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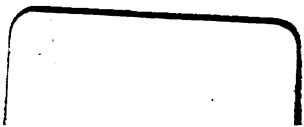
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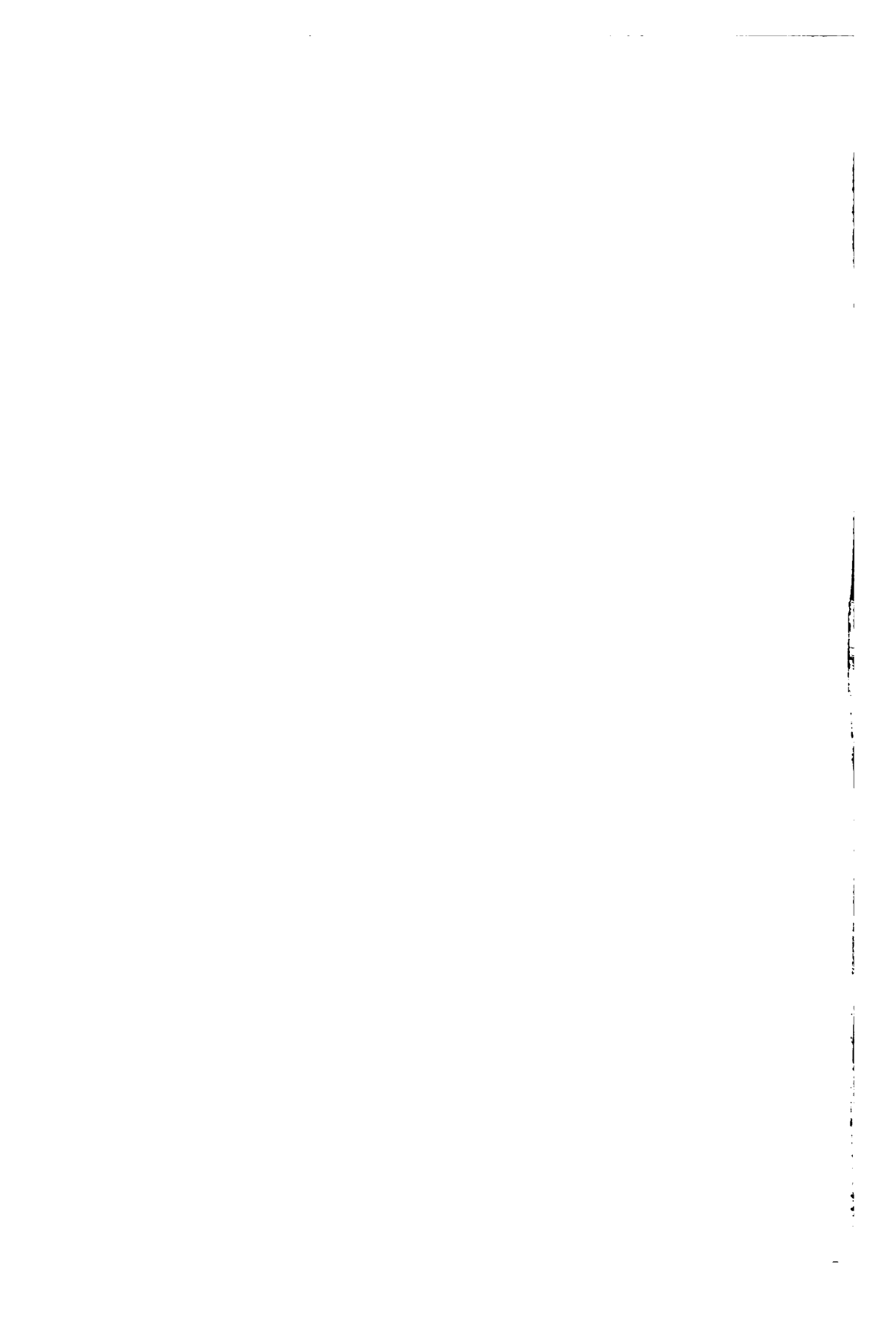
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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF SELECT FICTION

VOLUME XX.

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER, 1895

THIS MAGAZINE IS PLANNED TO COVER THE
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ITS SELECTIONS WILL BE OF THE BEST PRO-
CURABLE IN ALL THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES

"Were I called upon to designate that class of composition which should best fulfill the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous fields of exertion—I should unhesitatingly speak of the short prose tale. The novel is objectionable from its length. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself of the immense force derivable from totality."—EDGAR ALLAN POE.

NEW YORK

THE CURRENT LITERATURE PUBLISHING CO.

52 AND 54 LAFAYETTE PLACE

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STORIES BY J. Henry Shorthouse and Guy de Maupassant IN THIS NUMBER

XX., No. 1

September, 1895

Price, 25 cts.
\$2.50 a Year



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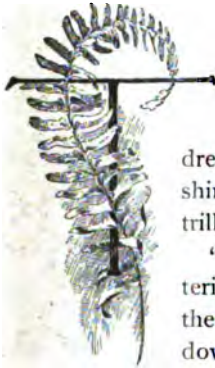
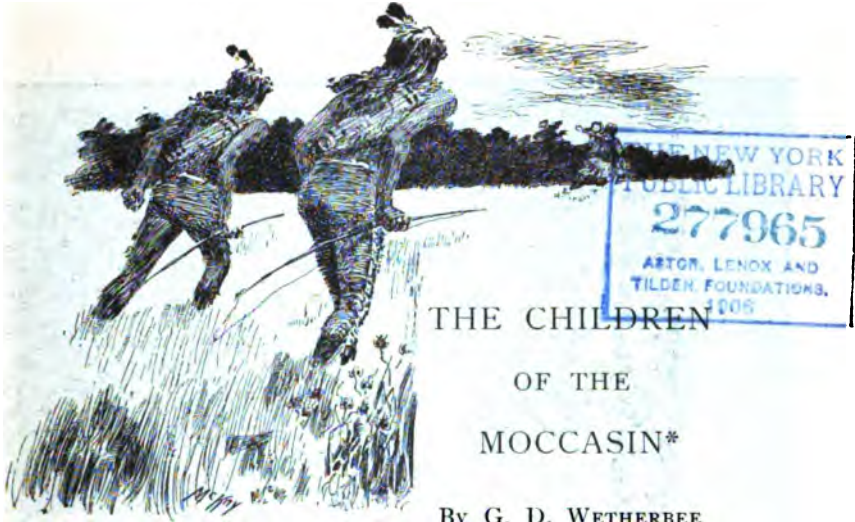
PORTLAND.



Every path
hath a
puddle"

-every day its
dirt. Keep your
house clean and
your heart happy
by using
Sapolio





HIS is a story which I heard the river, the loving Mother-River, telling to her children of a summer twilight, when the dew fell in shining splashes on the lily-pads and the crickets trilled in the hayfields.

"Shut your little eyes, crickets brown; chattering katydids be still; let me tuck you up in the soft, summer mud, my wee turtles; cuddle down close over mother-bird's babies, you little green leaves. Lullaby, lullaby! Rock them to sleep my small south wind. Fast asleep, fast asleep, while the cradle swings!"

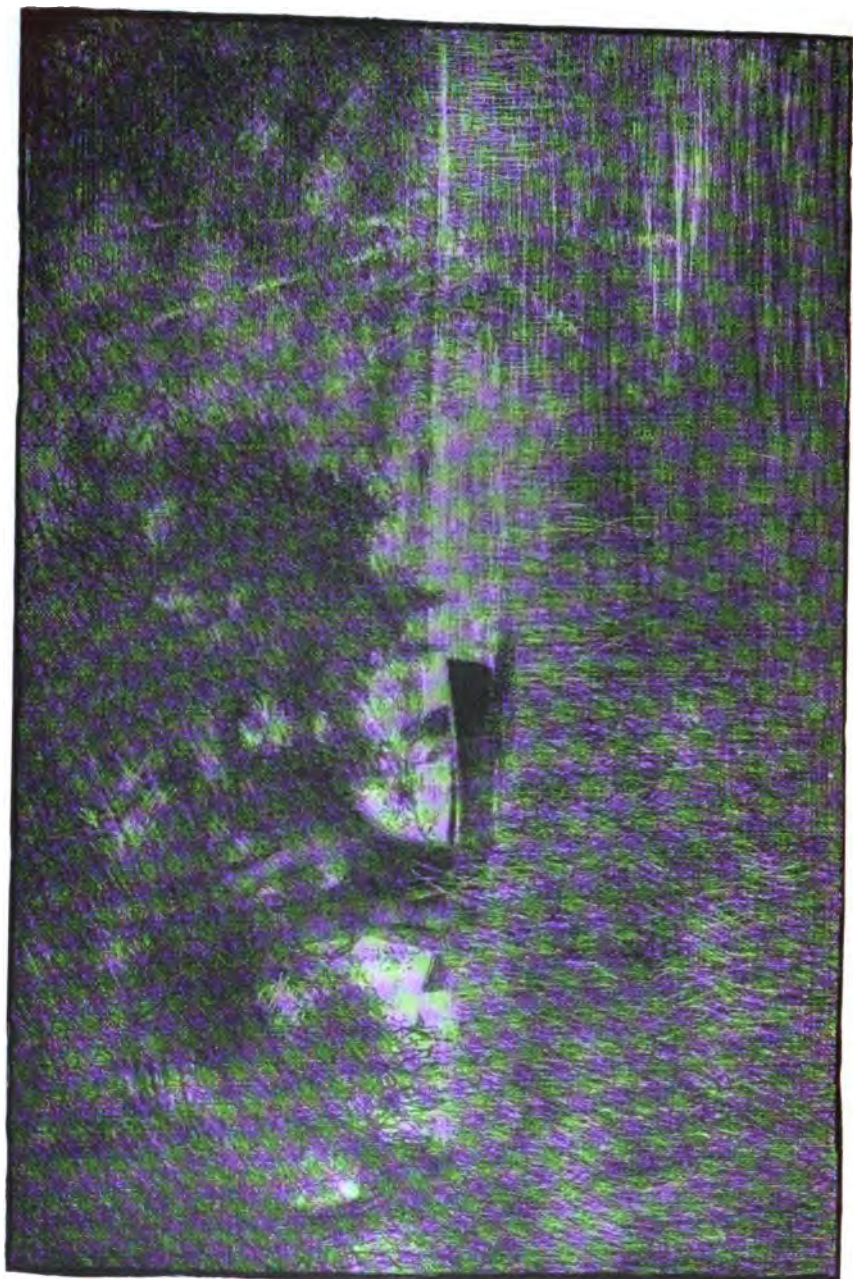
I held my breath to listen as I paddled softly down the stream.

"We have been good children to-day, Mother-River. Tell us a story of the Brown People of the forest who used to play with us in the old days."

Mother-River hummed thoughtfully to herself a moment, while I pulled my canoe in among the reeds, and caught my paddle through an arm of the big grapevines to keep the waves from pulling me after them down stream.

"I will tell you a story of the Brown People," said Mother-River, at length, "who, in the old days, used to live on my

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1954

banks and play in my waters. Are you listening, all you children?"

The leaves stretched out over the water, the little turtles stumbled and scrambled up on the old chestnut log; the tadpoles nestled down in the warm water, close to old Grandfather Frog; the little brown toadstools pulled their nightcaps up from their ears, the better to hear, and Father Owl in the great hickory-tree, called out, "To whit, to whoo, all ye river people, listen to the tale Mother-River is about to tell us."

Thus does my story commence: Long ago, before many of you were born, and when the folk whom we of the river call the Brown People still lived here, there were, among the tribe, two little twin brothers called the Children of the Moccasin. On a summer's day they two came to that wild cherry-tree which stands in the corner of yonder meadow. The day was hot, and the big blue flies were droning their slumber-songs, and the little boys lay down in the long grass and fell asleep. Not long afterwards there came a little girl to the tree, and seeing the two sleeping children she climbed noiselessly up into the branches, and sat peering down at them through the leaves. Presently she grew tired of sitting thus still and began pelting them with the fat red cherries. The little boys opened their eyes sleepily.

"Who showers cherries upon us?" they cried, gathering up a handful of the fruit and sending it flying back through the branches.

The child thrust her pretty head forward through the green twigs and answered, laughing, "They call me Little Squirrel. My father is the Great Flying Goose. Tell me on whom my cherries fall."

"On Sorrow and Red Snow, the twins," said the little boys. "Come down and play."

Little Squirrel scrambled down through the leaves and stood at the foot of the tree, smiling at them.

"Why did they give ye such sorry names?" she asked. "Ye are very pretty boys."

"We were born when our people ran from the people of the Great River. Our father found our mother lying dead under a red-oak, at sunrise, with us in her arms. He laid her under the tree in the snow, for it was bitter winter, and us he would fain take with him to the country of his people. But he had naught to wrap us in save his moccasins of deerskin, so he

put little Sorrow in one," said Red Snow, "and little Red Snow in the other," said Sorrow, "and we swung from his shoulders

a day and a night. And because our people had been defeated and our mother had died did they call me Sorrow."



"And because the snow was red where my father trod with his naked feet did they call me Red Snow. Why art thou crying, Little Squirrel?"

"Because your mother lies cold in the snow, because your father's feet bled when he carried ye, because——" Little Squirrel choked and stopped, rubbing her small, brown fists into her eyes. "Shall ye never see your mother any more?" she asked.

"No," answered the little boys.

Little Squirrel looked doubtfully at them a moment, while two great, round tears stood in her eyes. "Then I would like to be your mother," she said. "Would ye love me if I were, better than anyone in the world, as I do my mother?"

"Not better than Sorrow," said Red Snow.

"Not better than Red Snow," said Sorrow. Then they laughed and said together, quickly, "But next best."

"Better than the white pebbles in the river we throw in the stone-sling, and the long reeds we make into whistles; better than the young blackbirds and 'possums in the mountains, and the dinner of black bear after the chase, and the warm fire when the nights are cold; better than everything, everything, will ye love me?"



"Better than everything but each other will we love thee, little Foster-Mother."

"Then let's sit down and eat the cherries," said Little Squirrel,

comfortably, putting a warm arm about the neck of each. "I shall scold ye both as does old Mother Applecheek if ye are naughty," and she laughed, and the little boys laughed, too, straight into her brown eyes, and gave her cherries, twice as many as they ate themselves.

Many years passed.

One day Little Squirrel came and sat under the old cherry-tree and stretched out her arms in the sunlight.

"In the right hand the heart of one, and in the left hand the heart of the other," she said softly, to herself; "and I weigh them up and down, and I know not which is the heavier—Red Snow and Sorrow! Sorrow and Red Snow! Ye would die for me, both; and ye would live for me, both; and I, miserable Little Squirrel that I am, I must decide which shall live, and which shall die—Sorrow and Red Snow; Red Snow and——" Little Squirrel stopped and caught in her breath. There was a rustle in the long grass behind her, a step on the soft earth.

"Little Squirrel, it is I, Red Snow. I heard my name on thy lips. Wast thou thinking of me, O Little Squirrel?"

"I am always thinking of thee—of my foster-children," said Little Squirrel. But she blushed like the sky at sunrise, for Red Snow had never called her by any other name than "Foster-Mother" before. "For what art thou come, my son?"

"Red Snow," corrected the young man, quickly; "we are not playing with the cherries now. I have come to tell thee something, Little Squirrel, dear Little Squirrel. I have come to tell thee that I love thee, dearest, dearest. Oh, don't laugh, don't!"

"But thou hast told me that so many times, Red Snow, from thy very baby days." The girl hid her face in her hands, for it



was scarlet as on the day they had all eaten cherries under the big tree, and the juice had stained their cheeks.

"I loved thee that first day under the tree better than the river, and the earth, and the sky; better than my mother who died for me and my father who bled for me; better than all only Sorrow, and now, I love thee better than him! Little Squirrel, dearest Little Squirrel, thou who knowest how I love him, thou wilt understand. All night long, when I hear the wind sobbing in the pine branches, to my heart it is the voice of Sorrow moaning for us both. But when the morning comes and the sun creeps in through the tent-opening and kisses me, I think it is thy kiss thy kiss! See how mad I am, dearest?"

Little Squirrel clasped her hot hands against her breast. The voice of all the great world was surging through her head. She tried to speak, but the words would not come.

"In one hand the heart of Sorrow and in one the heart of Red Snow; which shall die and which shall live?" The whole air was filled with the question.

Then the grass of the meadow rustled again, and the soft earth gave back the sound of a footstep. To her other side came Sorrow, and knelt down.

"I heard what ye said, everything, all!" he cried, hastily. "I, too, had come to tell thee that I love thee. I, too, have heard the pine-tree sobbing Red Snow's grief. I, too, have felt thy kiss in the morning, darling. I do not love thee better than he does. It is the same for us both. Thou must decide."



"Which shall live and which shall die," whispered the meadow and the cherry-tree. Little Squirrel put her hands over her ears to shut out the sound. She sprang quickly to her feet and stood before them, trying to laugh with her little, drawn face.

"What folly is this, my children? To-day is as yesterday; and then I heard nothing of this—this nonsense. I told ye in the beginning I should scold ye if ye were naughty, as old Applecheek used to scold, and I——"

"It is too late," said Red Snow and Sorrow together. "Thou must decide."

"Which shall live, and which——" began the cherry-tree.

“ Oh, the Great Spirit, help me then ! ” cried out Little Squirrel, “ I must think ; I must think,” and she bounded away through the meadow grass, like a mote through a sunbeam.

Then the two brothers turned opposite ways and left the tree. Each thought to himself : “ If I have stolen from my brother in wish, so may I do in deed. I must have Little Squirrel, dear Little Squirrel, at any cost, if I bleed for her, if I die for her. I will go to the Great One who lives on the other side of the mountain. He will give to me a love-potion.”

So, up the mountain, under the great, sad trees, climbed each his lonely way to the dread abode of the Giant, whom the Brown People call the Great One. So loudly beat the heart of each in his bosom, that neither heard the heavy, slow footsteps of the other in the still forest. At the top of the mountain, under a ledge of redstone, overhanging it like the shaggy eyebrow of a demon, the fierce eye beneath, lay the cave of the Giant. The Great One lay stretched on the moist earth in front



of his doorway, scowling savagely at two small, shivering toads in front of him, who were alternately making up their little minds, with big sighs, to escape down the mountain side under the wet leaves, and forgetting the determination with the next

breath, as they looked up into the bad black eyes of the Great One.

Over the stony mountain-top, through the red sumachs, came Sorrow, the first to reach the cave.

"Who comes here?" said the Great One, putting one thick, moist hand out over the little toads, as he looked up. "What! Sorrow and Red Snow, the twin children of the Moccasin?"

"Nay, only Sorrow," answered the brave. "Thou knowest me, then?"

"As I know all the Brown People. But hark! Red Snow follows thee! Hear his heavy breathing as he comes through the bog in the hollow of the hill, hear the slushing of the black water as he steps, hear the cry of the frogs as they flee from him——"

"I hear," said Sorrow. "Then make haste to answer me. I have come to thee for a love-draught. They tell me that thou brewest drinks that make the heart to stand still with love, that charm the eyes when they fall upon the desired one. Such a brewing must thou give me."

"Love-potions, thou blind one! Come not to me for such. Ask the sun, who makes love to the flowers, to wither them; ask the robins, who make love to the worms, to devour them."

"I will pay thee whatsoever price thou askest. Only make haste."

"Thou wouldst conclude the bargain before Red Snow comes?"

"Yes."

"Then tell me for whom is this love-potion?"

"What matters that to thee? I tell thee that whatever price thou askest I will pay to thee. Is not that enough?"

"Fool! dost thou think every one may drink of the same brewing? The name, the name!"

"Little Squirrel, the daughter of Flying Goose, if thou must know. But make haste, I pray thee."

"Is she very beautiful, thy Little Squirrel?" said the Great One, with a leer, turning over, and looking up at Sorrow, who was standing over him, while he tickled the miserable little toads on their white stomachs to make them dance in his big hand.

"Of course," answered Sorrow. He would rather have put the green shine of the frogs' pond upon his head than have spoken to the Great One of Little Squirrel.

"I am often lonely up here in my solitude," said the Great One. "I, too, have bethought me of taking unto myself a wife. I can well sympathize with thy feelings—brother!" He sat up and laughed till the tears ran down his fat cheeks, and laid his finger alongside his nose.

"No brother of thine, creeping one! Give me what I ask that I may begone."

"Wilt thou indeed pay me my price? To the poison vines of the forest have I paid in my blood the brother-right that I might take in safety of their death-sap. Long nights have I lain by



the black spring that I might steal of its water when the dying moon shone into it. The death-kiss of the snake, the death-grasp of the bear are in the drink, and none but I can brew it. Wilt thou pay my price?"

"For the third time I tell thee, yes! Give me but a few years with her and then take my wretched life. Will that suffice?"

"No, thee do I want not. Wilt thou sell me thy brother, thine other self, whom thy mother died for, whom thy father bled for; wilt thou sell me Red Snow?"

"Nay, to what dost thou tempt me! We are as like as two drops of rain, as two eggs in the nest, as two hands of one body. Where one suffices will the other suffice. Take me, Great One. Oh, be merciful and take me, but spare my brother!"

"As one drop of rain falls into the water, and one on the land; as one egg hatches the bird, and one dies in the nest; as one hand carries the spear, and one seeks the hand of the loved one, are ye different one from the other. He is my price and naught else will suffice. Hark! the rustling of the elder branches, the creaking of the sumachs! He comes! decide, decide!"

"No, no, I cannot sell him—my brother!"

"Thou art selling his heart, coward! Dost thou quake at the thought of giving me his life? What need will he have of his useless self, when thou hast taken the loved one? Hark! the sumach leaves rustle! But ten paces more and he is here. Say me yes and fly. Here is the potion. Drink it, and when she next sees thee, I swear to thee she will love thee. Take it and go, for he comes."

"May the Great Spirit forgive me, I take it! He is thine!"

And out through the red sumach leaves at the other side of the cave stumbled Sorrow, the cup in his hand. Blindly through the forest he plunged downward, like a boulder that falls when the snowbank that upheld it melts in the springtime; onward, the cup held far out ahead of him, out from under the creaking branches, through the knotted meadow-grass, to the old

cherry-tree. He leaned panting against its scarred trunk, looking with staring eyes into the cup. Suddenly he straightened himself.

"Why, 'tis done," cried he. "Perhaps he, too, sells me to the old creeping one. Why should I pull a long face? Down with it, and then to await here the coming of Little Squirrel, my Little Squirrel!"

He caught the cup to his lips with both hands and drank down the potion to the dregs. Then he made a circle in the air

with his arm and flung the cup far out over the meadow.

"Go, thou, and with thee all the past! I look but before! Come to me Little Squirrel, my Little Squirrel!"

He sank down on the bruised grass, his knees drawn up, his head bowed upon his strained arms.

At last he heard footsteps coming toward him over the meadow.

"'Tis Little Squirrel who comes," he whispered. "Hark!



there follow the footsteps of Red Snow, and from the other side come other footsteps, heavy but swift. They all bear this way. Hark! a shriek cutting through the summer air, sharp as the arrow of the huntsman through the heart of the doe. It is the voice of Little Squirrel!" He sprang to his feet and plunged out over the meadow toward the far end of it, where he saw the bulky form of the Great One running with staggering steps toward the river. In his arms he held Little Squirrel. With one hand he clutched her to him, with the other he strove to tear away her arm, which she had thrust like a blinding bandage over his eyes. Madly he rushed on toward the sound of the river. Bearing down upon him, his right arm clutching the great white bow, his head down, bounding like the fish in the stream, like the hawk in the air, ran Red Snow. Sorrow caught his own bow from his shoulder and followed in the chase. On, like the dried leaves before the autumn blast, they flew.

"This is thy doing, thou devil-brother," cried Sorrow, through his teeth. "Thou hast sold her to yon monster!"

"Nay, thou liest; 'tis thou who hast sold her. Take thy punishment from my hands;" and seizing an arrow from his quiver he fitted it to the bow, and straining back his arm, let it fly straight into the heart of Sorrow. At the same moment the arrow left Sorrow's bow. With a great cry, like the breaking of the ice-floe in March, they ran toward each other a few paces, and fell.

Sorrow raised himself on his arms and looked toward his brother, who lay a few yards from him.

"Is it thou, Red Snow?"

"Is it thou, Sorrow?" Red Snow lifted his head and looked into his brother's dying eyes. "What have we done, oh, my brother?"

"We must not think of ourselves, dearest brother. We have still to save her. Lean on thy bow and let us take hands, perhaps we can yet reach the river. See, he still bears her toward the bank."

So they dragged themselves to their feet, and, hand in hand, as on the day they had first come to the old cherry-tree, they crept toward the river.

"Be of good cheer, little Foster-Mother," cried Sorrow, "we come to save thee," but his voice was as hoarse as the wind when it chokes through the thicket at midnight.

The Giant had succeeded in pulling the arm of Little Squirrel

from his eyes. At the voice of Sorrow he turned, and, seeing the two dying ones coming toward him, he was moved to great mirth, and burst into such laughter that, standing on the bank, he swayed backwards and forwards far over the stream. "Come on, ye strong ones, and take her! Ye had forgot what the selling meant. True was the love-potion I gave ye, and true the price ye did pay. Come and take her, for ye have bought her and ye have paid the price," and, with a great gust of mirth, he swung his huge body far out over the stream. The laugh choked in his throat, his face grew purple with fear, he tried to regain his balance, clutching frantically at the girl in his arms, but with a splash as when a giant oak breaks from its roots he fell, face downward, into the water.

"Shall I save thee, Little Squirrel?" I cried, Mother-River went on.

"Must thou save him, too?" she choked to me.

"I cannot save one without the other."

"Then let me die, holding him to his death," cried Little Squirrel, and she strained her arms about his great head so that he could not rise. Thus, together, in the water they died. And if you look well when the moon comes through the branches of the hickory-tree, where yonder point of land turns the current, you will see plainly, in the depth of the black water, the huge white bones of the Great One, lying face downwards as Little Squirrel held him. And imprisoned under the skeleton there is a little gray fish. It is the spirit of Little Squirrel held forever in the death-embrace of her captor. And yonder two white birches, which stand close to one another on the bank, springing from one root, and ever looking down to the placid water, arose from the blood of the two children of the Moccasin who died there, where the Great One fell into the stream. The little gray fish ever tries to swim down to them, and they stretch out their long, thin arms toward her and drop their silver leaves, like tears, into the stream.

"And that is the end of my story," said Mother River, with a sorrowful little splash.

I slipped my paddle from the arm of the grapevine into the water, and floated down the stream, the soft lap-lapping of my paddle keeping time to Mother-River's humming.



THE CIRCUS RIDER*

A Tragedy of Bohemia

BY MARY MONCURE PARKER



E'RE goin' to hev a rival show, I see," said the Indian Doctor, as he sat at the door of his tent, smoking his pipe. He was looking over one of the advertising bills that had been thrown to him by the advance agent of the circus, a flaring yellow sheet covered with pictures of trained horses and dogs, trapeze artists suspended from dizzy heights, tight-rope walkers, bareback riders and many other curious sights to tempt the guileless farmer to part with his pennies.

"They'd oughter make a fellow give up more'n a quarter with all them attractions, eh, Doc'?" queried the funny man, leaning over Doctor Lightfoot's shoulder with an incredulous smile upon his face.

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The Doctor looked up and winked. He knew the "tricks of the trade." Had not his own coming been heralded by pictures of a brave young scout on horseback, whose long hair, graceful figure and bold mien had set all the damsels of Pine Lake in a fever of expectation for a week or two before his appearance? Alas! Whatever the Doctor may have been in his youth, there



was nothing about him in any respect like his pictures save the long black hair which fell in greasy strings about his fat shoulders. Not a very picturesque-looking object was he, surely, with his great cumbersome figure clad in a shiny black coat much the worse for wear, trousers that were constantly expectant of rainy weather, so short were they in the leg; a soiled shirt, a

faded black tie, above which was a heavy, coarse-featured face surrounded by long hair and topped by a wide sombrero. The Doctor was travelling about the country with his "Tippecanoe Indian remedies," and was having a profitable season. The numerous tents about him, decorated with painted semblances of the noble red man, made the place look quite like an Indian encampment, which impression was strengthened when the Doctor, arrayed as an aboriginal chieftain, gave one of his lectures to the people, who were seated out of doors in an auditorium, which, despite the rough board seats, was far grander than any ever fashioned by the hand of man, with the lofty, star-lit dome of Heaven above and graceful trees, with swaying branches, round about. The audiences he drew in various small towns through which he travelled were not disposed to be critical, or they might have found fault with or amusement in the Doctor's utter disregard of grammatical law and order. Sometimes he challenged the whole "medical eternity" to find any fraud in his medicines, or, again, he gave instructions to "ulcerate" a flannel rag with his Tippecanoe Oil and put on affected parts for pain. His lectures were astounding examples of rhetorical composition, but he managed to sell a great deal of medicine, for he had a cure for every "ill that flesh is heir to," from troubles of the

brain and blood down to even so ordinary an affair as a tooth-ache.

At the conclusion of each lecture his show people, who were also his agents, went about the audience disposing of the invaluable remedies, "good for man and beast, externals or internals," as the Doctor expressed it in his talks, after which the curtains were drawn about the rude stage and the people were treated to an entertainment.

First there was the funny man, who made his appearance sometimes as a burnt-cork artist, whose jokes rivalled the flood in antiquity, and sometimes as a Dutch comedian who laughed, winked, sang songs, told stories, danced in sabots, and made a



great deal of noise generally. Then came the juggler, a big, good-looking fellow, with a crop of black, curly hair and a shapey figure, who, in a Japanese costume (which was the only thing Japanese about him), performed many strange feats, such as spinning an egg on the edge of a plate, swinging a tumbler filled with water in a hoop and spilling not a drop of the liquid, tossing up five coins at once and catching them one by one ere they fell to the ground, much to the astonishment and delectation of the audience. Sometimes the juggler and the funny man, disguised as gentlemen, as the funny man was wont to remark, gave a musical performance on instruments of various kinds and sizes. But the crowning delight of every evening was the

appearance of Squaw Heloise and Pappoose May. Why she was called "Squaw" or the baby, "Pappoose," it would be hard to imagine, unless it was another "trick of the trade." The woman was a pale, colorless sort of creature, with a delicate, pretty face, light hair and faded blue eyes. Perhaps she took her name from the moccasins, which were the only Indian garments she wore, and which made rather a surprising combination with a gown of red gauze, trimmed with spangles, or the costume of a Spanish Señorita. However, she had a sweet, though thin voice, and she danced rather gracefully, so her audiences were satisfied, and, indeed, they had probably never noticed the incongruity of her attire.

When Pappoose May, who was the legitimate offspring of the juggler and Squaw Heloise, ran out upon the stage in the sturdiness of her dimpled baby beauty, with her mother's fair complexion and her father's crop of dark curls, and sang and danced and pirouetted about, the audience went wild, and when her mother strapped her across her back, like a real little pappoose, and she sang a song about an Indian baby and kissed her tiny hands to them in answer to their applause, it always brought down the house, so to speak. The "Indian Show" had been at Pine Lake but a week, and already Squaw Heloise and Pappoose May were prime favorites.

It was the second week of their stay that the circus came to town, "for one day only, afternoon at two, evening at eight," and



the "show" people went to the opening entertainment and took reserved seats. Fellow-members of the "profesh" should encourage one another.

The funny man, whose homely features were more prominently ugly without the disguise of burnt-cork, looked warm and uncomfortable in a stiff shirt and woolen suit, but he applauded vociferously and seemed to enjoy the novelty of being a spectator instead of a performer. Squaw Heloise, in a faded pink muslin gown, looked rather pretty, if slightly washed out, with her pale face and colorless hair.

There was a bored look upon the juggler's handsome face, but Pappoose May was as happy as a lark and clapped her tiny hands as though it were all for her especial benefit.

The parade of horses enchanted her. Then came the clown with his white face, red trousers and peaked cap, who joked, cracked his whip, sang songs, and made himself generally obnoxious. There was a tight-rope walker who conducted himself as though a wire, stretched across space, were the ordinary means of locomotion, and a contortionist, who tried to twist his anatomy into every conceivable shape, save the one in which his Creator had moulded it. There were trained horses and dogs who did all sorts of wonderful things, and a trick donkey who made the children laugh by his antics, and Pappoose May laughed most of all.

Presently the manager announced the celebrated Mlle. Faerie, "the young, beautiful, world-renowned bareback equestrienne."

"Some old fossil, likely," the juggler muttered, under his breath, to Squaw Heloise.

In she came, on a shapely white horse whose long tail was gayly decorated with pink and blue ribbons, with her shining eyes as blue as the blue of her tarlatan skirts, her cheeks as pink as the pink of her satin bodice, her arms as white as the lace that fell away from their round shapeliness, her hair as yellow as the spangles of her dress—a glow of color. Round and round the ring she dashed, then up on her feet as lightly as a bird, showing all the dainty beauty of her form; round and round the ring, through the hoop, over the silken scarf, graceful, airy, not a mistake, not a misstep; then down off her horse, throwing kisses to the audience with her pretty hands; then away like a flash—and she was gone.

Squaw Heloise drew a long breath, the juggler did the same. She looked up at him quickly, but he was scanning the dispersing audience with a scowl upon his face.

"Come," he said, shortly, "the show is over, we must go."

She took Pappoose May's hand, stepped down from the seats and followed him, mechanically, giving no heed to the child's delighted prattle of all she had seen. Her little world was a narrow one, and her vision was so limited. There were but two classes in this world of hers—actor and audience, with the actor far in the ascendency. This woman, this circus rider, seemed to have attained heights toward which she could never soar.

When Pappoose May began to talk of "the booful lady on horsie back," a chill struck her heart.

How colorless her hair beside the golden shower that streamed down Mlle. Faerie's back; how faded her eyes in comparison with those blue orbs; how insignificant she was altogether beside



the circus rider's rich beauty! And what had Niki, her husband, thought of her? She was a jealous little thing, and she loved her handsome husband passionately.

Niki, the juggler, he was called; she had never heard his real

name but once, when he married her; it was John Webster, she believed, but she knew him only as Niki.

Niki had sighed. Did that sigh mean anything? They had been very happy together. Sometimes Niki drank a little, but only a little—and then he never abused her. She went into her tent and sat down, resting her head upon her hands, while Pappoose May played about outside. They were to have no “show” that night, in deference to the circus, which was to leave the next morning for Sidon, a larger town about three miles away. After supper, which the members of the company ate out of doors, back of the tents, Squaw Heloise said to Niki:

“Ain’t you a-goin’ to the show to-night?” The tone was careless, but the answer was awaited with an anxious heart. He shrugged his shoulders.

“No. I seen enough this afternoon. Guess I’ll walk about town and have a smoke.”

She felt relieved. What a fool she had been to think that Niki had noticed that woman! A load was lifted from her



heart, and she went about her tent singing, as she arranged Pappoose May’s pallet for the night, crooning the baby to sleep with a lullaby that was a part of her “repertoire.”

The rest went to the circus and she sat alone, but she was happy. She could see the lights from the circus tent and hear the music, the barking of the dogs, the bray of the donkey, the

crack of the whip and the applause of the people. It was growing late—almost time for *her* to appear. Now there was a great clapping of hands. It must be Mlle. Faerie.

Squaw Heloise's heart gave a jealous bound—but, then, Niki was not there to see.

What if he had gone; had told her a lie?

Good God! Not that!

She rose and pulled at her dress, as a stifling sensation seemed to catch her by the throat.

The crowd was beginning to stream out of the circus—the show was over, and presently her people came back.

“Where's Niki?” she asked the funny man.

“He didn't go to the show,” he answered, “but I seen him over there just now talkin' to the clown.”

When they had gone to their tents, she looked in for a moment at Pappoose May's sleeping form and then walked around toward the circus. The men were busy taking down the large tent and piling the board seats upon a wagon, ready for an early start in the morning. Squaw Heloise walked slowly around behind them, coming suddenly almost up to a group of three—the clown, Mlle. Faerie and—Niki. They were laughing and talking boisterously—it does not take people of that sort long to get acquainted. The clown went away leaving Niki and the woman alone.

Squaw Heloise clenched her hands and stood still.

They began conversing in low tones and then—Niki put his arm about the woman's dainty waist and kissed her full red lips.

Squaw Heloise uttered not a sound. She turned and ran swiftly to her tent, with her hands clenched about her temples.

It was late when Niki came in and she pretended to be asleep. He laid down upon his cot without undressing and was soon breathing heavily. After a time, she, too, fell into a deep sleep, awakening only in broad daylight. Pappoose May was playing about the tent in her little night dress and she ran and kissed her mamma.

“Oo seeped so long, I sought oo was most dead,” she prattled.

Dead! Great God! If she only were dead! She looked over at Niki's cot. It was empty. Had he gone away with that woman?

She sprang up and ran to the door of the tent, but drew back quickly when she saw him just outside, smoking his pipe.

That night they gave their entertainment and the next morning Niki took the ten o'clock train north. *Sidon was north.* He came back, on the half-past six, somewhat under the influence of liquor and avoiding her glance, but she did not reproach him. It was the same the next day and the next. She counted on her fingers—the circus was to be at Sidon for a week.

One morning she asked the funny man to look after Pappoose May for a bit. She wanted to do some shopping, she said. Nevertheless, she directed her steps toward the station, keeping out of Niki's way, and, after he had gone into the smoking car, she slipped into a seat in one of the coaches.

A few minutes' ride brought them to Sidon. Niki got out and Squaw Heloise followed cautiously. About the depot were numerous wagons and busses, for Sidon was on a small lake and was a resort for summer tourists.

Presently Niki was joined by a woman. Could it be? Yes, it was—Mlle. Faerie. In her white dress, white shoes and sailor hat, she might have been a young girl upon a summer's outing and not a circus rider. They went on past the stores, back of the hotel towards the lake, and Squaw Heloise followed slowly.

When she reached the bank she was too late—they had gone out in a boat together, and she watched them drifting slowly away.

Now they were in the lily beds, and he had stopped to pull some flowers for her.

How strong and handsome he looked, and how beautiful she was, with her lap full of lilies! That the woman was a circus rider and the man a juggler did not lower them in her eyes. She knew no other life. The deserted wife upon the bank saw only a beautiful, successful rival, and with a heart full of bitterness she watched them until they were out of sight; then she rose and started back to the camp.

There was no train south until four o'clock, and she trudged down the railroad track—a dusty, tiresome, three-mile walk—in the hot sun.

When she reached the camp, Pappoose May was seated at a table beside the funny man, who was feeding her mashed potato with such a gentle solicitude upon his homely face, that Squaw Heloise for a moment forgot her misery, and her heart gave a great bound of love towards him for his care of her neglected baby.

Pappoose May shook her curly head, reprov-ingly.

"Mama gone long time—*two, free, four weeks*. Been to circus to see the pitty lady?"

The mother turned ghastly white and held her throbbing forehead with her hands.

"I don't want no dinner," she said to the funny man, who had moved to make a place for her. "My head just about splits. I guess I'll lay down," and she went to her tent.



Niki came in a little after four o'clock—then later they had the show. Squaw Heloise got through her part somehow, just how she didn't know, but the people applauded, so she supposed it was all right; otherwise, they would have hissed.

After undressing Pappoose May and putting her to bed, she threw herself down upon her cot in her red gauze gown and lay staring at the top of the tent. The gasoline torch at the opening flickered and blew in the breeze, now a broad blaze and now a tiny thread of light.



She could hear the baby's regular breathing, the hum of conversation from the other tents, occasionally a burst of laughter or a snatch of song, and now the roar of a passing train. By and by all grew still, and later, very late, it seemed, Niki came in. He stared at her crossly as she lay in her dress upon the cot. He had not given her a pleasant look for *so long*—oh!—was it only a week?—it seemed such ages ago—was it only seven days?—and it seemed like seven years.

"Are you asleep?" he asked, gruffly, sitting down upon the side of the cot opposite to hers, and taking off his shoes.

"No," she answered, shortly.

"Well, I might as well tell you first as last, I'm goin' to quit the Injun show bizness."

She turned towards him. "Quit! Why you ain't had no row with Ole Doc, have you?"

"Row! Naw—but I'm goin' with the circus—they need a juggler."

She raised herself to a sitting posture.

"The circus—oh, no—we'd best not go there. I'd ruther stay here."

He gave a short laugh. He had been drinking quite heavily since the performance and the tent was filled with the odor of liquor.

"I didn't say nothin' about you. You can stay here or go to the devil."

Her face grew a shade or two paler in the flickering light.

"Niki," she said, slowly and with difficulty, "you ain't never goin' to desert me—me and Pappoose May?"

"I'm a goin' with the circus," he growled, but he did not look at her.

"An' you're leavin' me for—that other woman——"

In his drunkenness he swore a fearful oath.

"That other woman—you white-faced cat. Why, her little finger is worth more than your whole body."

There was a long silence.

"It ain't no use talkin'," Niki said after a time, seeing she did not intend to speak. "My mind's made up an' I'm goin'." Then he rolled over on his cot and was soon fast asleep.

How long she sat there she did not know. After a while she arose and walked about the tent.

There hung the flimsy yellow dress, black lace mantilla and tambourine, the costume in which she danced and sang as a Spanish girl; and the faded pink gown with cap and apron which she wore as a dairymaid. Here were Pappoose May's soiled gauzy little gowns and Niki's Japanese costume and plates, swords and various articles with which he performed his juggling feats. Not much that savored of a "home," but it satisfied her Bohemian tastes, and then Niki was there, and Niki was her idol. She had placed him far above even Pappoose May in her heart. But Niki—oh, God! Niki was her's no longer. He belonged to the other woman. She would take Pappoose May and run away to the ends of the earth. Any thought of redress by law did not occur to her. Law and order had not much part in her

free, careless life. As she stooped over the sleeping child, she caught sight of something gleaming down amongst Niki's plates and swords—something that made her rise slowly without touching her child and stand shuddering at the horrible thought that came to her. Fascinated as by a serpent's gaze, she kept her eyes upon it; then she reached out slowly and clasped it in her shaking hands. It was a dagger Niki used in his juggling feats,



sometimes balancing upon its point an egg or the edge of a China plate. Scarcely breathing, she held the dagger in her hand, irresolutely; then she turned and glided swiftly to the cot, with her brain in a whirl, her whole being on fire. For a moment she stood looking at the unconscious man with his breast bare with the warmth of the night.

Niki was her's no longer—he should never belong to that other woman. He stirred in his sleep—now or never—she must not stop to think—with a swift, sharp blow, she drove the dagger into his breast. He sprang forward, then dropped back with

a long, convulsive sigh. She watched him like one in a dream, kneeling, presently, and taking his head upon her breast, kissing it, and singing and crooning as she did to her baby, whispering her love and adoration and of all the happy days they had spent together. After a while she rose and looked toward Pappoose May's pallet. Never more could she touch those innocent baby lips! Oh, what a thing had she become! Through the opening



she rushed, out into the night. The torch, at the tent door, cast flickering shadows upon the dead man on the cot and the sleeping babe beside him. She walked down the dusty road, then into a field of newly-cut oats, the stubble crackling beneath her feet. On and on she trudged through cornfields, across pastures, then into little groves, her thin dress torn, her arms scratched and bruised by the barbed-wire fences in her way. By and by day began to break and she rested in a cornfield, safe hidden by the uncut stalks. She did not know where she was, save that she was near a farmhouse. The men came out and milked the cows and drove them to pasture. Not far away were several stacks of oats and some machinery. Presently some more men came, leading horses, which they attached to the machinery. A man jumped upon the power, cracked his whip, the horses started forward, and the busy whirr of the thrashing began. The noise kept her from thinking.

After a while the men stopped work and went into the house.

She supposed it must have been noon and they had gone to dinner. Slowly and painfully she rose to her feet and stumbled on through the cornfield, across a little orchard, and into the cool, shady woods, where she sank into a heap at the foot of a great



oak-tree. Poor thing! She could scarcely expect to hide herself long, with her torn gauze gown with the dark bloodstains upon the bodice: All through the afternoon she sat staring before her. The shadows began to lengthen in the woods, the sun was going down. A crackling in the dry leaves startled her. A man was coming towards her. Did she have a double sight, or was there another and another?

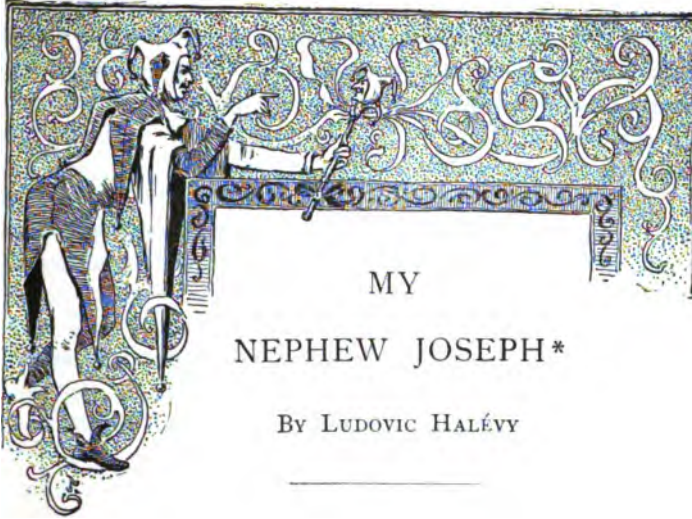
She dragged herself to her feet, and stood with her hands behind her, clutching at the tree for support, and looked back of her. There was another—they closed in upon her.

“There ain’t no use tryin’ to hide from us now,” said one, putting his hand upon her arm, “we’ve got you.”

She looked up with a ghastly pallor upon her wasted face.

“I wuzn’t tryin’ to hide from *you*,” she said. “I wuz tryin’ to hide from *myself*.”





(Scene passes at Versailles; two old gentlemen are conversing, seated on a bench in the King's garden.)

“**J**OURNALISM, my dear Monsieur, is the evil of the times. I tell you what, if I had a son, I would hesitate a long while before giving him a literary education. I would have him learn chemistry, mathematics, fencing, cosmography, swimming, drawing, but not composition—no, not composition. Then, at least, he would be prevented from becoming a journalist. It is so easy, so tempting. They take pen and paper and write, it doesn't matter what, apropos to it doesn't matter what, and you have a newspaper article. In order to become a watchmaker, a lawyer, an upholsterer, in short, all the liberal arts, study, application, and a special kind of knowledge are necessary; but nothing like that is required for a journalist.”

“You are perfectly right, my dear Monsieur, the profession of journalism should be restricted by examinations, the issuing of warrants, the granting of licenses——”

“And they could pay well for their licenses, these gentlemen. Do you know that journalism is become very profitable? There are some young men in it who, all at once, without a fixed salary, and no capital whatever, make from ten, twenty to thirty thousand francs a year.”

“Now, that is strange! But how do they become journalists?”

* Translated by Louise H. Conger, from the French, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

" Ah! It appears they generally commence by being reporters. Reporters slip in everywhere, in official gatherings and theatres, never missing a first night, nor a fire, nor a great ball, nor a murder."

" How well acquainted you are with all this! "

" Yes, very well acquainted. Ah! Mon Dieu! You are my friend, you will keep my secret, and if you will not repeat this in Versailles—I will tell you how it is—we have one in the family."

" One what? "

" A reporter."

" A reporter in your family, which always seemed so united! How can that be? "

" One can almost say that the devil was at the bottom of it. You know my nephew Joseph——"

" Little Joseph! Is he a reporter? "

" Yes."

" Little Joseph, I can see him in the park now, rolling a hoop, bare-legged, with a broad white collar, not more than six or seven years ago—and now he writes for newspapers! "

" Yes, newspapers! You know my brother keeps a pharmacy in the Rue Montorgueil, an old and reliable firm, and naturally my brother said to himself, 'After me, my son.' Joseph worked hard at chemistry, followed the course of study, and had already passed an examination. The boy was steady and industrious, and had a taste for the business. On Sundays for recreation he made tinctures, prepared prescriptions, pasted the labels and rolled pills. When, as misfortune would have it, a murder was committed about twenty feet from my brother's pharmacy——"

" The murder of the Rue Montorgueil—that clerk who killed his sweetheart, a little brewery maid? "

" The very same. Joseph was attracted by the cries, saw the murderer arrested, and after the police were gone stayed there in the street, talking and jabbering. The Saturday before. Joseph had a game of billiards with the murderer."

" With the murderer! "

" Oh! accidentally—he knew him by sight, went to the same café, that's all, and they had played at pool together, Joseph and the murderer—a man named Nicot. Joseph told this to the crowd, and you may well imagine how important that made him, when suddenly a little blond man seized him. 'You know the murderer?' 'A little, not much; I played pool with

him.' 'And do you know the motive of the crime?' 'It was love, Monsieur, love; Nicot had met a girl, named Eugénie——' 'You knew the victim, too?' 'Only by sight, she was there in the café the night we played.' 'Very well; but don't tell that to anybody; come, come, quick.' He took possession of Joseph and made him get into a cab, which went rolling off at great speed down the Boulevard des Italiens. Ten minutes after, Joseph found himself in a hall where there was a big table, around which five or six young men were writing. 'Here is a fine sensation,' said the little blond on entering. 'The best kind of a murder! a murder for love, in the Rue Montorgueil, and I have here the murderer's most intimate friend.' 'No, not at all,' cried Joseph, 'I scarcely know him.' 'Be still,' whispered the little blond to Joseph; then he continued, 'Yes, his most intimate friend. They were brought up together, and a quarter of an hour before the crime was committed were playing billiards. The murderer won, he was perfectly calm——' 'That's not it, it was last Saturday that I played with——' 'Be still, will you! A quarter of an hour, it is more to the point. Let's go. Come, come.' He took Joseph into a small room where they were alone, and said to him: 'That affair ought to make about a hundred lines—you talk—I'll write—there will be twenty francs for you.' 'Twenty francs!' 'Yes, and here they are in advance; but be quick, to business!' Joseph told all he knew to the gentleman—how an old and retired Colonel, who lived in the house where the murder was committed, was the first to hear the victim's cries; but he was paralyzed in both limbs, this old Colonel, and could only ring for the servant, an old cuirassier, who arrested the assassin. In short, with all the information concerning the game of billiards, Eugénie and the paralytic old Colonel, the man composed his little article, and sent Joseph away with twenty francs. Do you think it ended there?"

"I don't think anything—I am amazed! Little Joseph a reporter!"

"Hardly had Joseph stepped outside, when another man seized him—a tall, dark fellow. 'I've been watching for you,' he said to Joseph. 'You were present when the murder was committed in the Rue Montorgueil!' 'Why, no, I was not present——' 'That will do. I am well informed, come.' 'Where to?' 'To my newspaper office.' 'What for?' 'To tell me about the murder.' 'But I've already told all I know, there, in that house.' 'Come, you will still remember a few more little incidents—and I will

give you twenty francs.' 'Twenty francs!' 'Come, come.' Another hall, another table, more young men writing, and again Joseph was interrogated. He recommenced the history of the old Colonel. 'Is that what you told them down there?' inquired the tall, dark man of Joseph. 'Yes, Monsieur.' 'That needs some revision, then.' And the tall, dark man made up a long story. How this old Colonel had been paralyzed for fourteen years, but on hearing the victim's heartrending screams, received such a shock that all at once, as if by a miracle, had recovered the use of his legs; and it was he who had started out in pursuit of the murderer and had him arrested.

"While dashing this off with one stroke of his pen, the man exclaimed: 'Good! this is perfect! a hundred times better than the other account.' 'Yes,' said Joseph, 'but it is not true.' 'Not true for you, because you are acquainted with the affair; but for our hundred thousand readers, who do not know about it, it will be true enough. They were not there, those hundred thousand readers. What do they want? A striking account—well! they shall have it!' And thereupon he discharged Joseph, who went home with his forty francs, and who naturally did not boast of his escapade. It is only of late that he has acknowledged it. However, from that day Joseph has shown less interest in the pharmacy. He bought a number of penny papers, and shut himself up in his room to write—no one knows what. At last he wore a business-like aspect, which was very funny. About six months ago I went to Paris to collect the dividends on my Northern stock."

