the Hall and the gardens very much; and enjoyed the simplicity of the service; for we both felt how airy and pleasant the church was, with its wide-open door, through which we could see the waiving boughs of the trees, and scent the fragrance of the flowers.

Mrs. Uwins then paid a number of visits amongst her friends.

One of these friends was the Rev. Edward Vaughan, at Harpenden; and here she took pleasant lodgings for a time, in what once used to be the clergyman's house, which was a very picturesque place,—as she says, "of the old England sort, and a full mile away from the clatter of any railway."

In one of her letters, she descants on the charming incidents of country life that she could not step out without seeing;—"the cows drinking in the clear oval pond, under the shadow of the trees, together with the ducks, pigs, donkeys, and groups of children;—carts, and boys on ponies, varied by heaps of timber lying about;—and stonemasons going backwards and forwards to their work upon the church. And besides all these, the strawplaiters walking about, or standing at their doors, plaiting straw, for that is the staple trade of the place."

She went back to Staines very much recruited both in body and mind; and a friend—a lady from Germany went to visit her, and stayed most of the winter through.

On returning home, Mrs. Uwins took up her brush, and made several water-coloured drawings;—some of them flowers from nature,—to be sent in the spring, to the Ladies' Exhibition.

But alas! bright as the prospect seemed, for her the evil day was only put off, and too soon to come.

Early one Monday morning, we received one telegram after another, in rapid succession from London; from Mr. Uwins' old friend and lawyer, Mr. Beaumont; who it seems had written to us a couple of days before,—but there being no delivery on Sunday, his letter had not been received.

He begged us to come without delay, as neither himself nor his partner, Mr. Thompson could be responsible for Mrs. Uwins' property, or personal safety any longer.

We telegraphed a reply, and started by the next train for Leicester, where we had to wait a considerable time before we could get on to London. But the "mitigation" was having Mr. Gregg with me to help me to bear it.

Poor Elizabeth was left ill in bed, and the only "mitigation" (as old Humphrey styles it) in her case seemed to be, that the "little doctor" as we used to call him, was a friend, and would take the greatest possible care of her. I also sent a note by train to Leicester to our pretty sister-in-law, begging her to go over to Syston, and do what she could towards getting Elizabeth well again.

We arrived safely in town, and that we might lose no time, we took a cab at the station and drove at once to the lawyer's office, in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Mr. Beaumont seemed in a state of anxiety, for he was an elderly man, and felt afraid lest anything should prevent our coming, or that any mischief might happen to Mrs. Uwins before we arrived.

Mr. Thompson the junior partner, received us in the same friendly way, and after pressing upon us wine and biscuits (the only thing they had in the office) he brought forward a packet of letters received from Mrs. Uwins, by every post, within the last three or four days.

And then he added with emphasis and a peculiar expression, that by these letters she had for the first time brought herself within the letter of the law.

On Mr. Gregg's enquiring how she had done that, he said "by the threat of self-destruction."

Both the gentlemen were as considerate as possible, but there was no time to lose, and no use in mincing the matter; and Mr. Thompson proceeded to read to the effect—that she was so persecuted by the Earl of C——and others whom she would not name, that if no one came to her assistance, and that speedily—she should throw herself out of the window to escape them.

And then she besought him in the most urgent manner, to put her under the care of the "Society for the Protection of Women," whose offices were in Lincoln's Inn Fields, almost next door to his own.

The lawyer was very sharp-witted, and said it was just the opening we wanted. We must find two doctors without delay, and he would introduce them to her, as a deputation from this society, come for the purpose of taking her under their care.

Mr. Gregg proposed we should go first to a friend of his in Torrington Square, Dr. Pascal, whom he knew quite well, as having been kind to the poor in Mr. Montgomery's district.

And then it was arranged for us to take the evening train to Windsor, and find our second doctor there, and to meet Mr. Thompson in the morning at eleven o'clock at the Castle Hotel.

When we left the office, we went on to Dr. Pascal, and found him and his sister about to sit down to dinner; nothing would do, but we must have a bit with them. And then we made our proposal, and talked over the business that brought us there.

Dr. Pascal was very timid indeed, as he said he might well be, for a burnt child dreads the fire; and he had recently had to pay handsomely for detaining a deranged person, who got his liberty, and brought an action against him.

However, he would run the risk, to oblige Mr. Gregg, and promised to meet us at Windsor in the morning.

The plan was faithfully carried out, and we spent the night at Windsor, in as quiet an hotel as we could find; for I was beginning to have a pain in the head, and a dread of sickness.

Looking out of our inn window in the morning, I saw just opposite a doctor's house, with a brass plate upon the door, and a brougham waiting before it. So I rang the bell at once, and enquired of the landlady who lived there and all about him.

She told us he was Dr. Holderness, and that he had been in attendance at the Castle, and was well-known as one of the examiners of lunatics for the Middlesex district. And she added "if we were on any such business (which she seemed to suspect) he was the very man we wanted."

Mr. Gregg went over the way at once to Dr. Holderness,—and lest he might miss him, did not wait to hear all the landlady had to say.

As soon as she was alone with me, she began to sob, and to tell me that her husband was out of his mind, and would not be dressed, and she had to keep him locked up in the bedroom, and carry the key in her pocket; for if he got out, he would be on the landings and in the passages, without any clothes on at all.

Ay de mi!—as Carlyle has it—and I felt inclined to echo his cry, and to fear that half the world was mad.

Dr. Holderness came in almost immediately, and I was struck with the refinement of his manners, and the fatherly way in which he treated me.

But he did not conceal from me the fact, that I must be prepared to accept all the responsibility; for being a blood relation and the nearest of kin, I alone could act.

And then, with a few kind words, he went off to see the patient who was expecting him; but said he would see us again, at the Castle Hotel, at eleven o'clock.

LEAFLET LXXIII.—Consultation of the Doctors.

A LITTLE before the time Mr. Gregg and I walked into the Castle Hotel and engaged a private room, and bespoke a luncheon, when we were ready for it and should ring.

In a few minutes the gentlemen we expected came in. The lawyer, followed by the two doctors, and also by Mr. Newton, a friend of Mr. and Mrs. Uwins; who had driven over from Staines to offer his services, if he could render any assistance.

It was a pleasant looking party, but on what a dreadful errand had they come!

Mr. Thompson opened the business by producing Mrs. Uwins' letters, that we had already heard; and also another received that morning, in which she said, an infernal machine had been set up in the garden opposite to her drawing room window; but she meant to die rather than to fall into the hands of her persecutors, and should put an end to her life, unless help was at hand.

The doctors both thought it a serious case. Dr. Holderness looked upon it as hysterical mania; and said, that when he had seen her, he should be able to tell us exactly what course it would take,—and whether she would ever be any better.

Then the doctors were carried off by Mr. Thompson to Staines, to be introduced to Mrs. Uwins as coming from the "Society for the protection of women," to which she had desired to appeal.

And to prevent any delay Mr. Newton offered them the use of his own carriage, and as soon as a slight collation had been disposed of, they drove off in it.

Mr. Gregg and I came on with Mr. Newton by the train, and waited at his house to hear tidings of what had transpired.

It was a lovely garden, full of flowers, but as colours depend upon the light in which they are seen, so at the present moment everything appeared to my eyes, enveloped in the thickest gloom.

We had not long to wait, for in coming up from the station Mr. Thompson was soon with us, and gave us all particulars.

He had, he told us, gone first and rung boldly at Mrs. Uwins' front door bell; but as every entrance to the house was securely barred and bolted, it took some time before he could be admitted.

But at last he did get in, and the two doctors close behind him; and going into the drawing-room he met Mrs. Uwins, and shaking hands with her, begged to introduce the two gentlemen who had come with him from London, for her protection; upon which she bowed with some stiffness, and made a movement to them, to sit down.

Then all in a moment, she became very shy and suspicious, and looking Dr. Holderness full in face, said she did not believe he came from London, and that he was deceiving her.

Fortunately, that gentleman had had plenty of experience, and referred to the fact of her having claimed the Society's protection; and that he was come at her bidding, for the purpose of taking her under his care.

She was reassured by his kindliness of manner. And then, he went on to say how valuable his time was, and that he must have some evidence to carry back with him, in order to commence proceedings against her persecutors.

His adroitness carried the day; and very soon she began to open her budget, more startling than any sane person could imagine or invent. He sympathized with her wrongs, and as she had received so many insults at Staines, he thought it would be better to leave it; and even promised to fetch her away to his own house, where she would be perfectly safe.

Dr. Pascal, who had meanwhile been in the dining-room, was then called in, and followed in the other's wake.

They said we must lose no time in finding an Asylum for her; and Dr. Stilwell's name was mentioned, and a house of his, for ladies only, near Uxbridge, was very highly spoken of.

Till this moment, I had regarded all asylums in the light of prisons, or places only to be dreaded. But how circumstances can alter cases!

I felt now thankful that there were such retreats, and very grateful to Dr. Holderness when he said he was a friend of Dr. Stilwell's, and though he believed his house—called "Woodend House,"—was always full, he would write and see what he could do, to get Mrs. Uwins admitted.

After this point was settled, we dispersed; Mr. Gregg and I coming on with the two Londoners to town, and taking up our quarters in a good hotel as near as possible to Lincoln's Inn Fields; I believe next door to the Freemason's Tavern.

But before saying "good night," we agreed to be at the office by twelve o'clock the next day.

Mr. Gregg, who was one of the best and kindest of husbands, wished to divert my attention from the painful business on hand; and the next morning, after breakfast, proposed to show me a few of his bachelor haunts. And accordingly we strolled out into the noisy streets.

I had a birds-eye view of Percy Chapel, which he remembered with much affection for Mr. Montgomery's sake; and then, he tried to find some of his old lodgings,—but every place was so changed by time, that he could hardly tell where he was, and the familiar faces he was looking for, were no longer to be seen.

Once more in Queen Street, we walked into the depôt of the Bible Society, and I sat down for a few minutes, while Mr. Gregg had a little chat with one of the officials.

But before going into the lawyer's office, we paid a visit to a confectioner's shop, for biscuits and lemonade, as my head was bad, and I eschewed the wine that might perchance be offered us.

As we sat in this shop, I was reminded of poor Elizabeth in the days of her youth, going into one of these inviting places for a bun, and as she held it in her hand, she said to the young lady behind the counter, "I think now, I must wait till this cart is gone by," when with a smile at the simplicity of her customer, the young lady replied "then Miss, you will have to wait all day!"

LEAFLET LXXIV.—Mrs. Uwins' Dream Fulfilled.

WE were punctual to the time appointed for us to be at the office, and found Mr. Beaumont in his private room, ready for us.

He was unwilling to take so great a responsibility upon himself as to allow that Mrs. Uwins was suffering from any but a mere passing derangement, and was for temporizing, and putting off stringent measures.

Mr. Gregg observed that we must do what was necessary *now*, while we were on the spot;—for he considered the verdict of Dr. Holderness, made it impossible for us to leave the matter half done.

That doctor had said, in his opinion (and he had much experience to speak from) she would never recover, or indeed be any better as long as she lived.

All the talking in the world, could not alter Mr. Gregg's conviction of what we ought to do. And therefore he begged, that without any delay, Mr. Beaumont would get the papers ready, which I should be required to sign; and also to take steps, to make Mrs. Uwins a ward in Chancery, that in case she outlived us, she might still be under legal protection.

The next day, we heard from Dr. Stilwell that he would be glad to meet us at Woodend House, for though it was full of patients, one was convalescent enough to be removed, and he would take her for a few days into his own house, and so make room for Mrs. Uwins.

I was laid up, and quite unable to go, therefore Mr. Thompson and Mr. Gregg went off together.

The distress of these proceedings nearly cost me my life; and brought on a second attack of the illness I so much dreaded.

Before Mr. Gregg went, he asked the landlady, if she could find anyone to sit with me, while he was gone; for he was unwilling to leave me all day alone.

So a pretty little girl came in to keep me company; and this child, when not sitting still and staring at me fixedly in the face, amused herself by looking out of the window.

In the afternoon I came into the front room and lay on the sofa, and as it happened, there was something to see, for a dinner was taking place at the Freemason's Tavern; and a great many Ambassadors drove there in full dress, and they and their carriages, and their lackeys in fantastic costumes,—according to their different nationalities,—formed a gay procession.