"The Northern is doing very well; it went up this week——"

"Oh! it's good stock. Well, I had collected my dividends and had left the Northern Railway Station. It was beautiful weather, so I walked slowly down the Rue Lafayette. (I have a habit of strolling a little in Paris after I have collected my dividends.) When at the corner of the Faubourg Montmartre, whom should I see but my nephew, Joseph, all alone in a victoria, playing the fine gentleman. I saw very well that he turned his head away, the vagabond! But I overtook the carriage and stopped the driver. 'What are you doing there?' 'A little drive, uncle.' 'Wait, I will go with you,' and in I climbed 'Hurry up,' said the driver, 'or I'll lose the trail.' 'What trail?' 'Why, the two cabs we are following.' The man drove at a furious rate, and I asked Joseph why he was there in that victoria, following two cabs. '*Mon Dieu*, uncle,' he replied,

‘there was a foreigner, a Spaniard, who came to our place in the Rue Montorgueil and bought a large amount of drugs, and has not paid us, so I am going after him to find out if he has not given us a wrong address.’ ‘And that Spaniard is in both the cabs?’ ‘No, uncle, he is only in one, the first.’ ‘And who is in the second?’ ‘I don’t know, probably another creditor, like myself, in pursuit of the Spaniard.’ ‘Well, I am going to stay with you; I have two hours to myself before the train leaves at five o’clock, and I adore this sort of thing, riding around Paris in an open carriage. Let’s follow the Spaniard!’ And then the chase commenced, down the boulevards, across the squares, through the streets, the three drivers cracking their whips and urging their horses on. This man-hunt began to get exciting. It recalled to my mind the romances in the *Petit Journal*. Finally, in a little street, belonging to the Temple Quarter, the first cab stopped.”

“The Spaniard?”

“Yes. A man got out of it—he had a large hat drawn down over his eyes and a big muffler wrapped about his neck. Presently three gentlemen, who had jumped from the second cab, rushed upon that man. I wanted to do the same, but Joseph tried to prevent me. ‘Don’t stir, uncle!’ ‘Why not? But they are going to deprive us of the Spaniard!’ And I dashed forward. ‘Take care, uncle, don’t be mixed up in that affair.’ But I was already gone. When I arrived they were putting the handcuffs on the Spaniard. I broke through the crowd which had collected, and cried, ‘Wait, Messieurs, wait; I also demand a settlement with this man.’ They made way for me. ‘You know this man?’ asked one of the gentlemen from the second cab, a short, stout fellow. ‘Perfectly; he is a Spaniard.’ ‘I a Spaniard!’ ‘Yes, a Spaniard.’ ‘Good,’ said the short, stout man, ‘Here’s the witness!’ and, addressing himself to one of the men, ‘Take Monsieur to the Prefecture immediately.’ ‘But I have not the time; I live in Versailles; my wife expects me by the five o’clock train, and we have company to dinner, and I must take home a pie. I will come back to-morrow at any hour you wish.’ ‘No remarks,’ said the short, stout man, ‘but be off; I am the Police Commissioner.’ ‘But, Monsieur the Commissioner, I know nothing about it; it is my nephew Joseph who will tell you,’ and I called ‘Joseph! Joseph!’ but no Joseph came.”

“He had decamped?”

“With the victoria. They packed me in one of the two cabs

with the detective, a charming man and very distinguished. Arriving at the Prefecture, they deposited me in a small apartment filled with vagabonds, criminals, and low, ignorant people. An hour after they came for me in order to bring me up for examination."

"You were brought up for examination?"

"Yes, my dear Monsieur, I was. A policeman conducted me through the Palais de Justice, before the magistrate, a lean man, who asked me my name and address. I replied that I lived in Versailles, and that I had company to dinner; he interrupted me, 'You know the prisoner?' pointing to the man with the muffler, 'Speak up.' But he questioned me so threateningly that I became disconcerted, for I felt that he was passing judgment upon me. Then in my embarrassment the words did not come quickly. I finished, moreover, by telling him that I knew the man without knowing him; then he became furious: 'What's that you say? You know a man without knowing him! At least explain yourself!' I was all of a tremble, and said that I knew he was a Spaniard, but the man replied that he was not a Spaniard. 'Well, well,' said the Judge. 'Denial, always denial; it is your way.' 'I tell you that my name is Rigaud, and that I was born in Josey, in Josas; they are not Spaniards that are born in Josey, in Josas.' 'Always contradiction; very good, very good!' And the Judge addressed himself to me. 'Then this man is a Spaniard?' 'Yes, Monsieur the Judge, so I have been told.' 'Do you know anything more about him?' 'I know he made purchases at my brother's pharmacy in the Rue Montorgueil.' 'At a pharmacy! and he bought, did he not, some chlorate of potash, azotite of potash, and sulphur powder; in a word, materials to manufacture explosives.' 'I don't know what he bought. I only know that he did not pay, that's all.' 'Parbleu! Anarchists never pay——' 'I did not need to pay. I never bought chlorate of potash in the Rue Montorgueil,' cried the man; but the Judge exclaimed, louder still, 'Yes, it is your audacious habit of lying, but I will sift this matter to the bottom; sift it, do you understand. And now why is that muffler on in the month of May?' 'I have a cold,' replied the other. 'Haven't I the right to have a cold?' 'That is very suspicious, very suspicious. I am going to send for the druggist in the Rue Montorgueil!'"

"Then they sent for your brother?"

"Yes; I wanted to leave, tried to explain to the Judge that

my wife was expecting me in Versailles, that I had already missed the five o'clock train, that I had company to dinner, and must bring home a pie. 'You shall not go,' replied the Judge, 'and cease to annoy me with your dinner and your pie; I will need you for a second examination. The affair is of the gravest sort.' I tried to resist, but they led me away somewhat roughly, and thrust me again into the little apartment with the criminals. After waiting an hour I was brought up for another examination. My brother was there. But we could not exchange two words, for he entered the courtroom by one door and I by another. All this was arranged perfectly. The man with the muffler was again brought out. The Judge addressed my brother. 'Do you recognize the prisoner?' 'No.' 'Ah! you see he does not know me!' 'Be silent!' said the Judge, and he continued talking excitedly: 'You know the man?' 'Certainly not.' 'Think well; you ought to know him.' 'I tell you, no.' 'I tell you, yes, and that he bought some chlorate of potash from you.' 'No!' 'Ah!' cried the Judge, in a passion. 'Take care, weigh well your words; you are treading on dangerous ground.' 'I!' exclaimed my brother. 'Yes, for there is your brother; you recognize him, I think.' 'Yes, I recognize him.' 'That is fortunate. Well, your brother there says that man owes you money for having bought at your establishment—I specify—materials to manufacture explosives.' 'But you did not say that.' 'No, I wish to re-establish the facts.' But that Judge would give no one a chance to speak. 'Don't interrupt me. Who is conducting this examination, you or I?' 'You, Monsieur the Judge?' 'Well, at all events, you said the prisoner owed your brother some money.' 'That I acknowledge.' 'But who told you all this?' asked my brother. 'Your son, Joseph!' 'Joseph!' 'He followed the man for the sake of the money, which he owed you for the drugs.' 'I understand nothing of all this,' said my brother; 'Neither do I,' said the man with the muffler; 'Neither do I,' I repeated in my turn; 'Neither do I any more,' cried the Judge; 'Or rather, yes, there is something that I understand very well; we have captured a gang, all these men understand one another, and side with one another; they are a band of Anarchists!' 'That is putting it too strong,' I protested to the Judge, 'I, a landowner, an Anarchist! Can a man be an Anarchist when he owns a house on the Boulevard de la Reine at Versailles and a cottage at Houlgate Calvados? These are facts.'"

“That was well answered.”

“But this Judge would not listen to anything. He said to my brother, ‘Where does your son live?’ ‘With me in the Rue Montorgueil.’ ‘Well, he must be sent for; and in the meanwhile, these two brothers are to be placed in separate cells.’ Then, losing patience, I cried that this was infamy! But I felt myself seized and dragged through the corridors and locked in a little box four feet square. In there I passed three hours.”

“Didn’t they find your nephew Joseph?”

“No, it was not that. It was the Judge. He went off to his dinner, and took his time about it! Finally, at midnight, they had another examination. Behold all four of us before the Judge! The man with the muffler, myself, my brother and Joseph. The Judge began, addressing my nephew: ‘This man is indeed your father?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘This man is indeed your uncle?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘And that man is indeed the Spaniard who purchased some chlorate of potash from you?’ ‘No.’ ‘What! No?’ ‘There,’ exclaimed the fellow with the muffler. ‘You can see now that these men do not know me.’ ‘Yes, yes,’ answered the Judge, not at all disconcerted. ‘Denial again! Let’s see, young man, did you not say to your uncle——’ ‘Yes, Monsieur the Judge, that is true.’ ‘Ah! the truth! Here is the truth!’ exclaimed the Judge, triumphantly. ‘Yes, I told my uncle that the man purchased drugs from us, but that is not so.’ ‘Why isn’t it?’ ‘Wait, I will tell you. Unknown to my family I am a journalist.’ ‘Journalist! My son a journalist! Don’t believe that, Monsieur the Judge, my son is an apprentice in a pharmacy.’ ‘Yes, my nephew is an apprentice in a pharmacy,’ I echoed. ‘These men contradict themselves; this is a gang, decidedly a gang—are you a journalist, young man, or an apprentice in a pharmacy?’ ‘I am both.’ ‘That is a lie!’ cried my brother, now thoroughly angry. ‘And for what newspaper do you write?’ ‘For no paper at all,’ replied my brother, ‘I know that, for he is not capable.’ ‘I do not exactly write, Monsieur the Judge; I procure information; I am a reporter.’ ‘Reporter! My son a reporter? What’s that he says?’ ‘Will you be still!’ cried the Judge. ‘For what newspaper are you reporter?’ Joseph told the name of the paper. ‘Well,’ resumed the Judge, ‘we must send for the chief editor immediately—immediately, he must be awakened and brought here. I will pass the night at court. I’ve discovered a great conspiracy. Lead these men away and keep them apart.’ The Judge beamed, for he already saw him-

self Court Counsellor. They brought us back, and I assure you I no longer knew where I was. I came and went up and down the staircases and through the corridors. If anyone had asked me at the time if I were an accomplice of Ravachol, I would have answered, 'Probably.'

"When did all this take place?"

"One o'clock in the morning; and the fourth examination did not take place until two. But, thank Heaven! in five minutes it was all made clear. The editor of the newspaper arrived, and burst into a hearty laugh when he learned of the condition of affairs; and this is what he told the Judge. My nephew had given them the particulars of a murder, had been recompensed for it, and then the young man had acquired a taste for that occupation, and had come to apply for the situation. They had found him clear-headed, bold, and intelligent, and had sent him to take notes at the executions, at fires, etc., and the morning after the editor had a good idea. 'The detectives were on the lookout for Anarchists, so I sent my reporters on the heels of each detective, and in this way I would be the first to hear of all the arrests. Now, you see, it all explains itself; the detective followed an Anarchist.'"

"And your nephew Joseph followed the detective?"

"Yes, but he dared not tell the truth, so he told me 'he was one of papa's debtors.' The man with the muffer was triumphant. 'Am I still a Spaniard?' 'No, well and good,' replied the Judge. 'But an Anarchist is another thing.' And in truth he was; but he only held one, that Judge, and was so vexed because he believed he had caught a whole gang, and was obliged to discharge us at four o'clock in the morning. I had to take a carriage to return to Versailles—got one for thirty francs. But found my poor wife in such a state!"

"And your nephew still clings to journalism?"

"Yes, and makes money for nothing but to ride about Paris that way in a cab, and to the country in the railway trains. The newspaper men are satisfied with him."

"What does your brother say to all this?"

"He began by turning him out of doors. But when he knew that some months he made two and three hundred francs, he softened; and then Joseph is as cute as a monkey. You know my brother invented a cough lozenge, 'Dervishes' lozenges?"

"Yes, you gave me a box of them."

"Ah! so I did. Well, Joseph found means to introduce

into the account of a murderer's arrest an advertisement of his father's lozenges."

"How did he do it?"

"He told how the murderer was hidden in a panel, and that he could not be found. But having the influenza, had sneezed, and that had been the means of his capture. And Joseph added that this would not have happened to him had he taken the Dervishes Lozenges. You see that pleased my brother so much that he forgave him. Ah! there is my wife coming to look for me. Not a word of all this! It is not necessary to repeat that there is a reporter in the family, and there is another reason for not telling it. When I want to sell off to the people of Versailles, I go and find Joseph and tell him of my little plan. He arranges everything for me as it should be, puts it in the paper quietly, and they don't know how it comes there!"



ON THE GREAT PLAINS*

BY W. THOMSON.



DURING our overland journey to California, in 1850, we were attacked at daybreak, one morning, by a strong band of Apaches. After a lively skirmish we beat the marauders off, but three of our men received arrow wounds, and a fine boy of seventeen, named Frank, the son of our guide, Joe Martin, was captured and borne away by the savages, in spite of our utmost exertions.

The scrimmage occurred in Central Arizona, not more than a mile from the foothills of San Francisco Mountains, whose fastnesses were gained by the retreating Indians before we could saddle up and give effective chase.

Notwithstanding his almost frantic grief, the bereaved father was forced to admit that to follow the enemy into the mountain defiles would be an act of wanton folly, certain to result in the slaughter of the whole pursuing force. We must, he agreed, bide our time, and endeavor, by assumed carelessness, to provoke another attack in some position where we might interrupt the flight of our wily foes, and thus rescue the captive.

When asked if the bloodthirsty Apaches would not probably torture their prisoner to death at once, Joe, profoundly versed in Indian ways, replied: "I think not. The boy's so young that they'll likely want to adopt him into the tribe; and, meantime, they won't hurt him. He's sharp enough to pretend to humor them; and I've great hopes that, if our plans fail, he'll manage to escape somehow. But oh! wouldn't I like to be just for one minute within reach of that red brute—I'd know him anywhere—that lassoed and dragged poor Frank off!"

The guide was a tremendously powerful fellow, in the prime of life, and, as he spoke, his dark gray eyes flashed with an ominous light, which the fiercest warrior of the plains might well have quailed under.

* Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

Our party consisted of thirty men, all armed with muzzle-loading rifles and Colt's revolvers—the latter quite a new weapon then. Hence we did not fear to meet, in fair fight, any number of these far-west Indians, very few of whom, at that early day, possessed firearms. Our only real danger lay in falling into an ambuscade, and that we took every precaution to avoid.

After our fruitless pursuit of the hostiles, Joe proposed that we should continue our route along the mountain's base until we reached a certain pass he knew of, one we must necessarily traverse in order to escape a fifty-mile detour.

"The redskins are sure to be waiting for us there, boys," he said. "They can get to it without showing themselves at all. They'll think that we suppose them to be far away and will walk right into the trap. If we were green enough to do that, not one of us would come out alive. If this heavy wind keeps up we'll show the murdering hounds a trick or two, and get a chance at them on the open plain. When we get through with it, I reckon this band won't go on the warpath again in a hurry."

In about three hours we came opposite the mouth of the pass, the bottom of which was, as Joe had hoped, overgrown by stunted bushes and long, coarse grass, now dry as tinder, while its sides were composed—for two miles up, Joe said—of vertical rock.

"Now, boys," ordered the guide, "don't corral the wagons as usual, but leave them around, kind of careless-like, three hundred yards or so out on the plain. Let the horses graze while we get dinner. Then we'll likely have some fun, for the wind's exactly right."

"Why, Joe," observed one of the party, "I don't believe there's a blessed Indian in that gulch. They'd be sure to scoot off in some other direction after the licking we gave them."

"Maybe so," dryly rejoined the veteran, "but all the same I wouldn't try to lead you fellows through now for all the gold in California. I know these red cusses too well."

When our meal was finished, and all were anxious to learn Joe's plans, he abruptly said: "Men, I want a volunteer for what may be a mighty risky piece of business. Who offers?"

"I" and "I" and "I," promptly responded a dozen or more of us.

The old Indian fighter smiled grimly, as he said, "You give me lots of good stuff to choose from, boys, but I think Tom Graydon better go. He's the fastest runner among us, and that may count before he gets through."

"All right, Joe. Let's have your orders," cheerily replied Tom, a wiry, active fellow barely out of his teens, but swift of foot as a deer and a wonderful rifle-shot.

"It's this way, Tom: The wind's blowing a hurricane down the pass; the bottom's covered with dry grass and dead bushes, and the walls, for two miles, as I've said, are perpendicular. Every living thing, that can't fly, now in the pass, must, if driven from above, come right through, for a goat couldn't climb the rocks.

"Now, I want you to go, on foot, over the mountain till you come to the trail made by the reds while riding to the gulch. It's sure to be not much more than a couple of miles from here. Then creep, quiet as a panther, down into the pass itself and set fire to the grass! That's all. We'll do the rest. Most likely the Indians won't see you, for they're certain to be ambushed in an ugly, stony gorge some distance below where they went in. If they do spot you, no harm will be done, unless it's before the fire is set. They're all mounted and can't catch you if you're careful.

"Once start a blaze and everything 'll be all right. You can come back through the pass after the fire goes down; that'll be easier than scaling the hills again. So away you go, and good luck to you!"

When the daring scout had gone, Joe said: "Now you twelve men, that I name, post yourselves behind that little bluff at the west side of the pass. I needn't tell you what to do when the time comes. The rest of us 'll loaf round here, innocent as can be; but we'll have the riding horses all saddled up, and whether the reds charge or not they'll find themselves in a bad fix, I reckon."

For an hour and a half we waited; then, far up the pass, there appeared high in the air a wreath of dark smoke. A few seconds afterwards we heard the faint report of a rifle, and Joe jubilantly exclaimed: "There! Tom's all right! He's taken a long shot at the reds as they began to run. See that your tools are all in working order, boys. The circus 'll begin soon."

In ten minutes the smoke had drifted down to the mouth of the ravine, driving before it a number of deer, coyotes, gray wolves and one huge grizzly bear, at none of which we dared to shoot, for fear of betraying our whereabouts.

More and more dense grew the smoke, and presently we could hear the roar of flames rushing through the flue-like passageway.

We heard something else, too, for now arose a wild chorus of Indian yells, blended with the sound of trampling ponies, and in half a minute thereafter we saw, riding for dear life, a panic-stricken crowd of war-painted Apaches, behind whom raged a sea of fire, in advance of which their utmost speed barely enabled them to keep.

As the weird scene unfolded, I said to myself: "Well, that canopy of black smoke and the darting tongues of fire below present a fair picture of what the infernal regions are supposed to be, and that swarm of hideous savages will do for demons flying from everlasting torment!"

But now, choking, gasping, furious with rage, the warriors—about seventy in all—emerged upon the plain and drew up to recover breath and clear their half-blinded eyes. Though they had not yet noticed us, we keenly scanned their ranks, but could nowhere see a sign of Frank Martin.

"My boy is lost! Those red villains have killed him!" hoarsely whispered Joe, and his face took on a look of concentrated ferocity that made me shiver.

The next moment, the Indians caught sight of us, apparently wholly unprepared for an attack. In an instant every bow was strung, and, raising the terrible Apache war-whoop, the band opened out a little and came straight at us.

"Mount, men, mount!" shouted Joe, "but leave that tall fellow with the eagle plume to me. He's the one that lassoed Frank."

In order to reach us the redskins had to traverse about 250 yards of level ground, and when one-half that distance had been covered, they sent, while at full speed, a shower of futile arrows in our direction. We, however, did not fire a shot until the howling crew had come within fifty yards and their missiles were becoming troublesome, when our leader quietly said: "Give them a volley, boys, then drop your rifles and charge with revolvers. Now!"

Seventeen shots rang out at the word, and several of the foremost braves went headlong down. The others halted, wavered, and seemed about to fly, but at this moment the twelve men, rushing from behind the bluff, attacked them furiously in flank, while we, in full career, thundered down upon their front, our heavier horses rolling ponies and riders over like tenpins.

Thus caught between two fires, the bewildered survivors broke away to the east, their only avenue of escape, north, south and west being barred by foes or flames.

In rear of the fugitives rode the still untouched wearer of the eagle plume, a gigantic warrior, who had tried in vain to stem the torrent of flight; and, like a maddened tiger, straight upon him charged Joe Martin, whose mount was the swiftest horse of our lot.

Desperately the savage lashed his pony; but, seeing that he must speedily be overtaken, he twice half turned in his rude saddle and each time launched an arrow at his relentless pursuer, who, all unhurt, still pressed on without firing, while this vain defense somewhat delayed the brave, whose comrades had now left him behind.

Nearer and nearer came the avenger; and we, far in the rear, watched the chase with intense interest, greatly wondering why Joe did not end it by a pistol shot. In less than a half-mile race, however, he overhauled his quarry; yet, even then, did not shoot; but when the Indian drew his knife and aimed a mighty blow at his breast, he caught the tawny wrist in his right hand, broke it by one fierce wrench, threw his left arm around the warrior's waist and dragged him to the front of his own saddle, as an ordinary man might have done an infant.

The astonished redskin struggled frantically, but as well might a dove expect to escape the falcon's claws as he to shake off that iron grip or unseat his captor.

In a few seconds we came up, and one of us said: "Let me put a bullet through that rascal's head, Joe."

"Not for the world," savagely replied Martin. "By whatever torture my boy died, that death, and worse, if possible, he shall suffer."

As nothing more could be said, we tied the prisoner fast to his own pony and took him back with us to the wagons, near which lay the lifeless bodies of those Indians and ponies killed in the fight.

Joe knew something of the Apache language, and now, by a series of ingeniously cruel taunts, sought to provoke the chief—for so it seemed he was—into boasting of how his white captive had been put to death. All such efforts were useless. Not one word would the red man answer. With stoical composure and without a trace of pain on his dusky countenance, he began to chant his death-song, while ever and anon his snaky eyes glittered in contemptuous triumph as he saw several of our men wince under the operation of extracting arrow-heads from their persons.

"We'll wait till Tom Graydon comes in. Perhaps he may be able to tell us what we want to know," gloomily remarked the guide. "Then we'll turn Indians for a while and amuse ourselves with this treacherous dog. Maybe we can improve a little on the Apache mode of torture."

Yet, steadily on droned the monotonous death-song. Two or three of us, seeing that Joe was half crazed by grief, consulted privately together and agreed that if he did really attempt reprisals in this barbarous manner, we would shoot the prisoner through the brain, for no sane white man could brook such treatment of even a remorseless foe.

In a short time the lightly-fed fire in the pass died away, and although the ground might be hot in places, a well-shod man could incur no risk in walking over it. Therefore we began to look eagerly for the return of Graydon, though dreading to hear the harrowing details he would probably bring. But when, gliding out close to the nearest wall of the ravine, the young man finally appeared, a simultaneous groan went through our ranks, and one of us cried aloud: "Good gracious! Tom knows nothing of the boy! He thinks he's with us." For the youth came jauntily along, his face wreathed in smiles.

Savagely as a wild beast robbed of its young, Joe Martin dashed forward and, confronting the scout, roared out: "Tom Graydon! do you dare to say that you haven't even found the remains of my murdered son?"

"Not a remain," flippantly replied Tom, whereat, if we had not quickly interposed, the outraged father would have laid the young fellow dead at his feet.

The whole twenty-eight of us gathered watchfully about the pair, while Tom innocently continued: "Why! isn't Frank with you? He's not killed, surely, or I would have seen some signs of it."

Still, changelessly on, the Indian's mournful dirge floated out through the evening air.

All of us were so preoccupied, that nothing outside our circle was noticed; hence we were fairly electrified when presently a light form broke through the ring, threw itself upon the guide's breast and a voice joyfully shouted: "All alive and kicking yet, dear old dad!"

Then great, stalwart Joe broke down and cried like a baby, and all those of us whose throats were not too husky, burst into such a storm of wild cheers as Ouaniche (Wayneesh) pass had never

before heard, though not for a moment did they interrupt the prisoner's doleful cry.

Rogueish Tom was now rolling on the ground in an ecstasy of delight over his successful ruse, and poor, happy, choleric Joe looked rather sheepish as he said: "How was it, Frank? Tell us your story."

"You may thank Tom's good shooting for it all, father. The Indians had tied me to a sapling, some way behind where they were waiting to catch this party. At the very first sign of fire one of the braves ran back towards me with his tomahawk and scalping-knife all ready for business, and in two seconds more I should have been a dead boy, but just as the wicked beast was going to strike, I heard a rifle crack and he tumbled down dead, almost on top of me."

"Yes," put in Tom, "I was more than two hundred yards away, but (patting his rifle) I knew old Betty, here, and had to risk it. My bullet went right through the redskin's heart; and, under the circumstances, it was a pretty fair shot. By that time the fire had started up in earnest; the Indians scrambled on their ponies and put out like lightning; but we, being to windward of where I'd kindled the blaze, were quite safe—and we came along as soon as we could."

At this, Joe stepped gravely over to Tom, took off his hat and half-sobbingly said: "Tom Graydon, I humbly ask your pardon, and may God Almighty forever bless you!"

Then the two shook hands for ten minutes, more or less, and we once again awoke the echoes by such cheers as only men with overcharged hearts can utter. But on, ever on, without break or pause, pealed the warrior's death-song.

"Joe," laughingly said our oldest comrade, "maybe you'll just shoot this miserable wretch now, instead of skinning him alive."

For all answer, Joe walked over to the prisoner, stooped down, cut his bonds, placed bow, tomahawk and knife beside him, pointed to his pony and said in Apache: "Go, chief, go free!"

Then, at last, the death-song ceased. For one moment the astounded savage gazed in incredulous amazement; but quickly seeing that all was in good faith, he vaulted to his pony's back, waved his sound hand in not ungraceful acknowledgment, and galloped swiftly away. And never again were we once molested by any member of his tribe. These fierce denizens of the Western wilds do sometimes appreciate generosity.

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON*

BY J. HENRY SHORHOUSE



IT was the smoke-room of a Welsh castle, after lunch on Sunday. Three of the numerous easy-chairs were drawn round the small fire. It was a fine day towards the end of a fine September, but there is, especially when one has attained to a certain period of life, something in an easy-chair more in accordance with the after-lunch tobacco than there is in lounging about on terraces and garden seats, and two of the occupants of the easy-chairs had more than attained to this period of life. The man who sat to the left, facing the fireplace, and who was evidently the master of the house, was a tall, fine-looking man, Sir Frederick Chevenix Pole, perfectly English in type, fair-haired and fresh-colored, with strongly cut features, indicative of a firm purpose and will. Next to him, between his two companions, sat a man of about seventy years of age, of a striking and, one might almost say, fascinating appearance. His short white hair and gray mustache, according with his perfectly cut features, might have accounted for this attraction, but there was more than this. There was a distinction in his cold gray eyes, born of the habit of command and of the conscious possession of power, physical, mental and conferred; a consciousness that gave an expression of beneficence and courtesy because supported by the sense of authority which made the one possible of instant fulfillment and the other assured and safe. He was, there could be no doubt, a general officer in high command. The third chair was pushed back somewhat further from the fire, as though the occupant did not need its warmth. He was scarcely more than a boy—a young man of barely three and-twenty—Sir Frederick's only child, married within three months. He was as tall as his father, but much hand-

* From "The English Illustrated Magazine."

somer, giving promise, indeed, of becoming in a few years what used to be called "a beauty man." He had dark hair and unusually clear and piercing eyes, and, what he doubtless inherited from his dead mother, strikingly delicately cut nose and mouth.

Sir Frederick was evidently in a very bad humor. He lay back in his chair, his eyes fixed upon the fire, taking no pleasure from the cigar which, from the mere necessity of keeping it alight, he from time to time put to his lips.

"It is all very well," he was saying, "for Plynlimmon and Cader and such great men to say that it does not matter, and that nothing has happened. I say that everything has happened, and that it matters very much. I say that it is revolution!"

The other men continued to smoke calmly, looking into the fire. It seemed better to let Sir Frederick relieve his mind without interposing irritating remarks.

"To me," he went on, "to me, who care for every blade of grass upon the land, who, and my fathers before me, have done for these people infinitely better than they would have done for themselves, I say that it matters very much, and that everything has happened—that it is simply revolution. Look at the County Councils, and now Parish Councils! Am I to sneak in by a dozen votes or so, and be insulted and outvoted every time I propose anything the like of which my fathers have done for centuries for the people and for the land?"

It was quite too sore a subject to irritate further, and the other men remained discreetly silent.

"Look at Sir Corwen," Sir Frederick went on, talking more to himself than to the others, "I don't know what has come over Wales during the last ten or fifteen years. Only a few years ago they used to talk, all over Wales, of 'God and Sir Corwen.' Who talks of that now? Who talks of God at all?"

Of a family resident in Wales for centuries, but of almost pure English descent for all that length of time, and marrying with all the great English families, Sir Frederick was of Wales, and yet not Welsh. He did not speak Welsh himself. It was not the fashion to do so in his youth. His son had been taught the language, and spoke it sometimes to the farmers and peasantry, but he did it with constraint and apparent condescension, and it had not the slightest good effect, but rather the reverse.

"God knows," Sir Frederick began again, "I don't want to

insult these people. I never have insulted them. I have done them all the good I could; but you know what I mean."

"It is just the same in India," said the General, in his courteous, suave way. "We never know but that any post may bring us some insane orders from the British Parliament."

"Here is Felix, there," continued Sir Frederick, thus encouraged, "they want him to stand for the county. Plynlmmon says that it is our duty. I say no—I won't have him beaten by a tallow-chandler."

"He isn't a tallow-chandler, Dad," said the young man, in a cheery, pleasant, ringing voice, from his remote chair. "He is a great soap manufacturer, who employs tens of thousands of workmen, and has built a town for them on the most approved system. He will be made a baronet if the Gladstonians stick in."

"He is an insolent cad," replied his father with great asperity, "to set himself against the Plynlmmon and the Chevenix Pole influence. Look at Sir Corwen, who spends half of his income for the good of his people, and they all vote against him! Look at Cader, who gives all his laborers fancy cottages at a pound a year, and keeps the hedges and the gardens in order as well, and they all vote against him!"

There was a long pause; iniquity like this did not admit of discussion.

"And, what is worse," Sir Frederick said at last, after he had satisfied himself that his cigar was alight, "this tallow-chandler will get in! I think I can depend on old Thompson. He is the butler, General, and was my father's man. But I'll be hanged if I don't believe that the London footmen would vote against me if they got the chance! The effect of this demoralizing influence upon people of very good disposition is amazing."

There was another slight pause; then Sir Frederick began again—

"I tell you, Felix, you shall not stand! I won't have Felix Chevenix Pole beaten by a little red-haired Welshman."

"He isn't little, Dad," replied the boy, "and he isn't red-haired. He is not far short of my height, and he has black hair. As for Welshman, what are we?"

"You seem to know a great deal about him," said his father shortly, and ignoring the last question. "Where have you seen him?"

"I have seen him with the Flintshire Hunt. He rides fairly well to hounds."

What Sir Frederick might have answered to this will never be known, for at this moment the door opened and another actor appeared upon the scene.

"Felix," said a sweet, silvery voice, "I am going to the three-o'clock children's service. Will you come with me?"

"Come with you!" cried the young man, springing up. "Where would I not come with you? my love."

The other men had risen also.

"May I come too?" said the General. "I should like to hear the little children sing."

He was looking from one to the other with an amused, beneficent, surprised delight, and, indeed, at the latest comer he might well look—a tall, fair, gray-eyed English girl, with a perfect complexion and clear-cut profile and mouth. "A daughter of the gods, divinely fair," from whose girlish form the honors of her recent wifehood had as yet taken no single grace. A girl with whom, one would think, a man would go anywhere—even to church!

"Oh, the children don't sing much!" she said. "They are too little, but the choir-boys' voices are very sweet, and they sing such lovely hymns."

"You will excuse me, my dear," said Sir Frederick, as he kissed his new daughter on the forehead. "I have been to church once to-day, and I am not fit to hear little children sing. I am not in a Christian frame of mind."

They went out into the great hall. As he passed, Felix took his father's hand—

"Don't worry, Dad," he said; "what does it matter? There is a boy in Terence who calls to his father 'O festivissime Pater.' I always used to think of you when I blundered over that at Eton."

The great hall was surrounded by high leaded windows and dim portraits. There were masses of harpalium, single dahlias, and tritomas in china and delf jars; there was also a faint scent of mignonette.

As near as he could get to the centre of the hall stood a small pug-dog, apparently in an aggrieved and injured frame of mind. He was evidently of a most distinguished breed, with a skin of a fine golden fawn color, and brilliant black eyes. He regarded his mistress with a look of reproach.

"You seem to have made your own arrangements," he clearly said. "Am I to come or not?"

"Oh, you may come, Beo," said his mistress. "You will stay in the porch, you know, during the service."

The dog turned his back and walked slowly towards the hall-door.

"I suppose I know how to behave," he said to himself.

Beo was an aristocrat to the backbone. He was fed on minced chicken, and slept in his mistress's room on a down pillow (his mistress said she slept in his room), but when he was turned out of the wagonette he would run for miles and never ask to be taken in.

They followed Beo out of the carved porch and down the carriage-drive, deep cut in the solid rock, with banks of hydrangea on either side, now varied with curious pale autumn tints, and great oaks and ashes upon the top, and on the rocky mounds overhanging the drive where the walls and bastions of the feudal castle had been.

There was a lofty square-built tower, covered with ivy, where the jackdaws and swallows lived, with great oaken gates studded with iron bands and nails, through which they passed by a small wicket and came out into the main street of the village, with an old high-arched bridge immediately opposite the gate, spanning a rushing torrent in its course from the hills to the neighboring sea. The village street, with pretty new-built shops standing in gardens, passed up the valley; but opposite to the gateway and across the narrow bridge was another street of much older houses, leading up to the old Welsh church on the top of the hill.

Beo, evidently knowing, or thinking that he knew—the wisest of us are liable to be mistaken sometimes—exactly what was going to happen, walked in front and crossed the bridge with the intention of proceeding straight up to the church.

The first thing that disconcerted Beo as they came out from under the dark archway into the sunlight was a tame jackdaw, who, descending from one of the pillars of the bridge wall, came running towards him with much chattering and flapping of wings. Beo regarded this creature with the intensest disgust. His sentiments were precisely those of Sir Frederick Chevenix Pole. It was a sign of the general demoralization of manners that a gentleman could not walk up the street of his own village without being subjected to such familiarities.

On the bridge were several young men and boys, lounging and smoking and talking. It might have comforted Sir Frederick

somewhat to have seen that most of them touched their hats. We have not quite reached the lowest depth yet.

The party from the Castle crossed the bridge and began to ascend the steep old village street towards the parish church, which was their nearest way to the English church, built by Sir Frederick lower down the hill-slope, among the villas and tennis lawns of the English residents, on the verge of the park as it approached the sea.

They had not gone far up the street when their steps were arrested by the sound of soft music, melancholy and still, and yet at the same time with an odd sense of a lively strain underneath the solemn monotones; a distinct and divergent sound, different from aught that lay around, different from anything to which their lives had hitherto seemed to lead; a faint, slow movement, quaint and almost lively, yet touching and sad, that seemed to communicate itself to the warm sunny air, and, together with it, to act upon the sense with a marvelously attractive power. They turned almost instinctively and stood by the stone walls of the garden plots, looking down upon the street and upon the bridge.

A Sunday rest and glamour pervaded the quiet scene. The warm afternoon sun was shining over the late roses and the fuchsias and white anemones in the cottage flowerbeds, and on the rank growth of potatoes and cabbages and marrows in the gardens interspersed between the straggling houses. In the background were the massy woods and dark foliage of the Castle grounds, with the great feudal tower covered with ivy, all in flower, and traced here and there with tendrils of Virginia creeper stretching up through the dark green mass. The tame jackdaw came down again and stood in the very centre of the village street. He flapped his wings and seemed to be discoursing to an absent congregation; being dressed in black, his action might seem suggestive to the unthinking mind. At the cottage windows and at the backs of the houses girls might be seen preparing themselves in their Sunday finery for the afternoon stroll, while their fathers and mothers, too busy or too lazy to change their clothes, were standing in garden and doorway in their everyday working dress. Small birds darted in and out, the rooks swept across the sky. The village cats, calmed apparently by the influence of the day and of the hour, sat dreamily and securely, with something of a Sabbath serenity, upon wall and window-sill, gazing with unwonted complacency upon the dogs that strolled past in the village street. Through all this still life

the marvelously attractive notes penetrated the ear with irresistible force.

The loungers on the bridge, arrested apparently by these sounds, strolled listlessly up the street and stood at the entrance of a narrow passage or court from which the sounds seemed to come. The court was surrounded by some of the very oldest houses in the village. It was very narrow at the entrance, but opened a little afterwards into a quiet yard surrounded by stone cottages. The strollers from the bridge seemed to be somewhat sheepishly undecided, attracted apparently by the music, ashamed to show any marked interest in what was going on.

They were also exposed to a counter-attraction.

Some of the village girls, who had finished their toilette, now came out and joined them. One maiden went so far as to slap her friend jovially upon the back. The men did not seem to heed; something in that faint yet piercing note seemed to draw them with its magic influence, as it had done those others, of so different a kind, further up the hill. They moved off slowly one by one, and went up the narrow court. The village girls, disgusted at the desertion of their swains, went back into their gardens to bide their time.

"Let us go down," Claire said. "It is the Salvation singing, I think."

They moved down the steep street and stood at the entrance of the court, where the others had stood a moment before.

Beo strongly objected to this course. It was irregular, and to his well-regulated mind it did not seem that it was in good form. There was a stone step, or pavement, in front of a closed shop at the corner of the little alley. He seated himself upon this, with his back to the whole affair, and his gaze steadfastly fixed up the steep street towards the afternoon sky above, and towards the outline of the village church upon the crest of the hill.

An intense stillness pervaded the scene, scarcely broken by the strain of thin, wild music. The stone houses, worn and weather-stained, borrowed of the warm sunshine and of the rich autumn afternoon, and became to a certain extent mellowed and beautiful; and the pale, delicate sky accorded in its faded blue with the sombre colors of the houses and of the autumn gardens—with the quiet yard and with the mystic song, which no Eastern sunlight or fancy could have warmed into the tints and melodies of fable or romance.

As the Castle party stood in the main street, at the entrance

to the alley, they could see, beyond the group of men who were standing some little way up the narrow entry, the small court of houses, which seemed almost uninhabited. An old woman or so appeared now and then at the upper windows, and gazed with apparent indifference upon the scene below. An indescribable sense of peace and mystery pervaded this quiet yard.

In the open space between the small houses were three girls, in the orthodox Salvation dress, and two men.

The girls were singing, and had small tambourines in their hands. They accompanied their singing with the very faintest beating of the tambourines in time. In addition to this faint beating of the time, they executed at the interval of every few seconds the very slightest rhythmical movement of their position and pose—a movement so slight as to be scarcely perceptible, yet possessing an enthralling and suggestive effect; for this faint, graceful movement gave a reality and a touch of human feeling, as in the grandest music there are chords which suggest street and village life, and in dance and pantomime airs there are strains and adagios which recall the great music of the Mass.

What these girls sang none of the Castle party knew, but not one of them doubted for a moment that it was some version of that strangely persistent story born among the villages of Galilee many hundred years ago.

After an interval of two or three minutes the girls ceased singing, concluding their verses with a dance movement more marked than usual, and one of the men began a short address. He was a small, red-haired man, of an insignificant and common appearance. He spoke apparently to no one, for the group of men in the entry seemed too far off to constitute an audience, but he spoke with profuse action and earnestness, and in a full and rich tone of voice.

“He is consigning us all to hell-fire,” said Felix, who was supposed to know Welsh, “but it does not matter. It is a melodious language, and the men’s voices are rich and sweet.”

When the elderly man had completed his sermon—and he spoke for a very short time—the girls sang again, and when they had finished a young man stepped forward and delivered an address, which seemed to be only a repetition of the elder speaker. Then the girls sang again with the same thin, sweet, searching note, with the same faint beating of the tambourines, with the same *svette* movement of the limbs. Then they stopped altogether.

"Will they come out and walk the streets?" said Claire. "They have no audience here."

Felix shook his head. His knowledge of Welsh habits was small, of Salvation methods smaller still.

But when the girls had stopped singing the elder of the men took one of the tambourines from their hands and advanced towards the group standing in the entry. They apparently contributed something. Then he came a little farther, and stood for a second or two undecided, looking at the group in the street. Felix, to encourage him, took out his purse. Then the man came forward cheerfully, with his head on one side and a wheedling smile upon his face. He held out the tambourine; there were several coins upon it—half-pence and pence. Each of the men gave him half-a-crown.

"I should like to see if they come out," said Claire again; "let us wait a minute and see."

But nothing of the kind happened. When the man went back the service seemed to be over. He stooped, or almost knelt, before the others, and, producing the coins, arranged them in order upon the ground, so that all might see. Then the strange choir broke up, most of them apparently retiring into the houses around.

But one girl came down the court. She passed the group of men who were standing in the entry, and came out into the street. She was a striking-looking girl, in spite of her hideous bonnet and dress, and there was something about her look that seemed strange to the surroundings among which she stood.

Inspired, as it would seem, by a sudden instinct, Claire moved towards her.

"Your singing is very sweet," she said, with her silvery distinct utterance. "We thank you very much," and she held out her hand.

But the girl drew herself up. She fixed her steady eyes upon the striking group before her, and there was something in the glance of the dark eyes suggestive of the fact that such a group—not this one, but one not unlike it—was far from being an unfamiliar sight.

"Thanks, no," she said in perfect English, and with a refined accent and tone; "thanks, no, my lady; I am a ruined girl," and she passed on down the village street.

There did not seem much to say after this, as they went up the street to the old Welsh parish church upon the top of the hill.

The September light, which had been somewhat obscured in the valley, became brighter as they reached the crest of the hill, and a blaze of sunlight and, as it seemed, an unexpected day of space and sense awaited them as they crossed its ridge.

And, indeed, it could hardly seem surprising that Beo had steadfastly sat himself upon that corner flagstone with his eyes fixed upon the western sky and upon the low, suave lines of the Welsh church upon the hilltop, for the sight of man (or dog) has seldom seen anything more perfect in its way.

- The western sun, travelling towards its grave in the sea, had passed beyond the church towards the right, and left behind it, in the sky which it had traversed, an intensely clear and delicate flush, against which the low roofs of the church stonework, wrought upon and tempered by the slowly passing centuries, and wreathed here and there with masses of creeping ivy, stood out in soft and yet distinctly cut outline and relief.

The churchyard was guarded by a fence of slate piles, fastened together by iron bands; and the gate was a great slab-slate, girded with iron. Inside the churchyard the tombs were mostly of slate, with short inscriptions, one might almost say, scratched upon them; but here and there a great stone slab, moss-grown and colored with age, and supported by small carved pillars of stone, marked the resting-place of some Welsh gentleman whom the perplexities of this life ceased to trouble two centuries ago. All over the churchyard, in among these pale slates and armorial stones, a profuse *mêlée* of Welsh flowers flung itself in masses and in single lines over the greensward and around the lettered stones, and over the broad tombs, which seemed, as it were, some strange reminiscence of the discarded altar of the past.

As they trod, with hushed senses, these quiet pathways of the dead, the stillness, as of a day sacred to peace, and the chime of the green hues of earth and the clear tints of Heaven, and the hand of time graciously at work through many winters, and through long summer days, softened the rude outlines of poverty and of death, and seemed to reduce (or is it elevate?) all men, from the castle or the village, by the magic of a common clay, to one fellowship and kin.

Great trees, ashes and oaks, lined the further wall of the churchyard, and another gate, also of slate, opened the way to a path which led down to the new church at the bottom of the hill.

Underneath the spreading branches of the trees, as they stood for a moment by the churchyard gate, great swallows swept past, almost touching them in their rapid flight; through the overarching branches went a murmur and sound as of some spirit-whisper from above.

Beyond, the ground fell steeply down a sloping field, and over the shimmer of delicate grass and the pale blue tint of small thistle-flowers, and the tall white spire of the English church and the woods, lay a waste of yellow sand, broken with channels and rivers of blue sea, and beyond this more blue sea, and then, faint in the misty glamour of the autumn afternoon, the distant shores.

The General stopped for a moment, as if surprised.

"The sea is as blue," he said, "and the sand as yellow as at Capri itself."

A sense of consolation and of peace came over Claire's spirit, jarred and repelled as it had been.

"How beautiful it all is!" she said. "And the old village church, with its soft outline and its creepers and the mossy graves! General Lefevre," she went on with a sudden impulse, "you have been everywhere, and know everything. Tell me, why do Dissenters like everything that is ugly, and why are they so rude?"

"My dear!" said the General, "I am sure I cannot tell! I don't know anything. I was never taught anything but the Latin grammar, and that I wouldn't learn. I was sent into the Army because I was the fool of the family. 'He can stop a bullet,' my dear father used to say, 'if he can do nothing else.' And I didn't even do that," the General said with a smile. "In the hottest fire I was never touched. They said I bore a charmed life. I am sure I cannot tell!"

By the time that they reached the English church, by the path-way over the field, they had loitered so long that the service was over, and the children were singing the final hymn—

We are but little children weak,
 Nor born to any high estate.
 What can we do for Jesus' sake,
 Who is so high and good and great?
 Oh, day by day, each Christian child
 Has much to do—without, within—
 A death to die for Jesus' sake—
 A weary war to wage with sin.

When deep within our swelling hearts
The thoughts of pride and passion rise,
When bitter words are on our tongues,
And tears of passion in our eyes—

Then we may stay the angry blow—
Then we may check the hasty word—
Give gentle answer back to all,
And fight the battle of the Lord.

The shrill treble note, with a child's uncertainty, sang this lesson of human life, before whose stern realities it has been said that he is happy who is like a little child. The tears were in Claire's wonderful gray eyes.

"I heard that sung," she said, "in one of the smartest and most crowded churches in London. I never heard anything so touching in my life!"

So, there being nothing else to do, they went home by another way, past the gardens of the English residents and up the village street, where Beo was more comfortable in his mind. He had been to church as a gentleman should, and most of the creatures had retired to sleep. They went in through the great portcullised gateway, past the banks of hydrangeas and the avenues of ashes and of oak. The massy doors stood open, under the porch with its carved armorial bearings, to the great silent hall, and Claire went in.

"What did you think of that girl?" said the General, as the two men stood for a moment on the gravel outside the porch.

"Oh, I don't know," said the boy, with just a touch of assumption of supreme knowledge of the world. "Been in English service, I should say—ladies' maid, probably. Some fallen girl who has been reclaimed. The police tell us that these people do a lot of good."

"She reminded me," said the General, very slowly—and it struck Felix, with a sudden surprise, that his face was ashy pale—"she reminded me of a girl whom I knew many a long year ago. Do you think, Felix," he went on, and there was a strange humility in his tone in speaking to the boy, as to one possibly possessed of information later than his own, "do you think that there is anything in it all? Some of us will need God's mercy, one day, if there be."

MY PARROT *

BY LÉON DE TINSEAU



"HE apartment suits me," I say to the concierge who is showing me the place. "You are quite sure that it is perfectly dry? It is not agreeable to live in a damp place."

"Dry, sir? Why the workmen finished it eighteen months ago. There are two other parties that want it, but if you decide to take it,

I will take down the sign at once."

"Very well, take it down."

I put some louis into the hands of my future jailor, who pocketed them with an air of superb disdain. I took possession of my new rooms at once and settled rapidly. By the 30th of April I was through with the upholsterer, the gasfitter, and all the rest. Meanwhile, alas! I discovered that the house was a veritable Stradivarius, full of sonorous resonance. Under me was a family of young housekeepers who were blest with two children of very tender years. The older was just cutting its teeth and cried from morning till night. The younger was a new-born infant, and it wailed from night till morning.



"Patience," I said to myself; "the mortality of children is frightful in Paris!"

The floor above me was occupied by a woman who lectured to

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classes: history, mornings; geography, afternoons. Question me about the sons of Clovis or the cities of Sumatra, and you will be satisfied with my knowledge. Unfortunately, I did not get further than the dismemberment of Charlemagne's Empire.

Then in the court there were horses, carriages, and coachmen whose neatness was an exaggeration. After these gentlemen had finished their slushings they betook themselves to the basement and played on a French horn. Happily, I have always liked a horn.

It is the only one of Dona Sola's tastes that I have ever been able to comprehend.

One morning, just at the moment when the younger child had stopped crying, and before the other had begun, I was awakened by a frightful din; but this time the racket was on my floor and close to my ears. I understood that I was to have neighbors. The noise did not last long, so I judged that the furnishings were not very elaborate. Eight days afterwards, the family took possession.

I soon knew, without intentional indiscretion, that it was composed of three persons, the father, who was nearly deaf (he was the only deaf thing about the place), and who was cashier in a large banking-house; the mother, a commonplace person, and the daughter,—oh! that girl! What a disagreeable creature she was! The servant's name was Irma at the outset. But they changed so often that I lost all track of the name. Neither could I discover the real name of the ladies. The parents addressed their daughter as Bébelle. Evariste christened his wife as "Poulette" in private.

Their privacy had no secrets from me, for it was the conjugal sanctuary which was next my own chamber. By the end of a month I was perfectly informed of even the slightest affair in this household. Thus, I knew that Evariste was bald and predisposed to colds, for Poulette said to him often:

"Your handkerchief is gone again. You will catch cold near that damp wall."



At half-past seven, Irma—or some one else—brought my neighbors their *café au lait*. It was always madame who awakened her husband. Then the two talked over their business matters, and they were not brilliant, I can assure you. I regret that Bébelle was the cause of most of the financial strait. That girl did as she pleased in the family. Fond of dress, anxious for display, she had urged her father to rent apartments beyond his means. She wanted her mother to have a reception day—Tuesdays—and, to keep the peace, it was necessary to have an extra servant, then; a man in livery, too. Then came the refreshments, the flowers, and the suitable toilettes. Of course, matters were helped by having a seamstress come once a week, when the ladies both cut and sewed with her.



Then, too, Bébelle had skillful fingers and could manufacture a hat equal to Virof's. But her corsets and boots had to be bought at the best and dearest places.

"My foot and my waist are my best points," she argued. "I might, at least, be allowed to dress them well."

Oh, if you could have heard this silly chatterbox rattle on to her parents. Positively, to use Evariste's popular expression, she made "idiots of them." I know all this well from the confidence of the good couple at the hour of their *café au lait*. They naturally had but one desire concerning her; that was to see her settled in life. That was easier to talk about than to accomplish. Twice she had seen a chance escape; it was the fault of the "dot," or rather of the lack of "dot."

It is time to tell the reader that I was a bachelor, and that I am one still, thanks be to God, and to my parrot. This bird, with an old servant, constituted the "personnel" of my establishment, and with the faculty of imitation which belongs to its kind, my parrot was not long in learning and reproducing the phrases which often fell upon its ears. By the end of a month, it repeated about two hundred and fifty times a day this fragment of dialogue:

"*Evariste, will you let me in ?*"

"*Is that you, Poulette ?*"

These two questions were interchanged regularly every morning through the door of my neighbor's dressing-room, and it was very comical, the first few times, to hear the bird cry in the woman's falsetto voice :

"*Evariste, will you let me in ?*"

Then taking the slightly nasal baritonè of the husband, reply :

"*Is that you, Poulette ?*"

Please note that I had no hand in this education. It was spontaneous, but you could not have convinced my neighbors that there had not been, on my part, the most flagrant acts of prying and listening. Bébelle, above all, showed her anger, and when she came into her parents' room in the morning, she never failed to exclaim : " The nasty brute ! " after each of my bird's performances.