In spite of my young companion, the day seemed unusually long; and I was glad indeed, when I heard Mr. Gregg's step upon the stairs.

As soon as he came in, he had to answer a great many questions, and to tell me what he had seen.

He said the Asylum was at Hayes, which was quite a village, and he believed that no train ran so far as there, for he had to take a conveyance at Uxbridge and go by road.

The front windows of "Woodend House" looked down the village street; but the back, into a large garden full of flowers, with long shady walks, and large trees with seats round them, something like the Kensington Gardens. And there was one tree, or shrub growing in the garden, and also in the village, he had never seen before, and he thought it must be peculiar to that part of the country.

Dr. Stilwell had received him in a very friendly manner; and he was also much pleased with the Matron, Mrs. Fenton; who informed him

that the house would not accommodate more than a limited number of patients—or as she called them "afflicted ladies."

Before he left, things were so far settled, that Dr. Stilwell undertook to drive over to Staines, and fetch Mrs. Uwins in his own carriage, on the following Monday.

And then, we began to talk about the mystery of lunacy, and were obliged at last, to fall back upon the scripture explanation of it,—that evil spirits, and their name is Legion, enter into a man and have so much power over him, that he may throw himself into the fire, or into the water, or do any kind of mischief. Nebudchadnezzar's reason being taken from him, was however a case of direct punishment for pride and arrogance.

But after all, we had to leave the question where we began—namely, that lunacy is a great mystery.

Our friend Mr. Jones, the Vicar of Frisby, solved the difficulty, at once, the very first time he met us after our return to Syston, by saying, "Ah yes! If the Almighty taps us on the head, where are we?"

Unfortunately, instead of getting better I began to grow worse, and the fact of Mr. Thompson coming backwards and forwards, for me to sign my name to certain papers, was not calculated to do me any good.

So Mr. Gregg went off to Dr. Quin, to ask for the address of the medical man who had succeeded to his practice; and finding it was Harley Street, he went there, and brought him to me at once. I decidedly liked him, for he was a shrewd clear-headed Scotchman, and went on the same lines as Dr. Holland. But he said very frankly, he could not attend me with any chance of success, in that noisy hotel; and advised Mr. Gregg to take apartments at once, in as quiet a street as he could find.

So we acted upon his suggestion, and took possession of a drawing-room floor in Bernard Street, where I lay ill for ten days or more, and suffered a martyrdom for want of sleep.

However there was a "mitigation" even here, for Elizabeth was well enough to come to us, and the joy of seeing her again, almost counterbalanced the grief and sorrow of the past week.

She seemed to bring with her a breath of the fresh pure air of the country, and though she declared she hardly knew me again, I began to get better from the time of her arrival.

Monday morning came, and we could not banish from our thoughts the idea that Dr. Stilwell was about to fetch Mrs. Uwins from her own home, and drive her in his carriage to Woodend House.

Mr. Thompson was at Staines to watch the whole proceeding, though he had posted himself at a neighbouring window, where he could see without being seen.

It was, he told us a trying moment, even for him, when the Doctor's carriage stopped at the door; and a great relief, after the lapse of a few

minutes, to see him come out with Mrs. Uwins on his arm, and almost immediately she had taken her seat in the carriage, and it was gone.

He confessed that he was obliged to take a turn or two on the bridge, before he could sufficiently recover himself to go into the house, and look up the valuable deeds and documents he had been instructed to bring away with him.

He found the maid in tears at losing her mistress; but she told him, Mrs. Uwins was expecting to be fetched, and had been busy packing her trunk, since the visit of those two gentlemen. And now it was quite ready, and going to be sent after her.

Mr. Thompson knowing how anxious we should feel, was soon round in Bernard Street to tell us what had happened.

He had seen Mrs. Brown from the next door, and heard sad accounts of the way Mrs. Uwins had been going on;—there had been a bon-fire every night in the drawing-room grate, and a quantity of books, even pictures burnt; the very ornaments on the mantle-piece had not escaped, and in the ashes were still to be seen sparkling gems (of course not real), and pieces of gold, and also bronze—for besides the vases a bronze head, with the phrenological divisions upon it, had been broken with a hammer, and consigned to the flames; the wine in the cellar had not escaped destruction,—bottle after bottle had been brought up, and the contents poured down the sink as poisonous.

Mr. Thompson was thoroughly convinced, that it would be folly to delay taking stringent measures; therefore he had seen the house-agent at Staines, and commissioned him to let the house, disposing if he could of the lease; and also he had spoken about a sale of the furniture; but said that Mr. Gregg would go over and make final arrangements.

We generally expect to find lawyers gentlemen and shrewd men of business, but we were more than usually favoured in falling into such good hands, and having to do with such old friends of the Uwins' family.

There still remained more affidavits to be signed, but as we could not be detained in town any longer, I undertook to do them in the office of our own solicitor at Leicester.

We were anxious to return home; and after Mr. Gregg and Elizabeth had been backwards and forwards to Staines, and brought away what they considered would be unsafe to leave;—we bade adieu to our good friends in Lincoln's Inn Fields in particular, and to the teeming population of London in general, and started on our way for Syston, breaking the journey at Bedford, in order to give my head a little respite from the noise of the whistling trains.

"God made the country and man the town," we never felt to be more true, than when we got away from the smoke and din of London, and saw once more the fragrant hedge-rows, and fruit-laden trees of our own orchard, from which we seemed, in imagination, to have been absent a very long time, although in reality it was little more than a fortnight.

LEAFLET LXXV.—A Village Mob.

MR. GREGG continued to do Mr. Morgan two services every Sunday, for more than twelve months; and we looked for the Saturday night visit from the Vicar, as a matter of course.

At length, the Confirmation came round, and was to take place in Syston Church. There were a goodly number of candidates, and besides the classes conducted one or two evenings a week, for the young men, some twelve or fourteen young women used to attend at our house, to read with me every Sunday afternoon.

The coming of the Bishop caused an excitement in the village, and Mr. Morgan asked me to go to the Vicarage to receive him, and the number of clergy he expected would arrive. But he impressed it upon me, in the strongest of terms, that he was a *poor* man, and did not wish the Bishop to consider him a rich one.

And in spite of the solemn feeling that pervaded the party, it was quite ludicrous to see the Vicar's anxiety to have nothing comfortable, either to eat or drink,—but to play the part of a poor man,—which he certainly succeeded in doing.

He had several skirmishes with his housekeeper in the course of the morning, and snatched away first one thing and then another, that she had fetched out of the store-room, to make the table look smarter; no, he was a poor man, and a poor man he was determined to be.

When his lordship (the good Bishop Davies) who arrived in his own carriage was come into the parlour, and had sat down, Mr. Morgan put his hand to his ear, and his ear to the Bishop's mouth, and enquired whether he should need any refreshment after the service was over? But received the curt reply "yes, of course, yes."

So by and bye, the little bit of meat had to be served, and all the clergy (including Mr. Gregg and myself) made their exit, so that there might be enough for the Bishop's dinner.

Mr. Morgan flattered himself that he was a match for the Bishop—and in the matter of dining, he certainly was. But now, he began to be harassed about a license for his curate; and as Mr. Gregg of course declined the honour, he had to advertise, and bestir hinself to get someone else.

This brought about a catastrophe such as is seldom heard of.

Mr. Gregg and I had been, one Saturday, to Leicester; and walking home from the station, we saw before us, the Vicar and a common-looking man,—I cannot mis-apply the term gentleman.

They walked quicker than we did, and were evidently going on to the Vicarage; when Mr. Morgan turned round, and catching sight of us, left his companion, and came to meet us.

I had a suspicion of who the "man" might be, so I enquired, and was informed that he was no other than the curate!

"That man!" I exclaimed, "he is no clergyman—he looks more like a ticket-of-leave man!" And then, I begged he would not bring him to our house, as I would have nothing whatever to do with him.

We very soon found out what sort of person had come to the village; for he began to frequent the public houses, and to associate with the lowest characters in the place.

We had a neighbour in the Vicar of Queniborough—Mr. Goodacre; and his wife was a lady who devoted most of her time to visiting the poor, and most of her money went for their relief. But Mr. Goodacre was in a decline, and scarcely able to keep up to the many duties required of him.

He was always glad of any voluntary assistance; and hearing that a new curate had come to Syston, he invited him to dine with them one Sunday, and to preach in the afternoon, a charity sermon for the benefit of the schools.

That visit was a most unfortunate one, and fraught with serious consequences.

Mr. and Mrs. Goodacre said that the curate got intoxicated at their house, and could not raise himself from the sofa.

The circumstance was told to Mr. Morgan, and repeated in Syston, where the evil news, true or false, ran like wildfire, and roused the indignation of the mob; who instantly ranged themselves in battle array, to defend their boon companion.

They went in a body to Queniborough, and hooted, and groaned, and hissed, in front of Mr. Goodacre's windows; and frightened both him and his wife so much, that they dare not any longer come driving through our village to Leicester, but used to go another and a long way round.

Mr. Morgan came in for a share of abuse; and there were sometimes skirmishes between him and his curate, in the very church itself.

As for instance, when the curate wanted to preach, he would prevent with his arm, the Vicar from going up the stairs, and push himself into the pulpit instead.

Of course, the respectable part of the congregation were shocked at these proceedings, and began to absent themselves from the services; until by and bye, the mob had it all their own way, and took out every stool and bench, in fact every available seat, and held a service of their own on the village green, where the curate addressed them from an open window. And finally the church was locked up, and the churchwardens took charge of the keys.

Mr. Gregg was popular with the poor, and knew every man and woman in the place; and of course we were careful not to take any part in what was going on, whatever we might think; otherwise we should certainly have experienced some annoyance.

One dark evening in the winter, we heard a noise of shouting and yelling, and from the attic, we could see a cloud of smoke at the other end of the village.

Mr. Gregg stepped out to enquire what was the matter, but came back again directly, saying the mob had made a bon-fire and were burning the boots that had carried the curate to Queniborough—in fact, there was a threat to burn all the clothes he wore on that occasion.

However, they thought better of it, and did not go so far as that; but contented themselves with bundles of straw and rubbish instead.

The curate himself was at the head of the mob, and urged them on to acts of violence.

One day about noon, we heard a clamour, as though an army of rough-shod plough-boys were at hand, and I ran and bolted our front door, which was in a general way left unfastened.

In another minute, we saw but too plainly what was the matter; the poor old Vicar had been run down the street by the curate, who brandished a thick stick over his head, and was followed by a crowd of riff-raff men and boys, shouting and hooting like the Whipping-Toms; I went in a moment and unbolted the door.

There was Mr. Morgan, in a most exhausted state, and literally hanging on the knocker for support; I took hold of him and pulled him in; and stared so hard in the curate's face, that he shrank back, and went away.

But the men from behind began to call out, "pull him in, pull the old man in." So I stood in the doorway, and said as loud as I could "yes I will pull him in—and you be off, every one of you, about your business!"

They fell back at once, from the front of our house; but I knew quite well they did not mean to be off, for they crossed the highway and stood *en masse*, leaning against the houses, so as not to be seen.

In reality, they were in ambush for the Vicar to come out again.

We drew down the blinds, and placed Mr. Morgan in an easy chair, out of the reach of the windows; and brought him a glass of cold water (he would not have anything stronger), and as soon as he could get his breath sufficiently to speak, he gasped out, "Oh Mr. Gregg what shall I do? I must have the policeman! Pray fetch him for me! Pray do!"

Mr. Gregg comforted him as best he could, and begged him to keep quiet for the present, and recover himself, and then he would act the part of policeman, and see him safe home.

As Mr. Morgan sat in our parlour, trembling with agitation and fright, I thought how fickle is the favour of the multitude, and how inhuman they can be.

Here was an old man, eighty years of age, and bent double with infirmaties, and yet the people among whom he had lived for half a century at least, were ready at a moment's notice to bait him, like so many wild beasts.

How could I help feeling for him, in spite of all his foibles, the deepest compassion?

It was rather a critical moment, when my own husband was about to expose himself to that crowd of rough men; but at heart, I was not afraid, for I knew the influence he had over them, and that they one and all regarded him as a friend.