" *The nasty brute* " was at once echoed back in the girl's own tone. This is hardly the fashion in which one would have supposed a young girl would have interfered with the household goods of an eligible neighbor bachelor.



One day, Bébelle, throwing off all restraint, said to her father :

" That gentleman is offensive, and you should complain of him to the concierge."

" I have complained," replied Evariste. " But the cursed bird is in an apartment in the next house."

" How is it," said Bébelle, " that the walls are so thin ? "

Parbleu ! I had made the same remark, and the same complaint. Two women screaming at the top of their voices to make the deaf man hear was at least as offensive as a parrot. To my complaints I had received the reply that the two houses had been built by a company on the verge of bankruptcy, as most of such houses are. If economizing on walls could save them, they certainly would have been saved !

Meanwhile, June came at last. My downstairs neighbors left for the country. The horses went off, followed by the coachmen with their trumpets. The house became quite a Paradise.

Only my parrot, the lecturer, and my neighbors in the next apartments remained. It is true that these were not peaceable. They seemed to have fresh causes for contention, and with the exception of throwing furniture at each other, they did everything that could be done in a house haunted by discord.

Bébelle had taken it into her head to go somewhere as everybody else did; a legitimate enough desire, but which lack of means made it impossible to realize, if one might believe Evariste.



"I have no money," he repeated; "not a penny. Business is bad, my salary has been cut down ten per cent., and we are in debt."

After three days of strife the poor fellow made a concession. He consented to Le Treport. At that word Bébelle had laughed in his face. I could have choked her!

"Le Treport, indeed! Why not Bercy? Who goes to Le Treport."

She was twenty-three years old, and since her parents took no pains to do so, she thought that it was her duty to look up a husband herself.

"Begin by finding a dowry!" exclaimed her father, pushed to extremities.

"She has 60,000 francs," hazarded Poulette, who passed her days between the anvil and the hammer.

Evariste laughed, derisively. "60,000 francs! You know well that this is my bond. If I withdraw it, I will lose my place. Besides, God only knows whether I could get it now, business is so bad."

I cannot record Bébelle's reply. Positively, the girl was heartless in the extreme, and when after a scene, which was an outrage to humanity, my bird screamed, "The nasty brute!" I could not help adding, with conviction: "Yes."

Fortunately, the time for my own departure had arrived. I left Jacquot in the care of my old nurse, and started for my wanderings, happy in the thought that I should not hear the voices of my neighbors for four or five months.

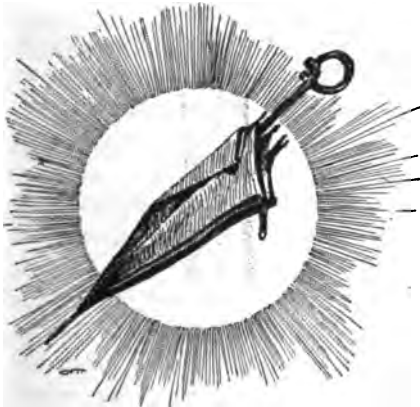


I travelled at first in Switzerland, passed three weeks in the Engadine, returned by way of Coire and Zurich, and reached Lucerne. In this city, or rather on the beautiful lake named after it, love was awaiting me. It was on a steamboat that I saw *her* for the first time. She was travelling alone with her mother, a woman with a distinguished air, whom I at first believed to be a widow. Three days later—I had arranged to stop at the same hotel—I became acquainted with these ladies, and soon I knew their names and history.



Mme. de Monsenpuelle was not a widow. Her husband, detained at home by important affairs, had not been able to accompany her in the month of travel which her daughter's health made necessary. As for the daughter, she pleased me much; too much, alas! She was a perfect type; a brunette with dark eyes—sad, proud, expressive, chaste and tender eyes. I would have preferred one less timid, as I have the misfortune to be rather retiring. Timid or not, her

mother guarded her as one guards a treasure, or rather as one guards an adored child; for they certainly adored each other.



Then, too, Isabella had a very sensitive nature. A mere nothing brought tears to her eyes, and I thought that she was going to burst into sobs at a simple observation made by her mother con-

cerning an umbrella forgotten on the Rigi-Kuln which we had ascended together. It was this same umbrella which broke the ice between us, if I may use such an expression. The next morning at dawn I started for the Kuln. By five

at night, Mlle. de Monsenpuelle was in possession of her umbrella.

She extended her hand to me and said in *such* tones :

“Ah! how kind of you!”

I kissed that little hand, and I believe that at first the mother and daughter thought the proceeding rather premature. They felt, however, that they had a sensitive man to deal with. Perhaps my growing love was not a secret to them. They say that women are clairvoyants in such matters.



We passed fifteen days at Lucerne and were together almost constantly. I flattered myself that I knew Isabella better than I would have done in Paris in two months.

Talk to me of travel to teach one human nature!

She was the only child and it was easy to see that the family had a fortune, and kept up a good establishment. In their conversation these ladies casually mentioned the names of their modistes, milliners, the people who visited them, and all that told me enough. They kept no carriage and simply said :

“In Paris, one has got to be content with livery-hire when one has only 60,000 francs of income.”

To a future son-in-law such an expression was worth gold, and I considered myself, if not a future son-in-law, at least a possible one.

At last we were to part. Every morning M. de Monsenpuelle wrote pages reclaiming his wife and daughter. He could no longer eat or sleep. Ah! What a lovely thing a united family is! I obtained from the ladies permission to travel in their company as far as Dijon.

There I left them, as I was going to open the hunting season in Bourgogne. They had the kindness to invite me to visit them; besides, we lived in the same quarter.

It was October when I reached Paris. I arrived on Tuesday at ten in the morning, and as it was Mme. de Monsenpuelle's “at home” day, I called at three at the address she had given me. Things were just as I had pictured them; a handsome house, well-kept hall, everything simple, but possessed of a certain elegance; not at all the house of a parvenu. The black-coated servant was eminently respectable; in fact, everything was in keeping. The ladies received me cordially. I even thought Isabella prettier than when in Switzerland, and I plainly

saw that she did not think me changed for the worse. We chatted almost intimately, for I was the only visitor. On rising, I said:

“How much I regret at not having the pleasure of meeting M. de Monsenpuelle to-day!”

“At this hour he is always at his bank. But at the first opportunity he will invite you to dinner, that he may make your acquaintance. Let me show you his portrait in crayon, done by his daughter.”

“Oh, mamma!” said Isabella, modestly, “it is so badly done.”

“Bah! Monsieur is a friend, and you do not pose as an artist.”

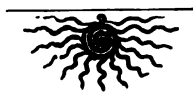
They opened the door and showed me into an adjoining room, which was evidently the conjugal chamber. On the wall I saw the portrait of M. de Monsenpuelle, but I cannot tell you whether it is good or bad, for just as I was about to examine it, I heard on the other side of the partition a shrill voice:

“*Evariste! Will you let me in?*” “*Is that you Poulette?*”

Great Heavens! I was in my neighbor's house; that bedlam! I was in the toils of Bébelle, that fiend!

Fortunately, I had the presence of mind not to betray myself, and I acted as if I had heard nothing.

It is unnecessary to state that I never again set foot in the Monsenpuelle house. But for reasons which I need not dilate upon, this quasi-cohabitation became painful to my vanity; I moved out at the end of the next quarter, and if there is in Paris a parrot cared for with tender gratitude, it is that of your humble servant.



THE VENDETTA*

BY MICHEL RAYMOND



PIETRO and I were twins and twenty years old in that year of many wars, 1792. In the teeth of a thousand perils we set sail from the Sicilian coast in our Palermitan *felucca*, after exchanging our black coral for buckwheat. English ships then swarmed in the Mediterranean on the lookout for convoys; but to Pietro and me, darkness and daring were propitious; and though we, as patriotic Corsicans, hated France, we had the incentive of a bounty on undertakings similar to ours offered by the French authorities, in consequence of the devastation of the crops on our island by a severe hailstorm. Intimate acquaintance with the coast and trust in Christ sufficed to bring us safe and sound into the harbor of Calvi, where the Marseillais commander of the fortress received our buckwheat and in part paid us for it. Then I anxiously turned my face towards our home at Poggiola among the mountains.

Our father, Luigi Giafferi, had not come down to greet us in the usual way, along with my betrothed, Annina Lazzelotti, whereupon my brother had a presentiment of evil that, try as I might, I could not but share. God does not lavish such specimens of his handiwork on this world as Annina. Never have I met her equal for beauty and winsomeness. My mother had adopted her when a babe; she was left the sole orphan of a household swept away by a terrible Eastern epidemic. Annina and I had grown up together, and she was as fond and proud of me as I of her. On my return from my seafaring she delighted in taking me by surprise, for which I had my revenge in many a furtive kiss under the ash-trees. My father watched us, however, like a hawk, and, coming suddenly upon us, would give such glances of sly meaning that Annina could not conceal

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her embarrassment. But for me to meet her thus was ample reward for all past hardships.

Well, this time the road was deserted, the ravines gave back no echo, and in a couple of hours Pietro and I traversed the five leagues betwixt Calvi and our cabin. But where was father?

"Dead!" shrieked my mother, rushing forward and snatching off the apron wrapped about her head. "Murdered!" and she pointed to the bed whereon he lay stiff and cold.

"Who killed him?"

"Evaristo Piccioli!"

Not another word uttered Pietro or I, but grasping our carbines we started for Monticello, the home of Piccioli, where we could find, however, neither him nor any of his family. Three days' patient search assured us that he was lurking with his household in the caves near Tartagine. Pietro recalled a grotto, whither in fine weather the eldest Piccioli boy used to lead his flock; and, sure enough, by filling the cavern's mouth with wet straw and setting it afire, we compelled the fugitives to come forth. They defended themselves desperately; but ten times I shouldered my carbine and shot down as many people, men, women and children, as they appeared at the entrance of the grotto. The fight over, I looked round for Pietro; he lay near me, his head shattered by a bullet. Despatching two of the men who still breathed, and lifting Pietro on my shoulders, I made my way home.

"You have only one son now," said I to my mother; "but the Piccioli are dead."

Yet these Piccioli had not been at enmity with our family. Evaristo, it is true, had lowered himself in his neighbors' esteem by favoring the French, because of the commercial advantages to be derived therefrom. It had so chanced that he paid my father a visit on the evening of a reunion of patriots at our house, and father, to avoid unpleasant and perhaps dangerous consequences, shut and fast barred him within his room. During the evening it was decided that the tocsin should ring the doom of the French garrison on the first opportune occasion, whither father was to put himself at the head of the revolt. As soon as the company had dispersed, my father told my mother that he was going to unbar the door and grant Evaristo his liberty. So he started to realize his intention, but was gone so long that my mother, beginning to wonder why he did not return, followed after him. What was her horror to find him lying in a pool of

blood, and the doors stretched wide open, and Evaristo nowhere to be seen. All these circumstances were detailed to me after my work of vengeance at the grotto.

When dismay and grief began to yield to time's influence, I one day wedded my beautiful Annina, and while in the church a friend drew me aside, whispering: "Girolamo Piccioli is come from Palermo, prepared to avenge the murder of his brother, Evaristo."

"Very good," I replied.

"He has sent me to warn you to be on your guard. Shall I point him out to you?"

"I'm acquainted with him, but I deemed him dead along with the others in the cave near Tartagine."

"No," said my friend, and motioned towards a pillar, against which I beheld Girolamo leaning. He had allowed his beard to grow, and by that and the peculiar glance he cast upon me, I knew he meant war to the death. It would seem, moreover, that, after slaying my father, Evaristo had contrived to apprise Girolamo of the foul deed, and to explain that it was done through a misunderstanding. He had got it into his head that a gang of bandits were assembled at our house, and fearful lest they should rob him of a considerable sum of money which he carried about him, he misapprehended my father's intention when the poor man came to let him out, and in his excitement and terror assaulted and killed him, and then fled. After hearing this I never ventured forth without my pistols in my belt and my carbine slung across my shoulder; for Girolamo was accounted a man of his word.

Oh, you don't know our mountains! Just imagine hills like great waves a league in circuit, one climbing above another in such a manner that each successive summit is hidden by the one preceding it from the valley below. So, when you have ascended one, you are amazed to find yourself confronting a second, a third, and a fourth, until you grow weary of the odd and immense stairway, and wonder if it is ever going to end. To ships sailing in the gulf of Provence, the effect is that of a gigantic pyramid. Far down, one meets mulberry-trees, wheat fields, vineyards, and bough-wrought booths thatched with straw; next come forests, wherein eagles build their nests; then follow empty barren spaces, till, dripping with sweat, one reaches heights where the wild goat's hoof hesitates and stumbles amid the sands. Nor is this all: higher yet up loom snow-laden peaks, and when the snows melt, the very mountains seem as though dissolving along with the rush

and roar of the descending waters. Above all else does one there feel the vast, awful quietude of desert places. There the cedar diffuses its aromatic smell, the *muffoli* (moufflon, Corsican argali), with limbs tense as a strung bow, bounds over precipices, or an eagle hovers lazily in the sky. Such are the pictures we can furnish, though no artist may paint their like. One mourns six months for a wife; but for one's native land, always!

I grew weary of petty plotting. Each faction accused the other malcontents of betraying some one of the three great powers that wished to "protect" us; while all of them betrayed poor Corsica. So I removed with my little family to Monte Patro, amid whose fastnesses I tasted a few months of happiness. I can still see my baby girl (for heaven had blessed me with a daughter), little Luigina, creep up to the spinning-wheel and try to stop it with her tiny hands; nor do I forget how my Annina would have me clasp her to my breast to reassure her when a mountain tempest made the tree-tops rock in its fury. Oh, it was good to dwell up there alone and undisturbed by man! Yet on divers occasions I met Girolamo, with whom I exchanged gunshots of which I still bear the scars, and in our last loyal encounter I left him with a fractured right arm. After that he revealed what dastardly Genoese blood ran in his veins by resorting to any means, fair or foul, to accomplish his ends, and even denouncing what he termed my crimes to the French authorities.

One night, my wife and my mother being gone to Calenzana to implore the Mother of Mercy to heal our little girl, who was ailing, I was attacked in my own house by sixty armed men, in the name of the French Republic. I miraculously made my escape by plunging into the torrent, tinged with my blood as they shot at me. They set fire to my cabin, scattered its contents in a twinkling, and brained my sheep with the butt ends of their muskets. I witnessed it all, and in spite of loss of blood and strength, I preserved sufficient presence of mind to crawl away to the path along which my wife and my mother would return, resolved to devote my last breath to their salvation by entreating them to fly. For who could tell what excesses that ribald crew might commit, whose drunken shouting of the Marseillaise accompanied the crackling of the flames about my burning house!

Darkness favored me; by the fire's reflected light in a pool I saw my wife hasten forward. I rose like a ghost, then sank

down again. She, rushing to me, flung herself on my body, and, heedless of my warning whispers, sobbed aloud, as she endeavored to stanch the blood streaming from one of my wounds. This outburst on her part was fatal to us. There came a rattle of musketry, yells, and then I ceased to see or hear. When I recovered consciousness I was in a room with my mother, who uttered a joyful cry to find me better. But I did not see my wife. What had become of her?

Mother pityingly endeavored to evade my eager questioning for a while, and then, as gently as she could, divulged the bitter truth to me. Even now, after the lapse of so many years, it gives me keen pain to say the words. My Annina and my little Luigina both—both were dead! The Mother of Mercy had taken them, in her divine wisdom, before they could witness and feel a thousand subsequent horrors. When I learned that they were no more, I wanted to kill myself at once and rejoin them in heaven. But I was told that God would not admit a suicide into paradise; and besides, there was Girolamo still alive. I must slay Girolamo to work out my salvation; therefore, I gradually became resigned to my sad life.

Knowing that Girolamo had denounced me, and attributing, with increased rage, my recent, most terrible bereavement to him, I embraced my mother and hurried off to Corte, where there was to be a meeting of patriots. I heard rumors of miracles along the way. At Favalello a statue of the Holy Virgin had shed tears, it was said; while storms of extraordinary fury swept over the island, and our priests beheld celestial visions. But I myself saw none, though at Corte I had a look at that small, pale youth, Bonaparte, whose blue eye pierced one's very soul. Yet nobody then imagined to what a glorious destiny he was vowed, although he was already suspected of liking the French too well.

As for me, I cast in my lot with Paoli, who had arrived at Calenzana, bent on attempting some decisive stroke. Though spies swarmed throughout the region, we kept so constantly on the alert and searched every one so thoroughly that there seemed scarcely a possibility of our being betrayed. One evening a beggar, clad in a tattered cassock, barefooted, and possessing only a staff and a gourd, was brought before me. I recognized him on the instant. It was—Girolamo Piccioli!

Ha! so at last I had him in my power! His crafty look of composure could not baffle me. But I knew that he counted upon his own impudence, as well as on my sense of the dignity

incumbent upon me in presence of my men. Had we been alone and unobserved, we should most certainly have grappled each other then and there.

"Where are you going, Girolamo?" I asked, with as much coolness as I could command.

"You see I am soliciting charity; you well know who has reduced me to this pass. The flocks of my family have been scattered among the hills and I have been maimed by my brother Evaristo's assassin. Therefore I go about begging."

"At such a time, Girolamo?"

"Any time is good when one is hungry; hunger is not squeamish."

"But to wander thus among parties of men who both fear and shoot spies is very imprudent, Girolamo."

"To be shot is to be rich, Matteo; and as for your suspicions, search me if you like."

"I would not soil my hands so much, Girolamo."

Then, turning to my soldiers: "Examine this fellow from head to foot," I commanded.

He offered no resistance, and, laying his staff and gourd on the ground, proceeded to strip. The men searched through and tore his rags, but found nothing.

"Never mind," I insisted; "conduct him to General Paoli. If he has no dispatches about him, he bears some verbal message, and we will make him tell it."

So they led him to Paoli, who was busy dictating dispatches, and with whom Girolamo employed the same tactics as with me.

"Where are you going?" demanded our chief.

"Oh, I wander here and there," replied the quondam mendicant; "but if you will let me go free, I will return to Anapesa to a poor woman's where I can have shelter."

"Take him away," ordered one of Paoli's lieutenants. Then addressing his superior officer, he remarked to him that the gourd looked suspicious. Consequently it was broken open, and a letter discovered within it. Though exultant, I felt puzzled and chagrined to think that it had not occurred to me to do the same thing myself.

The letter dwelt upon the fact of a deposit of arms to be used by certain of the affiliated who intended to assemble the next day at Monte Maggiore; while in a postscript there was mention made of a shipload of grain which was to pass the headland of La Revallata by night for the provisioning of the recruits.

"It's of no consequence to hold the spy without seizing his accomplices," added the lieutenant. "General, if you take my advice, you will this very evening send three determined men along with the rogue to Anapesa to watch him sharply and, on the least sign of any crooked work, blow his brains out, for we must discover the meeting-place and disperse the gang. Here is a gourd just like the broken one, and in it we will re-enclose the note, while to-morrow we will decide what course to pursue."

I volunteered to conduct the expedition and started off with my two companions. Following the ravine of La Ficarella, which traces a semicircle round the mountain, we marched towards the vale, interspersed with ash-trees and seamed with deep rifts in the soil. Darker and darker it grew; we lighted firwood torches; while, defying me, Girolamo hummed a Neapolitan barcarolle.

"You had better perform an act of contrition," I suggested to him.

"You had better do so yourself," he retorted; and on the instant a score of men leaped forth and overpowered me and my two subordinates. Then an officer appeared; it was Bonaparte!

"Ha, ha!" he laughed, and snatching the gourd from Girolamo, smashed it against a tree and extracted the missive, which he read attentively, smiling all the while. Then, after having us strapped on the backs of horses in the middle of the troop, he ordered the torches to be extinguished, and the cavalcade swiftly took its way toward the spot where the little army lay encamped. Scattered sentinels demanded the countersign of us twenty times or more; but at length we reached our destination. Then spoke Girolamo: "Will you keep your promise, Bonaparte?"

"Perhaps so. But what do you want?"

"Nothing except that man," and he pointed to me.

"You are a fool! I don't sell human flesh; here are six ducats."

"But I want that man!" cried Girolamo.

"You shall have nothing!" and as Girolamo manifested violent opposition to such a decision, Bonaparte added: "Make the fellow hold his peace!" and turned his lorgnette upon Calvi, which, shrouded in dense shadow, offered not so much as one light at which to take aim. One heard nothing save the hollow "Who goes there?" of the sentries and the grewsome plaint of the sea on the pebble-strewn beach. The Mediterranean seemed

in the deep darkness to commingle with the firmament. It was thus for a long time, whilst Bonaparte stood motionless as a statue. All of a sudden a line of fire shot perpendicularly into the sky and fell again in a shower of starlike sparks, permitting us to see Calvi, its fortress, and the gunners dismayed at the luminous apparition. There was a general beating of drums, a clangor of bells, a few stray gunshots in response to the preceding hubbub, and then a sudden silence. But presently lanterns were hoisted amid the ships' rigging, torches glided swiftly along the shore, and everywhere there was an illumination; while, to the cannons' roar and the measured tread of marching infantry, Bonaparte mounted his horse and galloped off to the city. The fortress was, therefore, taken.

Girolamo's letter enclosed in the gourd was itself only a decoy; and when Paoli, thus perfidiously warned, sent a detachment to the promontory of La Revallata, to seize the provisions that were to be landed there, it was just what the French desired. No sooner was the bark moored to the landing-place at the citadel gate than the soldiers, profiting by the confusion and darkness, rushed from the hold of the vessel and took possession of every exit from the fortress, maintaining their position by throwing blazing grenades into the guardhouse and streets adjacent to the harbor, and crowning their stratagem by the fiery signal whereby Bonaparte was apprised that all was ready for him to move down with his troops. It was a sort of modern imitation of the legend of the Trojan wooden horse.

Oddly enough, and most luckily for us, we were forgotten amid the mad rejoicings. I got hold of a horse, and speeding away, reached Calenzana at daybreak. Paoli wept with anger. The soldiers who, bereft of their firearms, had escaped from Calvi, here joined us once more. Not a single man of them was wounded. Harshly did Paoli rebuke them, and wished to send them off into the mountains, as having proved themselves unworthy to serve under the Corsican flag. At bottom, he alone was the cause of our misadventure, although, by manifesting such indignation, he screened his fault; nor could he have assumed the responsibility thereof without risking the loss of the confidence still reposed in him by the people. Having spent the fire of his wrath, he turned his back on us and broke his sword in pieces. The honest fellows began to shed tears. I ventured to intercede for them.

"General," said I, "we will recapture the fortress or die."

"Yes, we will die!" they all cried.

"You desire to be the first to attack?"

"The first."

"So be it! But I declare to you that should a single man return unsuccessful, I will brand him a dastard and forsake the country! for men I must have, not women."

Eight days thereafter, the Corsican flag again waved in the breeze over the citadel. But Bonaparte suffered no loss of reputation by its recapture, as he had embarked for France on the day after his victory.

Well it was for him that he had departed, since, like carrion flies, the shafts of calumny eagerly alight on the least speck in the purity of a reputation; and our General Paoli soon had to endure the chagrin of being called a minion of England, to whom, it was said, he meant to surrender our island. Many deemed such an eventuality a most happy issue from our partisan turmoils; and though the rumor made me boil with indignation, I had, alas! ere long to subscribe to its truth when I saw King George's troops relieve our sentinels, and the British consulate turned into the seat of Government. Amongst that crowd of cowering, dazed creatures, now become English, after having been, successively, French and Genoese, I refused to recognize a single Corsican, and, in consequence of the ever-increasing enmity about me, I comprehended the necessity of my leaving my native land.

Sending a farewell message to my mother, and begging her to watch over the grave of my wife and child, I secured passage to Barcelona on an English brig that was to stop on the way at Toulon to unship a load of timber. For three days we lay becalmed in the harbor; but on the fourth day, the wind beginning to blow, we weighed anchor, and those of the passengers who, like myself, had tarried on shore, were now summoned by the ship's bell, and had to row briskly to get aboard. I recall with a thrill of rage and horror the sight that met my eyes when I stepped upon the between decks. There, the centre of a circle of some fifteen or twenty British tars, intoxicated and hanging over a keg of rum, was Girolamo Piccioli, drinking to the health of King George! I cannot describe how the spectacle affected me. Though preserving an outward calmness, I felt myself grown equal to any deed. Yonder man, fallen from the status of an avenger to that of a denunciator and an assassin, yonder brutal seamen exulting over the abasement of my country, my schemes

of vengeance, my dream of a future for Corsica, all aided the conception of one of those thoughts whose awful pitilessness gains entire possession of its originator. In a few seconds the powder magazine was visited and burst open, strands of hemp were smoldering as they led to a caisson, and I was on deck again, whence I leaped into the sea and swam towards a bark en route for Calvi. I had just reached it when there arose from the English vessel a wailing call: "Matteo! Matteo!"

All the hot, surging blood in my body seemed to freeze on the instant, my heart to turn to stone. "Girolamo! relentless, fiendish Girolamo!" I cried. "So this is your crowning act of vengeance!" Like an arrow I darted from the deck and swam back toward the brig with the one mad, vainest thought of reaching it before it should be too late. On, on I dashed. Was I never to get there? Suddenly a frightful rending of the atmosphere, like the thunderbolts heard amidst our worst mountain storms, caused me to plunge beneath the waves, where, down, down to unknown, mysterious depths, the glare and noise of the explosion pursued me. On returning to the surface there was nothing in view save a mass of white smoke coiling into the sky, as if bearing heavenward the soul of the victim whom I had striven to rescue. How shall I add that by some foul suggestion, some evil contriving, word had been sent to my poor old mother, persuading her to go aboard the brig in hopes of finding me! Thus, doubtless, Girolamo meant to secure us both within his power; and, sometimes, shuddering within myself, half believing, I query whether, in his almost superhuman hatred, Girolamo had not foreseen what I was to do, and in demoniac clairvoyance rejoiced at beholding me the willing instrument of the terrible last act of his vendetta upon my family!



CROTCHETS AND QUAVERS *

BY GRACE SCHUYLER



OWN the dusty road from the white meeting-house on the hill, in at her front gate, up the graveled path, bordered by tall, gay holly-hocks, and around to the kitchen door hastened Miss Riggs. Without once glancing at the other occupant of the kitchen, she snatched from its shelf above the table the "Webster's Unabridged," which lay there in company with her cook-books, her Tupper, a life of George Washington, and her book of cash accounts. The hymn-book she carried would presently be put away beside her Bible in the less secular surroundings of the sitting-room. "Humph!" she presently exclaimed. "The dictionary says, 'Music is the science which treats of harmony,' and 'harmony' means 'agreement.' Fudge! Mr. Noah Webster, L.L.D., I guess if you was livin' here in Syringa, right now, you'd hasten to get them definitions altered to fit the times. But there's no tellin'! Every poet in the past has gushed over music, and poets of the future will go on writin' on the same ridic'ulous subject till the Day of Judgment, like as not. 'The man that has no music in his soul is fit for—all manner of mean tricks,' says one. 'Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast,' says another. They all go on ravin' over the tranquillizin', elevatin', ennoblin' effects of music on this human race of ourn! I tell *you*, Laurette Violet, I don't hold to a word of it. Bosh and humbug—every bit of it!"

Miss Riggs, with bonnet awry and heated countenance, glared over her spectacles at the small African, who sat by the window shelling peas, and closed her big book with such violence that the dishes on the table rattled, while the rolling-pin—possessed of that total depravity common to "things"—hit the cream-pitcher a smart rap which sent it bounding to the floor, where it broke into an archipelago of blue and white islands, surrounded

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by a creamy sea. After that, for thirty seconds, silence reigned—broken only by the solemn ticking of the clock and the sound of the peas as they pattered into the pan—for Laretta Violet, with well-bred repose of manner, gave no sign of having witnessed the catastrophe, unless the tiny wisps of braided wool might be standing more erect upon her head than usual.

Miss Riggs, with lips compressed, gazed upon the ruins at her feet during those thirty seconds, then said sharply: "Martha Riggs! that's your great-grandmother's cream-jug that you've broke, all along of your bein' so mad at the choir. You'll eat no pie at your dinner to-day!" Then, a little relieved in her mind by this self-inflicted penance, she brought mop and broom and scalding water and soon had the kitchen floor restored to its accustomed spotlessness.

"Laretta Violet," she said presently, in a gentle voice, "I've had some worries this morning and I feel all tuckered out. I'm goin' to lay down on the sittin'-room sofy. You jest go on an' git dinner by yourself. The peas and potatoes is all you need cook. I'll be out to eat when the clock strikes twelve."

The darkened sitting-room looked cool and restful after the long and exciting service at Deacon Gerry's funeral, which she had just attended in the hot and crowded meeting-house. She unlaced her shoes and slipped them off, spread a white handkerchief under her head and stretched herself out luxuriously on the smooth haircloth sofa. Out in the kitchen she could hear Laretta Violet moving busily about—now poking the fire, now bringing in wood, or pumping water at the sink in the corner—accompanying all her work with a mournful, chant-like melody, "Bress de Lord, *I ain't broke dat pitcher!* Bress de Lord, *I ain't broke dat pitcher!*" were the words constantly repeated.

Miss Riggs, in her shadowy corner, smiled grimly. "Well—that child ain't no different from the rest of us, anyhow! I guess the thanksgivin's of most of us has got more or less of selfishness in 'em. My song jest now—if I could sing a note, which I'm glad I can't—would be 'Bless the Lord, I ain't no musician!'" Just then a step was heard outside and a woman's voice asking: "Miss Riggs in the sitting-room? I'll go right in, then"—and in she entered, with a flood of light from the sunny kitchen. "Well, Martha Riggs—I do declare! If you ain't lying down in the middle of the day! What's come to you?" "Why, Lucy James! I'm jest rejoiced to see you!

If it ain't jest like you—droppin' in without a word of warnin'! You always was one for surprises!"

The two women had been affectionate cronies ever since the days—now a quarter of a century ago—when they had attended the village school together, and as the "smartest" girls in their class had been friendly rivals—Lucy James being always able to "spell down" Martha Riggs and all other competitors, while Martha had excelled in English grammar. Even now, if called upon, Martha could quote rules and parse sentences with a glib accuracy upon which she justly prided herself, though in everyday conversation she ignored these same rules with a lofty indifference which was almost sublime. Neither woman had married. Lucy had found a home on her brother's farm, where she cared for him and his motherless children. Martha had taught a district school for a while, and had learned the dress-making trade; but since her mother's death she had been "living on her income" in the little old homestead, entirely alone until this last year, when, to satisfy her craving for companionship, she had taken a small colored child from the County Poor-house.

This experiment had proved a pleasant success. Laurette Violet was a source of great enjoyment to her kind mistress, who dressed and fed her well, sent her to day and Sunday-school, and made her both useful and happy.

Miss James pushed Miss Riggs back upon the sofa. "You lay still!" she ordered. "There's no call for formalities betwixt us two. I'll draw up the rocking-chair close to you and we'll talk. It's a clean month since I've been to town or seen anyone. We've been that busy on the farm with berries and haying and the children having measles, I don't know a thing that's been going on down this way. I had cal'lated to be in time for the funeral, but we was too late in starting. I'm real sorry, for Deacon Gerry was a dretful nice man. I'm going to stay the night here if you'll take me in."

"You're always welcome here, Lucy—you know that; but if ever I wanted special bad to see a body it was *you*—an' jest this hour, too. You wait till I find my tongue an' git started about the recent doin's to the church! Why, Lucy, I don't know whether you'll be glad or sorry that you warn't in time for the funeral!"

Miss James leaned forward in her rocking-chair and, feeling about in the darkness for her friend's arm, shook it excitedly.

"You just go on and *talk*, and don't keep me a-waiting any longer!" she exclaimed, peremptorily.

"It's pretty much the old story, Lucy; seems to me nearly all the onpleasant times we've had in our village have grown direct out of music, first or last. You know our last minister left because of the hifalutin music Kit Best insisted on singin' and because the trustees held her up in it. He was a good man, too—Parson Mack was! Since him we've bin havin' candidates—stacks of 'em—a new one most every Sabbath, but none of 'em seem to suit the Wickers an' Days, and you know how we kind of have to truckle to them in church matters. If Jimmy Wicker an' Willie Day weren't in the choir, what's happened to-day wouldn't so much matter."

"Just tell me this much before you go on," broke in Miss James. "*Has* it got anything to do with Jedidiah Thompson?"

"Well, no, it ain't, an' yet again it *may* have," she replied, mysteriously.

Now, this Jedidiah Thompson had been Miss Riggs' lover in her school days—her rejected lover, too—but since those days he had thrice been married and was now, for the third time, a sorrowing, broken-hearted widower, living on, so he told his comforters, only for the sake of his daughter, Myra—a pretty, but rather giddy young girl of sixteen. During his two previous terms of sorrow he had essayed to renew his suit for Miss Riggs' hand and fortune, but being, some said, too easily discouraged, he had always forced himself to be content with some one other than his first and early love. Miss James, being Miss Riggs' confidante, was naturally curious to know whether the usual advances on the widower's part had begun as yet.

"Well—seein' his last has only been gone from him seventeen months, I *thought* maybe it hadn't begun yet. I'm glad he's acting decent," she said. "Jedidiah's singing in the choir still, ain't he?"

"Land! no, he *don't*!—not since he got riled at the sociable because Mrs. Wicker said in his hearin' that 'she should think a man orter know when he brayed'—she said it real pointed, too. Myra's in it, though, and her Pa is dretful proud of her voice and won't hear a word when folks complain of the way she giggles and carries on with Willie Day an' Jimmy Wickers up there. The singers is most all young now, an' the way they act up is jest shameful—an' that brings me to what to-day's trouble sprung from. You're an awful good listener, Lucy! I jest lot on tell-

in' you things. You remember how the choir sets up jest behind the pulpit—that's what makes it so conspicuous. Well, a few weeks ago Judge Phillips said to the trustees that he had noticed that the pulpit sofy an' chairs were lookin' rather worn an' rusty an' he'd esteem it a privilege to be allowed to present the church with new ones. You know what a quiet, close sort of a man the Judge is, an' you can guess that we was all kind of took a-back at his takin' sech an interest an' bein' willin' to pay out like that—when he ain't a member. He was goin' to have 'em made to order. down in Boston, he said, an' that's the last we knew about it till this mornin' when folks began gatherin' for the funeral. I went early because I had some pots of flowers in bloom that I thought might be kind of comfortin' to the mourners—an' there was the new sofy an' chairs, settin' up there in the pulpit—as handsome and impressive lookin' as any I ever see. They've got high, pointed backs an' made me think somehow of pictures I've seen of old Gothic cathedrals. I left my flowers on the steps an' went an' set in my pew an' read in my hymn-book whilst the church was fillin' up. The singers have got in a way lately of lingerin' down in the Sunday-school room till the last minute an' then comin' in with a rustlin' and bustlin' as is rather distractin' to sober-minded folks—an' they wa'n't any prompter to-day, though the occasion was a buryin'. I heard 'em clatterin' up the gallery stairs jest as the mourners come up the aisle, an' then somethin' made me look over at the Judge. *He* was lookin' up at the choir with such a curious look on his face that I turned my eyes after his'n—an'—there wa'n't no singers to be seen! Them blessed Gothic-cathedral chair-backs was so close together an' so high that, will you believe me, nothin' could be seen behind 'em but the head of that ridiculous bluejay on Myra Thompson's hat!—an' that was what the Judge was aimin' at all along. A real nice lookin' minister, bald-headed an' slim—very genteel lookin'—had gone up into the pulpit. Tom Gerry's folks over in Mudville had brought him down with them to hold the service an' preach. He's got a firm, decided face an' I jest wish we could get him here for permanent supply—we need sech a one. He give out a hymn an' read it through an' then set down for the singin'. The chairs are jest that high that if the singers stood up their heads would show above 'em. An' did they appear? No, ma'am, they did not! The melod-jun kept still an' Myra's bluejay had disappeared. Presently around comes a young fellow that sings tenor—lookin' mighty red an'

scared—an' he ups an' whispers somethin' to the minister, an' the minister he turns an' looks up at them chair-backs an' nods his head comprehendingly, an' then—'My friends,' says he, 'this here's an unfortunate occurrence, but because of the sudden absence of the choir we must omit the hymn I have given out. If the congregation will aid me, I think I can lead in a hymn which was a favorite with our departed brother. I refer to the psalm "Let those refuse to sing, who never loved the Lord."'

"There, Lucy! wa'n't that as merited a rebuke as ever was uttered in a meetin'-house? The minister has a powerful voice an' when he started the psalm I was jest that carried away that I opened my mouth an' sang, too—till I saw folks turnin' their heads to look at me—so I quit. Yes—*me singin'!* No wonder you laugh. His was real good, hearty singin'—but, of course, some had to run it down afterward. Miss Day says he started each verse on a different an' a higher key, an' that his voice was 'perfectly dretful'—findin' fault—jest as all these musicians do! There's no use payin' attention to their talk! The sermon was a good one—an hour long, an' while he was preachin', some of the ladies went down to the Sunday-school room an' coaxed the choir back to sing for the closin', promisin' them that they'd try to have them chair-backs let down a foot or so before Sunday. Myra Thompson was real saucy, Mis' Wicker says. 'Twas she led the others into goin' off, quick as she see what a screen had been built up to hide her injia-silk an' her gigglin' behavior. Finally, we heard 'em troopin' upstairs again an' rustlin' into the choir-seats jest at the end of the sermon. Then the little tenor come blushin' around again to tell the minister they was ready to sing—an' he give out the hymn an' read it beautiful (I'd ruther hear a hymn read than sung any day). I didn't think nothin' about the tune they sung, for I can't tell one from another, but the minister sat listenin' with his hand over his eyes an' a tremblin' look about his mouth that I could not help noticing. When the music stopped he rose. I thought he was going to say we 'could now walk 'round to take a last look,' but he turned an' spoke right up to the choir. 'I don't know what our churches are comin' to,' says he, 'when a choir can stand up an' sing *that* hymn to any tune but "China," an' I maintain that it's a sin an' a shame for a Christian choir to sing sech words to a gaudy, blaring tune like that you've jest given us or, indeed, to *any* tune but "China"—good old "China"'—an' his voice kind of shook. I couldn't help but

wish for a minute that that settee-back was lower, for I wanted to see the faces behind it—but all that could be seen was that bluejay wobblin' 's if some commotion was under it! I giv' one look over at the mourners—I didn't like to stare. They was all sittin' there, calm 's if everythin' was goin' on to their likin', and Tom Gerry was lookin' at the minister as if he approved of his course. I was glad to see that! Then the minister, after standing a minute, as if he was goin' to say more, changed his mind an' jest led the procession out of the church into the graveyard, an' all ended as usual."

"And then you began to talk things over, I guess!" ejaculated Miss James.

"Well, I ruther guess you're right!" responded her friend. "The folks that didn't belong with the mourners all collected about the porch an' the horseblock, an' sech a buzzin' an' stingin' as followed! It most made me laugh to hear Mrs. Wicker an' Miss Day insistin' upon everybody's agreein' with them. It seems this minister had partly come candidating an' I'm afraid his chances for election are pretty slim, for the folks that have the say on these things is all down on him. Jedidiah come up to me with Myra clingin' to his arm. 'Shameful state of things, Miss Riggs,' says he, 'when an irreligious man like Judge Phillips thinks he can run the church jest because he's got money, an' make our young singers look ridic'ulous by fencin' them in like they was skittish colts, or wild beasts in a cage.' 'Or silly-actin' *geese* in a *coop*, Mr. Thompson,' says I. With that says he, 'You don't mean that you uphold him in it, Miss Riggs!' says he. 'Indeed, that's jest what I *do* mean, Mr. Thompson,' says I, 'and it'd be better for Myra if you could look at the matter from the same point as I do.' 'Well, well!' says he, kind of huffy-like, 'at least, Miss Riggs, you must agree with me as to the impropriety of a minister of the Gospel—who had come here candidating, too!—insultin' a choir, an' at a funeral, too.' 'The minister to-day offered no insults to nobody, Mr. Thompson,' says I, 'he only reprov'd an' rebuked where rebukes was called for,' an' with that I turned an' walked off. I heard Myra saying somethin' about 'spiteful old maids,' but I didn't hear what Jed said back. I don't think he feels very friendly to me now. I'm sorry, but I had to say the truth! I left the hull crowd there, still gabblin', and now you know all about it that I know!"

Miss James drew a long breath and leaned back in the rock-

ing-chair in which she had been sitting rigidly upright, sustained by excitement. "The land's sake!" she exclaimed, "I never, no, I *never* did! I can't help but feel all worked up over your speaking out so plain to Jed, right before Myra, too! I don't feel 's if he'd ever get over it, and I *had* been kind of hoping that ——" Just here the front doorbell rang, but in such a faint, half-hearted way that the two women were undecided whether it had rung or not. Miss Riggs stepped into the little "front entry," leaving the door into the sitting-room open behind her, so that Miss James heard every word of the conversation which followed.

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Thompson!" "Mornin', Miss Riggs!" "Won't you step in, Mr. Thompson?" "No, I guess not. You see I was passing by, and—well, you see I just stepped 'round a moment to, to—well, I guess you'll agree with me that—that my Myra needs a—a mother. I've been feeling it more and more lately, and she needs a firm one, too—one that can subdue her proud sperit and that won't be afraid to talk back to her, and that'll make a good home-keeping woman of her. Miss Riggs—Marthy—I've been twenty-five years getting to this exact point again, and I regret that I couldn't get up courage to speak out plain before, when, in fact, on *several* former occasions, I guess you kind of held me off, *didn't* you? Marthy, you can't have forgotten our pleasant old school-days?"

"Oh, no, Jedidiah, I remember 'em well," replied Miss Riggs, tapping absent-mindedly on the wire-netting of the "fly-door," which interposed itself—like a screen in a nunnery—between herself and her lover. "Excuse my keepin' the door shut—the flies is so thick, Jed," she said, apologetically; but, in truth, she had just become conscious of the very embarrassing fact that she had come to the door in "stocking feet." A youthful glow appeared upon her cheeks. She had always been a pretty woman. Jedidiah gazed in at her admiringly. "You know I always used to like you better than all the other girls put together—though you *did* use to laugh at me so! I was green enough then, and I don't wonder at your feeling so—but, well, Marthy, I've got my big farm and thirty-five thousand dollars laid up, and I guess nobody never heard a word but what I treated my wives well. Won't you have me? I tell you it's dreadful lonely up home since——" A soft, half-consenting look was dawning upon Martha's countenance. Perhaps the affair might have ended

differently—perhaps the nun might have been persuaded to come forth permanently from behind her screen—had not Mr. Thompson gone on. “Say, Martha, do you remember that last night of the singing-school?” The gentle look faded from her face suddenly. A severe, determined expression gathered in its place.

“Yes, Jed, I *do* remember that night,” she said, resolutely, “an’ I’m right down glad you’ve reminded me of it. I’m not meaning what *you* are, but I *do* remember one thing very clear. It comes back to me now how the teacher said that night that you had the best voice in town an’ that you was a ‘born musician.’ You may think I’m narrer an’ awful prejudiced, Jed, but I can’t feel no call to trust my happiness to a musician. I’ve long felt a distrust for ‘em, and this mornin’s doin’s to the meetin’-house makes me feel that I’m right in the feelin’. No, don’t make no protestation, Jedidiah. Yes, I know you ain’t been singin’ lately, but it’s *in* you, an’ it might come on again any time. I’ve heard you play the trombone, too! Jedidiah—No! I can’t bring myself to do it. You can find some one else to be a mother to Myra—an’ the sooner the better. But I see my own way perfectly clear now. I’ll be best off jest to live on here in peace and quiet with Laurette Violet. I mean to educate her good. Maybe she’ll go South as a teacher or a missionary some day. Maybe if you wa’n’t musical I might have felt different, but as things is, Jedidiah, I guess you’d better go home!” She closed the inner door in her disappointed suitor’s face, agitation making her for once forget her manners. The kitchen door opened at that moment. “Dinner is on!” called Laurette Violet. Martha and Lucy walked into the kitchen and dined together, upon peas and potatoes, very cheerfully but quietly. Martha knew that Lucy must have overheard the proposal and rejection, but the matter could not be discussed before Laurette Violet.

Three weeks later Laurette Violet, coming home from school, found Miss Riggs putting the final touches upon an elaborate rag doll which she had been making for the child, who laughed with delight at the sight of its scarlet gown. Since positively deciding the Jedidiah Thompson question, Miss Riggs had been feeling unusually serene and happy and entirely satisfied in her own mind that the decision had been a wise one. The strength of her serenity was now to be put to the test.

“And as I came home,” said Laurette Violet, recounting, as

usual, all the little happenings of the day, "I saw Minnie Harris down by her gate, and she said 'Have you heard the news? Myra Thompson's father is goin' to get married again—to Miss King, that new milliner.' "

"So soon? All right, Jed. I'm glad I done it, all the same!" murmured Miss Riggs, while a smile played about her lips. But at the sudden tidings she had given a little jump, which had sent the doll tumbling to the floor, where it rested against the hassock at her feet, its arms upstretched towards her.

"It looks like 'twas worshipin' you," said Laretta Violet, admiringly, "and it's right it should, 'cause you're its creator, you know."



THE MASTER OF THE STEAM*

BY RICHARD LINTHICUM



ROUGH board shanty served as a railroad depot at Barranca, New Mexico. In the open doorway there lay at full length a big, black, woolly dog. Within, the station agent was taking a siesta upon a couch draped with bright-colored Navajo blankets.

There was not a cloud in the sky to temper the burning rays of the sun. It shone with a heat which, in that climate, tans the skin to parchment and withers tender vegetation.

Just beyond the depot building old Miguel, the Mexican, was following his nibbling ewes over parched and stunted pastures where the sun-cured grass grew scant amid a profusion of sagebrush, soapweed and cacti.

There came a deep growl from the shaggy, black animal in the doorway.

"What's the matter, old man?" inquired his master, partly arousing from the half-sleep, half-revery into which he had fallen. The dog's growls did not always convey a warning. The old fellow had a weakness amounting to a positive infirmity. His slumbers were always attended with dreams—dreams of his conquests over coyotes, and not infrequently did he awaken his master in the dead of night by giving voice to the phantoms of his brain. This time it was not an imaginary coyote that disturbed the slumber of old Jack. He rose to his feet and repeated his menacing growl.

The station agent raised himself on his elbow. The face of an old Indian, seamed and wrinkled, was peering in the open doorway. His once raven hair was now streaked with white, but his keen black eyes shone with the same fire they did in youth.

At a word of command old Jack reluctantly lay down.

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"Well, old Stick-In-The-Mud, what do you want?" inquired the station agent, addressing the Indian.

The Indian's name was not Stick-in-The-Mud, nor did he understand English. In good Spanish he asked to see the "head man" of the "iron-way." Then he told the object of his visit. He was a chief of the Jicarilla Apaches, whose reservation was forty miles distant. He had heard his tribesmen tell wonderful stories of the great iron-way that the white man had made through the land, and of the fiery monster that flew along its trail. He did not believe all the tales they told. His limbs were no longer strong; he could no more go like the wind; soon he would be with the great spirit; he had never seen the iron-way, nor the monster they called "el vapor"; he had come to learn if these tales could be true.

The agent and a half-dozen "section men" constituted the entire population of Barranca. The section men were now several miles away at work on the track. The agent did not often have a visitor, and a strange face, even though it was that of an Indian, was a welcome sight.

He was a queer fellow, this agent. There was enough sentiment in his nature to enable him to bear solitude. He was sufficiently impressionable to be affected by the languorous climate in which the most commonplace is tinged with the romantic.

Besides the Mexican freighters, his only other callers, and they came rarely, were Pueblo Indians, shy, timid little fellows—pathetic remnants of a subdued race, crushed beyond hope, until the watchfires set for Montezuma shall have died out and he shall come again to redeem the land and regenerate the tribes. The agent listened to their legends; the old story of the conquest was told in a sadder strain than he had yet heard. The gentle air of content that pervades the existence of these people, their simple faith, their patient poverty, their industry and frugality, all appealed to his sensitive nature and excited his sympathy.

Before him now stood the other extreme of Indian character—the apparently subdued but untamed savage, equipped with bow and arrows, bright in the gaudy trappings of the barbarian, on terms of enforced peace with the white men, but secretly hating them and holding them in contempt.

It was almost time for the arrival of the express train on its way to Española. While awaiting its coming, the agent tried to explain to the Apache how the engine (el vapor) drew the cars along the rails, but the old man either did not understand, or

did not believe him, for he shook his head and smiled incredulously. He gazed long and searchingly at the track, and gave utterance to frequent exclamations.

"Por Dios!" ejaculated the savage, with a sudden start, as the shrill whistle of an approaching locomotive broke the silence, and in a moment more the "demon of the iron-way" came tearing around a curve with its four passenger cars sweeping gracefully behind.

The old Apache took a position a safe distance from the track. Whatever his fears, he made a brave effort to master them. He was more than astonished—he was awe-stricken. He gazed with a bewildered expression at the great monster, now come to a stop at the depot. It was panting as if from its wild chase across the New Mexican mesa. The tales of his tribesmen were true; there was the monster—"the steam"—with the voice of thunder and the speed of lightning. The old Apache's eyes were wide with wonder; his mouth was open, and excitement caused his hands to tremble.

Down from the cab of the engine came the engineer, a dumpy little fellow, with a long-necked oil-can in his hand.

"Santa Maria!" gasped the savage, nervously clasping his hands, "the Master of the Steam!"

His eyes followed every movement of the engineer; they shone with the light of adoration. No heathen ever gazed more fondly on carved idol than did this old savage upon the little engineer. So far as he knew, this was the only engine in the world, and this man the only master of it. Surely the man who could control this iron monster and make it stay or go at will was greater than all others, wisest and most powerful of men. Almost unconsciously he followed behind the engineer as he passed to the opposite side of "the steam" to apply the oil, but kept at what he deemed a safe distance from the panting monster, and was careful not to step upon the rails when crossing the track.

When the engineer came back to his cab the Apache was close behind him.

"What is this old monkey-face tagging me around for?" asked the engineer of the agent, who was standing close by.

"He never saw an engine before, and he thinks you are a great man," replied the agent. "Here," he said, addressing the Apache in Spanish, "shake hands with the engineer."

The engineer held out his hand; there was a look of awe on

the Indian's face; he plainly wanted to grasp the extended hand, but he drew back. There might be a secret power in that clasp to strike him dead. The engineer laughed and went up in his cab. As he passed the Indian he felt the hand of the latter brush his clothing. The Apache had "touched the hem of his garment," or, more correctly speaking, the edge of his waistcoat, and there was an expression of gratification on the old man's face.

With two shrill whistles, which startled the Indian, the engine and its cars glided out of the depot and sped downward to the entrance to Embudo Cañon.

The Apache tarried with the agent. He watched the train until a curve lost it to sight, and listened until its last echo died away. He said little, but that little was of the wonderful man who guided and controlled "the steam."

Two weeks had passed and the Apache had come again to see the "Master of the Steam." The agent explained to him that the engineer would not pass that day, but that he would go by in the night; that unless there were people to go on the cars "the steam" would not stop there at night. The savage without a word departed, slowly and sadly.

The moon shone full and clear on the New Mexican mesa and the parallel bands of steel that marked the course of civilization's roadway gleamed in the bright light. Above Barranca Station—almost within sight of it—was a small clump of trees toward which two men were riding at a swift gallop. When they had arrived and dismounted one of them said:

"Climb that telegraph pole, quick, and cut the wire; there is no time to lose."

His companion obeyed and soon the severed ends of the wire were on the ground.

"We should have been here half an hour ago," said the first speaker. "I never got lost before, cutting across the divide. Now take this crowbar and pry a rail loose; I'll swing the lantern, and if they don't stop we'll ditch 'em; if they do, why, they can fix the rail in a minute and go on."

"How much money do you think they've aboard?"

"I don't know exactly; there's fifty thousand dollars for the First National Bank of Santa Fé, that I know they've got, and that's enough for us if we get it. They're due in a few minutes, so hurry up and get that rail loose."

The man who had received the order took the crowbar and approached the track. He raised the bar and brought it down with force beside the rail. Just then there was a hissing, singing sound, as if some huge insect had suddenly flown toward them, and the man with the bar fell to the ground, full length across the track. An arrow was buried deep in his breast over the heart.

It was a rash thing for his companion to do, but he was a desperate and an impulsive man. His six-shooter flashed in the moonlight, and he fired into the sagebrush, in the direction from which the arrow had come. He listened intently. He heard a groan and started across the track. The shrill scream of a locomotive's whistle startled him. He stopped for an instant and then started toward his horse. He grabbed the big pommel of his Mexican saddle to swing himself into the seat. As he cleared the ground the hissing, singing sound was repeated. An arrow grazed his leg and struck his broncho in the stomach. With a snort the animal jumped aside and the man fell heavily to the ground. The pained beast with the arrow in its side began to kick, and one blow from its heels fell upon the leg of the man. He uttered an oath and tried to gain his feet, but the effort was too great. His leg was broken. When he fell from his horse he dropped his six-shooter. It lay some distance away, glittering in the dry grass. He tried to crawl to where it lay, but the slightest effort made him cry out in agony. His horse, mad with pain, had dashed away across the mesa.

The headlight of the locomotive added but little to the brightness of the scene as the great iron mogul came into view. The dumpy little engineer was leaning out of the cab window. Suddenly he withdrew his head, reversed his engine and applied the brakes.

"What's the matter, Fatty?" asked the fireman.

"Man on the track," was the laconic answer.

The engine stopped, and all the train hands, except the guards in the express car, went forward.

The injured bandit, with his revolver a dozen feet away, the dead man on the track with an arrow in his breast and a crowbar beside him, the lantern in the bushes, the picketed horse instantly made clear the fact that a proposed train robbery had met with fatal interference. As the trainmen stood beside the injured robber, who refused to speak, a deep groan came from the sagebrush on the opposite side of the track. They cautiously

advanced in that direction. The engineer made the discovery. Lying behind a little clump of sagebrush was an Indian. The breast of his cotton shirt was red with blood. In his left hand he clutched a stout bow and in his right hand was an arrow.

The engineer bent over him and recognized him.. It was the old Jicarilla Apache.

The light of recognition shone in the dying man's eyes. As the engineer raised the Indian's head from the ground, a smile passed over the brown face of the savage. His lips moved :

“The Master of the Steam!” he said—and died.



ETCHING : REVENGE *

BY HUGH A. WETMORE



HA!" said the editor, as he picked up the book that his enemy had written, "now I shall have my revenge." For years he had awaited this opportunity. For years he had watched the course of the man who outshone him at college, who defeated him in athletics, who eclipsed him in business, who out-generated him in love affairs. His rival had refused to fight a duel with him, and brought ridicule upon him. Now, at last, that man had dared to come before the public as an author.

"I will strike him where he is vulnerable," quoth the editor, hurrying past the title page of "An Unknown Hero." There was no dedication to delay him, no preface to whet his pen upon.

"He to drink in a landscape!" thought the editor, as he plunged through the first chapter. Several more chapters were skimmed, and others still were skipped.

"Would-be realistic," jotted down the reviewer, "but, in reality, commonplace, dull, tiresome, clumsy, clammy, incoherent; plot, weak-kneed; style, hackneyed; incidents, improbable; moral tendency, bad. . . ."

He had been unable to control his impatient desire to get through the book, and had turned whole quires of leaves at a time. There was but one quotation in the volume, and when his eye rested on it, at the very end, he dropped his pen and held the book with both hands. The quotation was one he himself had directed the author's attention to, years and years ago, when the twain were boy friends, before ambition, envy and jealousy had parted them.

Now he needs must read the book. He tears up his notes

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and reads absorbingly, forgetting that banquet at eight o'clock. He is a rapid reader and a ready writer. By twelve o'clock he has devoured every line; by four o'clock in the morning he has completed an elaborate and a polished review. He rises from his desk and drops into an easy-chair, still clinging to the book and holding it open against his eyes to cool them. His stern features are not visible now, but a close observer might notice that his chest expands and contracts, as if from breathing heavily. He is not asleep. His lips move involuntarily as the quotation from Walt Whitman electrifies him :

“ Vivas to those who have failed !
And to the million unknown heroes,
As great as any heroes known.”

The book is a history of his own life.



THE WRECK*

BY GUY DE MAUPASSANT



It was yesterday, the 31st of December. I had just finished breakfast with my old friend, George Garin, when his servant brought him a letter covered with foreign postmarks and stamps. George said :

“ You will excuse me ? ”

“ Certainly.”

There were eight pages, crossed in every direction in a bold English hand, which he began to read with serious attention and with the interest pertaining to matters which touch the heart. Then, placing the letter on the mantel, he said :

Look here, here is an odd story which I never told you, a sentimental experience, too, which once happened to me. Oh, that was an odd New Year's Day that year. Twenty years ago—since I was thirty then, and now am fifty.

I was then an inspector in the company of underwriters of which I am now manager, and was making my plans to spend the holiday of the first January, since we have all agreed to make that day a holiday, at Paris, when I received a letter from the manager ordering me to leave at once for the island of Ré, where a ship from Saint-Nazaire, insured by us, had just gone ashore. It was then eight o'clock in the morning. I went to the company's offices at ten for instructions, and that very night took the express, which landed me at Rochelle the next day, the 31st December.

As I had two hours before going on board the *Jean-Guitou*, the Ré boat, I went out to see the town. Truly, Rochelle is bizarre and strongly marked in its character, with its labyrinthine streets where the sidewalks run under endless galleries with arcades like those in the Rue de Rivoli, but these galleries and arcades are low and mysterious and overweighted. They appear

* Translated by James Sheldon, from the French, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

to have been built and to have remained as a stage-setting for conspirators—the antique and striking setting of old-time wars, the heroic and savage religious wars.

It is indeed the old Huguenot city, grave and seemly, without any glories of art, with none of those wonderful monuments which make Rouen so magnificent; but notable for its serene and slightly crafty physiognomy, a city of inveterate fighters, a true hotbed of fanaticism, where the faith of Calvin grew to fever-heat and the plot of the "Four Sergeants" saw the light.

Having wandered for some time about these curious streets, I went on board the little black, big-bellied steamer that was to take me to the island of Ré. It went off, puffing angrily, passed between the two old towers guarding the harbor, crossed the roads, and passing out of the dyke built by Richelieu which, with its enormous stones just visible above the water, encircles the town like an immense necklace, turned to the right.

It was one of those mournful days which oppress and weigh down the mind, sadden the heart and destroy all our force and energy; a cold, gray day, defiled by a heavy fog, damp as rain, cold as frost, poisonous as an exhalation from a sewer.

Under this ceiling of low-lying and gloomy fog lay the yellow sea, the shallow and sandy sea of those limitless shores, without a wrinkle, motionless, lifeless, a sea of thick, greasy, stagnant water. The *Jean-Guitou* passing over it with her customary slight roll, cut through this smooth opaque expanse, leaving behind her a few waves, a few ripples, a few undulations which soon subsided.

I began to talk to the captain, a little man with almost no feet, paunchy and rolling in his gait like his ship. I required some details of the accident which I was to report on.

The *Marie-Joseph*, a large full-rigged ship, had gone ashore one night in a hurricane on the sands of the island of Ré.

"The storm drove the vessel so far ashore," wrote the owner, "that it was impossible to float her, and it was necessary to strip her of everything movable as quickly as possible." It was my duty to report on the situation of the ship, to estimate her condition before the wreck and to decide whether every possible effort had been made to float her. I was going there as the company's agent, to give evidence in rebuttal, if necessary, at the trial.

On the receipt of my report it was the duty of the manager to take any measures he thought proper to protect our interests.

The captain of the *Jean-Guitou*, having been engaged with his steamer in the attempt at salvage, was well posted.

He told me the story of the wreck, a very simple one. The *Marie-Joseph*, lost in the night, driven blindly by a furious squall over the foaming sea, "boiling like a pot," said the skipper, had gone ashore on the vast sandbanks which, at low tide, transform these coasts into a boundless Sahara.

During our conversation, I was gazing all about me. Between the sea and the heavy sky was a clear space where the eye penetrated a long distance. We were running along the land. I asked:

"Is that Ré?"

"Yes, monsieur."

Suddenly the captain, stretching out his right hand before us, pointed out to me in the open sea an almost imperceptible object, and said:

"Look, there's your ship!"

"The *Marie-Joseph*?"

"Yes."

I was stupefied. This black clot, almost invisible, which I should have taken for a shoal, seemed at least three kilometres from the shore.

"But, captain, it must be a hundred fathoms deep at the spot you showed me."

He laughed.

"A hundred fathoms, my friend! Not two, I assure you!" He was from Bordeaux. He continued:

"It's high tide now—twenty minutes to ten. Go along the beach, with your hands in your pockets, after breakfast at the Hotel du Dauphin, and I assure you that you will get to the wreck at ten minutes to three or three o'clock at the latest, without wetting your feet, my friend, and you can stop on board from an hour and three-quarters to two hours, not more; you would be caught. The farther the tide goes out the faster it comes in. It's as flat as a bog, this coast. Trust me, start back at ten minutes to five, and at half after seven you will be on board the *Jean-Guitou*, and she will land you to-night on the quay of Rochelle."

I thanked him and went to sit down in the steamer's bow and look at the little town of Saint Martin, which we were rapidly nearing.

It was like all the miniature ports which take the place of

capitals in these poverty-stricken islands scattered along the mainland. It was a big fishing village, one foot in the sea and another on land, living on fish and poultry, vegetables and shells, radishes and mussels. The island is very low, poorly tilled; it seems, however, thickly populated, but I did not penetrate inland.

After breakfast I crossed a little headland; then, as the tide was fast going out, I started across the sands for a sort of black rock which I perceived far away above the water. I walked quickly over the yellow plain, elastic like flesh, and which seemed to sweat under my foot. The sea a short time ago was there; now I saw it afar off retreating out of sight, and I could no longer distinguish the line separating the sand from the ocean. I seemed to be present at a gigantic, supernatural fairy spectacle. The Atlantic, a moment ago, was there before me, now it had disappeared in the beach like scenery through a trap, and I was walking in the middle of a desert. Only the whiff and perception of salt water remained. I caught the smell of the wrack and of the waves, the good, strong smell of the seashore. I walked rapidly; I was no longer cold, and I gazed at the stranded wreck which grew larger as I neared it, and now resembled a huge shipwrecked whale.

It seemed to grow out of the ground and to assume surprising proportions on this immense flat yellow surface. I reached it finally after an hour's walk. The ship lay on her side, burst open, shattered, showing her broken bows of tarred wood pierced with huge nails, like the ribs of an animal.

Already the sand had invaded her, had entered by every crack and had possession of her—would never again let her go. She seemed to have taken root in it. The bow had entered deeply into this soft and treacherous beach, while the stern, high in air, seemed to lift to heaven, like a cry of despair, the two words—*Marie-Joseph*—in white on the black planking.

I climbed this corpse of a vessel by the lower side, and on reaching the deck penetrated into the interior. The light, entering by the driven-in hatches and the cracks in her side, gloomily lit up these long cellar-like spans filled with broken woodwork. There was nothing left inside but sand which formed the floor of this tunnel of planks.

I began to take notes of the condition of the vessel, sitting on an empty, broken cask, and writing by the light from a large crack through which I could see the unlimited stretch of beach.

A singular shiver of cold and loneliness went through me from time to time, and I sometimes stopped writing to listen to the vague and mysterious noises of the wreck, the sound of crabs scratching the planking with their crooked claws, sounds of all the thousand tiny sea-creatures, as well as the soft and regular noise of the *teredo*, which gnaws unceasingly, with the grating sound of a gimlet, at all old framework, hollowing out and eating it.

Suddenly I heard voices quite close to me. I made a bound as though I had seen an apparition. For a moment I really thought that I was going to see two drowned men rise from the gloomy hold to tell me the story of their death. In truth, it did not take me long to swing myself on deck by strength of wrist; and I saw, standing in the bow of the ship, a tall man and three young girls, or rather, a tall Englishman with three '*misses*.'

To be sure, they were more frightened than I when they saw this flying creature rise from the depths of the abandoned ship. The youngest ran away; the other two threw their arms around their father; as for him, he opened his mouth, the only thing that betrayed his emotion.

After a few seconds, he said: "Oh, monsieur, are you the owner of this ship?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"May I take a look at it?"

"Yes, monsieur."

Then followed a long sentence in English, in which I could only make out the word *gracious* several times repeated.

As he was looking for a place to climb up, I showed him the best way and gave him my hand. He came up; and then we helped the three girls, who had recovered from their alarm. They were charming, especially the eldest, a blonde of eighteen, fresh as a flower and so refined, such a darling! Really, pretty English girls have much the air of tender fruits of the sea. One would have said that she had sprung from the sands, and that her hair had kept their hue.

With their exquisite freshness they remind one of the delicate colors of the rare and mysterious rosy and mother-of-pearl-tinted shells, which bloom in the unknown depths of ocean.

She could speak French a little better than her father, and acted as interpreter. I had to tell the story of the wreck in all its details, which I invented, as if I had been present at the catastrophe.

Then the whole family descended into the interior of the ship.

As soon as they penetrated into these gloomy, dimly-lighted galleries they uttered cries of wonder and astonishment. All at once the father and the three girls drew forth their sketch-books, hidden, no doubt, in their huge mackintoshes, and began four pencil sketches of the bizarre and gloomy scene.

Sitting side by side on a jutting beam they were covering the four sketch-books on their eight knees with little black lines to represent the gaping belly of the *Marie-Joseph*.

While she worked, the eldest girl talked to me as I continued my inspection of the ship's inside.

I learned that they were passing the winter at Biarritz and that they had come to the island of Ré on purpose to see this vessel which had driven on the sands. They had none of the English haughtiness; honest and simple faddists, they belonged to that class of eternal wanderers that England sends over the world.

The father, tall and thin, with a red face framed in white whiskers, was a living sandwich, a slice of ham cut into the likeness of a human head between two cushions of hair; the daughters, long-legged, like half-grown waders (with the exception of the eldest) were also thin, and were all three charming, the older sister especially so.

She had such an odd way of speaking, of telling anything, of understanding and of not understanding, of raising her eyes to ask a question, eyes as blue as deep water, of stopping her work to make a guess at one's meaning, of going on with her work, of saying "yes" or "no" that I could have remained there any length of time listening and watching her.

All at once she murmured: "I hear something moving in this boat."

I listened, and immediately heard a slight noise, singular and unceasing. I rose to look out of the crack and uttered a loud cry. The sea had come in and was surrounding us.

At once we were on deck. Too late! The tide had encircled us and was running with prodigious swiftness towards the coast. No, it did not run, it slid, crawled, spread like an enormous stain. Only a few centimetres of water covered the sand, but the flying edge of the invisible wave was already out of sight. The Englishman started forward, but I restrained him. Flight was impossible for we were sure to fall into the deep pools we had been forced to go round on our way out.

It was a moment of horrible suffering. Then the little English girl smiled and said :

'*We* are the shipwrecked ones.'

I tried to laugh, but fear seized me, a cowardly and awful fear, and mean like the waves. All the risks we ran appeared to me at once. I longed to cry out "Help!" To whom?

The two little girls had nestled up to their father who was watching in consternation the boundless sea around us.

Night was falling as rapidly as the tide was rising, cold, damp and heavy.

I said :

"There's nothing for it but to stop on this boat."

"Oh, yes!" answered the Englishman.

We remained there, a quarter of an hour, half an hour, I really do not know how long, watching the yellow water, thickening and swirling around us; it seemed to boil, to sport over the immense beach it had reconquered.

One of the girls was cold and we thought we would go down again for shelter from the light but cold wind which was blowing gently over us and making our skin smart.

I leaned over the hatch. The ship was full of water! We were forced to crouch against the planking of the stern which sheltered us a little.

The shadows of night encircled us and we remained huddled against each other, surrounded by darkness and water. I felt the shoulder of the little English girl trembling against mine, her teeth chattered every few minutes; but I felt, too, the soft warmth of her body through her dress, and this warmth was as delicious as a kiss. We no longer spoke, but remained mute, motionless, crouched like animals in a ditch during a hurricane. And notwithstanding everything, notwithstanding the night and the terrible and increasing danger, I began to feel happiness in being there, happiness in the cold and peril, in these long hours of darkness and suffering that I was to spend on this deck, so near this pretty, charming young girl.

I asked myself whence came this strange sensation of joy and comfort that penetrated me.

Whence was it? Does any one know? Because she was there? Who was she? A stranger? A little English girl? I did not love her, I did not know her, and yet I was affected, overcome! I could have wished to rescue her, to make some sacrifice for her. To commit a thousand follies! How odd a

thing it is! How does it happen that a woman's presence so upsets us? Is it the power of her charm that envelops us? The seduction of her beauty and youth that goes to our head like wine?

Is it not rather in some way the touch of Love, that mysterious Love continually seeking to unite all living creatures, who tries his power as soon as he has brought man and woman face to face, and who fills them with confused, secret and profound emotion, as one waters the ground to make flowers spring up?

But the silence of the night and of the sky became terrible, for we heard indistinctly all about us a slight unceasing murmur, the noise of the rising sea and the monotonous rippling of the current against the boat.

All at once I heard sobs. The youngest girl was crying. Her father tried to console her and they began to talk in their own language, which I did not understand. Still, I guessed that he was reassuring her and that she was still alarmed.

I asked my neighbor:

"You are not cold?"

"Oh yes! I am very cold."

I wanted to give her my coat, but she refused it. I wrapped it round her in spite of her. In the slight struggle I touched her hand, and a delicious shiver ran through my whole body.

For the last few minutes the breeze had been growing stronger, and the rippling of the water against the sides of the ship was increasing. I got up; a strong puff of wind blew across my face. The wind was rising!

The Englishman noticed it at the same time and said, simply:

"That's bad."

Certainly it was bad. It was sure death if the waves, even feeble ones, were to attack and shake the wreck, which was so shattered and disjointed that the first strong wave would carry it away in bits.

Our anxiety increased as the squalls grew stronger and stronger. The sea now began to break a little, and I saw white lines appear and disappear in the darkness—lines of foam, while each wave, as it struck the carcass of the *Marie-Joseph*, shook it with a short, quivering motion, which rose to our hearts.

The English girl trembled. I felt her shivering against me, and had a mad longing to seize her in my arms.

Far away, to right, to left, in front of us and behind us shone the lights of the coast—white, red, yellow, and revolving lights,

like enormous eyes, gigantic eyes, regarding us, watching us, eagerly waiting for our disappearance. One of them, especially, annoyed me. Every thirty seconds it went out and shone out again directly; a real eye, that one, always dropping its eyelid over its glance of fire.

Occasionally the Englishman struck a match to see what time it was, then he replaced his watch in his pocket. Suddenly, with great gravity, he said over the girls' heads:

"Monsieur, I wish you a Happy New Year!"

It was midnight. I stretched out my hand which he pressed, and at a word in English from him he and his daughters began to sing "God Save the Queen," which rose in the dark, silent air and passed away in space.

At first I wanted to laugh, but then a strange and strong emotion came over me.

There was something proud and ill-omened in this chant of the shipwrecked and doomed, like a prayer and also something loftier like the ancient and sublime "Ave, Cæsar, morituri te salutant."

When they had finished I asked my neighbor to sing something herself, a ballad, a legend, anything she liked to make us forget our anxiety. She consented and immediately her young fresh voice rose on the night. She sang something sad, probably, for the notes fell slowly and in slow succession from her lips and fluttered like wounded birds over the waves.

The sea grew stronger, striking against our wreck. As for me, I had no thoughts save for her voice. I thought, too, of the Sirens. If a ship had passed near us what would the sailors have thought? My troubled mind was lost in reverie. A Siren! Was she not really a Siren, this daughter of the sea, who had kept me on this worm-eaten ship and who would soon sink with me into the waves.

All five of us were suddenly rolling on the deck; the *Marie-Joseph* had settled down on her right side. The English girl fell against me, I seized her in my arms and wildly, without knowing what I was doing, I kissed her cheek, temples and hair. The ship was motionless and we did not move.

"Kate," said her father.

The girl I was holding answered "Yes," and made a movement to free herself. Assuredly at that moment I wished the ship might split in two and that I might fall into the sea with her.

"That's nothing, a little see-saw," said the Englishman, "my three girls are safe."

Having lost sight of the eldest, he at first thought her lost.

I rose slowly and suddenly I saw a light on the sea quite near us. I hailed it and was answered. A boat was looking for us, the hotel-keeper had foreseen our imprudence.

We were saved. I was in despair. They picked us off our raft and took us back to Saint Martin.

The Englishman was rubbing his hands now and murmuring "Supper, supper"!

We did have supper. I was not merry. I regretted the *Marie-Joseph*.

We had to separate the next day with many embraces and promises to write. They left for Biarritz; I came near following them.

I was mad about the girl; I was on the point of asking her father for her hand. Assuredly, I should have married her if we had been together for a week. How weak and incomprehensible man sometimes is!

Two years passed without my hearing from them; finally, I received a letter from New York. She told me she was married. Since then we write each other every year on New Year's Day. She tells me about her life, her children, her sisters, never about her husband.

Why? Ah! why?

And I—I write only about the *Marie-Joseph*. She is, perhaps, the only woman I ever loved—no—that I could have loved . . . Well . . . Who knows? Events carry you away . . . and then . . . everything fades.

She must be old now. I should not know her again.

Ah, the girl of long ago, of the wreck, what a creature . . . divine! She writes that her hair is entirely white. My God, what a pain that gave me! Ah, her blond hair! No, the girl I knew exists no longer . . . Sad all this, isn't it?



A CHEVALIER OF THE EMPIRE *

BY GEORGES D'ESPARBES



THE evening before they had fought, alternately defeated and victorious. Three divisions of Oudinot's grenadiers, St. Hilaire's division and Nansouty's cuirassiers were bivouacking. It was one o'clock in the morning. The men had hung their shakos upon their crossed bayonets, they had laid aside their shoes in the grass, and all of them, barefooted, in fatigue caps, overflowing with enthusiasm for their Emperor, were talking and boasting at random around the simmering soup-pots.

"Who was it said that the Emperor was wounded?" uttered a voice.

At the word "Emperor" there was silence. A sort of fascination seemed to hover about them. A veteran, whose grimy forehead and big, bushy beard were all of him that was visible, fell to laughing.

"The Shorn One† is proof against death!"

"What yarn is that, Watrin?"

"Great God! You know what I mean. Is he not always in the front rank? Why do the bombs leave him alone? You can do the reckoning yourself; in a full dozen years, that man has seen thousands of victories, and hasn't even had a button-hole burned in his coat. Isn't it plain enough? The bombs know him well, better than we do, even—by his white horse, his little green mantle, his blazing eyes. Woe to such as pester him! And, look you, even the grapeshot recognize him perfectly, and skip over his head, for his hat they dare not touch! That point——"

Suddenly a powerful voice interrupted the speaker, and the sentinel cried:

* Translated by Reuben B. Davenport, from the French, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

† "The Shorn One," a name given to Napoleon by his soldiers, in allusion to the style in which he wore his hair, unusual at that period.

"The Emperor!"

It was he. The staff, silently accompanying him, stood, muffled and motionless, four paces in the rear. He was dressed as a light-infantry officer, with a green tunic and a white waistcoat. He was recognized by the smallness of his stature and the greatness of his escort.

"How is the appetite—good?"

"Yes, Emperor," said the grenadier.

"What's in the soup?"

"Austrian horse!"

Napoleon broke into a laugh; he loved the humor of his soldiers.

"Listen, my men," he said, speaking rapidly; "we fought yesterday; we will fight again to-morrow; let everyone who has a claim to the Legion of Honor or to promotion come forward now, on the spot, and declare himself."

A man stepped out of the ranks.

"What is your name?"

"Watrin, Sire, grenadier under Oudinot."

"And you desire?"

"The Cross!"

Napoleon looked at him. It was his custom, of an evening, to stroll among the bivouac fires, questioning the soldiers, correcting in this way the ill-will or the neglect of the regimental chief, awarding recompenses upon the spot.

"Come," said the Emperor, "speak. What have you done to deserve the Cross?"

Watrin stood at "parade," motionless, in the attitude of the soldier without arms, almost like the rigidity of death.

"It was I," he said, timidly, "it was I who, in the desert of Jaffa, presented you with a watermelon, when the heat was enough to burn the hair off one's head."

The men burst out laughing—why, no one knew; Napoleon himself smiled.

"I renew my thanks," he said; "but the gift is not worthy of the Cross. Let us wait, both of us, for a better occasion; I hope that to-morrow——"

"To-morrow, as at the other times——" said the veteran.

No one heard him. The merriment, waxing louder, sent its reverberations into the distance, reaching other bivouac fires. There was hurry; there was running. Torches of straw flared up in the night. Those words: "The Emperor! The Em-

peror!" already resounded on every side. Napoleon, being compelled to proceed, quitted Watrin, and, followed by the staff, was swallowed up in the multitude.

The dawn of the 22d of May!

The Archduke renewed the attack and strove to pierce the line between Essling and Aspern. A division of cuirassiers flew at the enemy. Méssana yelled: "Grenadiers! there's fun over there, and we're not in it!" and away he rode, his sabre in hand, where the bombs offered him "distraction." Lannes rushed forward at full gallop, without troubling himself to see if he was followed; and the Old Imperial Guard, unmuzzled, threw itself, tooth and nail, upon the Austrians! In one hour the Archduke's army had melted away in the sun. It crystallized anew, however, and the Guard received it with grapeshot. Once more it paused, affrighted. Bessières, enraged, ordered the double-quick. Decisive charge! The enemy fled, and, returning, fled again. These counter strokes caused the victory to waver, like the billows of the ocean; but for lack of other food, Saint-Hilaire's, Demont's, Tharreau's and Claparede's divisions of infantry gorged themselves with glory, even to the point of repletion. The combat had lasted thirty hours.

In the evening there was rest; and the Emperor, according to his custom, made the round of the hospitals.

As he was passing along the rows of wounded, a head that he recognized caused him to stop.

"It's my man of yesterday," he said.

A surgeon was there.

"Is this man's wound a grave one?"

"No, Sire; the bandage might even be taken off."

The Emperor did not reply. Watrin was sleeping like a post; his face was cleft from ear to ear.

"Let Claparede be summoned.

An officer vanished and the General soon appeared.

"Tell me about this man," said the Emperor.

Claparede, accustomed to questions of this sort, sent for his adjutant and the regimental records.

The wounded were all conscious of the Emperor's presence—in sinister relief, their figures half emerged above their coverings, and they were silent. The adjutant came. Claparede motioned to him, and the adjutant, taking up a pass-book, read:

“Watrin, born at Romeny, Vosges, in 1767——”

“Omit that,” said the Emperor. “Has this man received any punishments?”

“None,” said the General.

“And his service?”

Claparede himself ran through the record. “Sire, this man has belonged to the armies of the North, of the Moselle. He fought at Toulon. Afterwards, he joined the troops of Sambre-and-Meuse; he did three years of Italy and three years in the Grand Army; he’s a veteran brave.”

Napoleon paled. He already recalled his injustice of yesterday.

“And his wounds?”

“I can answer that, your Majesty,” said the surgeon.

He seized the bedclothes and threw them back. Watrin was a lean man, with muscles strong as hawsers, and the scars which seamed his hairy flesh proclaimed at once his glory. Musket balls, lance thrusts, fragments of shells—he had made the acquaintance of all of them. It seemed that wounds had rained upon him, like the stings of angry hornets. They were on the head, on the neck, on the thighs, in the loins, on the hips, and the last, which he had received that very day, splitting his mouth in both directions, had enlarged the diameter of his smile by a foot.

“That will do,” said the Emperor.

At that moment Watrin awoke.

His eyes wandered to the ceiling, and as if he were continuing the dream from which he had been aroused, he murmured:

“The Cross! The Cross!”

Napoleon took one step towards him and darted upon him his eagle gaze.

“I make you a Chevalier of the Empire——”

“The Cross——”

“I add an endowment of two hundred francs a year——”

“The Cross! I want only the Cross!”

“But you have it, since the Cross, the title and the endowment go together.”

“What have they against me?” murmured the grenadier. “I want only the Cross; I ask for the Cross.”

He did not budge from this idea. Doubtless, titles were meaningless to him. As for the money, those who have never

had any despise it. Watrin could see nothing, knew nothing but the Cross, the red ribbon, the star.

“The Cross, Emperor, I want the Cross; give me the Cross.”

The Emperor unfastened his own from his breast.

“Here, stubborn fellow! Are you sure, now, that you have it?”

Watrin seized it with a grip that would have crushed the pommel of a sabre, and Napoleon said to Claparede: “I asked this man yesterday what he had done to merit this reward, and he answered that he had presented me with a watermelon at Jaffa. On my word, I command an army of children!”

“Ah!” said the General, “a watermelon when one is, perhaps, almost dying of thirst, has a greater importance in their eyes than a thousand wounds from which they will recover. These men are but simple fellows. Often I hear my soldiers say: ‘A wound, more or less, what matter? A bagatelle *pour l’Autre*.*’ Watrin judges you somewhat after his own plan, and thinks himself more honored in having saved your life, by relieving your thirst, than in having been wounded in your service. You are their Emperor; but, first of all, you are the head of the soldiers’ family.”

The Emperor took a step towards the door, but Claparede was right. Watrin, terrible and appalling, his head smeared with blood, reared himself in bed as if a bomb had exploded under him, and, drunk with pride, flourishing the Imperial Cross in the air, re-opened his wound by the violent effort of his jaws as he shouted:

“Long live the Shorn One, father and mother of the soldier!”

* “For the Other.” Napoleon was called “the Other” by his soldiers during his later campaigns, in a spirit partly of affection and partly of awe; and also, doubtless, because they said many things about him at their bivouac fires and on the march which they would not wish to have overheard by their officers, as liable to produce an impression of too great familiarity or lack of respect.



THE GHOST'S REVENGE*

BY PAUL HEYSE

Famous Story Series

IN a provincial town of some importance in the north of Germany is a narrow street, in which the ancient houses with their many-pointed gables bear all sorts of quaint and striking names cut in Gothic letters over the doorway or on little sandstone tablets. Among others one notices "The Sign of the Good Shepherd," "Noah's Dove," "The Rose of Sharon," and under each the date of building.



In early times this street was the main artery of the town, whose austere devout citizens cared less for the light and air that comes from without than for their spiritual enlightenment. As time went on, the old families sunk into unimportance and gradually died out behind their Rose of Sharons and Noah's Doves, and a new and more progressive race arose, whose light, airy dwellings surrounded the dismal old street.

The street had taken its name from one of the oldest of the houses, whose walls were blackened by the changing weather of three centuries. Over the broad entrance to the courtyard was inscribed in hardly legible letters, "The Doubting Thomas, 1534." Officially and on the maps the street was known as the "Thomasgasse," but among the common people it had been known for more than fifty years as the "Spukgasse" (Street of Ghosts), a name for

* Translated by Fidelia F. Putnam and Annie M. Wadsworth, from the German, for Short Stories — Copyrighted. Illustrations by Charles Lederer.

which the same old house was responsible. For every one knew that the house of "The Doubting Thomas" was haunted. And even the coolest-headed freethinker could not repress a slight shudder if obliged, even in the middle of the day, to tread the neglected pavement of this street.

How it happened that the three stories of this still solid building had for so long been inhabited only by restless spirits no one could say, but the fact could not be questioned. One man had been foolhardy enough to buy the house. He was a Jew, and the great empty rooms seemed made for a warehouse. He lived there two years, then was found one morning hanging from a crossbar in one of the largest rooms. Since entering that house luck had turned against the once prosperous man, and he had been obliged to steal out of the world, leaving a mass of debts behind him.

No second purchaser could be found, but fearing that it might become a shelter for thieves and counterfeiters, a poor devil of a shoemaker was found, who undertook the duties of porter in return for his rent. Wenzel Kospoth had wandered thither from Bohemia and plied his trade contentedly in the haunted house, his only duties being to open the great door in the morning, close it again in the evening, and keep a watch over the condition of the building. To the people of the neighborhood this little man, with his haggard face and deep-set, black eyes under bushy eyebrows, seemed almost uncanny. Long after midnight they watched him sitting on his bench, his long, bony elbows on his knees, reading diligently in a curious old book. It was a Bohemian Bible, which he could hardly understand now, having crossed the German frontier as a boy. His curious neighbors, peering in at the window, took the brassbound volume for a conjurer's book, and made up their minds that the old man had taken up his abode in the haunted house for the purpose of carrying on his intercourse with the spirits of darkness. But old Wenzel only laughed in his gray beard and took the first opportunity of strengthening the suspicions of his superstitious neighbors.

An old acquaintance of his, a woman in a neighboring town, was in great trouble. Married young to an idle, good-for-nothing husband who wasted her little savings, left a widow with a six-



year-old child, she had taken up the trade of dressmaking, and in her visits from house to house the kindhearted woman made use of her little remedies to relieve any pain and suffering that came in her way, little thinking that she would win thereby the reputation of a mistress of black art. And as the child grew into a beautiful young girl, with dark eyes and auburn hair, whose attractions none of the boys could resist, all the old women and jealous young girls considered the mother and daughter a pair of accomplished witches. But the men were on their side, and the two innocent women bore it all calmly until one day a rough peasant, who had lost several calves, stormed into Frau Cordula's house, and with many curses rated her as the cause of his misfortunes, and struck her such a blow that she was partially paralyzed from that hour.

This was only the beginning of a series of brutalities, and the poor woman at last saw that she could not stay longer among these superstitious people, and decided to seek the protection of the city. She consulted the only friend she had in the town, Wenzel Kospoth, asking if he knew of any little place where she could live with her daughter, and, hidden from malicious curiosity, earn her bread with her needle.

Now, behind the haunted house there was a dark little court in which stood a low building once used as a stable, and in the second story were two large, low rooms, next to a windowless loft, where hay and fodder had been kept. The rest of the court was occupied by a carriagehouse and a dead chestnut-tree, in whose leafless branches a tumultuous flock of sparrows hopped about all day.

This was not an attractive abode, but the shoemaker thought it would answer the needs of Frau Cordula and her daughter, and obtained the necessary permission for them to move in.

But their reputation had come before them, and a crowd of curious people awaited their arrival. They had imagined a witch older and uglier, and Gundelchen, with her laughing eyes and shining braids under the peasant headdress, roused almost a feeling of sympathy. But the girl's smile faded at the first sight of her new home. Their little house had been no fairy castle, but the sun had shone upon it and green gardens and fields surrounded it; but when she saw her mother tottering across the dusty floor she took her in her strong young arms and carried her to a bench by the window, where she could see the sparrows in the chestnut-tree. Then she talked so cheerfully of how quiet

it was here and how well they would sleep, that the mother was at last comforted, and only sighed softly now and then as with tender eyes she watched the child busily setting the room to rights.

Employment in the haunted house was out of the question, but it was not long before Gundelchen found a place as a dress-maker's assistant, where she worked so faithfully and watched so carefully that she soon became very skillful. When at last she was allowed to bring home work to her mother, Frau Cordula was well content, and by the end of the year a snug sum had been laid away from the earnings of the two.

But their evil reputation clung around them still, and the curious children on their way home from school would peer up at the windows, and one bolder than the rest would occasionally cry: "Witch!" but the old woman was never visible, and Gundula's sweet face and quiet ways went far to disarm suspicion. Indeed, it began to seem as if the old house had been unjustly condemned as a refuge of ghosts and witches. But the narrator of this true story must acknowledge the fact that in close proximity to these basely-slandered women a real,



live ghost had taken up his abode, whose presence none of the three inhabitants, nor anyone else in the street suspected.

As is well known, the souls of the deceased on leaving their bodies do not ascend immediately to heaven nor go down to hell; but if, during their life they have held to the Catholic faith, go directly to purgatory to await there the last judgment and the resurrection of the body. If, however, they have lived in the Protestant belief, they betake themselves to the so-called spirit world, where they wander about, restless and ill at ease, many of them looking back with longing and regret to their earthly haunts and occupations.



Only one thing came to disturb the monotony of the spirit world. A burning curiosity had taken possession of the living, and it had become the fashion to endeavor, by means of table-

tappings and hysterical mediums, to hold communication with the spirits of kings, wise men, and geniuses of past ages. After the aristocratic portion of the spirit world had for a time unwillingly responded to these demands, they hit upon a harmless expedient for preserving their own peace and quiet. They found among the commoner sort of spirits some who were willing to act as their representatives, and to answer all curious questions to the best of their ability. Nothing could have been more agreeable to some of the frivolous spirits than to visit earth again, and their want of knowledge in regard to the circumstances of the famous persons they were to represent did not trouble them in the least. It soon became apparent that the questioners themselves were satisfied with the most senseless answers, and received them as supernatural wisdom, twisting the meaning to suit themselves.



For several years the town in which this true story was enacted had been afflicted with a fever of spiritualism. At first, the people had been content with table-tapping and rapping, but gradually they had become desirous of closer communication with the departed spirits. Two mediums had come into town, and hardly an evening passed without a séance at the house of one or another of the prominent families. To fill the demand of the place, and have some one always on hand, it had been found expedient in the spirit world to install two of their most robust spirits in the town. In life one of these had been a travelling salesman for a wine merchant, and, consequently, found the enforced idleness of the spirit world unbearable. The other was the departed spirit of an hostler, who, as it happened, had lived in the family of the Burgomaster of the town, and was therefore well acquainted with the affairs of the townspeople.

This rather ill-assorted pair were, in reality, well qualified for the requirements of the case, for the drummer, with his wide knowledge of the world, could help out when the deceased hostler fell short. There could be no quieter place for two sensitive shadows than the carriage-house in the little court back of "The Doubting Thomas." The big, dark room, whose doors were never opened, was given over to the rats and mice, who had made sad havoc with the leather cushions of an ancient carriage that stood in



the farthest corner. The drummer, Heinrich Muller, appropriated this skeleton of a carriage as his resting-place. Johann Gruber, more humble in his demands, took possession of an old chest.

But they soon found that their position was no sinecure, for both hands and feet were kept busy attending to the many calls, and their nightly duties were so arduous, that when toward morning they finally sought their resting-place, each threw himself on his uneasy bed, and, without even a "good-night," fell asleep, cursing his unhappy lot.

This sort of life had gone on for several weeks, when Frau Cordula and her daughter took up their abode over the deserted stable. At the first sight of Gundula, Heinrich Muller lost his ghostly heart completely. He had broken many hearts in his day, and his short sojourn in the spiritual world had not wholly eradicated his human failings.

The less aristocratic soul of Johann Gruber was also destined to suffer a relapse. In a little barroom, in a side street, he had discovered an old flame of his. She had not grown younger, it is true, but since his departure affairs had prospered, and her ruddy face and buxom figure proved irresistible to her old sweetheart. In the small hours of the night a sensitive ear might have heard a duet of tender sighs that, accompanied by the rustling and gnawing of the mice, re-echoed from the walls of the old carriage-house.

This state of affairs had lasted about a year, when Johann Gruber returned one midnight from a hard evening's work. But worn out as he was by the unusually trying questions and demands made upon him, he found time to stop at his sweetheart's shop, and, climbing up to the window-sill, peer in at his old flame as she sat gaping and blinking her watery little eyes behind the counter. A bitter sigh escaped him as he thought how delightful it might have been if he had only lived to share this prosperity and rule over this charming wife. But since Fate had decreed otherwise, he finally descended from his perch, and glided sadly home through the empty streets. As he passed the porter's room he saw Wenzel still crouched over his heavy book. Johann Gruber shrugged his shoulders disdainfully. He could not endure this little man who consented to be taken for a conjurer, while the enlightened hostler knew very well that any pretension to power over the spirits of evil was pure fraud.

Johann sought the little crack in the old warped door through

which he was in the habit of entering, and only when he found himself unable to slip through, did he realize that he was still in the materialized state in which he had been forced to appear at the command of the medium. Hastily he slipped the encumbrance from his shoulders, as one might divest himself of an overcoat, and glided without further difficulty through the crack into the sepulchral darkness of the coachhouse.

"Good evening, Herr Muller. Have you had a hard night's work?"

From the carriage in the corner came a voice, a voice thin and weak, but trembling with anger.

"How often must I request you to go quietly to bed and not wake respectable people out of their first sleep? And you bring such a strong odor of rum with you that it is unbearable! Do keep away from me at least."

"Oho!" growled the other, coming nearer. "Softly, Herr Muller, a little more politely, if you please; you are nothing more than one of us; spirit is spirit, and as for complaining of my breath, you know very well that there is no more drinking for us. I only looked in at Lieschen's window as I passed by. And as for odors, the wines you've sampled in your lifetime——"

"Oh, be quiet!" came the voice from the coach. "You know there's no harm meant, only I am so perfectly miserable with this dog's life of a professional ghost. Then this confounded love affair; and never to be allowed to sleep in peace——"

"Yes, yes," sighed the other, now quite pacified. "You are even worse off than I am, Herr Muller, with your lovesickness. You never had so much as a kiss from your sweetheart, while I have the memory of many to cheer me. The best thing you can do is to forget the girl as soon as possible."

A doleful sigh came from the depths of the skeleton carriage.

"You don't understand, Johann. When I look at this maiden on whom heaven has bestowed every charm and grace, it is as easy to keep the moth out of the flame as to turn my thoughts from her. I often think, now that we know that hell was only the invention of the priests, that the true hell is the remorse we suffer in the spirit for the sins of the flesh. I have turned the head of many a silly maid, and more than one has shed bitter



tears on my account; for I was a deucedly handsome fellow in my time, and in my way of business it was out of sight, out of mind. But now I am paying for it and my sufferings are heart-breaking. Since I have become pure spirit I know for the first time what a spiritual love is. Its pangs are far sharper than those of earthly affection, and the comfort of drowning them in drink is denied us."

He ceased, overcome by this passionate outburst and only a low whimpering came from the dark corner.

Meanwhile his sympathetic friend had withdrawn to his chest and after a short pause remarked: "How well you express it, Herr Muller! To tell the truth, I've felt just the same about Lieschen. This falling in love is a bad business. When I was alive I used to laugh to hear people talk about everlasting love, but there is something in it after all."

No answer came from the opposite corner. Only the sound of a gentle ghostly snoring broke the silence.

But their slumbers were destined to be rudely interrupted. In a little winerom near by, two friends had been celebrating their reunion over a bottle of noble Rhine wine. One of them, a fine young fellow of twenty-four, had just returned from a neighboring university, where he had taken his degree as a Doctor of Medicine. Before entering upon his duties as assistant to a physician in a distant town, he determined to travel for a year, and although he had neither parents nor relatives, his steps turned first toward his native town. A youthful attachment which had withstood many lovers' quarrels and reconciliations seemed likely, now that his studies were over, to end in a betrothal, although no decisive word had yet been spoken and, in obedience to her father's wishes, no letters had been exchanged. Indeed, in the press of his studies, the young man's conscience had excused him if his thoughts had turned less frequently of late to his lady love.

"You've been awaited with impatience, Philip," said his friend, a young engineer, who was to be his host during his stay in town. "The Councillor, your prospective father-in-law, was asking me yesterday when you were going to show yourself to your friends in your



newly acquired honors. I answered evasively; they shan't monopolize you immediately. For you must have a few days' rest, my boy; you look as if you needed it."

And how rightly he had judged of his friend's exhausted condition was shown by subsequent events. Although they had not been drinking heavily, the young doctor felt his head swimming as they went out into the night air. Their way led them through the Spukgasse and by the house of "The Doubting Thomas." The young engineer was endeavoring to guide his friend's unsteady steps when the latter tripped and fell, striking his head so heavily against the corner of the stone doorpost that the blood flowed freely from the wound. In great dismay his friend tried to raise him from the ground and to stanch the wound with his pocket handkerchief, calling loudly for help at the same time.

Wenzel Kospoth, who even at this late hour was poring over his book, opened his little window. In a few words the engineer explained what had happened. The worthy shoemaker came out and examined the injury by the light of his lamp. He shook his head and assured the young man that it would be quite impossible to carry his unconscious friend any distance while the wound was bleeding so profusely. There was no room for him in the shoemaker's little cell, but Wenzel was sure that his old friend, Frau Cordula, with whose knowledge of drugs he was well acquainted, would receive and care for the wounded man.



No sooner said than done. A light still burned in the room over the old stable and Gundelchen still sat at her sewing, finishing some work that had been promised for the following day. In answer to his call she hastened down to open the door, but at the sight of the pale, blood-stained face of the young man she could hardly repress a cry of horror. Even Frau Cordula was startled when the wounded man was brought into her room, but she quickly sent Gundelchen for her medicine chest and carefully and skillfully washed and dressed the wound. During the whole proceeding the young man did not recover consciousness. They had placed him on an old sofa and made him comfortable with pillows from their own bed, and the kind-hearted widow, who could only move with

difficulty, a cane in each hand, kept his head swathed in cold bandages.

It would be all right, she said, reassuringly; the wound would be healed in a few days. They might leave him entirely to her care.

The engineer saw, indeed, that he was not needed. Feeling that his friend was in the best of hands, he took leave with many expressions of gratitude, and, accompanied by Wenzel, left the house.

Quietly as the events had taken place, the low tones and movements had not escaped the supernaturally sensitive ear of Heinrich Muller, roused from his light slumbers. Even in his dreams his thoughts had been with his beloved, and no longer able to remain in his corner, he went to the window and so remained an ireful spectator of the zeal with which Gundelchen busied herself about the wounded man.

Johann Gruber would have remained in ignorance of the little adventure, had not his companion, after quiet had been restored upstairs, returned to the carriage-house and in an access of jealous rage, poured out the bitterness of his soul in imprecations and curses against all mankind in general and Wenzel Kospoth in particular, who had been the means of throwing Gundelchen and the dangerously attractive young doctor together. Johann Gruber listened to the tirade with such unconcern, and yawned so audibly, that he drew upon himself the wrath of his colleague, and it was only toward morning that the two spirits, after long and bitter strife and many insults hurled at each other's heads, fell into the sleep of exhaustion.

It was late before the doctor woke. As he opened his eyes he thought he must be dreaming. How had he come into this big, low room, whose furnishings betrayed such evident signs of poverty? On the wall hung two old chromos, a picture of the old Emperor, and a very green landscape; on a wardrobe in the corner stood a figure of Little Red Ridinghood. Surely these were not the bachelor quarters of his friend, and where was his friend?

While he was considering this question he felt a sudden heaviness in his head and a sharp pain just over his temple. Mechanically he lifted his hand and found his head enveloped in a bandage. At the same time he heard a halting step and the tap of two sticks on the well-scoured floor, and became aware of the figure of a little woman who, while he slept, had noise-

lessly gone on with her work near by. He opened his eyes wide and came fully to himself as she explained to him in a few words how it happened that he had been obliged to claim her hospitality.

He listened attentively while she examined his wound and assured him that he would soon be quite himself again. Then she busied herself with the preparations for his breakfast, while her patient sat up among his pillows and asked all sorts of questions.

A comforting sense of well-being stole over him in this humble abode, behind the much darned but snow-white curtains, in the presence of this sensible, kind-hearted woman, whose careworn features bore an expression of unusual earnestness. The little door opened, and a young girl hurried noiselessly into the room, nodding brightly to the older woman, and throwing a quick glance at the young man.

"My daughter," said Frau Cordula. "The gentleman has just waked up, Gundelchen, and is ready for his breakfast. He is better, I'm glad to say. Have you brought everything?"

The girl only nodded, being still out of breath, and placed her market-basket on the table. Philip saw that it contained all sorts of provisions, a much more generous supply than they would naturally have on their own table. But his attention was wholly absorbed by the young girl, who attracted him to an unusual degree. She wore a plain brown gown, that must have seen long years of service, and, without regard to the changing fashions, had been lengthened from time to time, as the girl grew, by the addition of new material. The sweet face was framed by a heavy mass of shining braids from which little stray curls escaped. As she moved about noiselessly, lending ready assistance to her mother, she carefully avoided encountering the glance of the young doctor. She answered her mother's questions about her work in a low, soft voice. But the most charming thing about her was the way in which she now and then looked up suddenly, the light flashing from her beautiful eyes, and then as quickly let the long lashes fall again. Only occasionally, when Philip addressed her directly with some joking remark, a little smile played about her pretty mouth and a dimple appeared in one cheek, betraying the fact that behind the modest, almost childlike bearing, there lurked a merry spirit of mischief, repressed only by the consciousness of her humble position and her sense of propriety.

At noon came Wenzel Kospoth and the young engineer. Both

were delighted to find the patient so visibly improved and his friend wished to remove him at once to his lodgings. But Frau Cordula insisted that he should remain one more night under her care. It is true there was no danger from the wound, which was beginning to heal, but she wished to renew the bandage two or three times and could not leave the house to visit her patient. No one was more pleased at this decision than the patient himself. He declared he had never slept better than on the improvised couch and had never tasted a better cup of coffee.

When the two men had gone and Gundula had also left them, Philip seated himself in the little chair by the window where Gundula's machine stood, took up the scissors she had been using, stuck her thimble on his finger, and entered into a comfortable conversation with her mother, who sat at the other window with her work. He persuaded her to tell him the whole story of her life, and the quiet way in which she referred to her sad lot, the superstition and wickedness of her neighbors, and the deep feeling with which she spoke of the happiness and compensation she found in her child, went straight to the heart of her young listener, and he began to feel a sort of veneration for this simple woman.

But the time seemed long to him till the evening when the daughter would return from her work. When at last she came she was more at her ease and even ventured to ask him whether his wound still troubled him and if she could do anything for him. He declined her offer, but looked at her so earnestly that it brought the color to her delicate cheeks. She was going to move the machine into the sleeping-room, so that the whirr of the wheel might not disturb him, but he would not allow it, and drawing his chair nearer to the machine, watched her nimble fingers and studied admiringly the outlines of her graceful head as she bent over her work. Not wishing, however, to rob their patient of his needed sleep, mother and daughter withdrew early to their room.

For the last hour a shadowy form had been flitting about the gloomy courtyard and gazing in at the window. The spirit of the unfortunate Heinrich, torn with the pangs of jealousy, refused to stir from its post of observation until the two young people, who seemed on such friendly terms, had separated for the night. This was the reason that one of the best mediums in the town used all her arts in vain that night and



was unable to obtain any response from the spirit she tried to summon. All because the lovesick shade of the one time gallant Heinrich Muller obstinately persisted in standing guard at the window of a little daughter of earth.

The heavy-hearted spirit felt not a little relieved when, in the following afternoon, his living rival took leave of his excellent nurse and accompanied his friend to his lodgings. His peace of mind was of short duration. The very next evening, as soon as it was dark enough to allow him to slip unnoticed into the Spukgasse, the young doctor appeared again at Frau Cordula's to have his wound looked at and dressed by her skillful hands. He brought a great basket of fruit and sweets, and sat long watching the women at their work. Gundelchen had thawed completely by this time, and Philip thought he had never heard a merrier laugh than that with which she greeted his tales of student life. At times they talked more seriously and then Gundelchen s' yly joined in the conversation.

It was the same on the following evenings. Sometimes the engineer accompanied his friend, and then the evening was spent so merrily in the old room that they all forgot how time was passing and had to be reminded by Master Kospoth that the hour for closing the gate had already gone by. Not only the young people found pleasure in these social evenings; it did mother Cordula a world of good to see a little life about her once more and to be able to enjoy the entertaining conversation. But she could not be blind to the fact that a change had taken place in her child. Gundelchen went about absent-mindedly, hardly noticed what was said to her, and brightened up in the evening only to lose herself again in revery the moment she was left alone with her mother.