As soon as Mr. Morgan felt equal to go, Mr. Gregg put on his great coat, and leaving his stick behind lest it might provoke attack, they walked side by side out of the house together.

But Elizabeth was thrown into a paroxysm of alarm, lest any missile might be thrown, or any injury done to Mr. Gregg. So without waiting for bonnet or shawl, she ran up the street after them, and kept at a little distance behind them until they were out of danger.

The men were all there, at the corner of our road, waiting for the Vicar, and hoping he would come out alone; though on seeing Mr. Gregg they were mute, and gave no sign of their evil intentions.

But as he returned, after safely landing the Vicar, they came forward to meet him, and said with an aggrieved air—"Oh dear sir! How you have disappointed us! We did mean to give the old man a good hustling!"

LEAFLET LXXVI—Good Intentions Frustrated.

RICHES have a certain power in every place, and this is felt more forcibly in the country than in the town.

Mr. and Mrs. Adcock were uneducated people, but affluent and charitable withal; and in the village of Syston, they held a sceptre of their own.

They were very friendly towards us, and we had once taken tea with them, and been entertained in such a hospitable manner, that it seemed to me as if the whole business of the evening was eating and drinking. The village school had been erected through Mr. Adcock's influence, and money assistance; and therefore he possessed some authority over it.

Elizabeth's disposition was highly romantic; and she happened to take up the cause of the "Penny Readings," which had just then come into fashion.

She wished to introduce them into the village, for the benefit of the people, and proposed that we should call on Mr. Adcock and solicit his patronage, and ask his permission to have the use of the school-room, which was the only place suitable for the purpose.

Mr. Gregg discouraged the idea, and said, if we would take his advice we should let Mr. Adcock alone; but his counsel was over-ruled and wilful woman had her way. Accordingly we went, and a very amusing interview followed.

Mr. Adcock took quite an original view of the subject, and astonished us with the plainness of his speech, and the simplicity of his doctrines.

He began by saying, that the writings of Dickens, and other such men, were fatally bad; in fact he compared them to pitch, which could not be touched without defilement; and he swept the besom of destruction over them all—"No, he would never consent to have the school-room—his school-room,—polluted with such trash! If we wished to read the Bible there, all well and good, we might have it, and as often as we liked."

He waxed quite hot about it, and evidently regarded us as the accomplices of evil men; and as if in a pet, snatched his hat from its peg, and walked off and left us.

We were thoroughly discomfited, and felt rather ashamed of ourselves; but Mrs. Adcock said a few civil things by way of pacifying us; and made excuses for her husband, on the ground of his old-fashioned bringing up.

And then, she introduced a pretty young lady to us, Miss Johnson, a visitor from Melton, whose grandfather, Mr. Ferneley, had been an artist, and exhibited many of his animal paintings, in the Fine Arts' Exhibition at Leicester.

Miss Johnson gave us an open invitation to her mother's house at Melton; and she said she should like to show us a screen and a cabinet she had been making, in a style for which the ladies in that neighbourhood were rather famous.

When we got home, Mr. Gregg made a little fun of our defeat, and said if, like good children, we had "done as we were bid," we should never have pressed upon our neighbours' weak points, or trodden on their toes.

The next visit Mr. Morgan paid us, he declared his intention of taking himself and his carpet bag to the Continent for a time, till the atmosphere in his own parish was clear; and here he gave a plaintive look at Mr. Gregg, and "hoped he would be so very kind as to clear it for him."

The unruly curate had taken his departure in a rather ignoble manner. During the time he was under notice to quit, he had been transferred to Ragdale; but the inhabitants of that scattered hamlet resisted having him forced upon them. And another disgraceful scene was acted.

He headed a party of roughs, including the Syston blacksmith, and tried to break open the church door, which was locked against him. He did not however succeed, and in a short time after that escapade, he was gone, and nothing more heard of him.

We certainly did not want a repetition of the late riotous proceedings, so Mr. Gregg undertook to do what he could to quiet the people, and get them back to church.

As soon as the Vicar was gone, and Mr. Gregg had taken the services into his own hands, Mrs. Hudson, who was our best friend and neighbour in the place, set herself to do something for the improvement and decoration of the poor barn-like church.

And she brought as a present, two elegant mats, which she had embroidered in scarlet and gold, to lie on the plates, and prevent the rattle of the pence.

But the first time they were used (and it was at the Communion), the churchwarden looked at them with an evil eye, and snatched first one and then the other, and flung them rudely into a corner, saying, loud enough to be heard, "we don't want those Popish dolls here!"

Since those wild days, the church at Syston has been restored; every unsightly object removed, and it is now an ornament to the county.

The old Vicarage has been abandoned, and a new one built in a more open situation, and furnished with all the conveniences of modern times.

After the "riot" as Elizabeth called it, the place was never the same to her; and she made Mr. Gregg promise that whenever he could meet with a house in a more "civilized situation," he would take it.

So now in her daily walks she began to enquire whether there were any houses vacant; and Miss Gregory coming just then to pay us a visit, became an able coadjuter in the cause.

Weather was never a consideration, and one day in a gale of wind (high enough to blow them away, pony and all), they drove to Gaddesby, and went over a house, in every way desirable.

But when the ladies, who inhabited it, made their appearance, they seemed so forlorn and lost, for want of society, that the fever for Gaddesby at once subsided.

And now we had a new neighbour in Mr. O'Neile, the Vicar of Queniborough, who had succeeded our friend Mr. Goodacre.

He seemed to have been all over the world, in search of a climate to suit his wife; but told us that in every place he had found some drawback.

In Malta, the fine drifting sand had affected his eyes; while in Italy, the sun and the hot winds, of which we know nothing, are at times intolerable.

So after all, he had returned to an English village, and declared that for comfort, there was nothing like our native land.

During the time he was Chaplain to the Consulate at Florence, he had met with our Leicester friends, Mr. and Mrs. Palmer, and quite expected Mr. Palmer to die from sun-stroke, as so many of the English do.

All this time we were busy with the writing, and at work on another story for the "Quiver," called "The Half-sisters," and with the plot so carefully wrapped up that the reader cannot find it out, until very near the end.

The roué of the tale, who is called the "curse of the Cransteads" is in his wrong place, and has no right to the estate, or to the position he holds.

While Joyce the young man who has been snubbed and pushed aside as nobody, is the rightful squire, and takes legal possession of what the other is obliged to give up.

We had also another on hand, for "The Family Herald" entitled "My First Patient."

Mr. Uwins had told us, it was a good thing to have more than one picture at a time on the easel; and so we found it better to have more than one story writing at once. For then we could give a touch first to one and then to another, as the fancy took us.

Novel writing is a most absorbing occupation, and when in the act of manufacturing a mystery, or unravelling a plot, we seemed to be moving about, not amongst the matter-of-fact objects around us, but to belong to another world—a world of our own.

LEAFLET LXXVII.—Melton Mowbray.

DURING the troublous times at Syston, Brooksby appeared to us as a peaceful haven, and the little church like a place of rest. But nothing here below is abiding, or will last long, and so Brooksby was destined to disturbance and to change.

The estate which had long been the property of Lady Alfred Paget, was put into the hands of her agents to dispose of, and as a necessary consequence, the tenants all had notice to quit.

At first Mr. and Mrs. Charlton made a great trouble of leaving the place to which they had grown attached, but in the end, decided to settle in Brussels, where the education of their children, in French and German could be more easily carried on.

And for twelve months at least after they were gone, the Hall was shut up, and presented a very forlorn and deserted appearance.

In this beautiful world, how soon do the petals of our roses fall; and it is even so with our pleasures, we hardly have time to grasp them, when lo, they are gone!

My illness in London, so far disabled me, that things were never the same to me any more. The sound of the carriage wheels distressed me; and the visits to Brooksby, and the services in its little church, that used to be so delightful, seemed quite beyond my strength, and more than I could bear; and from that time, all lectures and concerts, and every other public entertainment, became a dead letter to me, and only to be avoided.

But to return to my narrative, and to Syston.

Mr. Morgan seemed to be away a very long time; but when at last he did come back, he found the parish had subsided into its usual state of quietude and composure.

During the last few weeks, he had been staying with a niece of his, in Wales, and brought out a bag of small shells (cowries etc,) that he had had picked up for him, by children on the beach, and offered them to me.

And then he talked with enthusiasm about Wales—the story of Merlin and his cave—and the meeting he had lately been attending of Welsh harpists, called Eisteddfod; which is in fact, a musical contest of songs and harp accompaniments, and prose recitations, when prizes are awarded to the successful competitors.

This assembly claims to be of very ancient date, going back to the time of the Druids, and some of their customs are still kept up. As for instance, a circle is formed of unhewn stones, and a larger one placed in the centre for the bard who is going to recite, or sing, to stand upon.

In days of old, the native princes were judges at the Eisteddfod, but after Wales had lost her independence, the kings of England succeeded to that office.

Mr. Morgan was much attached to his native land, and he began to repeat, in the Welsh language, one of the songs he had heard. And then I played to him "the Welsh Harper," and a few other such airs on the piano, in return for the recitation he had given us, that had been a succession of guttural sounds, of which we understood not a word.

Before he went away, he told us he hoped he had met with a curate, who might shortly be able to come, and set Mr. Gregg at liberty. And then he thanked us both cordially for having stood by him in the hour of need, and said he should like Mrs. Gregg to have a keepsake—something she could wear, and that would remind her of him.

A gold watch was what he had thought of, but as we had too many in the house already, I proposed a gold chain instead. Accordingly, Mr. Gregg received the commission to purchase one, the next time he went to Leicester.

By and bye the new curate arrived, and Mr. Gregg took the opportunity of going to see his father and mother in the Vale of Belvoir.

On the way, he stayed a few hours at Melton Mowbray, and was enquiring about houses, when he was fortunate enough to meet with Mr. Wakerley, a builder, who owned a great deal of property in the town; and before they parted, he had offered to build a suitable house for us, if we could agree about the terms, and were willing to take it on a lease.

Syston had for some time been gradually losing its character as a country village, and growing more and more town-like; trees were cut down on every side of us, and grass-land taken for building purposes; so that our own green lane to Barkby, once so pleasant, had lost all its attractions. A factory had been built by a Leicester manufacturer, and numbers of women and girls found daily employment in it. Of course there was a great increase of public-houses, and the noise of skittles might be heard in our own orchard.

The place being spoiled for us, inclined us to listen to Mr. Wakerley's overtures for Melton.

Miss Latham (the very same who had taken the bible class at Miss Fancourt's school, in the days of old) was the only person we knew there, but she was esteemed far and wide for her benevolence and acts

of charity. And when we came over to look at the site for the new house, that was to be, she received us with open arms, as did also her maid Alice, whom we found to be no other than Mrs. Uwins' confidential old servant, who had nursed Mr. Uwins in his last illness.

We very soon however found out another acquaintance who had also been connected with Miss Fancourt's school. This was Mr. Hickson, who had given the music lessons there, and was now manager of the Melton Branch of the Leicestershire Bank.

He was in fact the very one whose brother Charles had provoked my jealousy by marrying Miss Fancourt, and carrying her off to Manchester.

As both she and her husband died, leaving no family, a large property was bequeathed to the children of our friend in the bank; and by and bye he began to build a mansion for himself, which would rather improve the view from our new house, as it came within sight of our windows.

As soon as this grand house was finished, Mr. Hickson gave a supper to all the workmen, and made a very encouraging speech to them.

He told them his brother who had died so rich, had begun life a poor man—as poor as themselves, but his integrity, his industry,— and above all, his fidelity to his master, had caused him to rise step by step, until he stood at the head of the firm. The same path was open to them all, and he left the application of the story to themselves.

As we made several journeys backwards and forwards to Melton, to meet Mr. Wakerley on business matters, we used to walk into the fine old church, which is almost like a cathedral for size and beauty, and dates back to the twelfth or thirteenth century.

The living was then vacant, but the Rev. W. M. Colles, the curate for sixteen years, was by and bye appointed vicar.

The church was in a very delapidated state, for the foundations had given way, and the very pillars began to lean, as if they intended to fall.

But the new vicar set to work with the greatest energy; and as we looked in one day and went to speak to him in the midst of the workmen, we had the pleasure of seeing one of the pillars being raised to its upright position, by means of a screw-jack, or some such ingenious contrivance. The interior of the building looked full of pit-falls and deep holes, and appeared to us a regular wilderness.

The town itself was gay with hunters, and their elegant equipages, and still more elegant steeds. The season was coming to an end, but a lady friend drove me to the meet of the hounds, and I was astonished to see such a crowd of horses and their riders jostling together, and yet not getting hurt.

Before the final break-up and dispersion of the aristocrats, they very kindly gave an entertainment for the benefit of the church restoration fund. The tickets were a guinea and half-guinea each, and the largest room in the town, the Corn Exchange, was crowded with ladies and gentlemen in full dress, and the ladies glittering in jewels, looked like so many princesses.

The performers themselves were of the titled class, and first-rate amateurs. The Hartopp family, now sadly thinned by death, being the leading and most active of the actors.

We occasionally heard anecdotes of the gentlemen of the hunt, and their steeds, often of some deed of daring as the following is an instance.

After returning from the field and dining together, one of the gentlemen began to boast of his horse, and say that he could ride him anywhere, and make him do anything.

Of course this led to a wager being laid, and for a good sum, that he could not ride him upstairs.

The charger was brought, and his master soon in the saddle, and with a few leaps he was soon at the top of the staircase.

So far so good, but when the steed looked round the wide and spacious landing, it evidently occurred to him what a comfortable place it would be for him to spend the night in, so he refused and resented every attempt that was made to get him down again.

So there he remained; old china and nick-nacks had to be removed, and the horse was bedded down for the night.

The business of the next day was to coax and tempt him to come down of his own accord, but he would not listen to any such proposal; and the only way of managing the matter was to raise a horse box to the level of the window (which was a large and handsome one) and then when the window had been taken out, the horse was driven, like Jumbo, into his box and captured.

We were glad at this time to avail ourselves of Miss Johnson's kind invitation, and went to see her grandfather's pictures—the late Mr. Ferneley, and also the cabinet she had mentioned to us as her own work.

In the heat of my botanical days, I had had a cabinet made at Leicester, with a number of small drawers of cedar, to hold my specimens. It had been painted white, and had gilded mouldings round the panels.

We determined to experiment upon it, and the process taught us by Miss Johnson was suitable and very easy.

As a first step, Mr. Gregg painted the whole cabinet black, save and except the gilded mouldings. Then for the pictures that were wanted, we fell back upon some odd numbers of the "Arabian Night's Entertainments," that we had read in our childhood, and seen no impurity whatever in any of the tales. So true is it, that "to the pure, all things are pure."

The pictures were about the right size, and on very thin paper; and when we had cut them clear from any margin, we pasted them down on the black paint.

These plates afterwards afforded us much amusement—or rather the mistakes into which many persons fell, while looking at them. For instance—the Turk in the well was taken over and over again for John the Baptist's head in a charger. To say nothing of one of the female figures being pronounced the Virgin Mary.

The cutting out and pasting on was a long and monotonous piece of work; but as soon as we had finished, Mr. Gregg took the thing in hand, and gave it two or three coats of varnish.

And when it was dry, and the gilding completed, the old cabinet became not only a respectable but an ornamental piece of furniture, and was allowed to take its place in the dining-room.

So great was our success, that on more than one occasion, our work of paper and paste has been mistaken for inlaying; but Mr. Gregg always thought it his duty to correct the mistake by saying it was home-made ivory, and of our own manufacture.

I might say here a word or two about Mrs. Uwins.

We had found Dr. Stilwell's terms at Woodend House, rather higher than was convenient to her income; and also the distance we had to go to visit her was uncomfortably long, and could not be done in a day.

So on the event of Dr. Stilwell's death, we removed her to Nottingham, and placed her under the care of Dr. Tate, where she still remains in the same state of hopeless delusions,—though fortunately they are generally of an agreeable kind. To wit, that she is the Queen, and that Belvoir Castle is only one, among a number, of her royal residences.

LEAFLET LXXVIII.—The Kingfisher.

WHEN the architect's plan had been sufficiently corrected, and as soon as the preliminaries were all settled, our new house was built for us, at a little distance out of Melton, on the Asfordby Road, in a field where the ground was very uneven, and which had a steep bank in it, and in the bank a gravel pit.

This pit was an object of special interest to us, as the different lines of strata lay exposed to view, in such a slanting position, that the earth must at some time have been upheaved, to leave them in that oblique and tilted fashion. We picked up a great many fossils there, many sorts of shells, and even large ammonites.

But when all the gravel that we wanted for the walks had been taken out, Mr. Gregg had the floor of the pit beaten flat, and made a large roomy arbour there, by lodging a roof on the top of the bank, and supporting it below on two thick posts.

It was a very sheltered spot, screened from every wind; and here we used to sit and look down a winding river (the river Eye), bordered with willows and fringed with reeds and rushes, and covered on the surface with yellow water-lilies, arrow-heads, and many other flowers.

Very early in the spring, we noticed a hole was being made in the gravel bank, close to the arbour, and it was evident from the state of things, that some birds had been at work; but they were too shy to let themselves be seen; and for a time the whole affair remained a mystery.

But one day, later in the spring, fragments of delicate white egg shells, lay just below the hole, and then we heard a rushing sound, and a large bird flew out, and darted down the river, the sun shining on its plumage of green and gold. No English bird is dressed more gaily, and we knew it must be the kingfisher.

The arbour was quite open on the side nearest to the hole, which ran for some distance in a slanting and downward direction; and when the winter's frost caused a piece of the bank to fall, we saw that the nest had been scooped out at the bottom.

We could sit and watch for the coming in and out of the old birds; and by and bye hear the chirping of the little kingfishers, when they wanted to be fed.

But in spite of the parent birds not wishing to be seen, they were obliged to feed their brood; and one day as I sat quite motionless, the mother bird came in and perched on the rail opposite to me. For a minute or two, we regarded each other with fixed attention, and I could not help thinking how few persons have the chance of such a companion.

The mother bird was always more courageous than her partner; when she heard her little ones crying out for food, she never could resist them, but would fly in at a rapid rate and disappear into the nest with a fish in her beak.

The kingfisher is a famous diver, and we more than once saw him plunge into the water and come out again holding in his bill a fish, which struggled and twisted itself about, but he soon killed it by striking it against the bough of a tree, then tossing up his head swallowed it at a gulp.

A fine old ash grew in a convenient spot for its branches to hang over the river, and Mr. Gregg had his boat brought up from Brooksby, and moored in this shady nook.

The kingfisher found the boat out at once, and evidently thought it a good place for observation, as he used to perch upon the side and gaze intently into the stream.

We, and the birds too, had a friend in Mr. Latham, the only brother of the Miss Latham I had known so many years ago—and like her, quite a public character.

He took such an interest in the garden and the arbour, that he was here every day, and when he had seen the kingfisher, he sent his servant-man with a good sized zinc pan, and had it filled with water, and set it upon the edge of the river, with several little fishes in it, all alive.

He hoped to see the bird dart upon them—but no such thing;—that might be done before we were up in a morning, but we only knew that when we came to look for them, the poor fishes had disappeared.

As soon as the flower beds were cut in the lawn, Mr. Latham's servant-man paid us another visit, with his barrow; this time he brought a very large flint, weighing about two hundredweight, and somewhat in the shape of Neptune's cup, to be placed in the centre of the only circular bed. And very well indeed it looked, for the earth was laid on so as to give it a little elevation.

This flint was quite a curiosity, and full of large holes, into which Mr. Latham delighted to poke his stick. When it had been finally settled on its mound, we brought out a French book (Pouchet's L.'Univers, chapter vii.), and showed to him that in all probability, his curious stone was once a sponge, and that the holes he liked to poke so well, were the appertures for the living polypes of the sponge to come through.

The plate was so clear and convincing, he could not gainsay the fact that the softest of all living creatures, the sponge, had been changed, and become the hardest of all stones—the flint.

Our little domain was bounded by the Earl of Wilton's Park, with its surroundings of fine old elms. And as soon as our house was finished, and the rooks saw human beings were coming to live in it, they began to build, and formed a colony on the tops of the tallest trees.

And as the river meandered through the park, an opportunity was afforded in the winter for skating; on one occasion the ice was very thick, when a number of persons, some of them ladies of the hunt, skated down as far as Sysonby and landed in Mrs. Wright's Garden.

Whenever the frosts were very severe, Mr. Gregg would prepare some food for the birds, and feed them himself at his study door. There would come a flock of more than fifty at a time of all sizes and colours, and with the birds a large rat used to waddle up the steps, and as tame as a kitten, take his share of the provender.

Now and then there would be a gathering of holiday makers in the Park, and occasionally a flower show would be held there, or some other festive sight was to be seen.

I remember once a balloon (probably Mr. Green's) was the attraction for great numbers of persons. It was filled on the ground, and a successful ascent made, amid shouts and cheers, and the loudest applause.

How enjoyable was that summer time, when we could have a row in the boat every afternoon, and gather the water-lilies, or wile away an hour or two in quiet happiness; Elizabeth and Mr. Gregg managing the oars, and I being able to steer.

But in our rowing excursions we met with an unexpected obstacle, in the shape of the Indian water weed, the Anacharis, as Mr. Babington had named it.

The rapidity of its growth was truly marvellous, and it threatened very soon to choke up the river, and to prevent the boat getting along. Indeed it became such a nuisance that Mr. Gregg engaged two men to get into the water, and with rakes drag it out.

A great quantity was soon got out in this way, and thrown on the bank to dry. As soon as the moisture had been evaporated by the heat of the sun, and the weed become dry and crisp, we noticed the pony began to feed upon it, and he must have found it relishing, for he did not leave any to waste.

By and bye some swans were presented to the town by Dr. Whitchurch, and when they had the run of the river, they feasted very freely on the weeds, and considerably thinned our water-lilies by gobbling up the roots. But the grace and beauty of the swans more than compensated for the loss.

Our leisure moments were occupied in getting the garden and rough ground into order; and Miss Gregory, who was paying us a visit, used to be very handy with scissors and string, tying up the sprays of ivy and other creepers, that we were coaxing to grow upon an invisible fence; and now and then Mr. Gregg would come out of his study door, on to the lawn, and give us his substantial help.

And one evening he called our attention to a peculiar looking moth, that was darting from flower to flower, and kept poising itself with quivering wings, over a bunch of carnations. We knew it must be rather uncommon, and when we saw it thrust its long spiral trunk into the flower, and noticed its large hawk-like eyes we concluded it was a humming bird hawk-moth. It was soon alarmed, and darted away with the swiftness of an arrow.

When we were tired of the garden, we had only to open a wicket gate and wander away into a foot-road to Sysonby, where we could linger on one of Mr. Latham's seats, which he had placed under a group of trees for the benefit of the passers-by.

This tranquil scene is a thing of the past—I might say of byegone ages. For in these modern days of progress and improvement, there is scarcely a place to be found where peace and quietness are allowed to reign.

The seat and the trees are alike chopped up, and in their stead the Great Northern Railway Company has carried an embankment, and runs its trains along the top every quarter of an hour; and the steam whistle, and such like necessary evils, have long ago scared away our beautiful birds, and changed the whole aspect of the once secluded valley.

LEAFLET LXXIX.—A Public Testimonial to Mr. Latham.

WE had been settled in our new house about six weeks when Mr. Gregg was chosen by the Board of Guardians, and accepted the office of Chaplain to the Melton Union Workhouse, where the sick and aged poor, from fifty-six parishes, can be received and attended to.

This office was quite in accordance with his love for the poor, and the talent he possessed of making them feel at home with him, and always regarding him as their friend.

The men as a rule, were more intelligent than the women, and he kept them well supplied with newspapers, local as well as London; and also provided them with spectacles, that they might be able to read them, and found that strife, by these simple means, was much diminished.

In the women's ward he distributed many of the pictorial papers, the "Illustrated News," "Animal World," "Hand and Heart," and such like, as the inmates there had a preference for the lighter reading, and left the politics of Europe and the deliberations of the Cabinet to be discussed by the sterner sex.

One poor invalid in the hospital, who was bed-ridden, and had been for some time, used to raise herself on her elbow, when she saw the chaplain come in, and ask what pictures he had brought for her to look at; and never failed to remind him of the monthly number of "Home Words," as soon as it became due.