The discerning woman was therefore glad when one evening she was able to tell her patient that the wound had quite healed and that further attention being unnecessary, she would say good-by to him; at the same time intimating, as kindly as possible, that a continuance of his visits might arouse unpleasant criticism among the gossiping neighbors.

The young man winced. Gundelchen had grown deathly pale; but the mother had such a way of compelling respect that it all ended in a sorrowful farewell, after Philip had wrung the hand of his good nurse for nearly five minutes, while he poured out his thanks and gratitude. The daughter lighted him down the steep stairs and he stood for a moment, excited and con-

fused, tried to say something but failed, stole a hasty glance at Gundelchen as she stood beside him in charming embarrassment, and at last seizing her free left hand pressed it to his lips. She drew it away, blushing deeply, and whispered: "But, Herr Doctor!" Suddenly he drew her to him, pressed a hurried kiss on her glowing cheek, and then rushed out into the darkness.

Luckily, Heinrich Muller was busy at a séance and did not witness this scene. When he floated up to the bedroom window an hour or two later, he saw Gundelchen lying with wide-open eyes and a happy smile on her face. But his suspicions were not aroused.

The following day came a porter bringing a well-sealed box up the narrow stairs. Gundelchen had just come in to dinner, and Wenzel Kospoth was also there when the box was opened. In it they found all sorts of pretty things for a young girl's adornment, a piece of warm dress-goods for an older person, and a note begging them to accept these trifles and so release the sender somewhat from the sense of obligation which weighed upon him. In the envelope was also a dainty little brooch. The young girl had once complained that she lost all her pins. The hope was expressed that this little trinket would prove more secure and also strengthen the remembrance of a friend.

Wenzel Kospoth nodded his gray head in approval and mumbled something about a fine young fellow who knew how to do the proper thing; but Frau Cordula commanded her child to get paper and ink and write the answer at her dictation.

In it she thanked the Herr Doctor many times for his kindly desire to give them pleasure, but said that she could not possibly accept these costly gifts, as she must give her medical assistance without remuneration or incur the penalty for illegal practice. Therefore she would send everything back, and remain the doctor's most humble servant, Cordula Ehrenberg.

When Philip received this message he was very much disheartened. He had learned to know the worthy woman so well that he did not deceive himself as to the sincerity of her desire to break off all connection with him, and as he had to acknowledge to himself that he could not seriously think of making her daughter his wife, and still less of heartlessly trifling with her affections, he determined with a deep sigh that he must put the whole affair out of his mind.

At the same moment he remembered, for the first time, that he was already partially bound and made an effort to revive the

flame of his youthful love, which in the last fortnight had become almost extinguished. The surest means would certainly have been an immediate call at the house of the Councillor, but although his scar was hardly noticeable now, he put off the visit from day to day, and spent his time turning over the books in his friend's library or dreaming over his pipe. Nor was it strange that a slender, youthful figure was ever present to his eyes.

But one evening his thoughts became too much for him, and hurriedly springing up he made a careful toilet and set out for the house of his early love. It took some resolution not to turn in the direction of the Spukgasse, but the nearer he came to his destination the calmer he felt. His fate still lay in his own hands. He was in nowise bound to speak the decisive word just now; so he approached the house composedly and pulled the bell with a firm hand.

The daughter of the house opened the door herself, but greeted him coolly, with well-assumed surprise, and took him immediately into the living-room, where a little circle of intimate friends was assembled. The father was still in his office, and the mother who had always been most cordially disposed toward the young man, now received him with marked stiffness, congratulated him on his new honors, asked him how long he expected to remain in town, and took great pains to call him Herr Doctor as often as possible. He perceived at once that he himself had been the subject of the conversation which he had interrupted. He remained, however, quite composed and excused his tardy visit on the ground of an accident that had befallen him, in consequence of which he had been under medical care for a time. Nobody expressed any sympathy, though the omission was at the cost of politeness, and the conversation dragged.

He had time to carefully observe the daughter of the house, who sat beside him with her head in the air and her lips compressed in an ironical smile. She had so often been told that she was the prettiest girl in town, and had been the unquestioned belle of the ball so long, that she took it as a matter of course that every one should pay homage to her charms, and especially an old playmate and admirer, who had always brought her the largest number of bouquets at the cotillions. Philip pleased her better than any of her other admirers, and she had decided in her own mind to make him happy when the all-important moment should arrive. But it was unpardonable that he should sit so

passively at her side, and in her cold little heart she determined to make him suffer for it.

His changed behavior was still more offensive to his would-be mother-in-law, who had fully expected that the betrothal would take place immediately upon his arrival and had composed a nice little speech for the occasion. The presence of the other ladies was very inopportune, and as she still hoped that Philip was only waiting until they were alone to make his declaration, she made awkward attempts to break up the assembly. But the good ladies were anxious for a closer acquaintance with the prospective bridegroom, and finding her efforts fruitless, the lady of the house at length saw the necessity of furnishing some entertainment to her unwelcome guests, and turning to the young doctor, said:

"You have no idea what progress we have made while you have been away, in all sorts of occult knowledge. We keep up a lively communication with the spirit world. Instead of the customary game of cards, we question this round table about anything we are desirous of knowing, and even I, who was at first utterly incredulous, have, little by little, become convinced. I see that you shrug your shoulders. Modern natural philosophy considers all spiritualistic experiment humbug, and, indeed, to avoid any chance of deception, I never allow a medium or a hypnotizer to cross my threshold. But a wooden table—what interest could that have in fooling us?"

"Have you found these spiritual phenomena always reliable?" asked Philip, trying not to let his question sound too sarcastic.

"Not always, of course. The answers are sometimes ambiguous, sometimes wholly wrong. Then, again, they fit so exactly that one cannot doubt their supernatural origin. You can't expect a departed spirit to know everything, and they say that a fool, begging the company's pardon, can ask more questions than the wisest table can answer. But you shall judge for yourself, my dear doctor. Röschen has often wondered what you would think of one of these séances."

"I beg you will leave me out," said Philip, deprecatingly. "I am afraid the necessary magnetism is wanting in my finger-tips. I should only spoil it all if I joined the circle."

"No, no," said Röschen, quickly; "you must take part, or else you will think that we are not doing it fairly; that some one of us is playing a trick to fool the others. Just come and you will see that it is altogether a serious matter."

Meanwhile, the tea-things had been taken from the table, and seven or eight persons gathered around it. They laid their hands on the table with fingers just touching, then waited in breathless silence for what was to follow. Philip's little finger rested carelessly against Rosa's. In the old days such close proximity would have made his heart beat faster. To-day he remained perfectly calm, awaiting the promised manifestation.

Now it so happened that our old friend, Heinrich Muller, had undertaken the duties of this evening's séance, although table-tapping and that class of phenomena was usually left to his less erudite companion, Johann Gruber. But his colleague had been so mortified on the previous evening, through his lack of education, that he sulkily refused to run the risk of being caught again in a like manner. At the request of the assembly the medium had called up the spirit of Napoleon and plied him with all sorts of historical questions. Now Johann Gruber, in his calling of hostler, had never heard of the famous Corsican, and had only heard the name Napoleon in connection with a game of cards. Consequently his answers were so irrelevant that the medium was very much embarrassed, and was finally obliged to explain to her audience that the spirit was playing them a malicious joke, being very angry that his high and mighty shade should be called back to earth again.

Now, the accomplished Heinrich Muller, who always had an ambiguous answer at hand for every puzzling question, undertook this evening's task with the greater alacrity for the reason that he had seen his rival go into the Councillor's house, and he was dying to play a trick on him.

An opportunity soon presented itself, for he had hardly slipped under the table and made known his presence by a gentle kick of his foot, when Fräulein Rosa asked whether it knew that a stranger had joined the circle.

"Yes," answered the table, to the great satisfaction of the believers.

If it knew his name?

"Philip," rapped the table.

If it knew where this Philip had been staying since he came to town?

"Spukgasse," spelled out the table.

Rosa noticed a slight flush on Philip's face, and continued her questioning.

What had taken him there?

The answer came quick and sharp: "Lovemaking."

The effect of these words was so overwhelming that the chain was broken, and all eyes were turned on the young man, who endeavored to cover his embarrassment with a forced laugh and a remark to the effect that such slanderous jesting showed him plainly that it was a put-up job, to which the table was an unconscious accomplice.

Fräulein Rosa, who had been watching him closely, insisted that the circle be formed again, and, placing her trembling little finger against that of her neighbor, put the fatal question:

"With whom has Dr. Philip been carrying on a love affair in the Spukgasse?"

The table answered immediately: "G-u-n-d-e-l-c-h-e-n."

"Gundelchen!" exclaimed the questioner, drawing back her hand as if she had touched a wet frog. "Now, Herr Doctor, do you need any further proof? So, really, that little flirt, the daughter of that notorious old woman! You remember, mamma, that bold girl that our dressmaker brought here one day to help with the sewing—an ignorant little thing! And you have really been making love to her, Herr Doctor, and have found her company so interesting that you have neglected your oldest friends for it?"

She had spoken in great excitement, heedless of the fact that she had laid bare her wounded feelings to the company.

But Philip hardly noticed it. He thought only of the injustice done his friends in the Spukgasse, and with quiet dignity declared that the mother's notoriety was wholly undeserved, and that whoever called the daughter a flirt did not know her in the least. Then he related, simply and unaffectedly, how he had made their acquaintance and what deep gratitude he felt for all their kindness to him.

When he had finished, Fräulein Rosa stood up and said in a trembling voice:

"There is no accounting for tastes. I understand now how it was that you never came near your oldest friends for a fortnight; you were so lost in admiration of these two pearls. As we can't be expected to compare with them I will withdraw and not keep you too long from your evening visit in the Spukgasse."

She bowed ceremoniously to the young man, and nodding to the others, left the room.

There was an embarrassing silence, broken at last by the mother.

"You must not mind this little fit of obstinacy, my dear Doctor. She took a dislike to this little seamstress, and you were a little too warm in your defense of these people. If you should go after Rosa and tell her that you did not mean it quite so——"

"I am very sorry," interrupted Philip, rising, "but it is quite impossible for me to take back anything that I have said in behalf of these sadly misjudged women. If your daughter does not care for the society of a man because he takes the part of two unjustly persecuted people, then I must deny myself the pleasure of coming to this house, where I was formerly received so hospitably. I have the honor to wish the company a very good evening."

With that he took his hat, bowed, and left the room.

When he found himself in the open air he experienced such a feeling of relief at having escaped from the narrowing atmosphere of this house of worthy Philistines, that he threw his hat in the air and began to hum a gay student song. Some passers-by who recognized him and knew of his connection with the Councillor's family, whispered to each other that the young people must have come to an understanding.

As Philip walked along the quiet streets the picture of little Gundelchen rose so vividly before him, in all her loveliness and goodness, that his heart filled with love and longing, and he hastened his steps, determined to go that night to the haunted house and have a serious talk with Mother Cordula about the present and the future.

As he approached the neighborhood of the Spukgasse he noticed unusual commotion in the street—people running and calling—and learned to his horror that a fire had broken out in the Spukgasse. He outran the others and forced a way through the crowds standing about the gateway before the house of "The Doubting Thomas." People stood stupid and helpless, staring at the place where the flames were bursting forth from Wenzel's little room. The fire had already reached the big gate. The people watched it indifferently or with ill-concealed satisfaction at the fate of the old wizard. The moment Philip saw the state of affairs he called to the bystanders to bring axes and break down the gate for the rescue of the two women inside. Not a man stirred, and some one, bolder than the rest, called out that it would be a good thing if the whole pack of witches should burn up at once; they had long deserved the stake.

This remark was received with a burst of laughter. Philip boiled with indignation. He had just seized a piece of timber, and with supernatural strength dragged it to the door, when the rusty latch was raised as if by a miracle, and the door swung back on its hinges. In the dark opening appeared a curious group. It was Gundelchen bearing her mother on her back



through the clouds of smoke and flying cinders. The girl had gone to bed earlier than usual that night, tired out with her day's work. She was awakened by the screams of her mother, who had not yet fallen asleep. When Gundula saw the light of the flames, she hastily slipped on a skirt, threw a shawl over her shoulders, and, forgetting shoes and stockings, took her mother on her back and carried the precious burden down the steep stairway and through the court. As she stepped into the street and saw the young doctor, a happy smile lighted up her flushed face and she murmured softly, "Good evening, Herr Doctor;" which simple words sounded to him like the sweetest music. But he could only say, "Thank God, Gundelchen, that you are safe!" and would have clasped mother and all to his heart, if only there had not been so many spectators. Still Gundula did not put down her burden, but looked about as if uncertain where to go. It was in vain that Philip begged some of the bystanders to fetch a litter, or even a wheelbarrow, but they only shrugged their shoulders with muttered curses.

"We must help ourselves, Gundelchen, if these pious Christians have not enough brotherly love to lend a hand," cried the young man, as he gently placed Frau Cordula on the ground. Then he and Gundula made a chair of their hands in which they could carry her safely through the crowd, who shrank at their approach, into the market-place, where they found an empty carriage. Philip put the two women into the carriage, sprang up beside them, and ordered the coachman to drive to a small hotel about half an hour's distance from the town. As they drove away they could hear the roaring and crackling of the flames and the rumble of the belated fire-engines.

Philip now had time to examine his two companions. The mother lay back exhausted in one corner of the carriage, with closed eyes, while her child sat beside her, embarrassed and confused in her scanty toilet, and vainly endeavoring to hide her bare feet under the folds of her skirt. He asked if she felt cold

and she shook her head, but he quickly drew a warm kerchief from his pocket and threw it over her little bare feet. Then he stretched out his hand and she laid hers in it with a trusting look, and both felt that a solemn promise had passed between them.

When the carriage stopped at the inn, the mother opened her tired eyes, but said nothing, and let Philip take her in his arms and carry her into the house. After seeing them into their rooms he gave the landlord a piece of money and told him that it would be to his advantage to do his best for these ladies, who had just escaped from a burning house. Then he went upstairs again, and going straight to Frau Cordula, spoke very gravely.

"Dear mother, I am going to leave you now and go back to town, but before I go we must come to an understanding about a very important matter. During the ride here your dear daughter and I made a silent promise to one another. Now I entreat you, dear Frau Cordula, to give us your blessing. Believe me, I will be a true husband to your child and a loving son to you."

The mother had listened to him apparently unmoved; now she looked at him calmly, shook her head, and said: "My dear Doctor, you are very good and I believe that you are truly in earnest in what you say, but an old woman like me must keep a cool head, even if yours is so turned with youthful ardor that you take as right and good what I know to be an utter impossibility. You are a rich and educated gentleman and we are poor people. What will you answer your friends when they ask how you came to be infatuated with the daughter of a poor tailoress, who has the reputation of being a witch?"

"Dear mother, that is my affair," replied Philip, with emphasis. "Besides, it is a matter of perfect indifference to me whether my good friends like it or not. They may shake their heads and turn up their noses as much as they like. Indeed, I shall rather enjoy the sensation that will be created when it is announced from the pulpit that Doctor Philip and the Jungfrau Gundelchen are betrothed.

He bent over the old woman, whose eyes filled with tears, and kissed her affectionately on both cheeks. Then he drew the blushing girl to his breast, kissed her on lips and eyes, and before mother or daughter could speak a word he had left the room, rushed downstairs and jumped into the carriage that was to take him back to town.

The house of "The Doubting Thomas" was burned to the ground. Where the porter's room had been was found a heap of blackened bones, and in their midst four brass clasps, all that remained of the big Bohemian Bible. The chestnut-tree was a heap of ashes, and the smoking ruins of the stable and carriage-house filled the little court.



In the gray of the early morning the two former inhabitants of the coachhouse sat on a neighboring ridgepole in the worst of humors. Heinrich cast a grim glance at the smoking ruins.

"That little comedy is at an end," he said, with a shrug of his shoulders. "Well for me that no one guesses who was the cause of this."

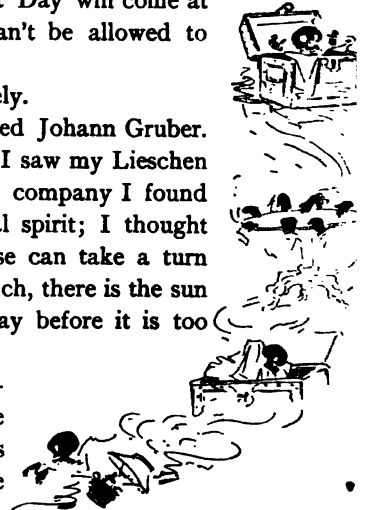
"Did you really do it, Herr Heinrich?"

"Why, of course; I, myself, and no one else," replied the ghost of the departed drummer. "You must know, Johann, that after I had played that joke on that low-down fellow, the doctor, and made trouble between him and his aristocratic sweetheart, I came directly home. There I saw that old shoemaker poring over his book of magic, and it just occurred to me that I would fix him once for all. I always hated him. So I tipped over the lamp, and the oil ran out on the table, and before the old fool knew what had happened the whole place was in flames. This relieved my feelings a little, and now I am going back to the upper world. I am tired of this hell on earth. It is stupid enough up there, but Judgment Day will come at last; this world is getting so bad that it can't be allowed to go on much longer."

He rose as if about to depart immediately.

"Take me with you, Herr Heinrich," begged Johann Gruber. "I am tired of this business down here, too. I saw my Lieschen yesterday, and you wouldn't believe in what company I found her! It's bad business being a professional spirit; I thought it would be much pleasanter. Some one else can take a turn at it if this fad continues. See, Herr Heinrich, there is the sun appearing over the hills; let us hurry away before it is too light. Hoop la!"

He did not wait for his comrade, who followed more slowly, casting a backward glance of ghostly satisfaction at the smoking ruins under which the poor victim of his revenge lay buried.



★ Mrs. F. N. Goddard
STORIES BY Stanley Weyman and Mrs. Oliphant IN THIS NUMBER
XX., No. 2 October, 1895 Price, 25 cts.
\$2.50 a Year

277965

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A RUSTIC WIZARD *

BY GRAZIA DELEDDA

FELIX REGALE was riding across the plain of Anela. It was a characteristic Sardinian landscape—an open, silent space, amid the cool, green immensity of the plain, the horizon shut off by azure peaks, and a solitary Sardinian horseman.

This was the way that Felix the herdsman looked that morning:

He wore a cloak, from his shoulders was suspended a musket, and a bag filled with provisions was fastened to his saddle. For he was making a long journey, from Nuoro to a farmstead of the province of Gallura, near the coast.

* Translated by Elizabeth Pullen, from the Italian, for Short Stories—Copyrighted. Illustrations by Mabel L. Humphrey.

Felix might not be called handsome, after the fashion of those fine, robust youths, recalling the best Latin type, who are often met with in the territory of Nuoro; but he was not ugly. He was muscular, well formed, with bronzed face, and a pair of marvelous, magnetic black eyes. He enjoyed an extended fame, which to foreigners will seem strange, but in Sardinia is quite natural. Felix was noted for his *verbos*.

The *verbos* are the words and the mysterious rites by means of which the shepherds and the peasants of Sardinia sometimes succeed in subjecting to themselves nature, things, and animals.

The *verbos*, which seem to one like remains of Druidic and pagan rites, may also be numbered among the modern phenomena of magnetism and hypnotism. In order that they shall be efficacious, it is necessary that the person who employs them should have a blind faith and an inward and iron will to succeed. The Sardinian populace, in general, believes in the *verbos*; but only a few persons are able to use them profitably. These are persons who do not even know the word charlatan—honest men, perhaps apt subjects to the mystery of suggestion, which science has recently explained. Felix Regale was of this number.

Let me say a few words more about the *verbos* before following Felix on his way.

They serve many purposes, especially in regard to animals and to agriculture. They destroy harmful insects, they cause to die or to disappear the worms which, after certain ailments, torment and gnaw cattle; they *bind* the eagle, the vulture, the hawk, the fox, the falcon—that is to say, they prevent these creatures of prey from falling upon small animals and carrying them off.

There are *verbos* to hinder the gun from shooting, the dog from barking, the wild boar from entering the vineyards and the grain fields. And there are many and many more, strange, improbable, incredible. The fascination which this belief in the *verbos* has upon the Sardinian people is increased by the mystery that surrounds these charms, and by the supposition of pious persons that to use the *verbos* is a sin punishable by excommunication. It is very difficult to hear any of them.

In some villages it is believed that, if they are told, they are no longer of use to the person who has revealed them. At Nuoro an individual acquainted with the *verbos* will never repeat

them to another older than himself, for otherwise they would avail him no more.

Above all, it is necessary to have a blind and unquestioning faith. Now I, who with difficulty succeeded in learning something of them, have tried to employ them. But, alas, in vain. Because I do not entirely believe in them.

But with Felix Regale they always were successful. Therefore he had a sort of celebrity, the more extensive in proportion as it was mysterious and occult. He was even sent for from distant villages. He never asked any recompense; but the shepherds presented to him live cows, on the hoof. Felix was especially famous for the cure of ailing cattle.

One day he received a postal card from a farm in the region of Gallura, begging him to come there on special business. He was at the time shepherd on our place.

He understood at once what the special business was; but in order to have permission to go, I remember that he invented some excuse.

“Very well,” said my father, “You may go.”

Felix set off joyfully. A week passed, two, three; we expected him during the whole month of April, and Felix did not return.

That was many years ago. Felix has lately come back to Nuoro, and this is the story of what had happened to him.

For some reason, instead of going by the shorter road that passes by way of the valley of Marreri, and then through the mountain village, Felix crossed the plains of Ozieri. Gently rolling green prairies, full of dreams and of historic memories, which in the heart of the strange land that Sardinia is, give a vague illusion, during the months of blossoms, of the American pampas and of the Karrù of Africa.

In the lavish April in which Felix crossed the plains, after an early spring, they were covered with a marvelous vegetation. The grain, already very tall, gleamed with flowers; and in the pastures the herbage and the grass, entwined with odorous thistles, brushed the legs of Felix, although the mare that he rode was not one of the short, diminutive Sardinian *achetias*. Felix, on that journey, felt himself truly happy. He had no cares nor fears. At night he slept in the fields, for the rays of the moon have a bizarre enchantment, well known to the shepherds, young and still full of dreams; during the day he rode, always alone,

guided by that fine instinct which leads the Sardinian herder through the most unknown ways.

At length he arrived at the farm, which was remote from any village or other habitation. It was a rich and well-populated house, filled with the good gifts of the Lord ; it was situated



near the sea, at the extremity of Gallura. A fantastic and delightful landscape surrounded it ; rocks and pastures, great groves of lentisks, the sea at the horizon beyond the coast outlined by an iridescent blue, and to the south the black line of immense forests.

Felix did not notice all this.

He arrived there weary, almost intoxicated by the green

spaces of the plains and the mountains which he had traverseed. He felt the need to speak with living human creatures.

" Good health to you, man from Nuoro ! " Bonaventura Rasu said, going to meet him.

Felix saw that he was expected, and was pleased.

" Are you Bonaventura Rasu, the master of the farm ? "

" Yes, sir. "

Felix was received as a person of importance. The farm people looked at him with curiosity, and all treated him with expansiveness, almost exaggerated, which is a trait of the inhabitants of Gallura.

Bonaventura took him aside and related the affair to him. All the cows were infested with worms upon their hides ; some had died, others were a pity to see. Every expedient had been tried by Bonaventura—doctors and medicaments, as well as the rational and irrational practices of the herdsmen. To no effect. Not even his own *verbos*, those of his herders or others, had been of use. Then he had heard the man of Nuoro spoken of, and had written to him.

Uncle Bonaventura was a small man, nervous, full of superstitions and beliefs. He lived alone, with his patriarchal multitude of servants, and a niece of whom he was the guardian. He was rich, perhaps one of the richest stock-owners of Gallura ; it was said that he had more than 80,000 lire in circulation, and his chief wealth was in his cows. When Felix saw them he stood open-mouthed for wonder. The herd was immense. Beside his own lands, Bonaventura Rasu hired other pastures to the amount of 400 scudi a year.

The products were very large. Bonaventura derived from his cattle the income of a rich lord.

Felix looked at the cows.

" The malady is far advanced, " he said, " but we must let it develop thoroughly. Also, we must wait for the full moon. "

In a group near a hedge, Felix, Bonaventura and two other herdsmen talked at length about the *verbos*. The man from Nuoro found that the *verbos* of Gallura were quite different from his.

As for the cutting of the sacred mistletoe of the Druids, as for many of the Nuorese *verbos*, in which, as will be seen, similar rites are performed, it is necessary to wait for the new moon or the full moon. At the other lunar phases they are ineffectual.

Felix wished to go away to the house of a friend living in

Santa Teresa, a neighboring village, but Bonaventura was almost offended and insisted that he should remain at the farmstead.

The mare was turned loose in the luxuriant pastures. A place was assigned to Felix at the master's table.

The young man felt as if he were dreaming, so different was



the life of the farm from his accustomed life at Nuoro, and so beautiful was Ciara-Maria, the niece of Bonaventura.

The costume of the girl was something like that of the women of Nuoro, only a little different in the bodice and the headdress. But the type of Ciara-Maria herself—Felix had seen nothing like

it in other places, not even among the most beautiful girls of his country.

She was tall, slender, of a wonderful whiteness. Her complexion was absolutely luminous, so that the splendor of her skin sometimes outshone that of her eyes. This is not uncommon among Sardinian girls, especially when the eyes have a shadowy tint, veiled by an irresistible fascination.

All the herders of the farm and of neighboring settlements were enamored of Ciara-Maria. Also Felix, in course of a few days, was over head and ears in love with her.

Then he talked no more of going away to Santa Teresa; rather, when the moon came to the full he said that the malady of the cows not being yet thoroughly developed, it would be necessary to wait for the waning moon.

Felix, meanwhile, led the merriest of lives, yet not untroubled. Bonaventura treated him with unvarying kindness. They passed long hours together, talking, telling stories and singing. Bonaventura, who was of Logudorese origin, spoke the sonorous dialect well, and sang excellently. Also, Felix was an extemporaneous rhymer. They sang in dialogue every day; but Felix was clever enough never to contradict Bonaventura, as usually happens in these improvised song-contests—and, instead, allowed himself to be outdone, subtly flattering the vanity of the rival poet. Ciara-Maria listened to them, smiling; and one evening, at a slight sign from her uncle, she suddenly responded to an octave of Felix, who was amazed. The girl sang very well, with the soft pronunciation of upper Logudoro, and her musical voice added to the enchantment.

No more was needed to set Felix on fire. His love became passion, and the wild dream of winning the heart of Ciara-Maria tormented him day and night.

Meanwhile the moon waned, the malady of the cows was fully developed and some were even dying, infecting those who had remained sound.

Felix had been there more than three weeks. To prolong his stay, by means of another excuse, would be a meanness. It seemed to him that they were tired of him, and even the master was not so expansive and gay as in the first days of his visit.

It was the early part of May. A great festival of greenery, of sunshine, of fragrance, of delicious light was throughout the farm. The hedges of the fold and the pasture revelled in odor-

ous white bloom; the first poppies glowed amid the dazzling green of the plains; upon the walls of the farmhouse sprang up tufts of odorous plants; the forests were deep green against the curve of the luminous gray horizon.

And the cattle were dying. Something must be decided.

One evening Bonaventura gave Felix to understand that he began to doubt as to the power of the *verbos*, of which so much had been expected. Felix was humiliated.

"To-night we will make the first trial," he said. "I should not wish anyone to witness it, however."

They set an hour. At moonrise they left the farmhouse. Felix chose the spot—a grazed pasture, from whence the whole landscape was visible.

"Select the cow that you like best, and tell me all the particulars about her, markings, color of skin, brand," he said, shortly. He was very pale, so that in the feeble rays of the moon, rising like a thin iridescent sickle in the crystalline east, his bronze face appeared almost white.

Bonaventura thought a while, resting his chin upon the stretched-out forefinger of his right hand.

Then he looked at Felix, and looked around.

It was about two o'clock in the morning.

The cool shiver of the waning night stirred the pastures that were gray with the moonlight; one felt the dewfall; and at intervals was heard the plaintive tinkle of distant sheepbells.

In the east the heavens were all a shining crystal sea; to the south lay the vanishing line of the ashen-hued plain.

Near to Felix there was a group of rocks, a sort of *dolmen*, which heightened the Druidical illusion of the strange ceremony.

The eyes of Felix gleamed with fever. In the moonlight their deep iris seemed like burning flames.

"To-night I'll strangle him if he does not grant my request," he thought, with an infernal gaze at Bonaventura Rasu.

"Have you chosen," he asked, aloud.

Bonaventura selected one of the worst infected cows. Her special signs were a black mark on the forehead, gray skin, branded B. R.

"Where has she the most worms?"

"All over her. She is nearly dead."

"Very well, we will begin."

Bonaventura took off his cap and signed himself; and with-

drawing a little, he gazed intently at Felix, concentrated in a mysterious devotion.

The young man from Nuoro placed on the ground his cloak and cap, and took out his Sardinian claspknife, which he opened.

He appeared to remember nothing; his eyes looked nowhere; and upon his perfect profile spread the hard, immovable lines which show the dominant, iron will to succeed in something.

He laid the knife across his breast, sustaining it only with the middle finger and thumb of the right hand, then made the sign



of the cross with the same knife, held in the same manner. Then he bent to the ground.

He cut a long stem of grass, still with the knife held between those two fingers; and, without the aid of the other hand, and letting it fall upon the earth, he pronounced thrice these words, in his own dialect, with his face turned to the moon:

“As this stem of grass is fallen, so may the worms fall from the body of the cow of Bonaventura Rasu, branded with a B

and an R, with gray skin, with a black mark on the forehead. So may the worms fall from her body before the setting of this holy moon!"

"'Tis done!" said he, putting on his cloak and cap. "God help us!" murmured Bonaventura.

The next day—or rather that same day—Bonaventura Rasu and all the herders witnessed a wonderful and cheering thing.

All the worms fell away, dead or torpid, from the hide of the poor diseased cow.

Bonaventura, in tears, embraced Felix; the women regarded him with superstitious dread; and Ciara-Maria passed in front of him, looking at him narrowly, without even smiling.

The beautiful girl was always laughing at every little thing. They were ringing laughs, that filled the farmhouse with merriment, and appeared to diffuse themselves in the brilliant gayety of the skies and the plain. That showed scant seriousness on the part of the girl, but at the same time proved that she was full of the joy of living, and was not yet taken with the terrible malady of love.

"I will repeat some *verbos* to you, and make you fall in love with me," Felix had told her, jesting, the evening before.

Ciara-Maria had looked at him and seen that, if his lips jested, not so his eyes. She had thought of him in the night-



time; and the next morning, after the miracle, she passed near him, looking at him again, but without laughter.

Felix felt that he was bewitched, he was under a lasting spell; and if he went away from there, he would die.

Therefore he made an attempt. When Bonaventura begged him to repeat the *verbos* for all the cows, promising him in return whatever he might ask, he said plainly and frankly that he was madly in love with Ciara-Maria and wanted her for his wife.

Bonaventura was much surprised. At first he took the matter in jest and laughed his Mephistophelian chuckle of a worthy Gallurese, then assented, in order to cheat Felix and make him say the *verbos*.

Felix understood the deception; however, he repeated the *verbos*, of ten different kinds. Almost all the cows recovered—and Bonaventura, though full of gratitude and wonder, took back his word.

“Take all that you wish,” he said, “but be reasonable. I will give you two, three, five cows, but Ciara-Maria must marry a gentleman.”

But Felix had said some *verbos* to Ciara-Maria, in an especial manner and of the invention of his own heart.

And the girl declared to her uncle that she preferred Felix Regale to all the gentry of Gallura.

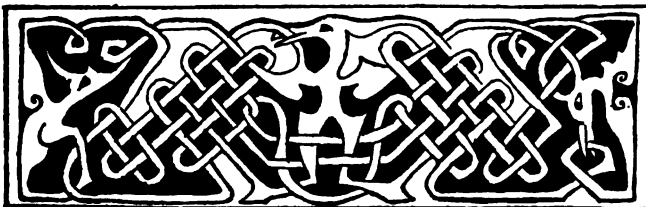
There was a great commotion at the farmstead. It came very near to blood-letting. Felix was obliged to flee on his white mare whom the rich pastures had rendered in magnificent condition. But Ciara-Maria joined him in a few days at Santa Teresa di Gallura.

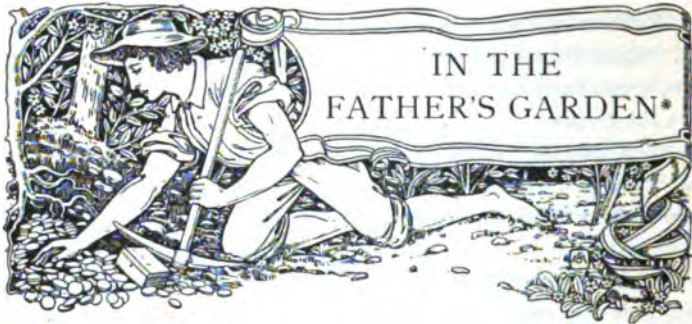
She was of age, and, like all the vivacious and brave women of the northern part of Sardinia, she knew her rights.

For two years Felix and his beautiful wife lived almost in concealment, to avoid the sure vengeance of Bonaventura Rasu. They were about to go away to Nuoro when the rich herder died suddenly, intestate. Therefore Ciara-Maria inherited everything, and Felix Regale, formerly our impecunious herdsman, now using the dress and dialect of the people of Gallura, is richer than his aforesaid masters.

They say up there in Gallura, where he has the fame of being a great wizard, that he repeated the *verbos* to charm Ciara-Maria and then to make Bonaventura Rasu die suddenly—but I don't entirely believe that.

What do you think about it, my fair reader?





BY EARLE TRACY

When storms tread the haunted country of the Gulf they waken wraiths that were better left to sleep.



ONTOMOC Bay was like a vast opal.

A soft haze veiled the shores, and the August sunlight shimmered in a rainbow through it. There was not a breath of air.

From his shaded gallery on Bayou Porto old Captain Beauchamp swept the water with his glass. It was a very old-fashioned, weather-beaten glass, but the name of a famous French maker of early days showed in worn letters on the rim. Far up the bay a brown sail stood becalmed. The captain shook his head. The sail belonged to Zozo Rafferty.

Zozo was a barefooted creole. Lean and tall, with smooth-shaven round face a labyrinth of wrinkles, shabbily dressed beyond description, he still looked neat, had manners of old-time elegance, and was well read in French and English classics.

His business was shipbuilding, but more particularly the repairing of old boats. Regarding land titles and division lines he was a great authority, and in the chaos of French and Spanish grants, state and county titles, all complicated by repeated burning of the county records, it was said that if one coveted one's neighbor's vineyard, Zozo could tell him of some claim that would undermine the strongest title on the coast.

His name was Rafferty, but no trace of Irish lineage could be seen about him, and on gravestones one could read the names

* Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

of Raffertys with first French, then Spanish, then French again, and lastly with plain English given names, marking the successive changes of political domination that had passed since the first was laid to rest in the old Catholic cemetery on the hill.

Every one in Pontomoc liked Zozo, and Captain Beauchamp watched him anxiously as the brown sail slowly grew in size, creeping past first one point of land and then another, for it became evident that Zozo was in hopes of rowing home before the storm.

A black cloud-bank rose above the tree-tops, and spreading across the zenith, covered the bay like a roof. The wind whipped the water to a yellow crest of foam. The brown sail staggered piteously, yet Zozo kept her to her course. Once old Captain Beauchamp, forgetting his infirmities, thought of starting to the rescue, but before he could leave the gallery Zozo had her up again and was running in the lea of a long sandbar. Then a great crash drew the captain's eyes to Bayou Scott. The Lone Pine had fallen.

This enormous tree was known all along the coast. It had been dead for centuries, and forest fires had burnt it nearly through at the base, yet standing gaunt and tall on Pointe-à-Scott it had been one of the great channel marks. Hundreds of sailors would miss the Lone Pine now. The captain sighted and turned his glass on Zozo.

Contrary to the saying that creoles are timid sailors, Zozo had gone about and must have beaten into the treacherous entrance of Bayou Scott, for the brown sail fell away before the wind, then seemed to drive straight into the land and disappear. The captain laid aside his glass and slowly rubbed his fingers through his beard. "Zozo thinks it is one message from our Captain Scott," he mused. "He will stay there and wait for him tonight." For in the teeth of storm, when the branches of the great trees writhe and bend, and the long gray moss is torn from them and carried through the air like spray, he who ventures out into the night may see a phantom schooner ride in silently. A phantom rowboat, manned by two shadows, puts away from it. Sometimes in one place, sometimes in another on the wooded shore the shadow of a form with lifted sword falls on the stooping shoulders of another form. There is a flash like steel and then the shadow bends to wipe its ghostly blade on the wet leaves.

This is a legend that remains of Captain Scott, the last, the cruelest, the most mysterious of the pirates of the gulf.

Although Captain Beauchamp made the best wine on the coast, there was one bottle which he always liked to fill in town, and when it was exhausted neither heat nor cold nor storm deterred him from a trip up the bayou.

Sanchez's saloon, like most creole drinking-places, was large and airy, with lofty ceilings and broad windows. The floor was scoured and sanded in ornamental patterns, the wares behind the counter were tastefully displayed in much cut-glass and surrounded with a wealth of tissue paper and mosquito netting of various colors, crimped and gathered most ingeniously. When it rained, or when the weather was too hot outside, it was a favorite place to while away the afternoon, lounging in a cane-seated chair, and listening to the gossip of the town.

Father Stumph, the village priest, was a frequent visitor, for Sanchez was the chief financial bulwark of the parish where worldly wealth did not abound. The Father was a short, fat, rubicund German, whose near-sighted eyes looked upon his children through the most benignant spectacles. He was emotional as a creole, understood and loved his people, managed them with kindly shrewdness, and did better work for his parish than many another priest more highly approved by the Bishop.

When old Captain Beauchamp entered the saloon he sank into a chair. He was far along in years, and the exertion of rowing up the bayou in the sultry midday had been too great.

Father Stumph, who had come in just before him, hurried to where Zozo Rafferty stood leaning against the bar. "Aha, my Zozo," he cried, cheerily, taking him by the hand, "I got you now."

"I am exceedingly glad to see you, Father Stumph," answered Zozo.

"Well, I tont know bout dot," said the priest, doubtfully. "If I want to see you, I must come py Sanchez', you tont come py me."

Zozo stammered with embarrassment, but Father Stumph went on, "I tont undestant dis, Zozo. What haf I to you done? I tont for money ask. I know tose people boud here haf pooty hard time. If somebody got money he will gife, but if he ain't, vell he can come py my church shust te same."

"You must excuse me, Father Stumph," said Zozo, with his simple dignity. "I have ze utmost personal regard for you, but I have my own opinions."

"Dot ees notting," broke in the priest. "I trouble me nod

much boud you. It is tose liddle girl. Why haf tey nod some catechism learn und be confirm? It is time, und tot Pishop will be here next spring."

"But, Father Stumph, it is not my nature to play the hypocrite."

"Hypocrite," screamed the Father, growing scarlet in the face. "You can'd be a hypocrite! Listen, I shall prove it before all tese gentlemen."

Then, planting himself before Zozo, he looked him straight in the face, and, shaking a fat forefinger slowly at him, he went on:

"You was Cattolic born, not? Vell, und you shall Cattolic die. Vy den not Cattolic live? Aha, now, you cannot answer me dot. Haf I not right, gentleman? Is not tis some blain common sense? Come, now, my Zozo, you shall dake one liddle drink mit me, *un petit verre*, aha! Und your children shall be confirm," and chuckling, he turned the half-reluctant creole to the bar.

In the buzz of general conversation which followed, Zozo seemed inclined to sneak away, but Captain Beauchamp straightened his old bent form and crossed the room, leaning heavily on his cane.

"Can not I 'ave ze pleasure to offer you somesing?" he said, in his cracked French voice. "Weel not you join me, Fazer Stumph, an' you, Zozo, an' zeze ozer gentlemen?"

The company came forward with cheerful assent, and Father Stumph said, deprecatingly, as he held his glass:

"Sometimes a liddle is goot, but ve must pe moderate, ve must pe moderate;" and then, bowing to the old captain, he added, "To your good healt', sor, und to de nice action of our friendt Rafferty."

"Maybe," said the captain, smilingly, to Zozo, "maybe zat zis act will change your luck, an' ze nex' time you hunt for *trésor* you will be more fortunate."

"I—I do not understand your allusion, sir," said Zozo, coloring.

The old captain lifted his stick and shook it mockingly. "Was eet you zat I see digging out on Pointe-à-Scott las' night; was eet you? Was eet you zat I see pass in your boat an' change your course an' go in at Bayou Scott when ze Lone Tree fell down—eh, Zozo, was eet you?"

"Well," answered Zozo, haughtily, "and if I were? Zere is

treasure buried on zis coast, I have information of it. Zere were Lafitte and Dominick and Scott, and ozer pirates have left treasure here. Zere are traditions of it."

"*Trésor*," broke in the old captain, derisively. "Pirate *trésor*—buried—Zozo dig for him, eh?—ha-ha-ha! W'at you know bout pirate, Zozo? Notting! Bah, me, I know zose pirate—Lafitte, Beau Lafitte, an' Dominick. I sail wiz Lafitte at New Orleans at ze battle."

"Ve haf account of some treasure bury py Scott," began Father Stumph, slowly.

"I know notting 'bout Scott," the captain interrupted.

"Wait a liddle," said the priest, "und I vill tell you. Eet was in der spring pefore te great epidemic. Zozo, did you nefer see tot old woman dot down py der coaling station lif at der railroad? She took te fever und pefore she died she says to me dot she had peen searching for a treasure. It was, her fater dot knowed the secret, und try to come to der blace und was always brevented. Ven he was dying he tell about it, und ven she was dying she try to tell me. But she haf not strength, und all I comprehend was dot de treasure was somewhere at my point buried, boud tree huntred yard from der peach, close py two very great magnolia-trees. Und on one tere was carved a ship, und on der oder a star.

"Now you know how te undermining waves washes te bluff, und ve lose a liddle ground efery year, und it may be dot sixty year ago tose tree *were* tree huntred yard from der shore. I suppose tot is te reason tot she nefer found tem."

"Why, I know zose trees!" cried Zozo. "Zey are in Father Stumph's own garden."

"Und tot is true," said the priest, nodding sagely, "but te old woman did not tell vere to dig, und I would not haf my whole garden demolish und my trees destroy to find a treasure tot in all der probabilities has been already call for, und is blood-money beside."

But old Captain Beauchamp knocked on the floor with his cane. "Zat is all foolish!" he cried, excitedly. "Pirate don't bury no *trésor*, zey spend him all. Zey spend also a damn much more if zey got him," and he started toward the door.

"You say you never knew Scott," Zozo said.

The captain paused reluctantly. "Well, I hear some talk about him," he admitted. "He was one real pirate, him—wen he catch somebody——" he drew his forefinger across his throat.

"But I thought he made them walk the plank," said Zozo.

"Yes, wen zey plenty shark about. Zat wat zey say," and lifting his cap with a formal bow to all, the old captain went out of doors.

"I cannot believe it," said the priest; "it is not possible to be pirate und kill somebody like dot. Old Beauchamp, like all tose old captain, somedime he tell liddle lie—tink tot funny." He shook his head. "Sound big, hey!" and he chuckled to himself.

The carved magnolia-trees in the Father's garden stood a few feet back from the bluff. They rose far above the surrounding trees, and in blossoming time their white flowers could be seen as far away as Pointe-à-Scott.

When Captain Beauchamp left the village he did not return to his boat at the landing, but hobbled down the road to Father Stumph's.

After all the storm there was scarce a pool of water to be seen. The springs were overful, and the tree-toads were singing at noon. This was the time of year when storms beat down by night all that sprang up by day in Pontomoc.

A rose-colored mimosa leaned against Father Stumph's gateway, its sensitive branches open to the heat. As the old captain brushed past it, each frail leaf shuddered back and closed.

It was very still in the garden. The good priest cared for his vegetables and his old-fashioned flower-beds alone. A trim walk led to his cottage among the live-oaks through the garden. The captain followed this walk almost to the bluff, then turned aside to the magnolia-trees.

The marks had been cut deep. "One mast," the captain murmured, tracing with his finger, "one mast, and here another. One mast, two mast, and bowsprit? There must be bowsprit. Ah, yes, the jib runs out this way. Bowsprit and jib and flag. Two masts, a bowsprit, jib, and flag—*sacré tonnerre!*"

He moved to the other tree and drew his finger around the star. "Two points, three points, five points," he muttered, "and the top is here," and he looked up among the branches.

He walked away at a measured pace, turned, and looked long at the tree again. Then he tapped on the ground with his cane. His old eyes flashed.

Somewhat later in the day, while Zozo Rafferty stood working on an old boat near the bayou, Captain Beauchamp came along and greeted him in French.

"I am delighted to see you," said Zozo, cordially. "Could you favor me with a light? I have used all my matches."

The captain drew forth some wax tapers and each lighted one of Zozo's cigarettes.

"Zozo," said the captain, "I have come to see you on a private matter."

"Zen we will converse in English," said Zozo, glancing back at his wife's figure in the dooryard. "And to what do I owe such an honor, capitaine?"

"Zozo," cried the captain, leaning toward him, "let us lose no time wiz *sacré* nonsense. You are hunting *trésor*, you."

Zozo, recalling the discussion at Sanchez' that morning, folded his arms haughtily and leaned back against the boat. "And zen, Capitaine?"

"Why, *sacré nom du*—you know nosing 'bout *trésor*, but I do."
"Well?"

"See. We must join forces. I am old and feeble, but I know ze place. You are young and strong, you can dig."

"Ah, Monsieur le Capitaine," said Zozo, "zis is not ze first time I receive such a proposition. Many men would like to share secrets with me, but zeres are worseless and zey only wish to find out mine."

"But, Zozo, *au nom du ciel*, you dig here, you dig zere, where zere ees no *trésor*, but zere ees one *trésor* by zose two magnolias at ze priest's."

A shocked look came to Zozo's face, and as quickly disappeared. He shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, I know zose trees," he said. "I know zem better zan you do. I have known zem all my life."

"But attend. Zose sail and mast, zose star point are one writing; zey signify measure and distance and I can read zem."

"Well," said Zozo, "I have heard zat, too. Plenty of men read me signs on trees and sings, but zey know less zan I do, after all."

"Zozo," cried the old captain, smiting the boat with his cane, "I say you shall believe me! Know zat I was wiz Scott. I was his lieutenant. An' more, your grandfazer was wiz Scott as well. He was an Irishman; but he was caught and hung at Mobile."

"It was my great grandfather," faltered Zozo, growing pale at mention of the family skeleton.

"See, you admit zat!" exclaimed the old man. "Zozo, you know well zat I speak true."

"But what does this prove?" asked Zozo, shifting ground. "Did Scott teach you the marks by which to find his buried treasure!"

"Ho! no! he was no such fool. But your granfazer, he was one man Scott trust. Zey talk English togezer. Zey never knew I understood. I deceive zem about zat, an' I listen. Zey write sings on paper an' I read zem wen I can. He was great swordsmen, your grandfazer, wiz ze cutlass, I mean; he was terreeb' wiz ze cutlass. He an' Scott bury treasure before zis, an' zey dig eet up again an' spend eet. I found ze place, an' I study ze mark. He was taken months before Scott deserted wiz zis las' *trésor*, so he could never have known, an' zerefore you know nozing. Come, we will go togezer zis night in ze storm, an' I shall put my foot upon ze spot, an' say, 'Zozo, dig here,' an' you shall find eet. We will divide eet fairly, half an' half, an' eef zere ees an odd piece we toss up for eet. An' zen,—ah sink of eet! we shall be reech. We can see Paris. You are cultivated man, Zozo, an' you will like eet. I was back once long ago. I had brought some Guinea niggers in an' had some money. Ah, ze pleasure—ze gayety—zat is life. If I can see Paris again, I may die. I care not!"

Something in Zozo's heart had recoiled from the thought of violating a place that seemed part of the church and belonged to the good Father Stumph, but the end of Captain Beauchamp's speech touched him in his weakest place. He was a little vain of his culture and of having strayed from what he considered the commonplace paths of ignorant belief.

"Gold ees ver' nice," mused the captain, patting his own flat pockets softly. "I was never great reader like you, Zozo; but—Zut!—my boy, if ze storm come like las' night we could pull ze house down an' ze Fazer would not hear. But we need not do zat," he added, hastily. "A little care in putting back ze dewberry vine an' he shall not know zat anyone was zere."

Zozo's forehead was all clear of doubt; "I will help you," he said, eagerly.

That evening Zozo ran his boat round into the bay, and moored it at a convenient spot, but it was midnight before the treasure-seekers ventured to approach the house and recon-

noitre. Carefully shielding their lantern from the wind, the old captain searched the ground. Finally he stopped beside a small palmetto.

"Here, Zozo, dig! Quick, look at the tide, how it rises, it will cover ze point to-night!"

The waves were already leaping above the bluff and threw their spray into the excited faces of the men. The wind writhed through the branches overhead, and a great live-oak, undermined by the waves, went toppling down. Ankle-deep, knee-deep, waist-deep, Zozo delved in the soft, loose earth, flinging the shovelfuls faster and faster outside the pit; the voices of the night had speech together, and the black ranks of the pines took stealthy forms. The lantern light flickered, and the shadow of a man with lifted sword fell for a moment on Zozo's stooping shoulders. The great magnolias swung and bent, and the long gray moss was torn from them and carried through the air like spray. They could hear the pounding of the surf. Great quivering flashes left the darkness blacker as they passed, and the shadow of a man bent to wipe his sword on the wet leaves; but Zozo flung the earth up savagely, unseeing. Sometimes the spade would strike some obstacle, a root, perhaps, or a buried shell, and he would start and seize the lantern.

Once he bent down and felt with his hand.

"Captain," he said, "it is a skull!"

The old man was on his hands and knees. "I knew it," he cried, peering in. "That is Miguel. He helped Scott take the *trésor*. I knew Scott had killed him and left him guarding it. He has kept it well, too, all zese years!"

The spade crashed through something like rotten wood, and there was a jingle of metallic sounds.

"We have it," cried Zozo, voicelessly, but the old man leaped and shouted in the lantern light.

"Ah, ha! My Captain Scott, you thought to cheat me and have all this gold to yourself, but you are dead and I am here, and it is mine, mine—all mine!" His voice became inarticulate. The old fierce blood of the corsair flamed up within him, obliterating all his senses. Seizing the mattock he rained murderous blows on Zozo, still delving in the pit.

Stunned and desperately wounded, Zozo sank down, but he was strong, and rousing himself with a mighty effort, he leaped outside and grappled with the madman. It was wonderful the strength of that old frame, but in a moment Zozo's long fingers

were closed round his neck like a vice. There was a gasping struggle and both sank on the ground.

As morning broke, Zozo came gradually to consciousness. He tried to rise and found himself pinioned down. His arm was still beneath the neck of Captain Beauchamp, and the old man's body lay across his legs. He looked on stupidly awhile, then mustered strength and pushed the thing away.

Slowly, inch by inch, he crawled and dragged himself along the ground. "The priest," he sobbed, catching for his breath, "the priest." It was long until he reached the house. There, against the wall, he raised himself and staggered a few paces more, then he sank down and crawled again. "Help!" he cried, hoarsely, "Help—for the love of God!"

Barefooted and unkempt, the Father came, and almost carried Zozo and laid him on his bed.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, in horror at the wounds, "der doctor—my poor Zozo, I will run for him."

"No," groaned the dying man, "it's you I want, it's you."

The Father took his hand. "You must be comforted," he said. "You must be comforted by dot nice action dot your children will be confirm."

"Ah—quick," gasped Zozo, "zere's no time—I cannot tell you—I——"

The good priest hastened to perform the last offices, anxious that the penitent should be comforted. When all was finished he came out again. "Ah," he murmured, "I knew it; dot man was goot Christian. He made some bretention of atheis', but he was Christian at heart, and prayer shall avail him I know dot; prayer shall avail him."

A trail of blood led him across his garden. Near the magnolias the old captain lay straightened into his youthful length.

The priest crossed himself. "Oh," he cried, emotionally, "dot is too bad. I am sorry for you, mine friendt—you dot was not one goot man."

He looked about and saw the great hole lying open, the mouldy skeleton, the litter of decayed wood and iron on the ground. A few rusty Spanish coins were all that was left of the treasure. Marveling, he gathered them up.

"Und men haf killed for money so liddle," he said, wistfully. "It is like one legend of my own country, it is elf-gold, und wen you find it, it vanish at der touch."

He knelt in prayer.



AH WANG; OR, THE QUAIL FIGHT *

BY LI-TE-SCHUE

Interpreter for the Imperial Chinese Legation at Berlin

AH WANG came of an old family in the Province of Pin. He was very, very lazy, so his possessions grew daily less, till he had nothing left but a tumble-down house containing a few rooms.

He and his wife slept on a bundle of straw, and many a scolding did she give him for his laziness.

There was in his village a summer residence belonging to the family of Tchu. The walls were in ruins and there was but one pavilion left, in which many people slept during the summer heats, and one night Ah Wang was among them. Most of the sleepers departed at daybreak, but Ah Wang did not waken till the scorching sun was high in heaven.

He was about to return home, when he spied, lying in the grass, a golden hair arrow. He picked it up and found on it the inscription, "Made by I-bin." He had noticed the same mark on the few heirlooms which he himself possessed. As he stood holding the ornament in his hand, an old woman suddenly appeared and said that she was looking for her hair arrow.

* Translated by Mrs. J. M. Lancaster, from the German, for Short Stories—Copyrighted. Illustrations by H. M. Walcott.



Now, though Ah Wang was very poor, he had always been honest, so he at once gave up the ornament. The old woman was much pleased, lauded his honesty, and said:

“The thing has no special value, but it is a memento of my dead husband.”

When asked her husband’s name, she answered:

“Ah Wang-si-Stchi.”

“That was my grandfather,” cried the astonished Ah Wang. “How did you happen to know him?”

Now it was the old woman’s turn to be surprised, and she said:

“So you are a grandson of Ah Wang-si-Stchi! I am a goddess who used to be a she-fox, and a hundred years ago I was very closely related to that gentleman, but after his death I lived in great retirement. It is very odd that you should have happened to find my ornament.”

Ah Wang had heard that his grandfather had married a she-



fox, so he believed the old woman and asked her to go home with him, which she did. When they reached his hut Ah Wang called his wife from the woman's apartment to introduce her to



the visitor, and she appeared in rags, with unkempt and tousled hair, and a sickly, cadaverous face. Then the old woman cried in astonishment, "How comes Ah Wang-si-Stchi's grandson to be so poor?" Then she noticed that no fire was burning on the broken hearthstone, and said, "Is your family in such poverty as this? How do you manage to live?"

Mrs. Wang then told her, weeping quietly, how wretched was their condition, and the old woman handed her the arrow, telling her to pawn

it and buy rice, and in three days she would return.

Ah Wang tried to detain her, but she said, "You cannot support even one woman. Shall I stay here and stare at the bare walls. That will do no good." So off she went. Then Ah Wang told his wife the occasion of this visit, and she was much alarmed, but he praised the she-fox's goodness and entreated his wife to regard her as a grandmother-in-law. Three days later she came back, gave him some taels, and he bought a picul of rice and barley. At night she slept in the bed with Mrs. Wang. To be sure, Mrs. Wang was rather frightened at first, but when she saw that the old woman was very kind and gentle, she ceased to fear her.

The next morning the grandmother said:

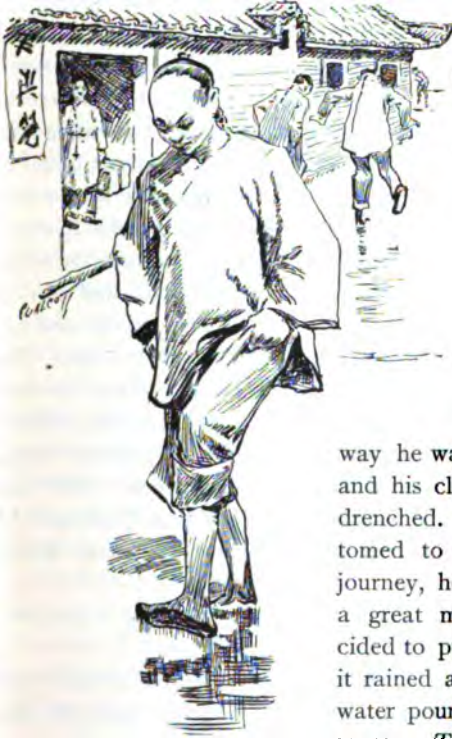
"My dear grandson, you should not be so idle. You must start some business. Nobody can live without working."

Ah Wang excused himself by saying that he had no money, but his grandmother went on:

"Your grandfather in his lifetime made over much of his property to me, but as I do not belong to this world I kept very little of it. I have only a small sum of forty taels, which was

intended for pin money. I no longer need it, so take it and hasten to the capital of the empire, where you will be able to make a little profit on it."

Ah Wang followed her advice and bought fifty rolls of summer goods, and the old woman bade him prepare for his journey, which, she judged, would take about six or seven days, and



warned him to be diligent and not idle, industrious and not lazy.

"If you waste a single day you will regret it when it is too late." -

Ah Wang promised respectfully to do as she directed, packed up his goods and started off. On the

way he was caught in a shower and his clothes and shoes were drenched. As he was unaccustomed to the discomforts of a journey, he looked upon this as a great misfortune, and so decided to put up at an inn. But it rained all night long, and the water poured in streams from the eaves. The next morning the

roads were very wet, and Ah Wang, noticing that the passers-by sank to their ankles in mud, was afraid to start out. By noon it was somewhat dryer, but the clouds gathered overhead, and it began to rain again. On the following day he continued his journey. When he drew near Pekin he heard that goods were very high, which piece of news, of course, pleased him greatly. When he reached the capital, however, and deposited his goods at an inn, the host told him that he was too late. This was how affairs stood: Business relations with South China had lately been resumed. Very few goods from those provinces had hitherto been in the market, and many of the rich citizens had paid high prices for them,

so that the merchants had made a great profit. But for the last few days these goods had arrived in large quantities, so that the prices had fallen again, and those dealers who had come too late were in despair. The host explained all this to Ah



Wang, who spent an anxious night. Later on more and more goods reached Peking, and the prices fell still lower. Ah Wang did not even open his bales, since there was nothing to be made on them, but on reckoning up his expenses after about ten days he found that they amounted to a considerable sum, and he became still more depressed. His host advised him to sell his wares for whatever they would bring and start a new business. This he did and lost by the sale about ten taels. The next day, as he was about to start for home, he opened his money-pouch and found it empty. Quite

overcome, he told the host of this new misfortune. The host did not know what to say, and one of the guests advised Ah Wang to inform the police and demand that the host should make good his loss.

"But," said Ah Wang, sighing and groaning, "it is my fate; what has the host to do with it?"

The latter heard these words, and thanking him for his consideration presented him with five taels, so that he might at least have enough money to take him home.

Ah Wang, however, rather shrank from facing his grandmother under existing circumstances, so he was quite undecided what to do.

He had once been present at a quail fight, at which thousands of people had exchanged bets. The birds do not cost more than a hundred cash—sixty-pence—and it occurred to him that he might start the quail business with his money. He mentioned this idea to his host, who advised him to try it, and also offered to give him a room, and refused to take any money for his board. Ah Wang was much pleased, and went at once to make his purchase. He bought as many quail as he could carry—two baskets full—returned with them to the capital, and the

host joyfully wished him a speedy sale. It rained hard all night, however, and in the morning the water rushed in streams down the street, and the rain was still falling. So Ah Wang had to wait till clear weather. But it rained six days in succession, and seemed as if it would never stop, and when at last he went to his cages, he found several of his quail dead; so his joy was turned into mourning, for he knew of no remedy for this new misfortune, and in a couple of days still more died, so that there were but few left. He put them all in one cage, so that he might feed them all at once. When he went to them the next day only one was living. He told the host, and could not restrain his tears. The host sympathized deeply with him, but Ah Wang made up his mind that as he should now never be able to return home, there was nothing left but to put an end to his life. The host



tried to console him, and went with him to the cages. He examined closely the surviving bird, and said: "That seems to be a very powerful bird, and it is not impossible that the deaths of the other quail resulted from fighting with this one. You have nothing to do, so accustom him to being handled, and if he is mettlesome you may be able to live on the money he wins for you in prize-fights."

Ah Wang thought this a very sensible proposition, and, as soon as the bird was tame, he went out into the street by the host's advice and offered to bet wine and bread on him. The quail was, indeed, very powerful and a good fighter, and always won. The host was much pleased, and gave his guest money so that he might challenge rich sporting men, and the bird continued to be victorious. In half a year's time Ah Wang had already saved twenty taels, and he valued the quail as he did his own life.

There was a certain prince living at that time who had a passion for quail fighting. On the 15th of January of each year he assembled the quail fanciers in his palace for a tournament of

birds. The host told this to Ah Wang, and added: "You may win a fortune on the spot, if fate only favors you, of which we



can, of course, not be certain." Then he took him to the appointed place of meeting, and enjoined upon him to heed his advice: "If your quail should be beaten, you will find yourself under the painful necessity of going away very much cast down; but if he should be victorious, which, of course, is only one chance out of ten thousand, then the Prince will certainly buy him. Meanwhile, you must not sell him at once.

If the Prince should urge you, keep your eye on me, and, when I nod my head, give your consent."

Ah Wang promised to do as he was bid. When he reached the palace, he saw a great many people with quail standing side by side in front of the veranda. The Prince soon came out and called to his servants: "Let those who wish their quail to fight come forward!" A man stepped out with his birds. The Prince gave orders to set his quail at liberty, and the man did the same. The fight began, and in a little while the stranger's quail were all vanquished, which pleased the Prince very much. By and by—and it did not take long—all the birds which had been presented were beaten and put to flight by the Prince's quail, and the host said to Ah Wang: "Quick! now it is time!"

So he and Ah Wang went forward. The Prince examined the new combatant and said, "Anger flashes in the eyes of this bird. He looks very powerful and we must look out," so he ordered them to bring the bird called "Iron Beak." They attacked each other repeatedly, but the Prince's bird soon let its wings fall. Then they brought a better one, which met the same fate. Then the Prince sent for his quail "Alabaster," which soon arrived. It had white feathers like a gull and looked exceedingly fierce. Ah Wang was much alarmed when he saw it and begged to be released in these words, "Your Highness's bird is a supernatural bird, and I fear that he will wound mine and I shall thus lose my

property." But the Prince said laughing: "Let it go; if your bird should fall in battle you shall be amply rewarded."

So Ah Wang let it loose and it flew at Alabaster, while the latter crouched and stood awaiting attack like an angry rooster. Ah Wang's quail gave him a blow with his beak. Up and down, hither and thither fluttered the birds. Then Alabaster seemed to grow tired, but he was all the fiercer, and the fight was more furious than ever. By and by white feathers began to fly and Alabaster fluttered off with drooping wings. There were thousands of spectators, but all envied Ah Wang. The Prince asked to see the victor, took him in his hand, examined him from beak to claws, and asked Ah Wang if he would sell him. Ah Wang answered, "My littleness has no property, so I value this quail as I do my very life and I do not wish to give it up."

"I will give you a large sum of money," said the Prince, "so that you may purchase a piece of property suitable for a person of the middle class. Do you agree to that?"

Ah Wang hung his head and thought it over a little, and finally answered, "I would rather not sell him; but your Highness fancies him and wishes to own him. As things now stand I shall always be able to earn my food and clothing—what more do I need?"

The Prince then asked him his price, and he answered, "A thousand taels."

Then said the Prince, laughing, "Stupid fellow! What sort of a treasure is your quail that he should be worth one thousand taels?"

Ah Wang answered, "Your Highness does not, of course, value it so highly, but I attach such importance to this creature that fifteen cities could not exceed its worth to me." To the Prince's question why this was so, Ah Wang answered, "I take my bird to market and earn six taels a day, so that I could support a family of ten members. What more precious treasure could I ask for than that?"

Then the Prince said, "I will not be ungracious and will give you two hundred taels." But as Ah Wang shook his head, the Prince went up one hundred taels.

Then Ah Wang looked at the host, who as yet gave no sign, and said, "To oblige Your Highness I will take one hundred taels off my price."

The Prince said, "Who would give you nine hundred taels for a quail?"

But, as he was preparing to take his bird and go, the Prince cried, "Come back, quail man, come back! I'll give you six hundred taels. So now, take it or leave it."

Ah Wang looked again at the host, who, however, still stood motionless. But as the sum seemed to him sufficient, Ah Wang



feared lest he might lose the opportunity, so he said, "I am not quite satisfied with this offer, but if I don't make a trade I shall be in a bad fix." So he accepted the Prince's offer, because he did not know what else to do. The Prince gladly gave him the money. Ah Wang packed it away, saluted the Prince, and went out. Then the host began to scold him.

"What did I tell you? You gave in too soon. If you had only held out a little longer you would have eight hundred taels in your pocket."

When they reached home Ah Wang threw the money on the table and begged the host to help himself, which he, however, refused to do. After a good deal of urging, however, he took enough to pay Ah Wang's reckoning.

So now Ah Wang was at last able to pack up and go home.

He told his friends of his experiences, took out his money and blessed his good fortune. By the advice of the old woman he bought 300 acres of land, built a house and furnished it, so that they could now live like a rich old family. The old woman always rose early and made the husband go and oversee the laborers in his fields, and the wife look after the weaving. And when either of the two neglected their duties, the grandmother scolded them well.

Ah Wang and his wife, however, lived henceforward on the friendliest terms, and had no complaint to make of each other.

After three years their possessions were greatly increased, but one day the old woman said she must leave her children, but when Ah Wang and his wife embraced her and finally began to weep, she consented to remain. The next day, however, they looked for her everywhere. She had disappeared.

You cannot get rich save by industry. In this instance, riches came through idleness, but that is the only case I ever heard of. We must mention, however, that Ah Wang, though poor, had always kept a clean conscience, and for that reason the Gods, though they had at first deserted him, finally took pity on him. But do you really believe that a man can get rich by laziness?



A MYSTERIOUS BRIDEGROOM*

BY MRS. OLIPHANT



JOHN ROTHBURY was a young man who had succeeded to his fortune quite unexpectedly, after the very homeliest training as a child, and no thought that he was born to be anything but a peasant gardener, growing fruit and flowers for the market; or, perhaps, if luck should favor him, a painter, living in a cottage like Millet, as poor, at least, if not as great as that master. But John was so far from any knowledge of what was going on in the world that it is to be feared he had not even heard of Millet, but only imagined vaguely a wondering beatific existence all given up to art, and conscious of nothing else, nothing finer or more desirable in the world. But he was a youth of very conscientious mind, and when he discovered that he was the heir of a large fortune, he put himself with great docility into the hands of his guardians and men of business, and suffered himself to be trained in the most correct way according to all the necessities of what one of them called his "station," though John was aware that he had in reality no station, but only wealth and a blank record like that of one who had no ancestors, nobody who had gone before him in the path of life. His father, who had made all the money, had been unknown to John, and he had no relatives nor any fixed place in the world. He had, indeed, a house in London, but that did not count as a home. His mother, after having so long accustomed herself to the barest elements of life, did not feel capable of any other manner of living, and remained in the cottage in the South of France, which she had chosen for her dwelling before her son was born. And thus John was virtually alone in the world.

He was a most docile ward in the hands of his governors, so long as he was under age, and even beyond that time so long as his education lasted. He went to Oxford dutifully,

* From the Pall Mall Magazine.

having been prepared with care for that crowning point of training, and though he never distinguished himself in the faintest degree, got through very well in the crowd. But after this he took the reins in his own hands and pursued the way that pleased his childish thought. He had no special duty to his country, no "place" to keep up, or territorial influence to exercise; so he gave himself up to what was in reality the only thing he loved in the world, which was art. I doubt whether he would ever have become a Millet, even had he been left to pursue that career, as he originally intended; but he did attain to painting pictures which, if they were not great, were at least very sincere and natural, and possessed a quiet character and originality not to be despised.

His life was innocently Bohemian, very free and untroubled, full of wanderings in beautiful places and brotherhood with queer people, but with very little of the wildness of the society which is generally distinguished by that name; or, at least, of the supposed wildness which is conventionally attributed to it. John was *bourgeois* in the cleanness of his life and manners; he did not like noise, and hated drinking; he was, in fact, born respectable, though he disliked any ties upon his personal freedom. This is in reality, I think, the true artist temperament, though the world is pleased to call it unconventional, meaning unruly and disorderly—whereas order is the breath of its nostrils. John was very particular about all his simple surroundings; he pulled down curtains and thrust ugly ornaments out of the way with a freedom which somehow no French *aubergiste*, and scarcely even any English village innkeeper, took amiss. Perhaps this arose from the fact that John was more liberal than artist-guests usually are, keeping no very strict eye upon the little sundries of a bill as most of them do, and allowing himself to be discreetly fleeced for the benefit of the company in general; and partly that he knew exactly how to deal with the Frenchmen, at least of that class, as one to the manner born.

Thus he spent his life in his own way, and it was a very enjoyable life. Few people suspected that he had a house in Belgravia to which he might retire at any moment, or a great deal of money upon which he could draw as he pleased. Still less was it generally known that he had been brought up as a French peasant. What his comrades knew of him was that he was a very good fellow, who might be safely asked for a small

loan in time of need, or who would even offer that kindness where he saw it was much wanted, and who never troubled any one about paying back. To account for this he always said that he had had some money left him, and that, as he had neither wife nor child, he wanted it much less than many others did.

He sold a picture now and then, at which he always had the air of being astonished as well as pleased, protesting that it was all luck, and that the others, which remained on the painters' hands, were really much better than his, which sometimes, no doubt, was the case. He said freely that he was a lucky fellow, and people generally took him at his word. He was certainly one who was content, and loved his art and his freedom, and his long days' sketchings out of doors, and the humors of the little artist community which is wont to gather together at all sorts of out-of-the-way places, very gregarious and friendly, and admiring the beauty of the world as nobody else does. John loved to sit among them, and hear them adoring the light as it came upon their bit of landscape, or upon the curves of a figure—and the landscape or the figure upon which the light came—and the distances and the foregrounds, and the human grace and outline, and all the beautiful things which these (sometimes rough) fellows admired and lingered over with an exquisite pleasure. He, too, admired and adored, and fell into despair over his own attempted renderings of these lovely things. And yet there was always a grace in his roughest studies, which was not lost even in the most elaborate of his pictures, the grace of a real sense of beauty and a real sympathy with life.

This life went on for many years, till John had entered upon the thirties, the full maturity of manhood. And then a thing happened to him, the strangest thing in life, yet the most common thing, and occurring every day. He fell in love—all at once, without any warning, in that perfectly unprepared and unintentional way which often happens among the most unlikely of men. It was not that he wanted a wife, which is the motive with some men. Most certainly he did not want a wife whose advent would disturb all his plans and force him back into the trammels of society. This, I suppose, was why, when his love came to the boiling pitch, he presented himself to the parents of his Edith solely as he was, or as appearances showed him, as an artist doing tolerably well in his profession, and able to keep his wife more or less comfortably. These parents were the Vicar of a little parish in the Isle of Wight and his wife—

good, honest people, who were naturally poor, and whose daughter, one of several, had shown some taste for drawing, and had been sent to such schools of art as they could hear of, or get at, to cultivate this faculty. Poor Edith was not a genius, as these good people had fondly hoped at first, but she had found a little market for her modest drawings—better, perhaps, than if she had had more power or pretension; and they were satisfied that they had done what was the best for her. It was necessary that their girls should learn to do something for themselves, they sadly acknowledged, “in case anything should happen to me,” the Vicar said. It was certain that this “anything” must happen sooner or later, for the Vicar was an old man; and the girls took their work very cheerfully, as it is happily now the fashion for girls to do, not bemoaning themselves, as in a previous generation. Margaret, the eldest, was a governess; as for little Dorothy, it was not as yet decided what she should be trained to be.

There was great commotion at the Vicarage when John, with a somewhat heavy foot (which he retained from his peasant days, nothing ever obliterating the *sabot* from the habits of the human step), came up the gravel walk to the old parson’s study, into which the evening sun was streaming level with blinding force. The house was a pretty house, covered with a great flowering myrtle, which was the pride of the parish, and showed its round pink buds at the window of the odd little den, full of mouldy books, kept wholesome by the constant fumigation of the Vicar’s pipe, which was the old gentleman’s refuge from all the cares of the world. He came out of it when John made his exit into the garden, where Edith, very nervous, was waiting for him, with his gray hair all rubbed up and standing on end round his head, and calling for “Mary, Mary,” in a voice which went over all the house. This perturbed tone, with which she was very well acquainted, unearthed Mrs. Austen from the spare bedroom, in which, as in the only unoccupied place, she was cutting out undergarments for the sewing-class.

“I am coming, I am coming, Edward,” she cried, as she put down her big scissors, and rubbed her forefinger and thumb, which were almost blistered by the use of those implements. She hurried after him to the drawing-room, where he had already seated himself in the species of confessional to which he resorted when he went thus specially into this apartment in the working portion of the day. He was the Vicar, and he had a high sense of his own sacerdotal dignity, nevertheless there were moments

in which the peace of his mind depended upon a free and full confession into his wife's private and particular ear.

"Mary," he said, with tremendous seriousness, "I have just had a very strange visitor, Mr. Rothbury, the artist. And what do you think he wants?—our Edith for his wife!"

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Austen, with composure, "I cannot say I am very much surprised."

"Surprised! Edith, whom we thought we had done so well by, training her for her water-colors."

"Ah, Edward, that is all very true," said Mrs. Austen; "and I wish we had the money in our pockets that she has cost for that. But, so far as she is concerned, I am sure it will be much happier that her husband should do the water-colors and she look after the house."

"Do you really think so?" he asked. "I thought you would be disappointed, after all the trouble we have taken."

"Oh, disappointed!" she said—thus brushing that folly aside.

"And did he tell you what his means were; and does it seem to you that he has enough to keep her comfortably, and can he make any provision in case of—anything happening?" This paraphrase of the more dreadful words, death and misfortune, was the expression always used between the Vicar and his wife.

The Vicar rubbed up his stubby gray locks still more. "He did say something about five hundred a year; but I was so much taken by surprise, and so uncertain how you would take it——"

"Five hundred a year!" his wife repeated, "and we've never had more than three hundred and fifty." She put up her hand to her eyes and a sob came into her voice. "That's a very good income for a young couple—oh, a very good income—to begin upon. I suppose he expects to make more as he goes on. And, Edward, it is very important to know whether he has anything to settle. Did he say he had anything to settle? He might die, though God forbid it, and leave Edith with perhaps—others to provide for. You must inquire into that, my dear."

"Mary," said the Vicar, "Edith has nothing. How can I ask him questions about his most intimate concerns, when we have nothing to give on our side?"

"What nonsense!" cried the troubled woman; "haven't we Edith to give—a girl that any man might be proud of. And she will have to give up her profession; and there probaby will be—"

others to take into consideration. If he has no money to settle, you must make him insure his life."

"My dear Mary," said the Vicar in despair, "how am I to speak to a stranger, like Mr. Rothbury, about his most intimate concerns?"

"Oh, Edward, don't be so ridiculous!" Mrs. Austen cried; and then she added with composure that she supposed she must do it herself. "Though it always comes so much better from a man," she said. But this the Vicar deprecated as quite a mistake on her part.

"He will not mind it from you," said this disingenuous clergyman. "He will think that you don't know much of business, and that if you're over anxious it's very excusable in a mother; whereas me he would expect to speak like a man of the world."

Poor Vicar! if that was his opinion, it was one that was not shared by any of his family. But John, on being talked to, proved himself most happily ready to do anything that was required. He was ready to settle upon Edith a house he had in London, which brought in a very 'decent rent, he said; or he would insure his life, or do anything Mrs. Austen pleased. He was, indeed, so entirely at his ease about this, that his very compliance raised doubt in the anxious mother's mind. He talked quite calmly of insuring his life for thousands!

"And where is the money to come from to pay the premiums?" she said, with a troubled countenance, being well aware what a business it was to scrape together enough to pay the Vicar's premiums once a year. But she had to be satisfied for the moment with these assurances, and Edith was as happy as the day was long.

Edith was so happy that she did not mind at all whether John had five hundred pounds or farthings a year. "He wants us just to go on as he has been doing, travelling a great deal and sketching everywhere, and enjoying all the most beautiful places in the world. Oh, mother! think of going to Italy, and perhaps Spain, and all the places that one has dreamt of, but never hoped to see!" cried Edith, in her delight.

But Mrs. Austen shook her head. "Do you mean that you are to have no house—no home of your own to settle down in?" she said in dismay.

"Not till we get old and want to settle down. Not now, when we are both young and free; we are to work together, and draw

together, and never to have a dull hour," Edith said, radiant with smiles.

Poor thing! poor, young, unthinking girl! But how was her mother to convince her that this was not the most desirable life in the world? Mrs. Austen did not think it at all desirable. What she wished for was a house—it might be quite a small house to begin with—decently furnished, with a little plate for the table, which no doubt the friends of the young couple would give them as wedding presents, if properly directed thereto. Had not Mrs. Cramer given Alice Scott a dozen of spoons only the other day? and Edith was a much greater favorite with that lady than ever Alice had been. A little house with a Brussels carpet in the little drawing-room, and those art carpets, which only cost thirty-five shillings each, in the bedrooms; and, perhaps, some nice second-hand furniture, which is so much more the fashion nowadays than anything new. Mrs. Austen having succeeded so well in the matter of the life insurance, resolved to put forth to John the importance of having a house ready for Edith, and giving up this sort of vagabond scheme of wandering without delay. He received the representation—made by her with great nervousness—with the same easy good humor which he had shown before.

"There is the house in London," he said; "whenever we like we can come home to that."

"But you said it was let, and that the rent——"

"To be sure," he said, "it is let; but that stops at the end of the season, or whenever we please."

"But—but—Mr. Rothbury, the rent was to be the provision for Edith; the settlement——"

"Oh, was it?" he said, lightly; "well, we must put something in its place."

"But—it was a great part of your income, I understood. I am afraid you are not a very good man of business. A house to live in is of great importance; but something to live upon is more important still."

"That will be all right, Mrs. Austen. The lawyers will look after that. Edith and I will do very well. I assure you you need not fear."

"That is all very well," she said, with a troubled countenance; "but the Vicar will insist on guarantees. You can't live on the rent of your house, and occupy your house, and settle it on Edith—all these three things together. The Vicar, I am afraid,

dear Mr. Rothbury, will expect something very much more definite."

"Well," said John, "I can insure my life for a few thousand more. You like the idea of insuring one's life!"

"When you have plenty of money to pay the premiums. Do you know what a few thousands insured cost a year? And where are you to get the money?" Mrs. Austen asked, almost in a tragic tone.

But John Rothbury only laughed, and assured her that he and Edith would do very well; which was the most unsatisfactory answer to a business discussion that could be in the world.

It was on that same evening—when Mrs. Austen was still in this puzzled and troubled state, which naturally she had communicated to the Vicar, in whom there was no light on the subject—that George Gregory came in to tea. He was one of the artist band with whom Edith—who had met them all sketching one time or another, and who had the modern young woman's confidence in *camaraderie*, and conviction that all the elderly nonsense about the impossibility of friendship between men and women was contemptible indeed—had formed acquaintance, and to whom the Vicar, with a clerical impulse of hospitality and his usual imprudence, had given a general invitation. All the family, except Mrs. Austen herself, were of opinion that it did not matter how many people you asked to tea. If it had been to dinner, indeed, or even to supper—but a cup of tea and a piece of cake or bread and butter, of what consequence could that be in a house where so much of those simple dainties was consumed every day? Mrs. Austen, in this as in many details, ran counter to the general mind of the Vicarage. She knew how soon an extra spoonful of tea in the pot and an extra loaf cut down for bread and butter mounted up; and all those painter young men ate bread and butter as if they thought it cost nothing. But this was one of the points on which Mrs. Austen was overborne by the family and compelled to submit.

It was, as has been said, on the very evening when there had arisen that discussion between Edith's mother and John as to the house. George Gregory was one of the artist brotherhood whom no one liked very much, but he was one who was most assiduous in his devotion to the household gods of tea and bread and butter in the Vicarage. He had been absent for a little time, and had not heard, or pretended he had not heard, "about

John,"—which was the manner in which the family described Edith's engagement. And he said, "Rothbury!—oh, he's a queer fellow!" when some one mentioned somewhat familiarly his name.

"How is he a queer fellow?" said Mrs. Austen, pricking up her ears.

"Well, in every way, I think," said the malevolent one. "He has always plenty of money, but no one knows where it comes from. As for his making three hundred a year, or one hundred a year, by selling his pictures, I don't believe a word of it. He can't paint a little bit. He copies Millet—French Millet, you know, like all those Paris fellows. I am not sure that I think such a lot of Millet as some do—but his imitators! And yet the fellow has always plenty of money, and flings it about like a lord." Mr. Gregory was aware of more than one loan which never would be repaid to John, but which burned the borrower's pockets, so to speak, all the same.

Mrs. Austen grew pale. Edith was fortunately not present and therefore could not be affected by this report; but it struck the Vicar absolutely dumb for the moment, and he sat gaping at the speaker, who was exhilarated by the sensation he had made.

"If he has plenty of money," said Mrs. Austen, "I daresay it is from his property if it is not from his art. I happen to know that he has houses in the best quarter of London."

"Oh, that house in Belgravia!" the artist said; "everybody knows of that. It's part of the mystery. It is not let, Mrs. Austen, any more than I am. When he goes to town he goes there, and it's a palace. It's there he hangs all his pictures, I suppose, that he pretends to sell. He should have quite a gallery!" Gregory said, with a laugh. "And there's another queer thing about him which very few people know."

The Vicar had been making signals of distress, betraying the part he took in the matter, to his wife for some moments. He said, now, "This is very serious, Mary; this is very serious," shaking his great head.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Austen, "that it matters very much to us how queer Mr. Rothbury may be; but, for the sake of the story, what is the other queer thing that people don't know?"

"Well, you may see it in him," said the unfaithful brother, "Don't you notice the clumsy way he walks, as if he were wearing wooden shoes? Well, so he did once; he was brought up in a little French place, like a little clodhopper. Just a little

peasant he was, hanging about the railway to carry a bag, and so forth. I knew a fellow once that saw him at it—just a little Jacques Bonhomme, don't you know."

The Vicar's eyes grew larger and larger; his gray locks began to erect themselves on his head.

"Mary," he said, "Mary, it is well that we have heard this."

She gave her shoulders a shrug and wrench in her impatience.

"If Mr. Rothbury has raised himself to his present position by his own exertions, it is the greatest credit to him, I am sure," she said.

"Ah, yes, if he has done that!" said the other, with a laugh.

"But that's a mystery, like all the rest."

"I think we have discussed our neighbors quite long enough," said Mrs. Austen, for Edith had just come in and taken her place at the table; and she changed the subject so determinedly that even that evil tongue could find no more opportunity of speech.

Gregory went away, however, chuckling to himself with a sense that he had "dished," as he said, John Rothbury, a fellow who was so well off as to lend money to men a great deal better than himself, confound him! and who did sell his daubs, too, taking the bread out of other fellows' mouths.

After their uncomfortable visitor was gone, the Vicar tried every means he could think of to get his wife's private ear. He was very much troubled, the poor old gentleman! He accepted this newcomer's word against John, whom he was much better acquainted with, with that faith of the ignorant which is so unaccountable and exasperating.

"It must be put a stop to—it must be put a stop to," he said to himself.

For her part, Mrs. Austen was troubled, too. She did not know how to reconcile these strangely differing details. A peasant boy in France—well, if he had raised himself by his own exertions! And then that house in town which had already troubled her mind, which was let, and was to be settled on Edith, and yet was a home that would be open to them; and was a palace, this man said, with all his unsold pictures hanging in it. These things were enough to make Mrs. Austen very uncomfortable, though she did not give in as her husband did. They were all heightened, too, to her, by John's extreme easy-mindedness, by his almost laughing suggestion of one way after another of supplying the necessary settlement, and even by the lavish character of his presents, and his readiness to produce money for

anything that was wanted—parish charities, choir excursions, or whatever Edith might chance to be interested in.

When her husband finally secured her attention, after many efforts, she was in a very perturbed state.

“My dear, I am afraid Mr. Rothbury is not the man we thought,” he said, shaking his old head, when he had at last beguiled her into his study, from which there was no escape.

“How dreadfully untidy you are, Edward! and what a quantity of books you have out of the shelves! You can’t be reading all these at once,” she said.

“My dear Mary, I was speaking to you of Mr. Rothbury.”

“Oh yes, I know! But to bring me into a place smelling of dust like this, and of tobacco; I don’t really know which is worst,” she cried, with many sniffs of disgust.

“Mary, don’t turn me off like this. If this young man was really an uneducated boy, carrying parcels from the railway, and then suddenly has a great command of money and a house in town——”

“We knew he had a house in town,” said Mrs. Austen, reproachfully, as if that was an argument.

“Well, yes, so we did,” her husband replied; “he made no secret of that,” accepting the statement, too, on his side, as if there was logic in it.

“And if he was only a peasant boy,” cried Mrs. Austen, suddenly thinking of another thing, which really was an argument, “how comes he, Edward, I ask you, to be an Oxford man?—for that he is, as you know.”

“There is certainly a great deal in that,” said the Vicar, staggered. “A Brasenose man. It is not very great for scholarship, but still it is a good college.”

“Which is a great deal more than that young man Gregory ever was—who never has a good word for any one,” cried his wife, triumphantly; and then she turned again to the question of the books, and put some of them, which the Vicar particularly wanted, back into the shelves without remorse or pity, so that Mr. Austen was very glad finally to get her out of his den, and to take what comfort he could from his pipe and his thoughts alone.

But the Vicar’s wife was not at all at her ease. She took an opportunity next day to question John about his early life.

“How well you speak French!” she said. “I heard you reading something out loud to Edith, and it was so different

from the common English pronunciation. You must have a turn for languages." This was her subtle way of opening the subject.

"No credit to me," he said. "French was my first language. I used to know it better than English."

"Dear me!" she said, innocently; "was that because you had a French nurse, or were your parents living abroad?"

"My mother lived abroad, and she does so now. I am going to take Edith to see her," he said, with a queer look; "but it must be later in the year, for at present it would be too hot."

Mrs. Austen pondered for a little, and then she said, "You must have led a very chequered life. Brought up in France, and then going to Oxford, and then an artist. I can't follow you, I that have always lived in one place. It makes my head go round."

"Well," he said, "it is quite true. I have had an odd life." And his face, which had been so gay, grew grave, and he gave a little sigh, but said not another word.

What was poor Mrs. Austen to do? They had made all the inquiries they could about him, as prudent parents must. And they had got, as even the Vicar allowed, "every satisfaction." But there was a mystery, notwithstanding the assurance of those very respectable lawyers in London, who had certified to Mr. Rothbury's respectability, and that his circumstances were as he had stated them. But that was a phrase which would bear many meanings. Mrs. Austen had read a novel not very long before in which the lover and young husband, the most kind, the most chivalric of men, was discovered to make his income by burgling—if there is such a word,—which means that he was a burglar of consummate cleverness, and had kept himself entirely from suspicion. Who could tell that John might not be something of that sort? Or there might be an establishment of coiners, as in Lord Lytton's "Night and Morning," in that Belgravian house? A peasant boy carrying travellers' bags at a railway station, and then a thriving artist selling pictures at the rate of five hundred pounds a year, and possessing house property in Belgravia. "But then he is an Oxford man," Mrs. Austen said to herself. That was the only gleam of comfort; but how by any possibility it could fit in between the other chapters she could not imagine. Oh, if he would only tell her his story simply, whatever it was! She was not a woman to be frightened

by humble birth. The Austens had always been people in a good position, and she flattered herself her own family was at least as good: but still the Vicar's wife was a woman of the century, and if he had raised himself by his own exertions— But the house in Belgravia, which was a palace, and full of beautiful things,—perhaps, who could tell, unholy gear, got he dared not say how! To think that Edith, her Edith, might be taken home to that, and afterwards make some dreadful discovery and break her heart! Mrs. Austen took a walk round and round the garden, hiding in all the sheltered nooks, and keeping out of the eye and the repeated calls of her family for a long time, going over and over this terrible question. How could she now solve it? John was quite frank up to a certain point, but there he stopped; and how could she cross-question him as to these very intimate concerns with which, perhaps, she had nothing to do? And yet she had a right to know all about him before she gave him Edith. Poor Mrs. Austen did not know what to do.

And I confess it was very ridiculous of John to make any mystery about it. There was nothing in his birth or in his life which he had any reason to be ashamed of. His father and mother had not "got on." They had parted, and he had been brought up on his mother's small income till he was sixteen; and then his father had died, and he had suddenly been made aware, never having given any previous thought to it, that he was the heir to a large fortune. This was the simple truth. If it was a mystery, yet it was not a mystery which had anything disgraceful in it. His mother might be blamed, but for folly and want of understanding only, not for anything shameful. Why he should have hesitated to tell the Austens all this, who could say? It was highly absurd on his part. He had thought of giving Edith a surprise in the Lord of Burleigh way, taking her to his house, which he had made very handsome, a beautiful place, indeed a show house, and after showing her all its beauties and gloating over her admiration, saying to her, "All of this is thine and mine." It was a foolish idea, but he had cherished it. As for the parents, the settlements, when they were produced, would very well satisfy them. And he was delighted with the good faith which took him, as he thought, for granted, and on his own estimate.

"But we must not let it go on," said the Vicar: "an errand boy—of no family; we cannot let it go on."

"Oh, family!" cried Mrs. Austen; "who is of any family nowadays? As long as a man has enough, and is presentable

and well behaved, I don't think anything of his family, if that were all."

"There was a great financial man, a stockbroker or something of the kind, of the name of Rothbury," said the Vicar, reflectively.

"If John had been connected with a man like that he would not have been brought up in a French village," said Mrs. Austen, with most reasonable decision and firmness, cutting her husband short; and he recognized the justice of what she said; yet, notwithstanding, it was a little comfort to him that there was a great financial man whose name was Rothbury. It afforded some kind of vague guarantee that things might come right. And then there was the extraordinary yet unmistakable certainty that John Rothbury was a Brasenose man. Such a jumble of facts was beyond any one's power to reconcile and arrange, and whilst they were pausing and wondering the days ran on, and the wedding drew near. It was to be a wedding without fuss, for the Austens were far from rich; and Mrs. Austen, though it was a little against her Church principles, was yet deeply grateful in her heart that the afternoon marriages, which were now the fashion, made anything like a wedding-breakfast impossible. But this did make it possible to ask, so to speak, the whole island to Edith's marriage. Though she sent out the invitations with an anxious heart, she yet did send them out; and everybody accepted. It would have been the most delightful anticipation to Mrs. Austen, with nothing but triumph in it, had it not been for that drop of bitterness, dropped into the heart of all that was sweet. And throughout the whole, need I say, the Vicar kept up that continual cry, "Are you going to let things go on, Mary? How can we let things go on? He ought to be brought to book. He ought to be made to explain everything. Surely you are not going to let everything go on?"

"Bring him to book yourself," she said at last, turning to bay. Even the wife of a clergyman loses patience sometimes. "Make him explain; you are the proper person!"

Then the Vicar was cowed, and retired to his study, saying no more.

Must he be brought to book? Must he be made to explain? She went over all the arguments, for and against, over and over. A French peasant boy—an English Oxford man—a thriving artist making five hundred a year—a man who never sold his daubs at all, but hung them in a gallery all to themselves in a

house in Belgravia. But how could a French peasant boy have a house in Belgravia? or a burglar or coiner be an Oxford man? Indeed, Mrs. Austen soon gave up the burgling and coining as inconceivable, as things only to be imagined in a novel, not for common life. And all the time she was going about Edith's simple trousseau, making the "things" at home, putting her own fine needlework into them to make up for the lace and embroideries of the shop.

"What is the matter with mother? Is it only because Edith is going away?" the other children said.

Perhaps the only one who had an inkling as to what was meant by the shaking of the Vicar's head and the anxiety on Mrs. Austen's brow was John; and I am sorry to say that he did not behave as he should have done in the matter. He took the parents very lightly. He was disposed to laugh at their uneasiness. So long as it was all right with Edith he did not care. It was Edith he was in love with, and not her parents, as is the way of young men; and when he was questioned he had a way of turning the inquiries off. One day Mrs. Austen asked him, "Where did you say your house was, in town?" suddenly, with an elaborate air of impromptu which betrayed her.

"I don't think I ever said where it was," he replied.

"You said it was let; and then you said if you got tired of wandering you could take Edith home there."

"Yes," said John, with a laugh; "I could send off the tenant, don't you know? Nothing could be more easy; you have to give them notice, and the thing is done."

"The thing is not done in a moment," said Mrs. Austen, shaking her head; and then added, "and you relied upon the rent for a part of your income."

"Oh, the income is all right," said John, lightly; and then he was carried off by Edith, who came just then into the room, equipped for a walk. The Vicar was present, but he never said a word.

"How can I question the man about his most private affairs?" he asked. "But, Mary, you should really enter into it more fully; you should bring him to book."

Should she put a stop to it all,—deprive Edith of the comfort of five hundred pounds a year, a serene and peaceful happiness which her mother had never attained, all on the chance that John, who was an Oxford man and, besides, wore truth and honesty written on his face, was a burglar or a coiner, or got his

money in some other illegitimate way,—and break the girl's heart into the bargain? The Vicar went on shaking his head as if he would have shaken it off. The poor woman was so exasperated at last that she rushed at him in a fury and caught that large head by its gray locks in her two hands.

“Oh, for goodness' sake, stop shaking your head! or else do something yourself!” she cried. “Don't you preach to us every day that we ought to have faith?”

“In God,” said the Vicar, trying to shake—as a dog barks internally when prevented from utterance—notwithstanding the firm grip of his wife's hands.

“And in man, too,” Mrs. Austen cried, letting him go, like a momentarily arrested pendulum, in a still stronger oscillation from side to side.

This is an episode in John Rothbury's history in which I cannot justify his action. But it may be said that, when the settlements were placed before the parents, there was such a scene in the Vicar's library as had never been seen before. There was nothing to settle, as the lawyer gravely remarked,—as if they did not know that!—on the lady's side. But on John's! Mrs. Austen read those wonderful papers over her husband's shoulder, and it was some time before either of them could quite understand through the phraseology of the law what wonderful thing it was that had happened.

“Oh, Edward!” she cried at last, with a sort of shriek that ran through the house; and then she turned sternly upon the lawyer, who sat by as calm as a cabbage, and asked vehemently if it was all true.

“Is what all true?” said the astonished man.

“This!” cried the excited mother, striking the papers with her hand. “Has he got all these things? Is he as rich as that? Do you mean to tell me— —?”

But here the Vicar took his part, as became him, as the head and sovereign authority in the house.

“Compose yourself,” he said, laying his hand quite affectionately upon hers, which was quivering. “Have not I always said, my dear, that John Rothbury was a man we could fully confide in, from every point of view?”

Meanwhile Edith, who had never known any of these tremors, was trying on her wedding-gown; and John—much amused by the thought of the revelation which was bursting upon the elder people, and also of what the dignified Mr. Simmon, one of the

distinguished firm of Douglas & Simmon, would think of the Vicar's study, with its smell of smoke—was waiting for his last good-night till that process was over.

And the wedding next day was the prettiest wedding that had been seen in the island for many a day. And everybody was there; and it somehow crept out among the crowd that Edith Austen was making the finest match, and that her husband was no mere landscape-painter, as everybody had supposed, but a man with—Heaven only knew how many thousands a year. No wonder her mother beamed! But Edith, it was said (though no one believed it), was the sole individual who did not know.





A BLIZZARD *

BY J. A. MACRAE



DEAD silence! No sound of life breaks the perfect silence of the plain. Mercury freezes to-night and all Nature lies dead—killed by the Ice King.

Dead silence on the plain! The light that falls upon the snowy pall, under which the frozen earth lies, comes from luminaries of death's green-white hue; the icy air lies still upon the land; the unbroken surface of the snow shows that no coyote, nor fox, nor other living thing has trodden it; everywhere is the silence of desolation and death. Here reigns that invisible yet awe-inspiring spirit which possessed the universe before creation and will possess it again when every created thing has passed away; which knew no beginning and will know no end.

Far away in the Cave of Winds mischief is brewing; for a command of cavalry in pursuit of Indian depredators is crossing the great plain by night and day marches, and death is enlisting the services of the winds to compass the destruction of the two hundred men who compose it.

Hark! What is that sound which breaks the silence? It grows. From a distant murmur, it resolves itself into different distinct sounds, and soon the trampling of horses, muffled by the snow, the creaking of cold leather, the rattling of accoutrements, the champing of bits, and the voices of men raised in jest, anecdote, or laughter are heard as the troop—now close enough to be seen as a shadowy cloud upon the sky-line—moves on the route

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at a walk. Horses and men are alike—gray, enveloped in rime, the only dark spots visible on either being at the flanks of the beasts, where the movement of the hide has prevented hoar frost from forming. No steam rises from the heated cattle or from the lips of the troopers. It is too cold for that. Breath of man and beast congeals as it emerges from them; pipes have been frozen up and put away; it is, indeed, matter for wonder that men can travel in such weather, and live without fire or shelter, bivouacking at times without wood and water, sustaining life on pemmican, biscuit, and such tea as is made over a fire of dry buffalo dung, when such fuel can be found under the snow; carrying a week's provision on the saddle, without tents and with no more comforts than half a dozen packhorses can bear. Strong, hardy men of the plains are these, whom few events can daunt, but even they, during winter travel, fear the descent of that deathdealer of the West whose onslaught is so sudden, so terrible, so protracted as to cause it to be even more apprehended than the assault of savage foes. Yet at this moment even the "blizzard" is almost unthought of, so still, so calm, so beautiful and peaceful is the night.

From out of the dark, distant Cave of Winds steals the "northeaster" on its cruel quest for life. Soon it sweeps onward with a tornado's force over the great plains, catching up, as it goes, the burden of snow which is to transform it into a "blizzard." The loose snow of a hundred miles drifts in this wind, and as it drifts, hurling and whirling, becomes disintegrated into lightest particles of ice-dust which sweep along in the blast. At first the dense cloud of this dust is but a few inches deep, then a few feet, but it has not drifted far before its depth is thirty feet or more, and it spreads over the earth like a settled fog, save that, unlike the fog, it is dry, cold, and borne on the wings of a hurricane at the rate of seventy or eighty miles an hour. Above this snowcloud the heavens remain serene, the blue-black, unflecked sky, with its brilliant moon and hosts of glittering stars, continuing undisturbed by any passing cloud. The fearful snow-laden blast has a voice like a smothered sigh, whilst it holds its unobstructed course over the level snow, but will roar and howl in tempestuous fury when it meets with obstacles in its path.

Without premonition, for no warning cloud has shown itself in the sky, its front edge like an oncoming wall, the snow-burdened hurricane strikes the troop. Instantaneously the men close up, as beating upon man and horse, screaming and howling as it

seizes upon the party, which seems doomed, the storm—quiet whilst unobstructed—now, as it meets obstruction, deafens the ear and drowns the voice. Conversation is impossible; vision extends only a few feet, being circumscribed by the circular wall of whirling snow. Each man feels suddenly cut off from the troop, despite the fact that he may still dimly discern his fellows. Overhead, occasionally, when a shallower part of the cloud than usual drifts by, the moon and stars are to be seen dimly shining, as though anxious to send light to the benighted troop; but the snow for thirty feet above the ground is too dense for horizontal vision. The icy particles strike the skin with a force that increases liability to “frost-bite,” fills beards, eyebrows, eyelids and hair, drift into every crevice and opening of the clothes, and, melting, wets the skin beneath. Stout, veteran hearts are shaken by the onslaught of the storm, and many a cheek blanches as the snowcloud closes in around the troop. Nothing more quickly robs those unaccustomed to it of courage than a “blizzard,” and no amount of experience ever does away with apprehension of its dangers and discomforts. The sense of imprisonment in a snowy cell with impalpable walls—which arises from restriction of vision—is of itself most oppressive, but to be assailed by the biting, deathdealing, snow-charged blast whilst in this cell is to feel oppression turned to cruelty. Move where one may, there is no escape from this cell whose walls are of whirling snow, and from the cruel assault of the storm there is but one refuge for those who are as lightly equipped as these troopers. This is to be found in a still narrower cell, also of snow, but which gives warmth, shelter—life. Knowing this, the troopers quickly dismount, strip from their horses the loaded saddles, tumble the packs off the packhorses, and turn adrift all the animals but two or three of the fattest which, if they survive the storm, will be used to search for the stock when it abates. Quickly, too, a long low wall is constructed of the saddles and other harness of the “outfit” *across* the wind, and from the lee side of this wall the snow is kicked away. In the low trench thus formed blankets are spread, and no sooner are they down than the men are upon them, lying close together, their heads to the wall, covered with such blankets as have not been thrown into the trench, awaiting that safety and warmth which, before long, the blizzard itself—overcome by strategy—will afford. The wind, broken by the low wall of saddles, forms an eddy behind it, and the drifting snow entering

this eddy, deprived of impetus, is caught, held, and falls to the ground, forming a "drift" over the recumbent troopers. This becomes gradually deeper, until before long it quite entombs them; all their forms are out of sight, and the storm, unobstructed again, sweeps by almost in silence.

Under the drift, protected by it, lie the imprisoned men. Though confined, they are warm and perfectly protected from the scathing blast, which passes harmlessly by. So warm is their couch and covering that, though wet before the drift formed over them, they do not suffer from chill.

For two days the blizzard rages unabated in vigor, and for two days the buried troopers lie close in their lair. During all this time the sky has been cloudless, the sun succeeding the moon in occupation of the heavens, but the drifting snow holding its constant course upon earth. Then, as suddenly as it commenced, the blizzard ends.

Slowly the men emerge from their snowy beds, very gradually removing their snowy covering so as to allow the heat of their bodies to dry their clothing, which imprisoned vapors have rendered damp. To leave the drift suddenly would be to risk life, so quickly would the moisture-saturated clothes freeze. All, naturally, are ravenous, and as soon as possible pemmican and biscuit are taken from saddles and packs, which are dragged from the snow, and right merrily the troopers fall on both. But mirth is soon checked, as it is found that nine men are missing. Stern faces become sterner and graver, for there is little doubt that these comrades must have lost the troop during the commencement of the storm and that long ere this the hand of death has laid its icy clasp upon them. Still, it is one of the chances of plain life, so before long laughter runs through the troop again. The day is mild, tobacco smoke fills the air, the confinement of the last two days is forgotten. One of the tethered horses lies dead, killed by exposure; the other two, ice-covered, are pawing away the snow and feeding on the prairie herbage as though nothing unusual had happened. These are soon saddled, mounted, and in the course of a few hours the troop horses are found in a bunch in a coulee and brought in. Only those belonging to the missing men are unfound. For the men themselves a short search is made, but it is fruitless. All over the plain the snow has been furrowed and mounded by the wind, and a mound over a corpse looks no different to any other. So the search is abandoned—the troop saddles,

once more is on the route, and silence rests again upon the plain.