In those days, the children had a master and mistress and a school-room of their own, and were regularly taught there. They were trained to sing, and to take a part in the Sunday service, held in a large room, used also as a dining hall. They practised during the week with the schoolmistress, who played the organ, and used to lead the singing.

It was at best, but a dull life for the little ones, and they are much better and happier now they are allowed to attend, twice a day, the Church schools in common with other children.

Once a year, they came to pay us a visit, to play in our field, to run races for a half-penny, up and down the gravel walk, and be regaled with buns and home-made ginger beer, which latter, caused a great deal of fun; the boys standing with their mouths ready open for fear the cork should fly, and any of the contents of the bottle be lost.

I used to drive every now and then to the Union, and pay the inmates a visit; but our engagements with the publishers were increasing, and we were obliged to devote two hours or more every morning, and a couple of hours in the evening, to pens and paper.

We had a number of plates from Mr. Nelson, suitable for a volume he wanted to bring out and to call "The World at Home."

This was a very pleasant book to do, for it required us to hunt up all the information that was applicable to the subjects, and there was so much latitude allowed us, that we were at liberty to range from the North to the South Pole.

As soon as this task was finished, more plates arrived for "Beautiful Birds in far off lands," and also for the "Sea and its wonders"

And Mr. Nelson was most liberal in sending us presents of books, both French or English, that he thought might give us any assistance.

We also had the satisfaction of writing for the Rev. Charles Bullock's magazine—"Our Own Fireside," a story entitled "Margaret's Choice,"

the copyright of which was afterwards purchased by the "Religious Tract Society."

To another of Mr. Bullock's periodicals we contributed a story for boys, on the subject of how to keep the Sunday; it is called "Hold fast by your Sundays," and dedicated to the Earl of Shaftsbury.

Amongst other little books we did for the Tract Society was one called "Lost Cities brought to Light," and that contains much information about Egypt and Babylon and other cities of the Old World.

But it caused us some merriment when our friend Mrs. Palmer brought out of her trunk this very book and told us she was going to read it to us aloud.

The afternoon was our leisure time, and Mr. Latham was generally with us, and on one such occasion, he enquired if we had made our wills, adding that there was no time like the present moment. And so we agreed to his proposal, and he made all our three wills.

When the days began to shorten, and we drew round the fire, he had his own particular chair, and would sit with his feet on the fender, and relate many amusing anecdotes, which I regret not having taken down in black and white.

He was a native of Melton, and had lived in the same house all his life and his father before him, of which fact he was very proud; and in his opinion this little town was to be preferred to any other place. He had a contented mind, and was of a very easy and happy disposition.

But he always spoke of his father as superior to himself, and liked to tell us of his generous actions, which were well worthy of admiration; though his open-handed nature, he confessed, was often imposed upon, and sometimes had caused a little confusion.

One day as he crossed the yard from his office to the kitchen, he encountered a poor woman at the door, who began in doleful tones to represent to him, that what she wanted was food. Whereupon he looked about the kitchen (which happened to have nobody in it), for something to eat.

The only thing he could see, was a plum pudding standing smoking on a dish before the fire. Without a moment's hesitation he transferred the pudding from its dish to the poor woman's arms, and bidding her cover it up with her shawl, went his way.

In the middle of dinner, there was a dead pause, and a great deal of whispering between the servants and their mistress, as to what had become of the pudding.

There was a party of guests at table; but Mr. Latham held his peace, and was rather amused at the dilemma, until he found that the cook was to be held responsible; then he admitted that he was the culprit.

Mr. Latham related to us another anecdote of his father doing an act of kindness towards a poor man, such as no one else could have been found to do.

On the steps of the British Museum, a ragged looking man stopped him to say, that he had been refused admittance, on account of his shabby appearance. Like the rest of the holiday makers, he wanted to see what was inside, but how could he manage it? And what was he to do?

Mr. Latham thought a moment, and then bidding the man follow him, took him to the nearest public house; where stripping off his coat of fine broad cloth, he put it on the man's back instead of his own, and had the satisfaction of seeing him go off like a gentleman, and without any further difficulty, gain admittance.

And Mr. Latham positively had the patience to sit there and wait, until the man had satisfied his curiosity, and returned with his coat.

Our Mr. Latham was perhaps more industrious and more ingenious than most men. He had the taste and talent of an artist; and when we had been settled in Melton some little time, we found that he was occupying his leisure in making a plan, or rather a map of the town and district.

He himself walked over every inch of ground, and with the help of his servant-man, measured it with a chain.

When the map was finished and coloured and varnished, it was quite a work of art.

He had done it entirely for the benefit of the public, and contrived a mahogany case for it to be kept in.

This case is fastened to the wall in the Magistrates' room at the Police Court, and the map, which can be consulted by everybody, draws up and down with a cord and pulley, after the fashion of a window blind; and when wanted down, lies all its length on a long table, that might have been made for the purpose.

The pains and trouble Mr. Latham had taken over his map, demanded something more than thanks from the inhabitants of the town. And we thought he well-deserved a testimonial, or as we expressed it, to be "tea-potted."

We consulted with our friend Mr. Jackson of the Leicestershire Bank, and he in his turn, had a conversation with Mrs. Latham on the subject.

She had silver teapots *ad nausium* so that idea was abandoned. But a good sum of money was readily subscribed for the testimonial; and in the end a potrait, life-size, was painted of Mr. Latham, by an Academician (G. Archer, Esq.), at the cost of a hundred guineas.

There was a little ceremony at the time of presentation, which took place at Mr. Latham's house, where a number of the committee assembled, and after an address had been read, the picture was handed over to Mrs. Latham, with the understanding that after her husband's death, it was to become the property of the town.

A surplus of the subscriptions amounting to as much as a hundred and twenty pounds, was then handed to Mr. Latham in an ornamental purse, prepared for the occasion, by my sister Elizabeth and myself.

He was much gratified with the contents of the purse, and with his usual generosity, expended the whole sum in repairing the walls of the old Bede House, which had suffered considerable damage from a flood; and as Mr. Latham observed, it had been a "knotty point," and one he had been long revolving in his mind, where to obtain the necessary funds to keep the building from tumbling down altogether.

LEAFLET LXXX.—Sea Breezes at Dunstanton.

BUT if Mr. Latham was persevering and industrious, so were we, and took as much interest in weaving our stories, as he did in poring over his map.

We ran on with a serial tale for the Quiver, week by week, before the printers, and there was some excitement in that fact. It was called "In Duty Bound," and some of the characters were drawn from life.

The lazy "Luke Ormond," who lies on his back upon the sofa, and refuses to get up, but allows his sister Kate to do all the work,—was then a living person; as was also Kate herself, whose bright eyes, and decided manner win for her the love and confidence of the Baronet, Sir Frederick Morton; who for "once in his life" makes up his mind, and marries her.

Another serial tale of ours made its appearance in Cassell's Magazine, under the title of "Winifred's Divorce."

Here the heroine takes off her wedding ring, and by mutual consent, she and her husband agree to part for the space of a year, as he is a ne'er-do-well, and cannot provide her with a comfortable maintenance.

But the illustrated books had a greater attraction for us; and particularly one we did for Cassell & Co., "Chapters on Trees," with French plates of a superior kind.

We enjoyed many quiet years of happiness at Melton, and were busy in more ways than one, for we succeeded in turning the rough ground into a fruitful garden, and coaxing the turf to grow upon the lawn.

Mr. Ingram of Belvoir (who is to the Duke of Rutland what Mr. Paxton had been to the Duke of Devonshire) was a friend, and a great favourite of Elizabeth's, and he was at the trouble of coming over to help her with his advice, as to the disposition of the flower beds that were about to be cut.

It is a happy time to look back upon, and as Elizabeth was the chief gardener, Mr. Gregg was always making her some present in the shape of tools,—from a lady's patent roller, to watering pans with a number of different sized roses, from the coarsest to the finest, for the benefit of her geraniums.

But nothing in this world can ever remain the same for long together.

We received bad news from Vevey, where our sister Catherine and her husband were living—he being a classical master in the College there.

One sad result of the Franco-German War, was that the French troops carried the infection of small-pox through many of the peaceful Swiss valleys, and numbers of families were invaded by this terrible pestilence.

Monsieur Coulin fell a victim to the disease, and left his wife a widow in a foreign land. Happily his family were in the neighbourhood, and ready, as well as at hand, to show her every kindness.

We deeply sympathized with her in her affliction, and regarded the death of her husband as a great calamity.

Unfortunately, Elizabeth's health began to fail; she had been ailing for some time, and an attack of erysipelas left her so weak and languid that she pursuaded me to go with her for a fortnight to Hunstanton.

And so I did, leaving one of Mr. Gregg's sisters to keep house the while.

We enjoyed the sea beach and the cliff; and though it was early summer, before the season is said to commence, we found some pleasant and agreeable friends

One party that we knew, had gone from Melton. Miss K—— and her married sister Mrs. P——, a clergyman's wife, with a family of seven or eight children.

As soon as we had secured lodgings in "Belvoir House," we called upon them, and enlisted the services of the little ones in picking up the sea-weeds, shells and star fish, or anything else they could meet with upon the sands.

We found it very pleasant to be surrounded by children, who did not give us any trouble; but their mamma and their aunt too, were constantly and anxiously looking after their welfare; and I inwardly resolved that if I had a family, I would let them run where they pleased, and break an arm and a leg if they liked, rather than be after them with "dont this!" and "dont that!" Yes, I would leave them to learn wisdom by experience.

On Sunday we attended the small church of St. Edmunds, built near to the lodging houses, for the benefit of the visitors. The scent of the flowers was almost too sweet.

There was a boarding school not far off, and we had seen the young ladies on Saturday evening, busy decorating the church, and noticed that when one of them went to place a wreath in the chancel, she took off her shoes, and left them outside as though it were "holy ground."

There was no pulpit, but we heard a good sermon preached on the steps of the altar. The subject being—that "if a man will do, or does the thing that is right, it shall bring him peace at the last."

Mrs. P——'s little ones were so delighted with the service—the flowers, the other adornments, particularly the embroidered bags of scarlet, gold and blue, circulated for the offertory, that their mamma was alarmed at the effect produced upon them, and said she must not take them there again lest her husband might disapprove. But we thought it would have been better not to have kept them under such subjection, either on Sundays or on any other days in the week. But our notions of liberty met with no response, and we felt they were not appreciated.

There were no bands of music to dog our steps at Hunstanton, but there was a stall or two for the sale of corals and lumps of stone, and shells. We were somewhat amused to see graven on one of the shells the words "for her I mean to *mary*."

We remonstrated with the stall-keeper about the wrong spelling of the word marry, to which he made the sharp reply, that he had put in as many letters as he could afford for the money.

In the course of the week we had a pleasant walk on the cliff, by the cornfields with plenty of poppies in them, and meadows with pink lucerne, to the light-house, where the man on duty seemed lonely and rather melancholy. He offered us bits of agate and other stones, that had been picked up on the shore, and polished for pins and brooches, but asked us (as is generally the case on such occasions) about four times as much as they were worth.

And then he pointed out how the cliff had given way. And we had to step across a crack made during the last winter, and that looked very much as if it would widen, and a piece of cliff fall before very long.

We left the lighthouse behind us, and strolled along until we reached the old village of Hunstanton, and having a permit, went into the Hall gardens, from which the roses and other flowers were regularly gathered for the church decoration.

And on the following Sunday we attended the service at the old village church, and found it more airy and pleasant than the one so crowded with visitors.

There was no sermon, but the prayers were read in an impressive manner, and the communion afterwards administered to a large number of communicants.

I had left Mr. Gregg reluctantly enough, but when we got home again the delight of meeting seemed almost to compensate for the parting.

He had written to us nearly every day, and kept a diary, which he called "the Melton Journal," for our benefit, and by way of preface writes—"Is there not a sort of telegraphy in the thoughts of relatives and friends, one thought after another going out after the absentees, and returning again with visions of hopefulness and peace?"

We found him very well, but he had been decidedly dull, in spite of going out to dine, and receiving callers at home.

At one of these dinner parties, I believe at the Vicarage, an amusing incident occurred.

A dignitary of the Church, a Canon, and his sister were amongst the guests, and being strangers did not know any of the company present.