Night falls. Already from distant swales and coulees, the coyotes, wolves, and foxes have issued, led by horrible instincts, and already breaking the stillness with their hideous cries, the foul carrion beasts have opened eight snow mounds, robbed them of their contents, and are tearing and rending the remains of eight poor victims of the blizzard, making night frightful with their snapping, snarling and other sounds of their ghastly meal upon frozen human flesh.

The ninth trooper's fate was better. His lost comrades had separated, walked or ridden until they could simply walk or ride no more, and then laid down to perish. But he had shot his horse, thus procuring an obstruction to form a drift under which he lay in safety until the storm abated. Then emerging, he struck out on foot and reached in two days a trading-post and safety, little harmed by his experience. Whilst the arms of the Ice King closed around his fellows as they dropped into the sleep of cold, which means death, this "oldtimer," by prompt action, plainscraft, and endurance came through all right.

Silence is for a day or two broken by the discordant wrangling of the carrion beasts over the feast provided for them by the blizzard; then it once more reigns on the plain. The silence of the prairie, of death, and of eternity.



THE DICTIONARY*

BY LÉON XANROF



It is two o'clock. Guy de la Blague, the young Vicomte, is riding home in one of the club coupés, surrounded with dainty packages and boxes of all sorts that he has collected in a tour through the large shops—a tour made with a view to New Year's day which is near at hand.

He is thinking over the proper thing to inscribe on the card he is going to attach to each gift.

"Let me see; for the bereaved Duchesse, the Saxe jardinière filled with flowers—some polite formula will do. 'With respectful sym—simpath!—how in the world is sympathy spelled? I came near being Bachelor of Letters in my day, but that day was too long ago to do me any good now, and I don't possess a dictionary. Oh, stupid! The National Library is close by, they must have a dictionary there. Driver, to the National Library!'"

The driver casts a quizzical look at Guy, but seeing he is in earnest, draws up in front of the national monument. Guy gets out, crosses a court and enters a small anteroom. From this a glass door opens into a large hall wherein innumerable readers are sitting in deep absorption, as in a college classroom, with their fingers stuffed into their ears.

Guy—"Oh, just the place I want!" (He hurries forward.)

A voice, issuing suddenly from a kind of closet at one end of the anteroom, arrests him in a severe tone.

"Monsieur, oh, monsieur, your cane!"

Guy—(astonished) "Ah! so they have wardrobe-women here, do they? I'm coming right out again, I only want to look up a word in the dictionary!"

Wardrobe-woman—"That makes no difference, the rule is——"

* Translated by Frances Alley Weston, from the French, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

Guy—"Oh, very well! (handing in his cane.) Don't lose it, whatever you do! There's a woman at the Nouveautés who's lost at least eleven canes for me."

Wardrobe-woman (still severe)—"That ought to be a lesson to you not to go to subventioned theatres!"

Guy—"There now, I've offended her! But I must hurry and get that dictionary." (He pushes open the door and is about to enter the reading-room; a man stops him on the threshold.)

Man at the door—"Where's your card?"

Guy—"My card? I haven't come to make a call on the superintendent!"

Man at the door (severely)—"Your card of admission!"

Guy—"Must I have a card of admission? I only wanted to look at a word in the diction——"

Man at the door—"Sorry, but the rules are strict. You go down that passageway on your right till you come to the gallery on your left, follow that until you come to the corridor at the end; go in at the sixth door in that corridor, you can see the Administration there."

Guy (walking)—"Administration! —Administration! —what the devil have I to do with the Administration? If I had only known there was so much red tape about looking at a word in the dictionary—Ah! here is the Administration."

He timidly enters at the sixth door in the corridor. The Administration, who is quite a young man, is seated, writing, at a desk littered with papers. Guy bows and the Administration politely returns his salute.

Guy—"Excuse me, monsieur, it seems a card is necessary for admission to the library; can I obtain one here?"

Administration—"Certainly, monsieur, a very easy matter. You have only to make out a written application, to which you will affix your university degree, a certificate of vaccination, and a few notes on the subject of your search; an investigation will be made, and in two weeks——"

Guy (in dismay)—"In two weeks! But, monsieur, I only want to find a word in the dictionary."

Administration—"Oh, if it is so simple a matter as that, I can give you a card now, but it is only good for one presentation. Here it is, monsieur."

Guy is profuse in his thanks, and bows again to the Administration, who conducts him smilingly to the door. He returns to

the reading-room—after losing himself not more than three times on the way—and enters, proudly exhibiting the card that has been bestowed upon him. The man at the door takes it, and gives him in return a slip of paper that Guy assumes is a prospectus and shoves in his pocket.

Guy—“ I would like to find a certain word ; will you let me have a dictionary, please ? ”

Man at the door—“ You will have to apply over there, at the other end of the room.”

Guy walks, as directed, the length of the immense room, almost on tiptoe, for fear of disturbing the silent readers. Here and there a grave, ill-favored personage casts blighting glances at him through his spectacles, on account of his creaking shoes. Blushing with confusion, he arrives at the end of the hall and brings up in front of a large desk, behind which an elderly individual in a black skull-cap is enthroned. The elderly individual is carrying on a lively flirtation with a fifty-year-old female reader, who is simpering and assuming the kittenish airs of a young girl.

Guy (timidly)—“ Monsieur, I would like to find a certain word in the dictionary, if you please.”

Elderly Individual (interrupting his gallant trifling with an air of annoyance)—“ Where’s your slip ? ”

Guy—“ My—— ? ”

Elderly Individual (sharply)—“ Your slip ; your form.”

Guy—“ What slip do you mean ? ”

Elderly Individual—“ Why, the man at the door gave you a slip, didn’t he ? ”

Guy (fumbling in his pockets)—“ Oh, I know ! the prospectus ! I hope I haven’t thrown it away. No, here it is ! ”

Elderly Individual (motioning to the other end of the long desk)—“ Well, go and fill it in ! ”

Guy docilely takes up a pen, and, following the indications on the slip of paper, writes his name and address, while the Elderly Individual resumes his agreeable conversation with the coquettish visitor, and launches out into a quotation in Hindustani.

Guy (interrupting again)—“ There ! Now I would like to look at a word in the dictionary——”

Elderly Individual (glancing at the slip)—“ Why didn’t you put down your number ? ”

Guy (surprised)—“ Why, I did, didn’t I ? My number is 52.”

Elderly Individual (writing)—“You should have put it down then—52.”

Guy—“That’s right; 52 rue Taitbout.”

Elderly Individual (explosively)—“Rue Taitbout, rue Taitbout! I’m not asking you for the number of your house; it’s the number of your place I want.”

Guy (idiotically)—“The number of my place. What place?”

Elderly Individual—“Your place, of course! Where are you?”

Guy (in increasing mystification)—“Why—here——”

Elderly Individual (with wrathful emphasis)—“Where—are—you sitting?”

Guy—“Oh! that is what you mean! Nowhere!”

Elderly Individual—“Go and take a place then.” (To coquettish visitor who smiles pityingly) “What a trial, *mon Dieu!* these people who don’t know!”

Guy directs his steps toward a vacant chair, but as he is about to seat himself, a neighbor calls his attention to a book which has been placed there to mark it for an absent occupant. Guy apologizes and goes to a chair further on. The same scene is renewed nine times in succession. Finally he finds an unclaimed seat which is situated directly over a register. He writes the number — of the seat on the slip, places his hat in the chair, and makes his way again to the testy individual at the desk.

Elderly Individual—“What is it you want? You haven’t written out the name of the book yet.”

Guy—“But I told you what I wanted a moment ago; I want to find a word in the dictionary.”

Elderly Individual (loudly)—“What dictionary?”

Guy (in no gentler tone)—“I don’t know, I’m sure; a dictionary!”

Elderly Individual (spluttering with anger)—“Name of a comma! you don’t expect *me* to know what you want, I suppose! What a trial, *mon Dieu*, what a trial! Why do they let them in, these people who don’t know?”

Guy (stamping with vexation)—“*Sac à papier!* if I only had known! A course of study in orthography would have been shorter! Will you give me a dictionary, or not?”

Elderly Individual—“Make an application for one, in heaven’s name!”

Guy (gasping)—“Oh, that is too much! What the devil have I been doing for an hour past?”

Elderly Individual—"I'll tell you what you've been doing for an hour past, tormenting me, *parbleu!*"

Guy—"Look out, old Duodecimo! You'd best be civil!"

Elderly Individual (in a towering rage)—"Don't dare to call me names! I'll have you put out of this room! I tell you to give me the name of the book you want!"

Guy (howling)—"A dictionary! Do you know what the word dictionary means?"

Elderly Individual (hoarse from shouting)—"Write—it—down!"

Guy—"All right! Why didn't you say so?" (He prepares to write again on the slip; the elderly individual tears it from his hand.)

Elderly Individual—"Not on that slip!"

Guy (on the verge of insanity)—"Oh!"

Elderly Individual (almost inaudible, but with no less fury)—"On those slips on that table over there, do you see? What shall I do, *mon Dieu?* What shall I do? Who let him in? name of a papyrus!"

Guy, with the energy of despair, bears down upon the table indicated. Green and white slips are strewn all about on it bearing the same printed notice, "Book required for reference." Guy seizes one of the white slips and writes feverishly, "A dictionary—no matter what one!" Then he takes the slip to the elderly individual, who is mopping his wrathful brow.

Guy—"There! I hope this time——"

Elderly Individual (choking with rage)—"It isn't possible for any one to be so stupid; you are doing it on purpose to infuriate me!" (Brandishing the slip.) "Your seat is on the right side of the hall, and you have brought me a white slip!"

Guy (the color of rare beefsteak)—"Well?"

Elderly Individual (in a tone of thunder)—"The green slips, monsieur, are for the right side of the hall!"

Guy—"In the name of reason, then, why don't some one say so? How was I to know?" He rushes back to the table, determined to conquer or perish in the attempt this time, and makes out a green slip.

Elderly Individual (turning a glare of scorn on the slip)—"What a way to express one's self, *mon Dieu!* Well, go to your seat, the book will be taken to you."

The elderly individual mops his brow again, hands the slip to an attendant, and falls back exhausted in his seat, seeking resto-

ration in a bottle of smelling salts, pressed into his hand by the coquettish reader. Guy, still scarlet with anger, returns to his chair over the register. At the end of five minutes he feels alarming symptoms of apoplexy beginning to creep over him, and decides to walk a little. But he is forced, by the murmurs of his neighbors, to resume his seat again and to wait, growing redder and redder, and hotter and hotter, both mentally and physically. Suddenly the clock strikes the half-hour.

Guy (starting in dismay)—“It can’t be possible? Half-past three! An hour and a half wasted in this—I am going! (He makes for the door, but is arrested as he is passing out.)

Man at the door—“Where are you going, monsieur?”

Guy—“Home, *sacrébleu!* I’ve had enough of your infernal old—”

Man at the door (sternly)—“Where is your slip?”

Guy—“My slip! I gave it to that old party over there.”

Man at the door—“You will have to go back and get it, you can’t leave without handing it in to me.”

Guy (flaring with passion)—“Why not? I should like to know. Do you take me for a thief?”

Man at the door (imperturbably)—“The rules are strict, monsieur.”

Guy stumbles noisily back to his seat, heedless of wrathful glances now, uttering imprecations on his folly for taking such a course instead of going straight off and buying a dictionary at once. He succeeds in waiting ten minutes, at the end of which time an attendant brings him a huge volume. At last! He lays frantic hold of it, opens and reads, “Dictionary of Technology, Vol. I., from A to F.” It is too much! His whole afternoon wasted in obtaining a dictionary—the only one, probably, which does not contain the word he wants! He makes another rush for the door in the midst of cries of “Silence!” “Sit down!” “Put him out!” that arise from all parts of the room.

Guy (beside himself)—“You are a lot of idiots, I say! Do you hear? a lot of idiots!”

Attendant (approaching menacingly)—“If you don’t stop that noise I’ll—”

Guy (retreating before him) picks up the dictionary—“Here, take your dictionary!” And he hurls it at the head of the attendant, who falls backward onto a table in the midst of the inkpots and notebooks of a group of scientists. Then follows

a storm of protestations, anathemas and accusations of all the attendants, finally the expulsion of Guy, who is handed over to the guardianship of two policemen.

Guy (struggling in their grasp)—“ I am not a thief, I tell you— I can explain it all; I only wanted to find a word in the dictionary. See there! That is my carriage! ”

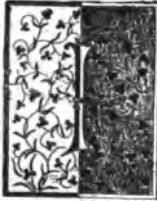
Policeman—“ So that carriage belongs to you, does it, and all the boxes and bundles that are in it? And you have the face to say you are not a thief? Come along, my fine fellow, we'll attend to your case! ”

And, followed by the coupé with its highly scandalized driver, Guy makes a triumphal entry into the nearest police station.



A PARTY OF FOUR

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN



It is of no importance to any one why, on that particular evening, I did not go down Bond Street to my club, as I had done many hundreds of times before ; why, instead of betaking myself like a sensible man to my dinner, I plunged into Brook Street, and went mooning westward through the drizzle. Perhaps I was tired of dining, having dined so often before, only to dine again. Or perhaps I had taken afternoon tea and been snubbed, or wanted something out of the common to happen, or really had no reason at all for the freak.

It had an unpleasant beginning near Grosvenor Square. A little short of that place a hansom dashed up to the pavement, and, drawing up sharply beside me, splashed me so freely that I stopped short with a mild exclamation. The words were still in the air when two people jumped out of the cab, under a lamp as it chanced ; and, while I stood glowering upon them, proceeded to pay the driver. The one was a tall girl, dressed in mourning ; the other, a child of twelve or thirteen, wearing short, full skirts of that age, a purple cloak lightly edged with fur, and a big purple hat, partly covered by a white veil. Still standing, as much from indignation as to wipe the mud from my cheek, I heard what followed.

“Kitty !” exclaimed the child, as the elder girl held up the fare, “do not pay him ; let him wait for us.”

Kitty shook her head. “Why, dear ?” she answered, gently ; “we shall have no trouble in finding another.”

“But you will stay so long,” her sister—I concluded they were sisters—pleaded, “and it is cold.”

“Indeed I will not stay long,” was the elder’s reply. “I will stay a very, very little time, darling.”

Now, said I to myself, that girl is in trouble ; and as they moved toward the square, I, too, walked on, so that when they reached the corner, and stopped abruptly, I nearly ran against them. They were standing arm-in-arm, looking toward the inner

pavement, which runs round the garden. . Without intending to listen I heard, as I tacked round them—their umbrella acting as a sounding-board—a few more words.

“Look, Kitty!” the younger was saying, “there she is again!”

“Poor thing!” replied the elder girl.

And that—that was all I heard. But the voice was the voice of an angel—in trouble. And the pathos and sorrow that rang in the two words set my curiosity vibrating more briskly than all their previous talk, or even their air of good breeding—out of place in the streets after nightfall—had been able to do.

“There she is again!” I said to myself. Up to this time I had learned involuntarily what I had. Now I took the first step toward meddling in a strange business by crossing the roadway to the garden, instead of keeping along the outer pavement. I would see who was there again. And I did. I came upon her at once—a short, middle-aged woman, plainly dressed so far as I could see, and apparently of the lower class. She was standing still, her back to the garden railings, her eyes strained—or did I judge of that by her attitude?—in an intent looking toward the houses opposite her. There was nothing odd about her except this air of watching, and perhaps her position; nor anything to connect her with the two girls now lost in the gloom, but probably not far off. She did not move nor avert her eyes as I brushed close before her, but only drew a quick sigh, as of impatience at the obstacle which for a moment intervened between her and her object.

Naturally I examined the house at which she was looking. It was the second from the corner, a large house with a brightly lit porch and heavy double doors. The rooms on the ground floor and the floor above were partly visible. Upstairs the curtains had been drawn, but not closely. In the dining-room below they had not been drawn, so that I could see what was passing within.

But the scene was commonplace enough. Two servants, an old man and a young one, were putting the finishing touches to a well-appointed dinner-table; walking round it and daintily moving this thing and that. There were good pictures on the walls, there was plate on the sideboard, and shaded lamps cast a warm glow upon glass and flowers. But in all this there was nothing which might not be seen in a thousand houses.

Yet stay. While I looked, the men paused at their work.

The elder seemed to be speaking to the other with animation, as if he were arguing with him or scolding him. More than once he raised his hands energetically, while the figure of the young man betrayed some shame, I thought, and more obstinacy. Still there was nothing marvelous in this, a servants' dispute, and I was moving away, pishing and pshawing, when I saw, a few yards from me, in the same attitude and gazing in the same direction as the middle-aged woman, my former friends—the two girls of the cab. It was wonderful how my curiosity was set a-thrilling again. Not caring whether they saw me or not, or what they thought of me, I crossed over to the pavement to read the number of the house.

I was making a note of it, when one leaf of the doors was thrown open violently, and a voice cried, "Out you go, my lad!"

And out accordingly, and down the steps, forcibly impelled, as it seemed to me, from behind, came the young man-servant, he whom I had seen in the dining-room. He held, in a helpless kind of way, as if they had been thrust upon him, an overcoat and a hat, and his face wore as foolish an expression of discomfiture as I ever saw.

"Come, none of that, Mr. Bund!" he cried, in weakly remonstrance, as he poised himself on the lowest step. "I do not see why I should go right away. I will not be turned out, sir!"

"Yes, you will, James," replied the butler, giving him a gentle push which landed him staggering on the pavement. "You will go, or you will wait at table, which you were engaged to do, my lad."

"Not on them!" exclaimed the young man, with a burst of excitement. "Why, you do not know the minute when one of them might turn round and——"

"Hold your tongue!" broke in the other, imperiously, "or you will get into worse trouble than this; you mark my words."

"You give me a month's wages," said the ejected one.

He seemed to be a weak young man and easily cowed.

"Not I!"

"Then let me get my things."

"Your things! You can come and get them to-morrow," was the contemptuous answer. "You do not go down into the kitchen to chatter to-night, which is what you would be at. You are a mean cur, James, that is what you are!"

"I would not talk of curs in that house, if I were you," retorted James spitefully. "People who live in——"

He did not finish. His taunt, which seemed to me harmless enough, seemed quite otherwise to the butler. The latter sprang down the steps, swelling like a turkey-cock, and would certainly have fallen upon the offender had not the young man, with a faint cry of alarm, fled and disappeared in the darkness.

"What is the matter, butler?" I asked, as he remounted the steps.

He eyed me sharply. "Oh, only a servant that would be master," he answered. "Pretty short-handed he has left me, too, hang him!"

"With a party on your hands?" I said, sympathetically.

"Party of four," he answered, shortly, his hand on the door; and he again looked me over, in doubt, I think, whether he should add "sir" or not. I was wearing an old overcoat above my evening clothes, and, instead of an opera hat, had carelessly put on, the evening being damp, a low-crowned black hat. I interpreted his glance, and suddenly saw a way in which I might gratify my curiosity.

"Look here!" I said, preparing to make a bold plunge for it, "I can wait at table, and I am a respectable man. I will give you a hand for the evening, if you like."

He whistled softly, looking much astonished. "Could not do it," he said, shaking his head. "There is plate about, and I do not know you from Adam."

"I am just off a job," I urged, more eager now, and pleased to find my invention serve me so well. "I go out evenings. I am not badly off, but I would rather take half-a-crown and my supper, and perhaps extend my connection, than waste time. Look here, I have a gold watch—legacy from an old master. Suppose I hand it over to you as security. Terms, half-a-crown and my supper."

"You can wait?"

"Rather!" I said, presumptuously.

He wavered, poisoning my watch, an old-fashioned timekeeper, which had been my father's, in his hand. "I am loath to let a stranger in the house," he said, "but there is nothing Sir Eldred hates so much as a bad service. I am half inclined to try you, young man. I like your looks."

I could have said much on that, but refrained. "All I want is a job," I answered, modestly.

"Then in you come," he said, making up his mind. "It is just striking eight, and Sir Eldred is an impatient man at the

best of times. Slip your coat and hat under this bench. And look slippery yourself, for there goes the master's bell. I will take the meats and wines, and do you take the sauces and the vegetables. The girl brings everything to the door. You understand, do you?"

I said "Yes," and did as I was bidden. But the prospect before me seemed more dubious now. My fingers had suddenly become thumbs, a very odd thing. And even my cheeks fell to burning, when almost immediately four gentlemen filed into the room and sat down at the round table. Two minutes had not elapsed, however, before I was myself again; following my leader with cayenne pepper and lemon as to the manner born, and displaying, I flatter myself, a fair amount of readiness and aplomb.

And so incongruous a party, for a West-End dining-room, were those four at the table, that I felt my curiosity was justified. I had no difficulty in picking out Sir Eldred. He alone looked at me with passing surprise. He was a man of refined type, with aquiline nose, blue eyes, and a long fair beard; fastidious, whimsical, and a bit of an epicure, if appearances went for anything. Facing him, wearing a kind of undress uniform jacket, sat a man whom he addressed as "Skipper," a short, sturdy sailor with a tanned face and a goatee beard, and the separate use of an oath which was new to me.

The third at table, sitting at Sir Eldred's right, was a pale, sickly youth, who from the moment of entering the room never ceased to fidget, I might almost say, to shiver and shake. If he touched a glass, it rattled against its fellows. If I handed a dish to him, he knocked it with his elbow; and his fingers so persistently dropped his knife and fork, that I am sure the only food that reached his lips was the bread he continually crumbled. He wore the regulation dinner-dress, but his hair was not that of a gentleman, although he came into the room on his host's arm, and Sir Eldred showed him much attention, even clapping him on the shoulder as he sat down, and saying, kindly, "Come, cheer up, my boy. We are all here again, you see."

"Aye, cheer up, lad," cried the skipper, bluntly, as he spread his napkin with elaborate ease. "Care killed a cat!"

"Oh, don't! don't!" cried the youth, staggering to his feet, as though a pin had run into him. "How can you! You—you——" Trembling, he cast a vicious glance, half hate, half fear, at the sailor.

"Skipper! skipper!" said Sir Eldred, reproachfully, laying his hand on the young man's arm and drawing him down again, "be a bit more careful."

"By the Lassie Kowen!" replied the sailor, "but I forgot." And he showed a certain amount of real concern, though for the life of me I could not see what harm he had done.

"Come, we are all here," repeated the host, with an air of satisfaction. "Where" (to the butler) "is the claret, Bund? Bring it round, and let us drink our toast and be thankful."

A sort of grace this, I thought. With some ceremony the butler, bidding me by a glance to stand back, brought from the sideboard a salver, bearing a Venetian glass carafe of claret and four glasses. One of these he filled and gave to his master, who waited with it in his hands until all were served. Then saying, with a ghost of a smile, "To our next meeting, gentlemen," Sir Eldred raised it to his lips and drank it dry. The sailor followed suit, tossing off the wine with much braggadocio, and smacking his lips afterward with such gusto that I could scarcely think the liquor merely claret. The fourth at table, whom I have not described—a stout, melancholy man of pasty complexion, with a big, bald head and thick lips: he wore evening-dress, but I saw the breadth of his thumb, and set him down for a master-saddler—took his glassful without looking up or saying a word. But even in him, as he set down the glass, I detected a curl of the lip that betokened relief. There remained only the young man at the host's right hand.

Sir Eldred, beginning his soup, cast an anxious glance at him. "Peter thinks," he said, lightly, "that he drinks best who drinks last. Come, pass the Rubicon! I mean," for it was evident that the youth did not understand him, "drink it off and no heeltaps, my boy."

Thus adjured, the young fellow raised the glass to his lips with an unsteady hand, and, with a queer, shrinking look in his face that was as unintelligible to me as the rest of the scene, did as he was ordered; not the least strange item being the interest which I could see the other three secretly took in this simple action.

"That is well done. We shall make a toper of you yet!" cried the host, slapping the table cheerily—over-cheerily, perhaps. "Seven from forty-two leaves thirty-five. Skipper, you want something with more body in it. Bund, quick with the sherry! Friedricsson, you liked the soup last night. What of

this? Now, Peter, to dinner! Care killed a——” He stopped with his mouth wide open, an expression of wrathful surprise on his face; and the skipper, who had had his glass of sherry, roared, “Ho! ho! ho! If the pilot do not know the shoals, it is small blame to the sailor-man, Sir Eldred. That is good sea-law, by the Lassie Kowen.”

“I hate a sea-lawyer,” retorted the baronet, testily.

“So do I,” was the hearty answer. After which the conversation, though always jerky, a fitful merriment alternating with a thoughtful pause, grew more general. The man of leather, who kept his appetite in spite of depression, gave gloomy praise to the cook. The youthful Peter hazarded a few tremulous remarks. And from these I gathered that this was not the first nor was it meant to be the last occasion of the quartette dining together.

I stealthily rubbed my eyes, yet still they were all there, the fastidious baronet, the tradesman, the cockney clerk, the merchant-mate. There, notwithstanding my rubbing, they still sat, hobnobbing together in this house in Grosvenor Square, and feigning, for some inscrutable reason, to be of the same rank in life: to be one and all bred to the napkin. Was it some new Abbey of Thelema? I asked myself. Some extravagant offshoot of Toynbee Hall? Some whim of a rich Socialist? Or was the baronet mad? Or the youth some near relation, yet a monomaniac who had to be honored? Or had I really strayed into the land where cream tarts are dashed with pepper? I wondered, and remembering what the young footman had let fall, grew suspicious. It pleased me to hear outside the occasional rattle of a carriage and the heavy tread of a policeman.

It was in the baronet my curiosity centred. And, taking every opportunity of watching him, I was presently rewarded. I was handing some jelly to his opposite neighbor, when I saw him pause with his fork halfway to his lips, and listen. I listened too, and was conscious of a stir in the hall—of a noise as if some one or something shuffling to and fro, with every now and then a shorter throb of sound. Listening intently, I forgot what I was about, and though the skipper had helped himself, I continued to hold the dish before him, until his harsh voice roused me with a start.

“Guess I’ll not take the whole cargo this voyage,” he said. “You’ve dropped anchor too near inshore, young man.”

I drew back in confusion, but escaped notice, as Sir Eldred rose.

"I am afraid," he exclaimed, looking round in anger for the butler, who had slipped toward the door. "I am afraid—How is it, Bund, that my orders have been neglected?"

Bund not answering, the sailor seemed at once to understand.

"Oh! by the Lassie Kowen! that is too bad," he cried, violently. "Not that I mind for myself, not I. But our mate here——" and glancing at the gloomy epicure, he left his sentence unfinished.

"Go and see, Bund!" ordered Sir Eldred, wrathfully. "Go and see!"

The butler had been standing near the door, with his hand upon it. Now he slid quickly out, and at once the noise ceased. While he was absent I noticed that the stout man desisted from eating, and sat with his eyes fixed upon the door and a look of dull alarm in them.

"Well?" said Sir Eldred when Bund came back. "Well?"

"She went out by the area door, sir," the butler said in a low tone, "and came in by the front. I can assure you, sir, it will not occur again. I have——" and he added something, the meaning of which I could not catch.

With that the incident ended, but it seemed to have destroyed such good fellowship as had existed. The bald tradesman left his jelly on his plate, and looked as if he was going to be ill. Sir Eldred's face wore a frown. The skipper tossed off two glasses of sherry, one on top of the other. Only the white-faced clerk, fumbling with his bread, had betrayed no particular emotion, being too much taken up with his troubles, whatever they were, to perceive anything strange, or to sympathize with the feelings of his companions.

"Whatever was the matter outside or whoever was the intruder," I thought, "they are a nervous lot. One is as bad as another. And then, who in heaven's name are they? Conspirators, madmen, actors, or practical jokers?"

By this time dinner was over. The wine was being put on the table, and I was dreading the order to withdraw—for curiosity raised to the pitch which mine had reached is an intolerable thing—when, following the skipper's eye, I saw a tear—an unmistakable tear, big, leaden and unconventional—rolling down the fat face of the man known as Friedricsson. The skipper saw it, too, as I have hinted.

"Come," cried he, bluntly, "don't give way, brother. We are all in the same boat."

The stout man seemed by a melancholy shake of the head to demur.

"You do not think so? Come, how do you foot it up?" asked the sailor, briskly, affecting interest, as I thought, to draw the other into an argument.

"They have neither wife nor child," he began. "You have only a wife."

"You have no call to 'only' her," interrupted the merchant-mate, sharply. "She is a woman in a hundred, aye, in a thousand! God bless her!" and he drank her health defiantly.

"Well, you have no children," the other meekly answered, "and I have seven. Perhaps that seems a small thing to you, and to make no difference."

But the skipper, nodding gravely, confessed that there was something in the distinction. And on the instant a ray of light pierced my mind. I divined who was the plainly dressed woman I had seen watching the house. Clearly the woman in a hundred. The skipper's wife. And the two girls, then—who were they? Sir Eldred had no wife or child. No; but at mention of those relations, a flush and a momentary parting of the lips, as in a smile arrested by some gloomy thought before it took shape, had been visible to one observing him. No, he had no wife or child; but that he had one who some day might be his wife I felt sure; as sure of it as she was then waiting and watching outside, sharing for some unknown reason the ill-lit, wind-swept pavement with the other woman, and doing wifely service before her time.

No wonder that I marveled as I set on the olives. What—what on earth did it all mean? The glimpse of light I had gained only made the darkness more visible. But there!—my chance was gone. The butler was giving me the sign to retire. The wine was already beginning to pass round the table. And though my eyes dwelt on the baronet to the last, that last had come, in another moment the door would have been closed behind me, when a sound, clear and prolonged, broke the momentary stillness of the square. There was nothing in the sound—to me, though I have heard it in lonely farmhouses and found it eerie enough, and though I know that it is a sound of awe to superstitious folk. It alone would not have stayed my hand upon the door; but the effect it produced did. The baronet swore, disturbed, as it seemed to me, for others rather than for himself. *Friedricsson* started nervously in his seat and looked

behind him. The sailor muttered something, and fidgeted oddly with his collar. Again the sound rose and fell dismally, and this time two of the four drank off a glass of wine as if by a single impulse. The skipper was not one of these. He looked flushed, and was straining as if he had something in his wind-pipe. The clerk's face I could not see, his back being toward me. But he seemed little moved, even when a third time the long, dreary howl of a dog rose on the night air; and Sir Eldred, with a fiercer oath, sprang up.

"Bund, where the fiend is that brute?" he cried, roughly. "It is not Flora? Then send out and have it stopped. Have it stopped! Do you hear, you fool? Don't stand there gaping." And he flung his napkin on the table wrathfully. "Go!"

I turned hurriedly to the butler, who was by my side, to learn why he did not go. He go? His whole soul was crying to be gone to feet that would not carry him away. His face froze me. His fat cheeks were quivering with overmastering terror, and his eyes looking past me—past Sir Eldred—were the eyes of a man looking upon death. I turned with a quick shudder to confront the worst.

Ha! The skipper was clawing at his throat in an ugly fashion. His face had grown purple, and his hair become disarranged in a wonderfully short time. He was beginning, too, to utter hoarse noises. A fit! I said to myself, and with a malediction on the butler's cowardice (I am not particularly brave, but there are some things, such as loosening a neckcloth, which one does owe to one's fellow-creatures) I sprang forward and undid the poor fellow's collar; and then tried to get him to lie down, not knowing whether that were right or not, but thinking, as he was inclined to be violent, that so he would do himself least harm.

"A doctor!" I cried, trying to restrain him, for he was pulling the cloth from the table. "Quick, fetch a doctor!" I dare say that I spoke almost as imperiously as had Sir Eldred himself, for the truth was that I was disgusted with them, one and all. The butler had escaped. I heard him fling open the outer door and rush down the steps. And I hoped that he had gone for a doctor. But of the others only Sir Eldred, and he but perfunctorily, as I thought, and with a daintiness that could never have been less in place, gave me any assistance. The clerk had flung himself face downward on a sofa, and was visibly shaking from head to foot. The bald tradesman had retreated to the other end of

the room, and was looking at us in silence over the back of an armchair, behind which he had intrenched himself. No help would come from them, although the poor sailor was now in evil case, foaming at the mouth, and working his jaws. Remembering or fancying that the tongue is sometimes injured in these fits, I snatched a spoon from the floor and tried to insert the handle between his teeth, so as to prevent their closing; but before I could effect this, Sir Eldred clutched my arm and knocked the spoon from my grasp.

"Are you mad?" I cried, enraged by his interference.

"Are you mad, man?" he answered, scarcely able to speak for excitement, and still holding my wrist while the perspiration ran down his face. "Are you mad, or a fool, or tired of your life? Hold him down! That is enough, if you can do it. Bund has gone for the doctor. By heaven, you are a foolhardy fellow, but a brave one!"

"The doctor will come, I dare say," I answered, not understanding him one whit. "But I do not fancy he will put our friend's tongue in, if once he bites it off."

I meant to be rude. It is not easy to hold down a man in a fit, and be civil to the lookers-on in kid gloves. But somehow Sir Eldred missed the rebuke. "Be more cautious, man," he said, chidingly. "If I had thought this would happen, I would have left the poor fellow to himself. And Higginson? He said he would come at any hour, night or day! And why the deuce does he not come? But here he—— Hallo!"

I glanced up; not at the wretched cowards—they were beneath regard—but at the new-comer. It was not the doctor. But it was the next best thing; it was the woman I had seen in the square—the skipper's wife. And I never felt more thankful to see any one. She would know something about these attacks, and what ought to be done. When I heard her cry "Jack!" and rush toward him with arms outstretched to clasp him, and, wife-like, save him from himself, the action seemed to me the most natural in the world. I did not dream of interfering or standing in her way. Nay, I doubted my eyes when Sir Eldred rose from his knees with a sharp cry, and, seizing the woman by both wrists, bore her back by main force. "Are you mad?" I heard him say, using the same words he had used to me, as he struggled with her. "You can do no good, my poor soul; be calm. The doctor is coming?"

She did not speak, but she wrestled with him, bringing down

in another minute the tablecloth, with all the service, pell-mell upon me and the floor. And then she fell into hysterics.

I snatched a hasty glance at her, and saw Sir Eldred trying to soothe her in a clumsy fashion. Then I had as much as I could do to hold my patient. I jerked out of his way a broken decanter, but he dashed his head so violently from side to side, amid the débris of knives and shattered glass, that he threatened each minute to do himself an injury or to do me one. He was a stout, heavy man. I could not by myself move him to a safer place; and though the noise was appalling, and the whole house must have been alarmed minutes ago, no one came to my help. I was breathless and giddy. The poor fellow was growing more and more violent as my grasp upon him relaxed, and I felt that in another moment he must take his chance, when, just at the crisis of his paroxysm, a small gloved hand slid into the little space under my eyes and deftly removed a broken plate, which I had been making frantic but vain efforts to push away with my foot. Away went its jagged edges out of sight, and away the same dexterous hand swept half-a-dozen other ugly things. Then this *dea ex machina*, by a few gentle touches, stilled the poor man.

“Good, indeed! a thousand thanks!” I cried, eagerly, raising my eyes to the face of the girl in mourning. “He is not, I added,” seeing how white the face was, “a pleasant sight, but he is better. I think I can manage him now.”

As I spoke I looked from her to the others, having leisure now to think of them. At the same instant Sir Eldred glanced up from his charge. Our eyes did not meet; but I saw his, as they rested on the girl beside me, suddenly dilate. His lips moved. He dropped his burden as if she had been lead, and, springing forward, laid his hands upon the girl’s shoulders—to pull her away, as it seemed. But so panic-stricken was he, that he had no strength to do it, and only rocked her to and fro, saying, hoarsely: “Helen! Helen! Come; you are killing me! Think what might——”

“Happen!” and, turning upon him, while his lips still faltered, a look full of pure exultation that glorified her face, she added: “And what then? I should but share your fate—for better, for worse!”

That did give him strength. “Oh!” he said ragefully, and dragged her away. I heard her utter a faint cry of protest, and then she fainted, as a stout, clean-shaven man came briskly in.

"Dear! dear! dear!" he exclaimed, looking nervously round at the strange scene—the senseless girl, the sobbing woman, the baronet on his knees beside the sofa, the two pale-faced cravens at the farther end. "Dear! dear! dear! We must get rid of these people. We can do nothing with these people here. It is a pity I was out. And what is it, eh? What is it?"

"Well, it might be the black death!" I replied, testily. He had not asked the question as seeking information, but mechanically, as if it were a form to be gone through. "People could not be much more afraid of the poor fellow."

"But," he answered, kneeling down suddenly, and laying his hand on the skipper's forehead so as to raise the eyelids, "this is not hydrophobia? this is only a fit! and not the first he has had either. Sir Eldred! Mr. Friedricsson! Where are you? There is no cause for alarm. Our friend is only in a fit. It is not hydrophobia!"

"Who said it was?" I replied, groping about for the truth, and yet at once understanding a part of it, and shuddering.

"The servant. Still it was an excusable error under the circumstances," replied the doctor, cheerily. "But I always thought Sir Eldred's quixotic plan a mistaken one. Though M. Pasteur considered all danger over, yet during the six weeks of probation there is always a risk. There! He is coming round. He will do well now. I must go and see the ladies."

I detained him for a moment. Of course he took me for a guest. "Were they bitten at the same time?" I asked.

"All four on the same day. By different animals though. One by a cat," he replied, genially. "Sir Eldred by a foxhound puppy, just off the walk. They entered M. Pasteur's establishment also on the same day, were inoculated on the same day, and discharged the same day. Singular thing, was it not? So Sir Eldred—kind-hearted man, but whimsical—said, 'They should see it out together and fare the same.' Ha! ha! Coming, Sir Eldred. The young lady is upstairs, is she?"

He hurried away, and Bund coming in, I caught the butler's eye, as he lifted it from a sorrowful contemplation of the wreck on the floor. "You have made your fortune, young man," he said, as unasked he put my watch into my hand. "I liked your looks from the first. Sir Eldred is asking to see you. And you are to call a cab."

I did so; and getting into it drove to my club to supper.

REFORMING A FAIR SMUGGLER *

BY LIEUT. G. DE H. BROWNE



OMEWHAT in accordance with that traditional principle of "set a thief to catch a thief" did it appear, to the initiated, that Mr. Joseph Vernon was brought from California to assist in stemming the contraband tide which sweeps steadily across Puget Sound. Not that Joe, during his thirty years of life, had ever manifested a particularly larcenous disposition, by no means. But a close attention to the arrival of certain steamers from China had seemingly permitted him to retire from active commercial pursuits, and when, later, he had evinced a desire for political preferment, his peculiar fitness for the customs service had been remembered.

But the vocation of a detective, notwithstanding its cloak of attendant and, perchance, romantic mystery, oftentimes entails duties that are seriously incompatible with the ethics of self-respect. Such had he encountered. One of the larger craft from British Columbia was steaming into the harbor at Port Townsend, and from the hurricane deck he was keeping an observant eye on the movements of a passenger below. In this, perhaps, there was nothing reprehensibly despicable; the object of his surveillance was an individual whose recognition of the tariff law was characterized by a personal laxity, and, moreover, was one whom he had been specially detailed to watch. Nevertheless, he experienced a sort of contempt for himself—the smuggler was a young girl.

Darkness had long since settled over the Sound, but here and there the saloon lights cast a yellow glare across the deck, and in one of these she had paused, as she emerged from the cabin. Joe was lounging within the shadow of the paddle-box. She was a remarkably pretty girl—slender, graceful, tastefully attired. "Too pretty," he muttered, "to ornament a jail."

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In her hand she carried a small valise, and with many cautious glances about, she bent over it and produced a dark, shapeless object from within. For a moment she appeared to calculate its weight, then she walked quickly toward the guards. Joe leaned over the rail. There she knelt upon the deck, and for a brief interval her further movements were concealed by a huge coil of rope. When at length she rose, her face was lifted; a hasty, frightened look, yet withal a charming face. Then she disappeared within the saloon.

Joe at once swung himself over the rail and dropped from the deck above. The girl had already entered one of the state-rooms, and approaching the coil of rope, he felt carefully about its base. Possibly the contrivance which he there discovered lacked the elements of novelty; nevertheless, he smiled. But he was not particularly pleased.

A fine, yet strong cord had been attached to the hawser, and concealed beneath the rope itself, passed through the hawse pipe; from which point, trailing astern, it was invisible against the dark hull. With a glance toward the cabin he drew it in. Depending from the cord was an elongated rubber bag, of whose contents there could be but little doubt; still he appeared to hesitate. For three days he had been sojourning on British territory in the guise of a fugitive financier, and all because one Miss Edith Wheelock had seen fit to dabble her dainty fingers in the illicit caldron. The rôle, which more than once, perhaps, he had contemplated with equanimity, had proven highly distasteful. But in establishing the girl's guilt would he not condemn her to veritable exile—or worse?

However, he loosened the fastenings of the bag. Within reposed a heavy stone, a reel of cord, and about ten pounds of refined opium. A look of actual disgust crossed his face, and reclosing it, he again dropped it astern.

“Bah!” he muttered. “As well arrest a child for smuggling cakes.”

Scarcely had he regained his former place above, when the steamer ran alongside the pier and an inspector came on board. His search on the saloon deck was of a superficial character. Joe smiled, as he watched him drop his lantern, for a moment, into that coil of rope and then retire. But there, too, his own interest ceased, and turning away, he sauntered down the plank.

As he left the wharf his step was slow, even lazy. In one of

the larger hotels, only a few blocks distant, he knew his report was awaited, and, perhaps, with considerable impatience; but the knowledge in no way hastened his movements. As a matter of fact he was mentally debating whether or not he should make that report in strict accordance with the truth. Aside from any sympathy which he may have felt for his earlier calling, he found it easy to condone the girl's fault. Further than that, too, her crime was very slight when compared with the operations of many others—several of whom, it must be confessed, were his fellow officials.

At the hotel, however, his hesitation vanished, and he ascended at once to his room. An elderly man, sharp of feature, looked up as he entered. Joe nodded, then threw off his heavy coat, and for a moment contemplated his appearance in a mirror. He was fashionably and even elegantly attired, but for once that fact gave him little satisfaction; he was dressing the part of an absconder. His features, though dark and rather handsome, were frank and open as he turned toward his superior.

"Well, I caught her," he said, laconically.

The other rubbed his hands approvingly. "Where is she?" he queried.

"Gone to Seattle, I suppose," was the reply. "I didn't arrest her."

"But the dope?"

"Playing fish, astern," Joe returned, quietly. "There was only a little—about ten pounds."

"But that is a hundred dollars," the other vouchsafed with a slight grimace of annoyance. "Have you forgotten the teaching of our boyhood, which says it is sinful to steal even a pin?"

Joe colored. "No," he retorted; "nor that which refers to one who throws mud when he's rather slimy himself. Oh, I don't mean you in particular, Sam," he added, as that gentleman half rose from his chair. "But there is plenty of the stuff being landed under the protection of brass buttons, and if this glorious country can stand that, I see no reason why it should send this girl to jail—yes, to the devil—for the price of theatre tickets."

"But you are only a small part of this 'glorious country,' my boy, and just at present your oath of office——"

"Can take unto itself another oath, together with my resignation," Joe interposed, coolly. "Sam, this position was given me solely because I am useful, and I took it because I can further

my own political ends by being useful; but I'll certainly resign before swearing the girl into stripes."

The other looked grave; manifestly he recognized that Joe was "useful." But it is to be feared that, in arriving at such a conclusion, he permitted his mind to stray in unofficial paths—Joe's seizures had diverted the public eye from certain operations carried on within governmental circles.

"Your resignation would not help her," he returned, after a pause. "You would be compelled to testify, as long as you remain in the country. However, Joe," he added, more affably, "I think I understand something of your feelings. Over there you have learned that the girl has a crippled father, that she only brings over a few pounds occasionally to help out the family larder, that she is well-bred, pretty, and aside from smuggling, virtuous. But—" and he drew a folded document from his pocket—"just skim over this."

Joe accepted the paper and a change came over his face. There, amid telegraphic reports and memorandums, appeared a sort of biography, together with a photographic likeness of the young girl in question. That she possessed the personal traits and characteristics previously attributed to her was conceded, but the paucity of her transactions was confuted. She was shown to have recently purchased some six hundred pounds of the contraband drug, which, at that moment, was supposed to be stored in a small bathhouse on the beach adjacent to her home.

The other smiled significantly, as Joe returned the paper in silence. "I thought so," he observed, dryly. "Does your California chivalry now discern the crime beneath the romance?"

For a moment Joe made no reply; he was staring retrospectively at the ceiling. Possibly the word romance signified, to him, little else than "one of those books for which the news agents charge double price," but somewhere within his being there was an inherent conviction that womankind should be beyond the pale of ordinary law.

"Yes," he returned, at last, and half musingly, "but even now, Sam, why break her whole life? Of course, you can't let her make any ten-thousand-dollar deals; but why not tell her to quit? Write her that she's on the list, and ask her to stop."

The older man smiled, satirically. "Then you would advise that we amend 'Thou shalt not,' so as to read 'Please don't?'"

"Why not?" Joe queried, bluntly. "The latter is obeyed—sometimes."

The other shrugged his shoulders. "P'rhaps," he returned, nonchalantly. "But that's neither here nor there; the question is whether or not you are going to stay with us—and the case. If you are, you had better let the boys take you back in the launch before daylight; your presence here is hardly consistent with the character of a rascally embezzler. If you are not—well, some one else will."

At this last bit of reasoning Joe rose and picked up his coat. "I'll go back," he said, briefly.

But even as they descended the stairs his companion eyed him suspiciously, and on the pier he laid a detaining hand on his arm.

"Remember," he adjured, "we must have the stuff if it crosses the line."

"Whatever I do, I always do *straight*," Joe returned, carelessly; "whether it be smuggling or chasing smugglers."

Long before daylight Mr. Vernon was again on British soil. It was an easy matter to locate the little building in which the young girl was supposed to have concealed her recent purchase; but not until the following morning did he seek to effect an entrance.

Some two miles above the city he found it, nestling beneath the steep cliffs which, for miles, rise abruptly from that beach. It was a small structure, scarcely more than a shed, and a single rusty padlock barred his entrance. But the people of Victoria, albeit they consider the export of contraband goods legitimate, have stringent laws forbidding burglary, and he dared not break that lock. As he pursued his investigations, too, such a course was still further precluded by approaching voices.

Joe glanced quickly about, then darted up the steep rocks and dropped out of sight on an overhanging ledge. The sounds continued to approach until they were almost beneath him; then they ceased. He raised his head. There was no one within view, but the door of the little building was swinging open. For several minutes he waited, then once more bobbed out of sight, but not for long.

The young girl herself had appeared within the doorway, and she presented a picture which, for the moment, drove all other thoughts from his mind. A dainty bathing costume displayed, rather than concealed, her slender figure; the short skirt falling to her knees and in no way hampering the delicately turned limbs beneath. A broad, rolling collar, much like that

of a sailor, had been carelessly fastened and exposed a glimpse of the soft, white throat, while the fair face above he likened to some beautiful flower which had opened its petals to the morning sun.

She was joined presently by a companion of her own sex, but for this new arrival Joe had no eyes. In her hand Miss Wheelock carried that rubber bag with which he was already acquainted; and as she carefully selected a stone suited to its buoyancy, then concealed both within the cabin, he was recalled to an unpleasant sense of his own position. Even this, however, was lost as she plunged beneath the waves, and later appeared on a small ledge which raised its crest of seaweed some distance from the shore. A mass of reddish-brown hair had escaped from its fastenings, falling about her shoulders and sparkling in the morning sunlight like the veil of some water nymph bedecked with the jewels of its own domain. But the spell was quickly broken. The distance intervening necessitated raising the pitch of conversation, and one word reached Joe—that word was “opium.”

He quickly raised his head and glanced along the beach; then he smiled. There was no one in sight and he could easily gain entrance to that little cabin. The next instant there was a splash in the water below. It was Joe, who had leaped from the overhanging cliff. But in calculating that a man with wet clothes would be taken into that bathhouse he had not given due consideration to the sunken rocks, which everywhere lift their heads through those sands.

He rose, but with a pallid face, here and there flecked with a darker tinge. Then his body was borne slowly away on the waves.

But he was not dead. A darkened room met his gaze, poorly yet neatly furnished, when he regained consciousness. A soft hand, too, was stroking his brow, but he did not look up. His whole body seemed as if imprisoned beneath some ponderous weight. The fluttering of his eyelids, however, had been noted, and a low voice asked :

“Do you want anything?”

For a moment Joe did not reply; his eyes were wandering about the room, and even in his bewildered state he recognized the refined poverty by which he was surrounded. Then his hand strayed laboriously toward the spot in which he should have found a pocket; but he was undressed and in bed.

“Fizz—champagne!” he ejaculated, weakly. “You’ll find

money in my pockets." And with the effort his eyes closed and he was lost to the time which elapsed before his request was granted.

When at last it was held to his lips, he drank feverishly. It seemed to lift that weight, to send the blood coursing once more through his veins, and with a grateful look toward the young girl at his side, he sank back on the pillow.

"I'll—I'll thank you, Miss Wheelock—sometime," he said, drowsily; "I'm sleepy now."

Another day was well advanced when he awakened. The bright sunlight was streaming through an open window, cruelly exposing a worn and threadbare carpet, while even the coverlet was shown to have been mended many times. He was alone, but from the next room voices were audible; and in a peevish, masculine voice he heard the words:

"Yes, but he's a thief."

Albeit there was no one present, Joe colored. On a table near at hand a newspaper had been carelessly tossed aside and seeing it, he felt no doubt that he was the thief mentioned. Therein was a sensational recital of the fictitious crime for which he was supposed to have fled from his own country.

"But, father," came the reply, "I, too, am almost a thief, according to the laws on the other side."

"An absurd comparison! Yours is warfare—subtle, but legitimate—against the senseless tariff."

At this bit of sophistry Joe smiled, notwithstanding the pain which racked his whole frame. And yet, through something of the same reasoning, had his own sympathy for the girl first arisen. She was more to be respected, certainly, than his newly-acquired associates; they had sworn to uphold the laws—were "crooked."

Presently the door opened, and the young girl entered. She was plainly attired, but there was a certain freshness about her presence that was inexpressibly attractive.

"Do you feel any better this morning?" she asked, approaching the bed.

"Oh, lots better," Joe returned, feebly. "But won't you tell me how I happened to be laid on the shelf?"

"You fell off the rocks."

"Yes—I—I remember slipping," he observed, with a smile of conscious falsehood. "But the water must be very hard where I struck."

The young girl laughed. "You fell on a submerged ledge," she returned. "But you must not exert yourself by talking; your leg is broken, and the doctor says you are injured internally."

"What does he know about my internal machinery?" Joe queried, contemptuously; then he paused. A twinge from his leg had warned him that, at least, he was injured in that member. "I didn't mean that exactly," he went on more meekly; "doctors are sometimes good guessers. But when is he coming again? when can I be moved?"

"Not for week or two. But if there is anything you want, or—or any one—anybody you wish notified, I will attend to it."

Joe winced; the girl's hesitation plainly showed that she considered him one of that little colony who on those shores have no friends. Then, as he listened to her account of how she had dragged him from the water, and even assisted in bearing him to her home, a warm color slowly crept over his face.

"Miss Wheelock," he said, seriously, "I am not a thief—the papers speak badly of me, but I'm not a thief."

The girl's face brightened perceptibly, and she murmured some reply; but both her look and words were unnoticed.

"No, I'm not a thief," he continued, musingly. Then his eyes lighted with the flash of a sudden resolution. "But even in that unfortunate guise we may sometimes gain valuable experience. Miss Wheelock, just as I fell off those rocks I heard you say something about opium. I hope you have never thought of dabbling in the stuff. Take the advice of one who has been within the shadow of stone walls, and don't—please don't."