Unfortunately the lady was taken into dinner by a medical man, but having no suspicion of the fact, she by and bye began to descant on the poor plight the hunting gentlemen must be in, whenever they met with an accident.

"I should think," she observed "they never trust themselves to the mercy of the country doctors, but take the train, and fly off to London."

"Excuse me" said her neighbour, meekly, "but you are not aware you are addressing a country doctor, for I happen to be one myself."

The lady was quite unable to cover her confusion, and the whole party felt it to be a *faux pas*.

Mr. Latham was soon with us, and had a number of anecdotes to tell us about the late Dr. K—— (Miss K——'s father) who had been for many years a leading man in Melton, and a great friend of his.

Some time before his death he lost his wife, and had an idea of taking another, a buxom widow in the neighbourhood. His daughters, naturally opposed to a mother-in-law, devised a plan to turn him from his purpose.

He was every day in attendance as medical man, upon Lord Harborough; so they entrusted to a mutual friend the delicate task of asking his lordship to intercede for them, and if possible to induce their father to forego his scheme of matrimony.

Mr. Latham thought Lord Harborough's reply a very clever one. "He said his maxim was never to interfere with any man, in the matter of his love or of his religion."

Mr. Latham was an amateur artist, and used to go sketching in the Park at Stapleford, and pay many a visit to Lord Harborough at the Hall. He had witnessed some curious scenes there, and gave us an instance of what he called a "bit of sharp practice."

A gentleman from Australia was dining there, and began to expatiate on the superior mode they had of cooking, compared with our English method. His Lordship rang for the cook, and desired her to pay attention to his friend's instructions, and to cook a piece of beef there was in the larder, Australian fashion.

She was saucy in a moment, and solemnly declard she would do no such thing; whereupon his Lordship gave her notice to quit, when she again declared she should do no such thing.

Matters went on till the end of the month, and then Mr. Latham was sent for, as a legal adviser, to do what he could to get rid of her.

She was a very big woman of some twenty stone, and what was to be done, since she had taken to her bed, and refused to stir?

Mr. Latham felt somewhat timid on going into her room, but seated himself in an easy chair by the bed, and in his mildest tones, began to reason with her. She would not listen to what he had to say; but at

last promised to oblige him so far as to dress herself, and sit up for an hour or so in the easy chair.

So Mr. Latham took his leave, and no sooner was she sitting up, than a number of flunkeys rushed in, and before she knew what they were about, they had snatched her, chair and all, and carried her down the stairs, through the Park Gates on to the open road, where they set her down and wishing her "good day!" left her to her fate.

LEAFLET LXXXI.—The Church Congress at Leicester.

DEAR Elizabeth's health seemed, for the time, to have been restored by the sea breezes and the change to Hunstanton, and we got back to our work again with fresh vigour.

But another summer brought with it a second attack of erysipelas, and we made a second journey to the sea.

She did not herself anticipate any danger from these illnesses, and said one day as we were walking together in the garden, that she thought she might reckon upon being able to write for some ten years to come.

But as she uttered the words I felt afraid it would not be so.

We were engaged writing for Messrs. Cassell, a story for the "Quiver," to be called "The Old House on the Common," and also an illustrated book, "Stories about Birds."

For this book we had to hunt up our resources, and find as many anecdotes about birds as we could.

We remembered our friend Mr. Ingram of Belvoir, who knew as much about birds, as about flowers, and felt sure he would help us, if we could only get over and see him.

And as it happened, we had an invitation to spend a day or two at Knipton (close to Belvoir), with Mrs. William Fletcher, whose husband was one of the Duke's stewards.

It was in the month of May, when the hedges were loaded with the bloom of the hawthorn, and everything in nature was in full beauty.

It was a long way, but Elizabeth and I went alone, in our own pony carriage, I acting the part of driver.

It was a very pleasant excursion, and when we arrived safely at Knipton, we received a cordial welcome from Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher.

The spring gardens at Belvoir were like a mosaic of colour, arranged with an artist's skill. And we found Mr. Ingram full of information about birds, and able to tell us many things that were of use to us.

One of his anecdotes about his tame raven, we were glad to make a note of, and afterwards inserted it in our book.

Besides the raven, he kept a pet dog, and the two used to be very friendly with each other. But the raven, always full of mischief, could not refrain from playing him a few tricks.

On a hot summer's afternoon the dog would stretch himself out in the sun for his nap, and the raven would stand solemnly by, as if guarding his friend.

But all at once, and as quick as lightning, he would give him a sharp peck. The dog would wake up with a growl, and look about him; there stood the raven as grave and as innocent as could be, and no one could imagine he was the guilty party. The dog did not even suspect him, and after another growl he lay down again to finish his nap.

But no sooner was he asleep, than there came another sharp peck, that roused him up, and made him very cross. This time he would look at the raven. But no, the raven had not moved a feather.

There he stands as grave as a judge, and with the air of the utmost innocence.

This game would go on for a long time, until the dog lost patience, and walked away giving up all idea of having a nap.

Mrs. Ingram put in a word to say, that when her baby was born, the pet raven had to be disposed of, as she was quite afraid his jealous feelings might lead him to give the child a serious peck.

We stayed at Mrs. Fletcher's all night, and drove in the morning to Knipton reservoir; a very picturesque spot, and a favourite resort for gentlemen who are fond of fishing. There is a boat at hand for their accommodation, and there can be no more tempting, or lazy method of spending their time, than floating about all day on the surface of that lake, sketching or watching their lines.

And round the pool are many shaded nooks and retired spots, where, if they please, they can take a plunge, and finish the day's sport by having a swim.

In the afternoon, Elizabeth and Miss Fletcher drove with Mr. and Mrs. Ingram, through wooded lanes, and many romantic spots.

And they had a ramble on foot in what is well known by the name of "Frog's Hollow."

They came home loaded with treasures of divers sorts; but perhaps the most beautiful of these was the nest of the long-tailed-tit, which Elizabeth had never seen before, and that highly delighted her.

They had spied it in the centre of a furze bush, and regarding it as a prize, had carried it off in triumph.

It was oval in shape, and the top so compactly made that not a drop of rain could get in, while the entrance was so small, we thought the tit must leave her long tail outside.

The nest was lined with the softest down, enclosed in a strong wall of closely pressed moss, and beyond that was a band of white lichen

and bits of wool, held together with the glutinous web that the spider spins as a cradle for her eggs.

We felt reluctant to leave Knipton, but in the cool of the evening had to wish our friends good-bye, and after thanking them for their kind hospitality, drove back home again.

Elizabeth seemed much better for the little holiday, and we both felt refreshed by the pleasant visit and the agreeable society of our friends.

And now it was Mr. Gregg's turn to go out, which he so seldom did that it was quite an event. He was going as one of the delagates to the Church Congress at Leicester, where the clergy would meet the Bishop, and a variety of subjects were to be discussed, and opinions to be obtained upon them.

The number of the clergy who were going to attend from the different parishes, was very great; and as the conference was expected to last two or three days, the laity in the town kindly opened their houses and offered them accommodation.

At that time, Mr. Winterton was the Mayor, and he sent Mr. Gregg a polite invitation to take up his quarters with him during his stay.

Accordingly, Mr. Gregg did so, and he and Mr. Winterton soon became very good friends indeed.

He was a stiff Presbyterian of the Scotch Kirk, and confessed that he had not much relished the idea of having one of the clergy to entertain, as he thought he would be sure to have high notions, and most likely look over his head to the hard wall.

So he had carried the list of names to a friend of his, and consulted him as to the possibility of getting off altogether.

But when his friend saw Mr. Gregg's name down in the list, he advised him to lose no time in sending him an invitation; as he was sure he could not help liking him, for there was no pride about him.

The Conference wound up on the last evening with a conversazione, attended by a very distinguished party of ladies and gentlemen.

Mr. Gregg enjoyed his visit to Leicester very much, and on leaving, the Mayor presented him with a photo of himself, wearing the chain of office round his neck, in remembrance of the pleasant time they had spent together.

LEAFLET LXXXII.—Days of Sadness.

WHEN Mr. Gregg returned from Leicester, he found us very busy with a little book that was to keep alive the memory of his good old aunt Martha, who had been the friend of his youth.

It is called "Aunt Martha's Corner-cupboard," and gives the history of two little boys who like play so much better than work, that they would certainly have grown up to be dunces had not Aunt Martha

excited their curiosity, by telling them tales about the different things she kept locked up in her corner-cupboard. She worked upon the minds of the boys so effectually that they wanted to hear more, and began to like their aunt's tales, better than their own marbles.

So at the end of the holidays, when they went back to school, they determined to find something out for themselves; and began to run about and look at first one great map, and then another, that had hung so long on the walls without being taken any notice of.

They were hunting for China and Brazil and a number of other places that their aunt had been telling them about; so that anyone might have thought they had just come back from a voyage round the world. In fact, they were no longer the same lazy idle boys; but for the future, became good and industrious scholars.

This book was still in halves, and the "Stories about Birds" not quite completed, when one morning at breakfast, Elizabeth said in a hurried manner, that she must go to Leicester by the next train, for one of her teeth had just snapped in two, and no one but her cousin, the dentist there, could mend it.

It was a warm June day, and I tried to persuade her not to go; as a visit to a dentist is at all times, a formidable undertaking.

But go she must, and as it was Friday, one of Mr. Gregg's days for visiting the Union, he contrived to walk with her to the station.

It was with a heavy heart that I saw her go, for a presentiment of evil lay so heavily upon me that I seemed under some mesmeric influence, or like a person in a dream.

By the afternoon post, we received a card to say that she was going to stay all night as her cousin could not possibly complete his work in that one day, but we were to meet her the next afternoon at the Midland station at five o'clock.

And here I must beg the indulgence of the reader, and be allowed to pass over as lightly as possible the following week, for the events of it are too painful to dwell upon.

On Elizabeth's return home, I perceived a spot of inflamation on her cheek; and the weather becoming suddenly hot, she seemed to lose much of her strength.

On Sunday, however, she dressed with more than her usual care, and attended the morning service at Church. And afterwards, as we took a few turns up and down the long walk in the garden, she said the subject of the sermon had been exactly suited to her case—it had been the priests carrying the ark of God over the river Jordan.

And she went so far as to say, that her feet were about to touch the brim of that river, and that she should soon have passed across.

And so it was—the red spot upon her cheek very quickly developed into phlegmatus erysipelas; and fever set in that nothing seemed able to relieve.

Dr. Shaw, a physician whom we had known and respected for many years, was summoned from Leicester, but he gave us no hope, and his parting words to me of "God have mercy upon you," were enough to confirm my fears, and make me feel that my worst apprehensions were about to be fulfilled.

Alas! The very next Sunday, my dear and loving sister lay dying. Her sufferings were so acute and so distressing to witness, that all wish to detain her was at an end, and she herself prayed, and begged us to pray and "to pray hard," that she might be released.

And we could distinguish the words, "Heaven, Heaven now," to be often on her lips.

She lingered a few hours into the following day, but before night was over, she had crossed the Jordan, and her feet were safely landed in the Promised Land.

When one so closely bound by the ties of affection, as well as of blood, is taken from us, it seems as if this world and the next were but separated by a curtain, a semi-transparent veil; and we feel as if we were drawn with them, half-way beneath that curtain, and could catch a vision of the light beyond, and hear the faint echo of their songs, and almost realize the joys of Heaven.

It was the last day in June (1873), when she was carried to her long home and laid to rest in the Brooksby churchyard. And the stone, we had placed upon the tomb, records the fact of her having presented the living to Mr. Gregg.

Nothing could exceed the consideration of the Squire and his lady, Mr. and Mrs. Chaplin; or the kindness of our Melton friends, who one and all tried to comfort me, and to divert my thoughts from the affliction that had overtaken us.

Mrs. Colles, the Vicar's wife, and Mrs. Latham too, had many a walk up this dusty road for the purpose of doing me good; while Mrs. Beasley and her daughters (nearer at hand) were always ready with consoling words.

Mrs. William Adcock also was a friend in need, and used to come every morning to make enquiries, and I can almost fancy now, that I hear her cheerful voice and pleasant salutation.

Nor do I forget dear Mrs. Marriot, or Mrs. Reuben Whitchurch, and many others, though I cannot mention them by name, who were ready to do anything for me in their power; and I can hardly say how much indebted I was to them.

My sister came from Vevey on purpose to be with me; but despite her loving attentions, and Mr. Gregg's great tenderness, I was never the same again. Indeed, he himself used to observe that now Elizabeth was gone, he looked upon me as only "half a person."

Miss Latham was very fond of coming up to pay us a visit in her bath chair, and nothing pleased her better than to be left at the study door to have a talk with "dear Mr. Gregg" as she called him. She was

very cheerful, and tried in every way to divert our attention, and to draw us from our grief.

One day she told us, that she and her bath chair had been making their appearance in the County Court.

She never refused either to lend or to give, so of course was much imposed upon.

In this instance, she had lent a man a good sum to buy tools, that he might go into business as a carpenter; and when he had done so, and became prosperous, he refused to repay her.

Then Mr. Latham took up the cudgels on her behalf, and carried her triumphantly through the Court, and the money was ordered to be refunded by instalments, which she observed would suit her very well.

Her chair had become a necessity in consequence of an accident, that happened to her in the street. She was going on her round of visiting as usual, when she was met by a number of "Band of Hope" boys, who were so full of fun and frolic, as not to see where they were going, and all at once, came into contact with Miss Latham, and knocked her down.

She fell backwards, and was so much injured as never to be able to walk again. But this did not stop her in her career of usefulness; for she would be drawn along all through her district, and stop every now and then to collect a little knot of listeners, who used to press round her chair, to catch her welcome and heart-stirring words.

It was a great loss to Melton when Miss Latham died; and while the remembrance of her was still warm in the hearts of the people a memorial window was subscribed for, and placed in the church near to the western entrance.

On the upper panes are groups of flowers, copied from her own sketch book, and at the base of the inscription is the text, "She hath been a succourer of many, and of me also," and then follows the Vicar's name in full.

The text was in allusion, not only to her good works, but to the prayers she had offered on his behalf, and to which he attributed the fact of his having obtained the living of Melton Mowbray.

LEAFLET LXXXIII.—Brooksby Spire Struck by Lightning.

THE estate at Brooksby had become the property of Ernest Chaplin, Esquire, who resided there, and began to feel an interest in the Church, and even undertook the office of clerk, while his wife played the organ, and trained a class for the singing.

The church however, was in a very rude and barn-like condition, such as it might have remained since the days of the Dukes of Buckingham.

Its only ornament stands within the chancel, and consists of a very fine monument of the last of that family (Villiers) with two life-size figures, the lady and her husband, mounted on a large pedestal, that bears the inscription in gold letters upon it.

But this beautiful monument had been shot at and injured in the time of the Civil Wars; and the white marble was now so black with age, as to have become a thing of faith rather than of sight.

One sultry afternoon in August ('74) we had a violent storm; so violent that the thunder shook every pane of glass in our windows at Melton, and Mr. Gregg observed that he feared some serious damage must have been done.

Fortunately we escaped, but the next morning the postman brought us the news that the spire of Brooksby church had been struck. The Squire himself was in town, but his wife was at home, and just going in at the front door of the Hall, when the crash came so loud and so powerful that it made the ground tremble under her feet, and alarmed her very much.

We went over as soon as possible to see what damage had been done. Happily no one was hurt, but the poor spire presented the appearance of having had a piece nipped out of one side, as cleanly cut as though it had been bitten by a dog or some other animal.

Mr. Gregg's first thought was whether it could not be saved from becoming an entire wreck; but the builder, when consulted on the subject, declared that it was in far too dangerous a condition to meddle with.

Mrs. Chaplin told us that the church had been full of sulphurous vapour, and that when the door was first opened it came out like smoke. We ventured into the belfry and saw upon the floor circles of deep grooves, as though the electric fluid had whirled round and round in its efforts to escape.

In the course of a few days, from the effects of weakness and a slight wind blowing upon it, the spire began to lean, and bent so much that it looked exactly as if it were hanging in the air.

But it could not long remain in that perilous state, and the upper portion soon fell, dashing the stones through the roof, and hurling them about at random. And as a few loose stones continued to fall, no one liked to go very near, and the services had to be suspended. When we went ourselves, we saw the large hole in the roof through which the stones had forced an entrance, and noticed that they lay together in one corner all in a heap. The monument and the interior of the church had escaped injury.

During the interval of Mr. Gregg's own church being closed he had the opportunity of assisting many invalided clergymen in the neighbouring villages.

At Kettleby for instance the Vicar had a delicate chest, and was advised by his medical man to keep indoors all the winter through.

And at Saxelby the Rector had an attack of heart disease that entailed a year's cessation from work, and never allowed him to resume it.

And by and bye our lively friend Mr. Jones of Frisby, was laid aside by illness, and Mr. Gregg undertook the services for him at the hamlet church of Kirby Bellairs.

So that in reality he had a great deal to do; but happily was such a favourite with the poor, that they esteemed it a favour to have him at liberty for their benefit, and regarded the accident of the lightning as a thing not to be regretted.

There were many week-day duties to be attended to, that occasioned Mr. Gregg frequent drives into the villages.

One afternoon, as he was about to start for Kirby to take a funeral, a young gentleman was shown into his study, and asked to be allowed to consult our Clerical Directory, saying that he had been to the Vicarage, but found the copy there too ancient to be of any use, so that Dr. Colles had sent him on to us.

It was a very sultry day in summer, and the young man who had walked twelve miles or more (according to his own account) seemed overcome with fatigue. Mr. Gregg begged him to take a seat, and said though he must be excused and leave him, yet he would send Mrs. Gregg to him instead. So he came into the dining-room and told me, that a clergyman's son was in the study, who wanted the Directory, and also some refreshment, but he must say good-bye, and leave him to me.

I went at once, and found a brawny fine-looking young fellow sitting on the sofa, taking off his boots. He apologized for that act of rudeness on the score of the great heat; and I gave him the Directory, and asked him what he would take. And when he had had something to eat he began to tell me, that as he had walked in the sun with his coat across his arm, his purse must have slipped out, and he found himself without the means of getting on to York, for which place he was bound. Indeed he had no money at all, but if I would kindly lend him a sovereign, he would leave me the address of his friend, and repay the loan without delay.

O foolish woman that I was, to believe a word he said! He left me an address, and went off with the money.

But he had not been gone long before Miss Colles came in, in some agitation, to say that her father had just seen an advertisement in the Record warning the clergy against a wild youth, a clergyman's son, who was going about in a fictitious name, and getting money under false pretences; and she said they felt quite certain the young man who had made the excuse of the Directory must be the very one.

We at once forwarded the name and address he had given me to York, to the Superintendent of Police, and received the pleasing intelligence, that there was no such name and no such number.

On enquiring in the town, we were told that the young miscreant had been into a shop, changed the sovereign and laid in a good supply of cigars and then gone on to the Railway Station and taken a ticket for Derby.

There was no help for me, and I had to fall back on the wise old saw that "it is better to be sinned against than to be the sinner."

Nevertheless, I had to bear some raillery from Mr. Gregg, who declared he should never have believed that I could be so easily taken in.

The next event that happened, was Mr. Gregg taking over to Brooksby a party of workmen, and setting them on to repair the roof in a temporary manner, and to put the interior of the church to rights so far as to make it possible for him to hold services there.

And when this had been done he continued to hold public worship there for more than twelve months.

But a subscription was opened for a restoration fund, at first for four hundred pounds, though it was soon found that double that amount would be required for the rebuilding of the steeple and the completion of the work.

At first sight it appeared a Herculean task, but as union is strength, so combination of purpose is sure to be successful, and assistance flowed in from many unexpected sources.

Lady Cardigan kindly volunteered a pulpit, and had it carved under her own supervision. Her husband had once upon a time resided at the Hall, and in memory of his favourite charger had a tablet with the name etc. cut in stone, inserted in the wall, where it can still be read by visitors walking round the gardens.

As the pulpit was provided for, Mr. Winter Johnson the architect, offered to join the contractor in presenting the new reading desk; and last of all, the lectern was given by Mr. Gregg.

Brooksby has always been a favourite meet for the hounds, and it was arranged that a bazaar should be held, in aid of the restoration fund, on one of those occasions.

The entrance hall was used for the purpose, and a very pretty sight it presented. The crowd of gentlemen in their red coats—the profusion of flowers—and the number of attractive young ladies bent on pinning the bouquets into the button-holes of the hunters before they let them start, might have made a picture for an artist.

The stalls themselves were tastefully laid out, and thoroughly well furnished. One table was covered with delicate green porcelain, that had come from France as a present to Mrs. Chaplin, and so much appreciated, that very soon it was all sold.

Our kind friend, Mrs. Palmer sent from Leamington a package of ornamental wares; and to the tradespeople of Melton, we were indebted for many liberal contributions of useful articles that met with a ready sale.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, the Brooksby cottagers, and a number of people from Hoby and the neighbouring villages, were admitted for a small payment, and as soon as the gates were opened, they came crowding in.

A fresh interest was roused in the sale, and purchases were made with great spirit and energy; indeed, the proceeds of the day reached the sum of three hundred pounds, if not more, and all parties concerned felt thankful for the result, and that their trouble and exertions were so well repaid.

The church was very soon in the hands of the workmen, and by and bye the walls began to assume a different appearance; but as they looked fresher and cleaner, the Villiers monument, in proportion, seemed to become blacker, and more dingy than before.

The Duke of Rutland, we found, was the only living relative of this ancient family of Buckingham; and when he was written to on the subject, he responded at once, and undertook the expense of its renovation.

There was no ostentatious opening of Brooksby Church, but when the work was finished, Mr. Gregg resumed his accustomed services as quietly as possible.

At first, there were many who came from motives of curiosity, and it was very natural that the attention of the congregation should be somewhat distracted by the changes that had taken place around them.

For light had come instead of darkness—everything unsightly had disappeared, and given place to objects of elegance and beauty.

LEAFLET LXXXIV.—High versus Low.

OUR days at Melton were passing very quietly away, the roses were in bloom, and the garden full of flowers, when we received a visit from our old friend Mr. Hudson, to whose hospitality we (that is myself and sisters) had been indebted for many pleasant holidays at his house in St. John's Wood.

He was a lawyer both by birth and inheritance, and was so fond of law that he was always burning his fingers with it.

And now his circumstances were changed. It seemed he had taken a partner, and then fallen out with him, and gone to law, and been worsted; the consequence was he had become an impoverished man. We knew nothing whatever about the rights of the question, but remembered the advice Mr. Latham gave to us, and to everybody else he cared for, which was this:—

"If you want to be happy a'days, don't go to law—if you want to sleep a'nights, don't go to law—and if you want to leave anything behind you when you die, don't go to law."

And when we remonstrated that a lawyer should give such counsel so contrary to his own interests, he used only to laugh and say his own experience had brought him to that conclusion.

Perhaps it would have been better, had Mr. Hudson been equally wise.

The first evening of his arrival he and I had to spend tête-a-tête, for Mr. Gregg had several engagements including a meeting of the "Young Men's Christian Association," at which he was going to preside.

But the next morning the two gentlemen were up betimes, and from my bedroom window, I could see them "parding" up and down the long walk in the garden, deep in conversation.

Mr. Hudson was a Dissenter, and inclining to Radicalism; but at breakfast he allowed that Mr. Gregg had been having the best of the argument, which was about the desirability of the Bishops being "swept out" of the House of Lords, as he expressed it.

The question was in reality that of "high versus low"; and when Mr. Hudson had exhausted all his arguments in favour of the low, Mr. Gregg had taken up the cudgels for the other side, and asked if there was no need for the blessing of the Almighty, to be invoked on the deliberations of the leading men of our country, on whose counsels so much depended; and whether it was not most proper and becoming for the Bishop, day by day, to offer up a prayer for their guidance and direction.

Well knowing the lawyer's love of having the last word, I forbore to enter on the subject, and turned the conversation to the poor in our Union Workhouse; and gave him an instance of the good that had resulted from the Commandments being impressed on the minds of the young; to say nothing of the Catechism version of our duty to God and our neighbour.

I told him how Mr. Gregg and I had one morning walked into the town to do some errands, and as we crossed the Market Place, I dropped my purse without perceiving it, indeed it was not until I had taken a siesta after dinner, that I found out the loss.

Then of course, one of the maids was despatched at once to make enquiries, but as there were some sovereigns and half-sovereigns in it, I never expected to see it again. But lo and behold! It had been picked up by a girl of the lowest class, who had come out of the Union, and taken a place in service. She had never had a sovereign in her hand in her life, and yet she resisted the temptation, and carried the purse without delay to her master.

The circumstance was particularly gratifying to Mr. Gregg, as she had been under his tuition and pastoral care; and he attributed her honesty to the fact of her knowing that God had said, "Thou shalt not steal."

A very different case occurred while we were at Syston. A poor girl in the service of Farmer Bennett, fell into the habit of picking his pockets of any loose money, whenever she took his Sunday clothes down to brush. Of course she soon began to be suspected, and a few coins, marked for the purpose, were found upon her.

Mr. Gregg, at the time, was doing the duty there, and went to see her. But alas! She was as ignorant and benighted as any heathen; she had never been taught the Commandments, and knew nothing whatever about them.

So when he began to repeat them, and rested on the words "Thou shalt not steal," she burst into a sob, and said it was too late for her to learn them now, for she was going to be taken to Leicester Gaol.

She lay there for a fortnight or more, and all we could do was to write to the Chaplain and try to interest him in her behalf.

Mr. Hudson spent the greater part of the next day with us, and we could not help admiring the patience and fortitude with which he bore the reverse of fortune.

He was a good man and took an active part in the London City Mission, and interested himself in many other societies for the spread of the gospel.

We were reading just then, Dr. Livingstone's Travels and Journals, and the book lay about.

It elicited a few minutes conversation, and we could not help commenting on the splendid harvest that had been reaped from the doctor's perseverance in remaining year after year, far away from his English home, in that uninviting region. But he had the welfare of the poor Africans too much at heart to leave them, and the effect of his presence there will continue to be felt throughout all time.

Thanks to his exertions and patient waiting, a way has been opened up, in that far off land, not only for the spread of civilization, but for commercial enterprise; and we trust the day may soon come, when the words of prophesy shall be realized, and Ethiopia stretch out her hands to God.

LEAFLET LXXXV.—Mr. Gregg and the Burglar.

AS our house stood a little distance out of Melton, and had no other house near it (though such cannot be said in these days) our friends were always kind enough to try and frighten us about robbers, and such like agreeable visitors.

And when the Great Northern Railway began to be made, there certainly was some danger. The workmen were so drunken, that the

great wonder was how the embankment could continue to be made, and remain at all solid. Strange as it may seem, we were told by one of the directors of the work, that the drunkards (of course when sober), were the best of workers.

But if we flattered ourselves that we were to be free from annoyance we reckoned without our host; for one Christmas night, when the frost was most intense, and the snow lay hard and thick upon the ground, we were roused from our midnight slumbers by the violent barking of the dog—our faithful Vick.

Mr. Gregg looked from the window, and saw a man trying to escape the dog, by getting over the garden gate into the road, but as he never believed evil of anyone, he merely observed that some poor fellow was making a short cut across Lord Wilton's Park, and our garden, to Asfordby, for it happened to be the feast in that village.

But his charitable surmises were soon dissipated, for almost at the same moment, the two maids came on to the front landing, and began to call lustily for Mr. Gregg, and to say that someone must have got into the house, for they had heard the sound of a window being broken.

As soon as possible he went down stairs (snatching up a club by way of weapon), and I ran after him, not daring to lose sight of him, lest he should be attacked.

The ground-floor rooms were just as we had left them, and there was no trace of any burglar; but going into the cellar, we found that both the windows had been smashed, and the curtains that hung there, to keep out heat and cold, were torn down and lying in tatters in the yard, while the cellar floor was covered with broken glass.

This had been done with a rake, but fortunately the meat had escaped, it having been removed on account of the frost; and the iron stanchions prevented the rogue from effecting an entrance.

Of course, no one was in the cellar, and as we emerged from the lower regions, we were well-nigh deafened with the clashing of bells, being rung as a precautionary measure, and surprised to see that lamps had been lighted in every room.

Mr. Gregg proposed to walk down to the Police station and report what had occured; so dressing himself and wrapping up in great coat and muffler, he came down into the hall, and stood while I unfastened the front door, and, cold as it was, we both stepped out, into the porch together..

I confess it gave me a slight shock to see a man almost close to us, but the sight of the revolver in Mr. Gregg's hand, somewhat comforted me.

Before we had time to ask any questions, the man said he had heard an alarm, and seen lights flashing about, and knew we had been disturbed, and thought he might do something to help us.

On which I thanked him, and Mr. Gregg, in the coolest manner, proposed that they should walk down to the Police station together. No

wonder—that in spite of the frost—I stood and watched them down the road, until they were out of sight.

On their way to the station, the man was evidently drawn towards Mr. Gregg, and confided to him something of his family history.

By and bye they both came back, accompanied by a couple of policemen. But all they could do was to look at the cellar windows, and to find out that the window of the wash-house had been broken too, and a rake thrown through it.

We noticed that the dog seemed very dissatisfied, and kept close at their heels. And when they went, the man went with them, seemingly of his own accord.

The next thing that happened was Mr. Goodman, the superintendent coming himself, and bringing a pair of boots in his hand. He said he had his suspicions of "that fellow" and had locked him up, and had brought his boots to compare them with the footprints in the snow.

Of course they were found exactly to correspond, even to the flaw of a nail or two being gone out of the heels.

On the following Tuesday, Mr. Gregg attended at the Magistrates' room, to meet Lord Grey who was then officiating, and was certainly the most popular gentleman on the Bench.

Mr. Gregg declined to prosecute the man for burglary, as in that case, he would have to take his trial at Leicester, and probably have lain in gaol for some weeks; so the inditement was altered, and he was allowed to escape after having paid the fine inflicted, and a certain sum for damages.

Nothing could exceed the gratitude of the would-be burglar, when he found himself so leniently dealt with, and that he was to be set at liberty, and allowed to go back to his home. And most cordial were the thanks Mr. Gregg received on the occasion, both from him and his brother; and after the money had been paid, the two men walked away arm-in-arm together.

LEAFLET LXXXVI.—Conclusion.

I MUST pass on, as did the days and weeks and years, and step over a space of time that was spent in a monotonous but not an unhappy manner; for Mr. Gregg was so kind and good a man, that it was a pleasure and a privilege to be with him.

On one occasion it is related of Robert Hall, that when he was about to preach in the Harvey Lane Chapel, a young minister came into the vestry and volunteered to offer the prayer for him before the sermon; but Mr. Hall declined his services and remarked that he "preferred to whet his own sword."

And so it was with Mr. Gregg; on Sunday morning he rose an hour earlier than usual, and spent the time in his dressing-room "whetting his sword."

And certainly his sermons were clear and plain enough for the wayfaring men to understand, as we more than once had proof.

One day we were out walking together when a poor man, a drover left his herd of cattle, and stepping up to Mr. Gregg, enquired how he came to know him, for he had heard him preach at Kirby Church on Sunday, and felt sure the sermon was meant for him.

But how little do we realize or believe the fact of our not knowing what a day may bring forth; and how little could I imagine Death was standing at the door watching like a thief in the night, to deal a sudden blow, that as far as this world was concerned must sever us for ever!

Remembering the difficulties of his own early life, Mr. Gregg naturally took a great interest in the welfare and education of young men, and in his turn used to attend the meetings of the "Young Men's Christian Association," and conduct a class.

On one such occasion, about a fortnight before his death, he told me that on mounting the stairs he felt a sharp pain in his side—so sharp indeed, that for a few minutes he was afraid he might not be able to do what he had undertaken. But happily it passed off and he returned home in his usual health and spirits. And on the following Sunday he drove as he was in the habit of doing, to take the duty at the Union at nine o'clock, and then on to Brooksby in time for another service at eleven.

And now I must claim to be forgiven if I linger with a melancholy pleasure over the last happy morning we spent together, and recall every one of the trivial events that happened, and which stand out before me like so many figures on the canvas.

It was November (1881) but bright and sunny, and as Mr. Gregg sat in his easy chair by the fire reading the paper and telling me the news, I was at work for him, and well do I remember the many little things he brought out for me to do.

First of all his umbrella must be mended, and have a fresh elastic band put round it; and then his new slippers, that were not quite easy must be cut down a little way in front, and the cut place have a rosette put on to hide it; and then a hole in his Sunday vest had to be mended, and a bit of cloth stitched on at the back quite out of sight, but so as to prevent his little knife from getting through the lining of the pocket.

Who could possibly imagine that these trifling offices were to be the last? And how mercifully does Providence hide from us the ills, that like the sword of Damocles, hang over our heads.

In happy ignorance of what lay before me, I put on my bonnet and went down the road to pay Mrs. Latham a visit. The call did not last more than ten minutes, and on my return I saw Mr. Gregg walking in the garden, with his faithful dog Vick at his heels.

I went up the long walk to meet him, and in a moment perceived that something was the matter; he looked paler than I had ever seen him; and death seemed to be written on his face. But when he put his hand to his side and said the pain was there, I felt an alarm amounting to terror.

During the long years of happiness we had enjoyed, the gipsy and her prediction had been forgotten, but now her random and cruel words came forcibly to mind, and I knew that they would prove true, and that all was lost.

We came in at once by the study door, and after Mr. Gregg had taken some hot brandy and water, he lay down upon the sofa, and I began to rub his side; but alas! the pain was so severe he seemed hardly able to bear it, and in a moment was bathed in such a profuse perspiration, that it ran off his face like water.

The maids were most anxious to do something to relieve him and brought hot flannels to foment his side. Then for a moment he seemed a little better, and expressed a wish to get upstairs and lie upon the bed.

Having had no experience of such an attack as this, I made no opposition, but to this day reproach myself for having let him mount the stairs; for no sooner was he seated on the bed than his countenance began to change.

The anguish of that moment cannot be described, nor can it be told how powerless we felt to render any help. I took his poor clammy hands in mine, and tried to chafe them into some degree of warmth, and to deceive myself into the belief that their icy coldness was not the forerunner of death.

While my sister, who had returned from her walk, entered the room just in time to put her arm behind him as he was about to fall, and supported his head upon her shoulder.

We heard him breath my name, but in a few seconds he had lost consciousness, and knew us no longer.

The mysterious curtain that divides us from the world of spirits, had lifted for an instant to let him pass, and had closed again; and he had left us and was gone—gone into that world, of which we know nothing save what the Bible tells us, that it is the rest prepared for the people of God.

At this moment Mr. Roberts, our medical man, came up the stairs only to look on when all human aid was useless; but he did what he could to comfort me with the assurance that no amount of skill could have availed us anything, for spasm at the heart had been the cause of his death.

It was impossible for me to realize my loss, and not until my dear husband had been taken to Brooksby, and laid in the tomb, could I believe that he was dead, and that I should have to face the world without him.

But how true it is when we have gained the summit of life's hill—and all that we once hoped for—as we begin to descend the other side, we look for first one and then another of our friends, but we look in vain—they have parted company with us, and have left us to traverse the roughest and the darkest bit of the way alone.

The funeral service was conducted by the Rev. Octavius Norman, who had known and esteemed Mr. Gregg from his boyhood; and the solemnity of the scene was much enhanced by a group of school children from the Melton Union, standing round the grave and singing in a sweet and childlike way, two or three appropriate hymns on the certainty of a joyful resurrection.

Some hundreds of persons were present, including a number of clergy and ministers of all denominations, and again was the Hall opened to the mourners and friends and the utmost sympathy shown towards them.

* * *

And now reader, adieu—my leaflets are ended, and let me hope you may have gleaned some lesson of wisdom from my experience.

Our life bears much resemblance to the seasons of the year, and the last of my sketches might be compared to winter, dark and dreary. How could it be otherwise?—Since the narrative is faithfully drawn and uncoloured by the hand of fiction.

You must close the book, but do not lay it aside in sadness. There is in it far more of sunshine than of shade, and we would look upward with a song of praise, and rejoice that there lies before us, a better and a happier world than this, where no sin and no death can enter.

JOHN AND THOMAS SPENCER, PRINTERS, "THE LIBRARY," MARKET PLACE, LEICESTER.