The young girl blushed, then paled. For a moment her lips moved, but no word was uttered; and rising, she hastily left the room.

Joe followed her with his eyes until the door closed. "At least I have tried the 'please don't,'" he muttered.

During the remainder of the day the young girl did not reappear; but on the following day, and thereafter for a week, she was his almost constant attendant. She was a charming nurse, albeit he found her somewhat sparing and even despotic, in the matter of certain vinous and edible delicacies, for which he would have sent. But for this her assiduous care made ample amends; and her touch was light, her fingers infinitely soft, as she occasionally smoothed back the tangled hair from his brow.

It is to be feared, too, that the rascal's hair required attention oftener than was actually necessary. Of this, however, she appeared wholly unconscious, seeming to find a sort of sisterly pleasure in ministering to his wants. Nor did she appear to retain any recollection of his allusion to her smuggling transactions; and she certainly entertained no suspicion that his advice had been other than the grateful utterance of a man who had felt the heavy hand of the law.

But there were moments, and hours, when his own mind would be seriously troubled. At such times he would ask, of himself, how— But the question never attained tangible shape; it was always lost in a vision of that little building on the beach. A strange, even heartless hesitation, perhaps, but he had said that the contents of that cabin should not cross the line. That unforeseen circumstances or gratitude warranted any deviation from his word never occurred to his mind—that word had been given “straight.”

Nevertheless, it must be confessed that there came a time when he wavered. A soft, gray dusk was settling down outside, obscuring the objects within his room, and causing the darker shadows to rise about him like the indistinct fancies of a dream. Through an open doorway he could see the young girl seated before an ancient piano, and the last fading rays of light were playing about her head like a faint, golden halo. The tones welling from beneath her fingers were in perfect harmony with the hour. Fragments of oratorios, scraps of Puritanical psalms, strains from some sad opera—they seemed to speak to him from an unknown world of peace.

Suddenly the music ceased and the young girl hastily left her seat. Then there was a buzzing of conversation, low yet distinctly audible, and in a strange, feminine voice, he heard:

“I shall take over two hundred pounds to-night. The boat will not leave until midnight. Will you come?”

Joe raised his head and his hand trembled on the coverlet, as he awaited the reply. He had hoped to learn nothing further concerning the young girl's movements while he remained under her roof; that albeit he might be censured, and even suspected of complicity, if her plans were carried out in the meantime, he would yet be blameless in his own mind.

But Miss Wheelock's answer was inaudible.

As the stranger continued to lay bare the course which she proposed following, he glanced quickly about the room, as if

seeking some escape. Then he reached out and tapped a small bell which had been left beside his bed.

Several minutes elapsed before Miss Wheelock appeared.

"I did not mean to leave you in darkness so long," she said, apologetically, as she entered.

"It's not the darkness," Joe returned, in a sort of smothered tone; "but I—I thought I heard you talking with a lady, and—and that you might not like me to hear. Girls sometimes don't, you know," he added, with a forced smile.

The young girl started. "Could you hear what we said?" she asked, quickly.

"No—nothing. And yet I did, too! I thought I heard her ask you to go across to-night. Are you going?"

"I scarcely think I can; my father——"

"You're not going—you're not?" Joe interposed, with considerable eagerness.

"No; but if you wish——"

"No, no! Oh, no!" Joe again broke in. Then his face brightened; if she was not going, he saw an easy solution of the entire difficulty. "No," he continued, in a lighter tone, "I merely intended asking you to convey a message for me. But I can send it by wire as well—even better."

For the first time the girl appeared animated by some slight distrust.

"Is it important?" she asked, half suspiciously.

But he had regained a perfect composure. "Not very," he returned, carelessly; "only a request for some clothes."

Such, too, was the gist of a message which, later on, she conveyed to the office for him. But in those seemingly harmless words there was vastly more than appeared to the ordinary observer, and he smiled as she left the room. Nor did his face belie his feelings, albeit he had condemned the young girl's opium. Her impoverished surroundings, however, had long since convinced him that she was not its individual owner, and if she was not to be interested in its transportation, she certainly would suffer in no way through its confiscation. For her friend he was not in the least concerned; she, being able to possess such a quantity of the drug, could afford to lose it.

A dainty breakfast was awaiting him beside the bed when he awakened on the following morning, but for a brief interval he gave it little attention. An aged man was laboriously hobbling about his room with the aid of a crutch, seemingly engaged in

arranging the few bits of furniture in their proper places. It was Miss Wheelock's father, but his presence there was strange, and for several moments Joe watched him in silence.

"Is your daughter ill?" he asked, at last.

The old man looked up with a start, then limped toward the door.

"No," he returned, briefly, and almost as if fearing some further inquiry, disappeared.

For a moment Joe stared after him blankly, then turned toward his breakfast. But his face wore a troubled look, and it deepened as the day wore slowly away and he was still left alone. For the first time, too, his confinement became exceedingly irksome, and not until late in the afternoon was it broken.

Lulled by the chattering of the birds outside his window he had fallen into a d \acute{o} ze, when suddenly he heard the young girl's voice. His face lighted with actual pleasure as she appeared, but it was of short duration. Her face was haggard, her eyelids red and swollen, and she crossed the floor with an odd, stiff step, as if laboring under some serious depression.

"Are you sick?" he asked, anxiously. "Your father said you were not."

"My father didn't know," she returned in a dull tone, and, sinking into a low chair, she buried her face in her hands.

Joe followed her movements with a pained expression. "I wouldn't give up like that," he said, gently. "Send for a doctor—two doctors, they'll fix you up."

But the girl made no reply. An occasional upheaval of her shoulders told that she was weeping, and the agitation she was undergoing inwardly seemed to have left her no sense of outward perception.

At last she looked up.

"Doctors cannot help me," she said, despondently. "I have been arrested—am even now under bail."

Joe started from his pillow, and every trace of color vanished from his face. But he did not speak. It all came to him in an instant—she, and not her friend, had been apprehended through his message. Several times his lips parted as if to speak, but he seemed to find the words difficult of utterance. And yet there was one chance that all might be well.

"Did—did they secure the opium?" he faltered at last.

"I had none; I intended never to smuggle any more," was the apathetic reply.

“ But your friend's—the two hundred pounds ? ”

“ That was not mine ; I only went over with her. But her husband is one of the officers, and she——” There the girl paused, and a change came over her face. “ But you heard—you——”

Joe raised his hand as if to ward off a blow. He seemed animated by a strange, even desperate calmness.

“ Yes,” he said in a low tone, “ I heard everything, and—and—I caused your arrest. But you shall not suffer. They have broken their agreement with me ; I shall break mine. You were arrested on an old charge, Miss Wheelock, and I am the only witness against you. I shall remain here in earnest now.”

The young girl regarded him with a dazed, vacant look ; then a tinge of color slowly crept into her cheek, and, rising, she turned toward the door. Her step was slow, almost like one groping in the dark ; and Joe's eyes followed her with a longing look. But she did not turn back.

It was long after midnight when she returned. The door swung silently open, and for a brief moment her face was turned toward the bed with a sad, reproachful look. Then she glided across the room, and once more her hand smoothed back the hair on his brow.

But Joe was not asleep, and his eyelids lifted.

“ Edith,” he said, softly, “ I did not mean to have *you* arrested. But they could not ask me to testify against my wife. Will you go back with me ? ”

There was no reply. The young girl slowly sank upon her knees, and her face was buried in the pillow beside his own. From beneath there came the low murmur of a sob ; but the tears were not of sorrow.



WHAT WAS IT?*

BY LUCY CLEVELAND



HE told it himself, on his word of honor as gentleman and judge," I said again, as my large party of listeners drew their chairs nearer the slowly-dying embers on the old open hearth around which we had been warming (or cooling) the evening by pallid ghost-tales and psychic recitals. "I will give it to you as he gave it to me on the voyage from New York to Liverpool." I filled my pipe again, reached over for a match, lighted, and puffed away contentedly.

We were all assembled in the cosy smoking-room of B—— Manor. The ladies, too. It was the "day after" Lady L——'s long anticipated masquerade ball. There was a consequent laxity of emotion. Whereupon, the feminine mind had suggested ghost stories and other light shocks to dynamite the evening into something bearable. I was the guest, for a famous fortnight, of Lord L——, at his fine old country-seat in ——shire. We had made acquaintance in Colorado when milord was touring the "States." We had done the Yosemite together, Pike's Peak, the Lick Observatory, a buffalo hunt, a week with Sitting Bull—and other buoyant excursions, and had grown into good comradeship which ended, for me, in a jolly old invitation to B—— Manor the ensuing year. It was the last evening of my stay. I was due in London the following afternoon.

The stories had rolled out, one by one, received with shouts of laughter as every shade melted into the sunshine of the fire. I had promised at dinner to give them all something really real, an unaccounted-for spook, data that were yea and Amen, and no back door to it. Literally, no back door to it (as you will see). 'Pon my soul, as I began the creepy thing, as I recall the creepy thing now, what the ladies call "cold chills" begin an excursion on my spinal column, and I am glad to escape into the sunshine of Broadway and the coquetry of cable-cars.

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An Unaccounted-for Spectre in the Dominion of the Unknown :

This introduction was received with "*Hear ! Hear !*" from the men, the ladies contributing appropriate little shudders very becoming to their pretty white shoulders.

Yes, he told it to me himself on his word of honor as gentleman and judge, I began. We were pacing the deck of the Teutonic in March, 188-. It was a couple of days after a stiff gale. The old gentleman couldn't stand it any longer below; the wind had abated its fury, and the sky was clear. But there was a tremendous swell on, and a yeasty expanse of white caps across the climax of blue—a grand mid-ocean day——

"A water-spirit?"——"An Undine?"——"A Kühleborn?"——"Mother Cary shepherding her chickens through the foam?"——"The wraith of the Albatross?"——"The Resurrected Ancient Mariner?"——"I have it!—Caliban!"——

The questions were tossed at me from twenty charming lips. What can a man do under those circumstances?

"Let him go on!" thundered the head of the house of L——. "Proceed, Hale."

A grand mid-ocean day.

"How curious and unaccountable the association of ideas!" the old judge said to me, as he buttoned his topcoat closer around the neck and pointed away to the foam-fringe that formed and vanished, fingered and fashioned the edges of wave; "the faces I can make out in the drift of those fleecy clouds of spray recall to me the Vision-Face as I saw it, as I shall never forget it, as I know not when I shall see it again." He laughed, but it was a sober laugh.

"Here are the facts, Hale, as I promised to give them to you last night :

"I was returning north from Tampa, Fla., whither I had been summoned to try a case—Marine Insurance (scuttling a vessel at sea). I had taken with me south my old body-servant, Digby, formerly a slave, devoted to my person and interests for twenty good years and more, a darkey, clever-headed, cunning, a man no fool; altogether a level-headed person. I returned by sea, the physicians having recommended every chance of ocean-air and the enforced repose of even a coasting voyage. It was on the return trip that I first noticed a peculiar change in Digby—alert always, active, prompt and careful of the minutest matters concerning me and mine, the sudden

transition—organic change you might call it—was quite remarkable.

“‘What ails you, Digby?’ I said one day as I caught the man standing helplessly in my cabin, when he should have been blacking my boots, staring out before him into vacancy. His eyes were dilating in a way that would have been ridiculous if there had not been something about the man, whose attitude and expression demanded my attention. His teeth were chattering.

“‘De good Lord know, massah. Digby see him!’ He shook all over.

“‘See the Lord, Digby?’ I laughed. ‘Not yet for you, I fancy, with that avoirdupois. Go about your business. I am waiting for my boots,’ I added sternly. But the fellow did not move, and only pointed into vacancy again.

“‘De ole man, massah. He come, and beckon. De har on his head am white as dat ar foam out dar,’ he indicated by pointing through the port-hole. ‘He stand still. He mighty tall. He beckon right awful, massah.’

“I believe I meant to be thoroughly angry. But a sudden, queer, unaccountable feeling came over me, as if a cold breath from the climate of the supernatural. I could not shake it off. No, not when Digby had quite recovered himself, and was *ha-ha-ha-ing* and *ya-ya-ya-ing*, twenty-six white teeth gleaming, cracking some monstrous darkey joke picked up in Tampa.

“It was one evening before our arrival in New York. Digby had been dancing a breakdown for the amusement of captain and crew, to the accompaniment of the purser’s fiddle and the shouts of the passengers. A warm June moonlight lay across the deck, and in its golden, poetic light, my grotesque lackey cracked his heels and grimaced and whistled and thumped, to a plantation tune of long ago. Suddenly he stopped—stood still, erect, in an attitude of listening. Waited. Listened again. Then nodded awkwardly to his audience, and disappeared down the companionway. I followed him, making some inadequate apology for his withdrawal, and found him as I expected, standing again in the centre of my little stateroom, staring into vacancy.

“‘Digby!’ I called. ‘Confound you! What’s the matter with you?’

“‘He come again, massah. He stand right still. He awful. Tall. Tall as dat ar pine-tree outside ole massah’s home in

Georgia. He beckon and wait. He got eyes what never shake a second. He look at Digby right down to de liver. O Lord a marcy, he come again! Now he gone!

"The fellow's face relaxed. He sank upon the sofa as if exhausted. His eyes half closed as if unable to sustain some unseen eyeballs. I got him on his feet again by coaxing, swearing and general threatening, and he left the stateroom with a low mutter (which I overheard):

"'Massah see him some day. Digby mighty sure o' that. O Lord, keep him off——'

"And I did 'see him' one day. But of this, later.

"At home once more, I decided to say nothing about the matter to my wife, that I might notice if she observed anything unusual in my old valet's conduct. I did not have to wait long. We had invited some friends to dine with us, the Saturday after my return—a judge, two senators, a clergyman and an author—a right honorable company," the judge laughed. "Fifteen minutes before our guests were announced, my wife came to my dressing-room with a face of white dismay——

"'For Heaven's sake, John, come down to Digby. He is standing in the butler's pantry nodding to the air, with eyes almost out of his head. Not a thing is on the table, and they will be here in fifteen minutes.'

"I followed her hastily downstairs. There he was, as I had found him again and again, staring into the tenantless air, but this time with a cold glow on his face that made my pulses stand still. Yes, on that African countenance some form from the spirit-world was reflected. I saw it as in a mirror. The sudden, queer, unaccountable feeling I have mentioned on the return from Tampa, came over me. I cannot explain it. I have called it a cold breath from the climate of the supernatural, as if I believed in Fahrenheit degrees in that colorless country. But it is not 'colorless.' It has degrees of latitude—psychic or soul-latitude. IT IS! You recall my nearness to death last year? All the papers had it. As I lay still, conscious, all my faculties alert to grasp the edges of time which, said the physicians, were slipping beneath my feet—suddenly, smoothly, yea, most divinely, across my room moved the hem of a white garment. It came on. (The nurses and physicians had left me for a moment. I was alone.) The unuttered grandeur of that broadening light—was it the fringe of eternity's veil lifting? A sifting sweep—a breathless moment as it flowed towards me. Then—it faded—

and went. And one hour afterwards, the physicians said I was saved (for time). When life presses," the old gentleman sighed, "I regret that I could not have gone into that strange light into its own domain of white—its prism of perfection. Not a colorless country.

"I could not scold my old servant, who was seeing something unrevealed to me. We managed the 'dinner.' I began to feel a certain awe of Digby.

"What I am now about to relate, you must believe on my word of honor as a gentleman—and judge." He smiled. "The butler's pantry opens into our dining-room, of course, directly—without any entry or passageway between. There is no means of egress, *save through the dining-room*. An awkward arrangement I had declared when I bought the house. I had always intended to have a door cut through to the hall, but it was one of those 'always intended's' which you never accomplish—absence, illness, and a hundred minor cares preventing. There was one window only to this pantry. A window that opened on the courtyard. That had strong iron bars put to it, naturally (for fear of robbers)—bars an inch apart, through which a sunbeam, or its shadow, only could pass. *There was no exit from this pantry, remember, save through the dining-room.*

"One afternoon my wife had taken her fancy-work down to the dining-room. Papering and painting were going on in the library. She was sitting beside our large open hearth, *facing the pantry and its one door into the dining-room*. Digby was in the pantry. She heard him busy with the silver and glass. She called to him from time to time; and from time to time he thrust his black head through the door 'to speak to missus 'bout dat ar berry-glass what Hallelujah Jack—(the button-boy, 'Hal' for short)—broke last week, missus.'

"She told me she felt strangely restless as the twilight deepened, fearing I was detained in town—fearing an accident on the road, or the blocked conditions owing to the sudden snow-storm. She told me she was glad to hear Digby's cheerful—

'Down in de meadows,
As I was a-walkin',' etc.

Suddenly, it became very quiet. The chink of the silver and glass in the pantry stopped.

"Digby! I want you a moment,' my wife called.

"But it was all very still.

“‘ Digby! Do you hear? I wish to speak to you. Come here directly!’

“There was no response.

“‘ Digby! ——’

“My wife got up from her seat opposite the pantry *through whose one door of exit no one had passed*. She moved towards it. But, she tells me, an untravelled dread suddenly wrapped her, swathed her like a shadow *that moves with an unseen Object, and moves forward, because that Object is moving*. She grasped the door as if for support, and flung it open.

“Great Heavens! The pantry was empty. There was no Digby. There was no sound. There was nothing. Her cry summoned the servants of the household. Search for him? Of what use? He had disappeared, *and not through the one doorway, and not through the only exit—the dining-room*. No one passed through it through those two hours my wife sat there alone, save for Digby’s, cheerful whistle and song in the pantry beyond. The house was searched. The village notified. I advertised him in the papers. But I have never seen him. No one has ever heard of him from that day.”

The judge stopped a moment, and again looked off, afar to the white foam-fingers rising along the red sunset waves.

“Let me stop to tell you one thing,” he added, letting each word drop slowly, his face more solemn than I had ever seen it. “As I came home that evening—the night of Digby’s disappearance—as I crossed the garden snows, beautiful, to my thinking, in their late pink twilight—that twin of dawn—I was arrested by seeing a figure standing by the little brook whose summer flow and chatter is our delight, frozen now and still and white and waiting—I saw a figure standing by the voiceless brook. The figure was tall. Very tall. How was it that the words came with one mighty rush into my memory:

“‘Tall as dat ar pine-tree outside ole massah’s house in Georgia. He stand right still. He awful.’

“Yes. ‘He awful.’

“I dared not move.”

“The figure went—not faded—into the red twilight, that mate of morning. I shall see It again—heaven knows when.

“WHAT WAS IT?”

AN EXPRESS IDYL

BY ARTHUR GRIFFITHS

Scene: York station. Time: 3 p. m. The South Express, known commonly as "The Flying Scotchman," is at the platform, and on the point of starting.



HE has taken his seat, and is snugly ensconced in the far end of a first-class compartment. He is straight from the moors—the “dittos,” deer-stalker cap, gun-case in rack, show that; a gentleman, young, well-born, well-to-do, all these are indicated by his bright, handsome face, aristocratic features, and altogether prosperous, self-satisfied air.

He—There—3:05! Safe to be alone as far as Grantham. I think I may smoke. (Takes out a cigarette-case and lights up. Suddenly the carriage door is thrown open.)

Guard (frantically)—In with you, Miss—train is moving! All right! (to engine-driver. Whistles.)

She (falling into her place like a bundle of old clothes)—Ah! (hysterically.) Oh, what a fool I've been! (Bursts into a paroxysm of tears.)

He (mentally, interested at once)—My word! Here's a rum go! Poor dear, how she sobs! (Examines her attentively.) Quite the little lady, too! Neat turn-out; good fit. Wish I could see her face!

She (raising her head, and with a quick gesture tearing at her hat, which she throws off, as though it hurt her)—Oh, the cur! To think that I should have believed in him, trusted him! The coward! the cur!

He (mentally)—There's a him in it then. A bad lot, too, I take it, to have ill-used so sweet a “her.” Clear skin, nice face, and what eyes! The tears improved them I think. (Their eyes met.) Hope you do not mind (aloud, with an almost imperceptible wave of the cigarette).

She (absently)—Mind what? You? (abruptly.) Not in the least!

He (meekly)—I meant the smoke. I never presumed to think you would object to me or my presence here. Besides, it's not my fault quite. I'd leave the carriage if I could.

She—Oh, I'm sure I don't care! Why should I care—for anything? I'm far too miserable. (A fierce sob.)

He (seriously)—I am so sorry for you! You seem in terrible trouble. Is there anything I can do for you? I hardly like to intrude, but no man—no gentleman—could see a lady in such distress without offering his help.

She (gratefully, but with fresh tears)—You are very good, very kind; but if you would please leave me alone—leave me to my own thoughts——

He—They cannot be pleasant thoughts, I'm sure. Far better look at the papers. Will you have *Punch*, or this week's *World*? They're both here.

She—I could not see to read them, thank you.

He—Then let me talk to you. (Rises and moves a seat nearer.)

She—No, no! you must not talk to me! I don't know who you are. I've never seen you; never met you before.

He—Let me introduce myself then. My name is Fitz-Hugh.

She—That's not enough. Some one else must introduce you.

He (raising his hand to the communicator)—Shall I stop the train and get the guard to introduce me? He knows me.

She (laughing, in spite of herself)—No, please. That would make us both look ridiculous. I will accept the inevitable. I know some Fitz-Hughs (a pause)—but I don't like them.

He—A bad lookout for me! Hope they're no relations of mine. What part of the country?

She—Oh, near us; near—but I have hardly met them; only I hear such things about them from my guardian; it is he who is always abusing them. They are such disagreeable neighbors, he says: the mother gives herself such airs, and the sons are so stuck-up.

He—That must be painful for them. Are there many of them, and are they all like that?

She—Three or four are. I don't know about the eldest; I've never seen him at all. No one has much. He owns the estates, has the title, but he's always away, shooting or travelling about the world. He's half a wild man, I believe.

He—What a curious person? I should be very sorry to resemble him. And I don't think I'm at all stuck-up. So your guardian hates the Fitz-Hughs? Perhaps it's a little his fault.

She—I dare say. He's horrid! I can't bear him!

He—Won't let you do foolish things, perhaps?

She (blushes crimson)—What do you mean?

He—You've just been doing something foolish, haven't you? I don't want to presume—I would not force your confidence for the world; but, you know, confession is good for the soul.

She (still scarlet)—I certainly shall tell you nothing! I wonder how you dare to ask! You are taking a very great liberty. I think you are exceedingly rude.

He—No, indeed no! Nothing was further from my intentions. I only thought I might be able to help you. I should be so glad to be of use. I mean it. Won't you trust me?

She—Oh, I can't! I can't talk of it! I think (breaks and sobs outright)—I think I am the most wretched, miserable girl alive!

He (soothingly, tenderly)—You poor, dear child! What is it then? What has vexed you? Don't cry. Come and tell me all about it; you'll be ever so much better then. What did he do?

She (quickly, looking up at him through her tears)—He? How do you know? Were you at Scarborough? I never told you about Captain Bell.

He—Yet I knew. Of course, I was certain there must be a he. What else would make a little woman cry? But he's not worth it, I assure you. Treat him with the contempt he deserves. He's a low snob.

She—How do you know that? Where have you met him?

He—I never met him in all my life, and yet I know exactly what he has done. I consider him an utter cad, and I hate him!

She—Why, what has he done to you?

He—Nothing to me. It's what he's done to you. He has treated you most infamously! I know that.

She—I never told you so.

He—You said—well, you implied something of the sort—at any rate I can make a shrewd guess. Shall I tell you what I think occurred?

She—You may talk any nonsense you please.

He—It is not so bad to talk as to act nonsensically. But

listen. Is this right? You met Captain Bell at Scarborough; he paid you great attention, you fancied yourself in love with him—don't interrupt me, please. Then he humbugged you into believing that he was desperately in love with you, and he persuaded you to meet him at York Station so that you might run away. Shall I go on?

She (with hanging head, her ungloved forefinger following the pattern of her cloth skirt)—I cannot prevent you.

He—But you'd rather not hear? I am not such a brute, I hope, as to insist. I only wanted to show you that I knew what I was talking about, and to prove the interest I take in you.

She (shyly)—You are very good, I'm sure. I don't understand why you should be so kind. You are a perfect stranger.

He—Don't be too sure of that. I know you, and have known you—at any rate, of you—all your life, Miss—Brignolles.

She (starts and blushes deeply)—Who are you? At any rate, I don't know you.

He—Your nearest neighbor at home, Lord Fitz-Hugh—the half-wild man.

She (stammering and in great confusion)—Dear, dear! how stupid I've been! You are not annoyed, I hope? But you see I could not know, could I? And—and——

He—I did not look half wild enough, eh? Well, I'll forgive you, but only on condition that you tell me, honestly, what you think of me.

She—Oh, I could not, really! It's quite impossible. You see, I, I—I have not come to any decided opinion; it's far too soon. I hardly know you at all. Why, we have not been together, in this carriage, I mean, more than five or ten minutes.

He (taking out his watch)—One hour and three-quarters, Miss Brignolles, that's all.

She—I could not have believed it. The time has positively flown.

He—Pleasant company, perhaps? Or have I no claim to that compliment? Anyway, I'm afraid—we have just a quarter of an hour before we reach Grantham—you won't enjoy that last quarter of an hour so much as the rest.

She—Why not? Why should it be any different?

He—Because—you will not be very angry, I hope—I am going to read you a lecture; to speak to you very seriously. Don't frown; what I am going to say is entirely for your good. I am going to take you to task.

She (stiffly)—By what right, Lord Fitz-Hugh, do you presume to interfere in my affairs?

He—I have no right; I make no claim to it, but I shall do it, all the same, and before we get to Grantham. After that I will change carriages, and I will not inflict myself on you further, if you so wish. But now you must, you shall listen to me.

She (coloring, but with a brave, rather angry voice)—Is this generous, Lord Fitz-Hugh? Is it gentlemanlike?

He (in a grave, solemn voice)—It is my duty to point out to you—

She (hotly)—How so? You have no authority over me. What you call duty I call impertinence.

He (stolidly continuing)—My duty as an old friend—

She—Not of mine.

He—Of your family, your father and mother. I knew them both, and owe both many kindnesses—your mother especially, for I was, like you, motherless when quite young. What would your dear mother have said, Miss Brignolles, to this escapade? Would you have put her to such pain? Or your father, so strict and honorable?

She (rather nervously)—Don't, don't, please! say no more. It's too cruel.

He—You have made a most terrible, irreparable mistake. You rashly, foolishly, put yourself, all you possess, all you hold most dear, entirely at the mercy of a selfish, designing scoundrel.

She (looking at him bravely, but with tearful eyes and quivering lips)—Is it necessary, is it kind, is it chivalrous, to go on like this? I was wrong, I know I was wrong, but I am so miserable. Oh—oh! (breaking down completely and sobbing hysterically hides her face in the cushions.)

He (quite concerned)—I had no idea. I am so sorry. I have gone too far—but never mind. Don't think of it again; I will make it all right, only do not cry so bitterly. What on earth shall I do with her? (Finding his words have no effect, takes her ungloved hand and pats it hard; then, with a sudden impulse, lifts it to his lips and kisses it.)

(Now the train begins to slacken speed, and just as it runs in at the Grantham platform she recovers herself.)

She (faintly)—Where am I? What has happened? (Then finding her hand in his, draws it quickly away.) Oh, Lord Fitz-Hugh, how wicked, how unfair!

He (much confused)—I thought you had fainted. I did not

know what to do. Let me get you something—a cup of hot tea. (Jumps hastily from the carriage, which is nearly the last of the train, and runs up the platform to the refreshment room.)

One Railway Official (to another)—That's them; you may take your oath.

The Other—Sure enough. Why, I saw him kissing of her, right opposite the window, as bold as brass, just when the train ran in.

First Official—Best call Mr. Perks; I'll stay by the compartment.

Second Official—And I'll watch my gentleman.

(Lord Fitz-Hugh returns, followed by a page boy, with tea, fruit, cakes.)

Lord F. (entering the carriage)—Here, hand it all over—pay with that and keep the rest. What do you want? You can't come in here (to a station superintendent in uniform). This compartment is engaged. We wish to be alone.

Mr. Perks (coolly, and rather insolently)—That is why I am coming in.

Lord F. (haughtily)—We'll soon see about that. Call the station——

Mr. P.—The station-master himself gave me my orders. I am to travel up to London with this young lady and her—her—her (at a loss)—that don't matter much. The officers of the court shall settle that when we get to King's Cross. So make way, please, or you'll both be detained.

(The train moves on. Lord F. looks in utter amazement at Miss Brignolles, who, by this time, has quite recovered. She is drinking her tea with great relish, her face most demure, but a merry twinkle in her eyes.)

Miss B. (looking up suddenly and meeting his bewildered gaze)—I'm afraid it's rather serious. The court won't be trifled with——

Mr. Perks—As you'll find.

Lord F. (turning on him hotly)—Look here, leave us alone, or I'll pitch you out of the window. You've no station-master now at your back. (To Miss Brignolles, in a whisper.) What does it all mean? What court?

Miss B. (also whispering)—The Court of Chancery. I'm a ward.

Mr. Perks—Whispering ain't allowed.

Lord F. (suddenly bursting into a good-humored laugh)—

Come, come, my good fellow, let's make friends, I shan't have another chance, you know. I suppose they'll separate us at King's Cross.

Mr. Perks (jauntily)—No fear. You'll find your carriage waiting—Black Maria, and attendants, a couple of 'em, who will give you every assistance—to Holloway Gaol.

Lord F. (who has taken out his purse)—You're married? I thought so. Do you remember when you were courting? Ah! well, then, do a friendly thing. Let's have our talk all to ourselves.

Mr. Perks (grinning and fingering the five-pound note)—I can't find it in my heart to say no. A real pair of turtle-doves.

Lord F.—You know I shall be shut up for ever so long; I may not see my sweetheart again for months.

Miss B. (protesting, *sotto voce*)—You are getting on too fast, Lord Fitz—

Lord F. (in a quick whisper)—Hush, hush! Not that name please, or you'll spoil all. I am playing a part—that of Captain Bell. I don't know his Christian name, but call me Freddie, dearest Freddie, if you don't mind. (Aside) I shall not. And you must let me call you—Emmeline, isn't it—or my love, my own darling love, sweetest pet, just to keep up the pretense.

Miss B. (with a heightened color, but laughing)—You must have played the part before, Lord—Frederick, I mean—it comes so pat.

Lord F.—But you must play it, too—we must pretend—(mentally) hanged if there's much pretense on my part—pretend that we are in love with each other.

Miss B. (with a coquettish shake of her head)—Oh, I couldn't, really! It would be really too absurd, and altogether too difficult.

Lord F.—Not for me. (Tries to take her hand, but she resists.) I assure you it's in the part. True lovers always hold each other's hands. Didn't Captain Bell ever do it? Lucky dog, how I wish I were he; that is, if you still care for him.

Miss B. (emphatically)—I don't, I never did, I believe; only he was so persevering, and I thought him better—less hateful, I mean—than the other.

Lord F. (deeply interested)—There was some one else, eh? Tell me all about it. It will be a relief, perhaps; at any rate, it will help you to pass away the time—prevent you from feeling bored.

Miss B.—I'm not easily bored; but I will tell you, if you like. It was my guardian's son, Archie Quibble, a lawyer like his father—not nice at all—like his father in that, too. They had him down with them at Scarborough, and did all they could to bring us together. I saw it directly; but I couldn't bear him.

Lord F.—An eye to the main chance—the Quibbles.

Miss B.—They wanted me to engage myself, but keep it quiet until after I was twenty-one—next year. And they bothered me so, I fell back on Captain Bell. He was very kind, and I thought I liked him—and what was I to do? I seemed to be quite friendless.

Lord F.—You don't feel like that now, I hope? (Looking at her earnestly, and again taking her hand, this time without opposition, although presently she withdraws it.) Have I offended you? I should be sorry to do that. I want you to look upon me as a friend, as your very best friend. Do you believe that? I will prove it yet.

Miss B. (dropping her eyes, after one eloquent glance at his)—I think you are very kind to me, too kind, kinder than I deserve, Lord Fitz—

Lord F.—Freddie, please. You needn't mind. It's my real name. Do you like it as well as Captain Bell's? What was his?

Miss B.—Something horrid. What does it matter? I never want to hear it or see him again.

Lord F.—You will have to hear the name of Bell once or twice more. Remember, I am Captain Bell. I shall presently answer to it, be taken into custody as Captain Bell, and spend the night in prison.

Miss B. (excitedly)—Oh, no, no, no! You must not suffer that ignominy. You must say who you are. If you don't, I shall never forgive myself if you were so awfully punished for some one else's fault.

Lord F.—It won't hurt me, my dear child; I have gone through far worse. A night in jail—I shall have a bed—is luxury to what I've endured on the prairies, or in the desert, or on the African veldt. Besides, even if it is far worse, it is necessary, indispensable. It is the only way to save appearances, to put you quite right with the court and before the world.

Miss B. (in a frightened, timid voice)—How? What do you mean? What shall you do?

Lord F.—Go to jail like a lamb—as Captain Bell. To-mor-

row they'll drag me before one of the Vice-Chancellors—as Captain Bell. His lordship will read me a severe lecture, and still as Captain Bell, sentence me to six months, a year perhaps, for contempt of court.

Miss B.—That is the awful part of it, and I—I mean we—I mean your friends—will not see you for all that time.

Lord F.—And you would be sorry for that, wouldn't you? Well, I can promise you shall see me again within three days, for I shall laugh in the judge's face and point out the mistake he has made. They'll soon let me go, you may depend. Even if they were inclined to be disagreeable, and the judge might say—

Miss B. (anxiously)—What?

Lord F.—That the whole thing was planned; that Captain Bell was a man of straw; that you came really to meet me at York Station.

Miss B. (blushing crimson)—Oh, Lord Fitz-Hugh!

Lord F.—Freddie, if you please. Why are you so shocked? Would it be very much against the grain if I tried to supplant Captain Bell? What would you say to me if I asked you?

Miss B. (almost inarticulate)—Oh, don't; please don't!

Lord F.—Well, if I asked the Vice-Chancellor, I don't think he would say "No," provided I may tell him that you agree.

Miss B. (in a low voice)—But suppose he did say "No"; he is very stern, very hard to please. This is why Mr. Quibble wished to wait till I was twenty-one.

Lord F. (complacently)—I think I can satisfy him I am an eligible party. I have no fears of him. But you, may I hope, will give me what I want? This. (Once more taking her hand and kissing it as he draws her toward himself.)

Miss B.—Oh, oh, you mustn't—

Mr. Perks (gruffly, becoming very official)—Come, drop that; 'tain't in the contract. Besides, we're just running into King's Cross. Maybe the Lord Chancellor himself's on the platform. What would he say if he caught you at it?

(The train glides slowly in; porters accompany it, running alongside; there is a crowd, expectant, cabs and carriages in the distance, and some excitement.)

Mr. Perks—You'll just keep your places, please, while I make my report.

(Leaves carriage, which he locks behind him, and stands there till he is joined by a small posse of people, the station-

master, followed by two tipstaves of the Court of Chancery; last of all, a fussy, plethoric-looking old gentleman.)

Mr. Perks (pointing his thumb over his shoulder)—There they are.

Old Gentleman—Take him. Handcuff him if he resists. You have your warrant.

Lord F.—Mr. Quibble, I think ?

Old Gentleman—Lord Fitz-Hugh !

Lord F.—At your service. The young lady—let me hand her over to you; my duty is done. I have escorted her safely to town. And these gentlemen—friends of yours? What do you want? (to the tipstaves.)

First Tipstaff—We arrest you, Captain Bell.

Mr. Quibble (hastily interposing)—No, no! it's all a mistake. This is Lord Fitz-Hugh. Don't touch him; an action would lie for false imprisonment.

Lord F.—So I should think (haughtily). Who dares to interfere with me? Stand aside! Good-day, Mr. Perks; I will represent your service to the directors. *Au revoir*, Miss Brignolles. I shall do myself the pleasure of calling on you tomorrow, at—

Miss B.—Mr. Quibble's, Bryanston Square. Come early, and (gayly looking at Mr. Quibble) stay to lunch.

Mr. Q. (hesitatingly)—Oh, I should be delighted, honored, but my wife is out of town, and all my establishment. I fear it will be hardly possible—

Lord F.—Never mind; don't apologize. I'll take her out to lunch instead. We'll ask the Vice-Chancellor. He shall do propriety. Good-bye. I see my brougham over there.

(Exit, after shaking hands warmly with Miss Brignolles, leaving Mr. Quibble, Perks, and the tipstaves looking at each other in breathless, speechless, hopeless amazement, while Miss Brignolles laughs aloud in childish glee.)



ETCHING: THE SPARROW

BY IVAN TOURGUENEFF



RETURNED home from the chase and wandered through an alley in my garden. My dog, Treasure, bounded before me.

Suddenly he checked himself and moved forward cautiously, as if he scented game.

I glanced down the alley, and perceived a young sparrow with a yellow beak and down upon its head. He had fallen out of the nest (the wind was shaking the beeches in the alley violently), and lay motionless and helpless on the ground, with his little, unfledged wings extended.

The dog approached it softly, when suddenly an old sparrow, with a black breast, quitted a neighboring tree, dropped like a stone right before the dog's nose, and with ruffled plumage and chirping desperately and pitifully, sprang twice at the open, grinning mouth.

He had come to protect his little one at the cost of his own life. His little body trembled all over, his voice was hoarse, he was in an agony—he offered himself.

The dog must have seemed a gigantic monster to him. But, in spite of that, he had not remained safe on his lofty bough. A Power stronger than his own will had forced him down.

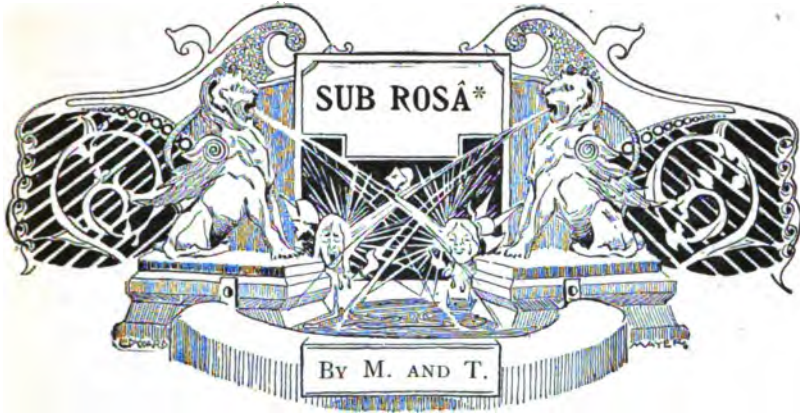
Treasure stood still and turned away. * * * It seemed as if he also felt this Power.

I hastened to call the discomfited dog back, and went away with a feeling of respect.

Yes; smile not! I felt a respect for this heroic little bird, and for the depth of his paternal love.

Love, I reflected, is stronger than death and fear of death; it is love alone that supports and animates all.





THE HON. MRS. MALTRAVERS.

FRASER, *her Gardener, ancient, autocratic, and well-meaning.*

Scene: A conservatory.

MRS. MALTRAVERS—"It is very singular, Fraser, that we shouldn't have a single camelia. Now Sir Francis' houses—I saw them only the other day—are full of them."

Fraser—"There's a vulgarity, mum, about camelias as it doesn't surprise me Sir Francis—begging your pardon if he's a partickler friend of yours—should have a heap of 'em. A nasty, showy shrub is a camelia, to my thinking, mum. As gaudy as you please for a little; but pick 'em, and in ten minutes they're as brown as brown—and no good for nothing. It's hallegorical, to my thinking, mum."

Mrs. Maltravers—"Allegorical! What in the world do you mean, Fraser?"

Fraser—"Well, mum, it's this: Sir Francis' walet tells master's walet, and master's walet he tells me, as how Sir Francis has lost a lot of money lately, and, camelias or no camelias, ain't half as rich as you'd think. 'Took to the turf,' says master's walet to me only this very morning. 'No fortun'll stand that, Chawls,' says I, sententious like. 'I believe you, Mr. Fraser,' says he. 'It's a pore lookout for our Miss Lyddy,' says I, 'as they're going to marry to Sir Francis, and I'll make it my dooty to let the missus know his goings on.'"

*From Black and White.

Mrs. Maltravers (with dignity)—“ Really, Fraser, you are excessively kind to busy yourself so much with my—private affairs. Let me recommend you to look after your own business—which very sorely needs your attention—a little more, and mine a little less. You do not know, perhaps, that your candor is something very like impertinence.”

Fraser—“ No, mum, I don't! I'm that fond of Miss Lyddy (as favors my own girl, who died when keeping company with Mr. Jones, the undertaker, as was in a nice way of business, mum, and buried the county families) as I'd do anything for her. Sir Francis ain't good enough for our Miss, and that's the truth. And Miss Lyddy—do she care for Sir Francis? You take my word for it, mum, not a jot. Why, when he give his grand ball, I meet Miss Lyddy a-sauntering slow-like on that very lawn, and says she to me, ' I suppose I must have some flowers to wear this evening, Fraser.' And says I, agreeing ready: ' You shall, Miss. Will you have them there white 'zaleas, or steffynotis, or vilets? Name your flower, Miss, and I'll do it.' ' Oh, I don't care, thank you, Fraser,' says she with her smile, only tired like. ' It don't much matter. Send me whatever you will miss least.' Now, that's unnateral, mum. My idea is, when a young woman's in love, greenhouses and the delicatest of plants and the feelings of hall the gardeners in creation ain't nothing to her. Why, Miss Lyddy herself, when the Captain was a-staying up at the house, treated them pots o' lilies of the walley cruel. Lilies for her nosegay, and lilies to put in her frock, and lilies (which was wicked) to pin, quite senseless, on her fan. And all a-cause, I suppose, of the Captain saying to her one day—I heard him, though busy pruning—' Lilies are your flower, Miss Maltravers. I never like to see you wear any other.' Or som'at like that.”

Mrs. Maltravers (frigidly)—“ You seem to know a great deal more about my daughter's feelings than I do, Fraser. I must really beg that you will keep your information to yourself.”

Fraser—“ No, mum, I can't. Sorry as I am to disoblige a lady as has been always considerate—except for asking occasional for flowers and coocumbers out of season—I must say my mind about Miss Lyddy and Sir Francis. If Sir Francis were sure of his money I shouldn't have spoke. Money's a nice thing, mum. I'm not going to say—tho' she don't think so—that if Sir Francis had been all tight and snug it mightn't have made up to her in time for losing the Captain. But it ain't. It

ain't at all. His walet is an honest-spoken gentleman, and he says to our Chawls: 'You take my word, Chawls,' says he, 'we shall have a bust-up at our place afore long.' And so they will."

Mrs. Maltravers—"May I ask if you are presuming to offer me advice as to whom Miss Lydia is to marry?"

Fraser—"No, mum, not yet; but I'm coming to it. If you and master ain't above listening to an old fellow who is nigh upon as fond of her as you are, I say let her have her Captain. He ain't got much, cook tells me. But what he has is sure. And as I said to my Pollie when the undertaker was a-walking with her: 'It ain't wealth Jones has, Mary, but it's sure. Now pictures (there was a picture dealer as had been a-dangling after her), they may go out of fashion or they may stay in. Goodness knows. But die people must, fashion or no fashion. And be undertook they must also—by the laws of the land.' It's the same with Miss Lyddy's Captain. And she's fond of him—which don't count for much in the hupper classes I'm aware, but is useful, uncommon useful."

Mrs. Maltravers (a little less sarcastically)—"May I ask, Fraser, what reasons you have for thinking Miss Lydia is—attached to Captain Wetherley?"

Fraser—"Reasons, mum? There was the hincident of the lilies. That came fust. And after that I seed them, dozens o' times—when you was a-driving in the afternoons, principal—a-sitting on that seat near the border which I was a-bedding out. Miss Lyddy—she don't say much. She hangs down her pretty head and a color like one of them carnations comes into her pretty cheeks. And she says "Yes, George" and "No, George," once or twice, uncommon soft. And the Captain he talk and persuade her. 'You'll be brave, Lydia, won't you?' and she says 'You don't know how I dread seeing Sir Francis.' 'Hang Sir Francis,' says the Captain, and she cries 'Hush, George!' very gentle and shocked. That's how I know, mum. And by the way she looked at him, with eyes all dim and soft like Pollie's."

Mrs. Maltravers—"I think you mean well, Fraser. I believe you are fond of Miss Lydia. So that you will be glad to hear your master and I shall do nothing—have never intended to do anything—to force her inclinations. You—are—quite sure about Sir Francis'—monetary difficulties, I suppose, Fraser?"

Fraser—"As sure as sure, mum. It's been a good deal dis-

cussed—in our class. Is it true, mum, as the upper housemaid tell Chawls, that the Captain is a-staying in the vi—cinity and a-purpose to get a glimpse of our Miss ?”

Mrs. Maltravers—“ Really, Fraser, I don't know. We can't all be as omniscient as you are. But if he is——”

Fraser—“ Well, if he is, mum, you tell Miss Lyddy, with my duty and respects, as the lilies are coming on prime, and it isn't Fraser as 'll say she shan't pick some of 'em—aye, strip the beds shameful as she did afore—for the sake of her Captain.”



ETCHING: ON THE TRAIL *

BY L. BUSHEE LIVERMORE

THE hot sun beat down upon the straggling sagebrush and drank the last remaining moisture from the sweating earth. The woodticks on the greasewood shrivelled and dropped into the white sand. The brown lizards, panting, wriggled into the nearest squirrel holes. Even the myriad grasshoppers were silent and still as the pulseless air.

Away off on the quivering horizon in the north a cayuse crept along toward the distant Snake River. Seated on top of bundles, heaped high above the horse's sweating sides, was a young squaw, who ceaselessly swung the heavy quirt from flank to flank of the jaded pony. Suddenly the cayuse stopped; the squaw slipped to the ground and lay in the scanty shade of a gnarled sagebrush.

A whirlwind careered wildly across the plain. The crickets began to chirrup, and the lazy lizards printed their ugly shapes in the sand. The squaw clasped the little lifeless papoose to her bosom and began a low moaning song. * * * * The sun went down behind the hills in a crimson glory, and again all was silent as the tiny grave heaped with whitening bones.

* Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.





THE twelfth child was born in a poor weaver's family. But no glad welcome did the newcomer receive; the father looked at him sorrowfully, for with his scanty earnings and his numerous family, the new burden fell heavily on his shoulders.

The brothers and sisters, whose hearts were already hardened by the misery of life, turned indifferently away from the little intruder who threatened to diminish their already meagre portion, and the only eyes which might have given him a kindly glance had just closed forever.

A friendly neighbor, only, busied herself with the crying child and vainly sought to soothe it.

"Run, run! you, father," she exclaimed, suddenly, "and fetch the priest to baptize the child; it is dying; don't you see it is already quite blue. Truly the poor mite is to be envied," she added to herself.

The father, supposing the woman to be right, dispatched the oldest boy for the priest, and told him to stop at the undertaker's and order a coffin at the same time, so as not to have to leave his work a second time.

The neighbor laid the tiny soul in a basket, and went back to her own affairs.

As the boy was returning with the priest, they met a wise woman who looked so kind and benevolent that the good priest begged her to help him in his task and to stand sponsor to the child.

* Translated by Annie W. Ayer and H. T. Slate, from the German, for Short Stories—Copyrighted. Illustrations by George Tobin.

She consented, and when the boy stopped at the door of the undertaker's, she said :

“Come; your little brother will not die.”

As they entered the hut together, the weaver came to meet them, and at the sight of the wise woman his face brightened as the sun after a two weeks' rain, for he hoped that she would leave her godchild at least a valuable present.

As she took the little boy in her arms he ceased crying.

She held him while he was being baptized, and she herself gave him the name of Johannes.

When the ceremony was ended she laid him again in the basket, placed her hand on his forehead and murmured a few unintelligible words.

Presently the child closed his eyes and dropped into a deep sleep. He smiled happily, and now and then stretched out his small hands as if reaching for some beautiful object.

The wise woman started to go. But the father, who had convinced himself that no gift lay on the child's pillow, intercepted her and begged her, with ill-concealed disappointment, to bestow at least a blessing upon her godchild, which might brighten his sad lot in the future.

“You are mistaken in me, my good man,” answered the wise woman. “I would gladly have left your little one some costly gift, but I have neither money nor possessions to bestow. That one-half of his life should be sorrow and trouble is not in my power to alter; but that it may not be quite profitless to him that a wise woman has stood by his cradle I have bestowed upon him the best I have to give: I have gilded the other half of his life.”

At these words the father looked up surprised and pleased, but his head sank lower and lower as the wise woman continued :

“When he closes his eyes, Golden Dreams will gather round his bed and will console him for all he has to suffer during the day. They will never depart from him until his life's end unless he seeks to rid himself of them. This he must never do, for if he does, great sorrow will come to him. In addition, he must never seek to let others share in them or to show them to any one—for unhappiness alone would be the result. Repeat this to him in my name as soon as he is capable of understanding you. And now farewell.”

With that she vanished.

The weaver turned sadly to his work again.

"Dreams!" he muttered to himself. "That is a rare gift! And of gold! A fine gold they will be; as real as that which the sunset casts upon my walls! Great people are always so when it comes to presents!"

But he was not so dissatisfied later, when he saw that the child caused him no trouble at all, for it slept the whole night through and half the day, and all the while it smiled happily to itself, and was tractable besides and easily managed.

The man had long forgotten the wise woman's strange words, for he had understood not a jot of what it all meant, and it never occurred to him to tell his son anything about it.

The little Johannes throve finely, and never knew that he lacked all that makes childhood beautiful.

He had no playmates, for his brothers and sisters were already busied in helping their father, and had no time for him. He



had no playthings but the stones he found in the streets or the shells he gathered on the shore—and no hand to guide his first baby steps.

And yet he was always a good little fellow, though far more silent than the other children.

An absent-mindedness soon showed itself in him which clung to him throughout his after life.

When he was so big that his father wished to make use of him in his work, and taught him the art of hand-weaving, life began

to show its shady side to him. Till then he had known only the wonderful Dreams which stood each night at his bedside, and for the sake of whom he was accustomed to sleep far into the day. He was much slower than other children in learning the ways of the world about him, for the whole day long he had nothing but his Dreams in his brain. He often sought to tell his brothers and sisters about them, and wished to show them to them, for his heart was good and it was a great sorrow to him not to be able to share his treasures with the others. But they could not understand him and made fun of him, and when he was too



importunate they would cuff him soundly on the ear. Then he would creep sadly away, seat himself in a corner and cry bitterly to himself until his eyes closed heavily. And immediately the Dreams stood before him, bright and glittering as pure gold, and he would stretch out his hands and smile in his sleep.

In his work he showed little aptness, and still less perseverance, for when he sat on the weaver's stool, his hands would suddenly sink in his lap and he would gaze with wide open eyes before him.

This earned him many scoldings and blows from his father and many a secret cuff from the elder children.

They regarded him as a useless encumbrance who would

never be capable of helping his father or of earning his own bread.

When they were in a better humor they called him "Hans the Dreamer."

Thus years went by. The father had died in the meanwhile and the children had scattered to fight their way for themselves. Some were dead, others had their own home, their wives, a crowd of children and a host of cares.

Only Johannes, who had come to man's estate, still sat in his father's cottage. The others, who thought him half witted, had left it to him out of pity.

There he lived a miserable life, from hand to mouth, for he never earned more than sufficed him for the day.

He was known throughout the village as "Hans the Dreamer." And he justified the nickname, for he always went about with his head in the clouds, and whenever it was possible he would lay his work aside, to stretch himself out and close his eyes.

That he spun no silk by such days' work was not to be wondered at. And in fact after a few years, his hut, which he never raised a finger to better, became so tumbled down that the blessed sun shone in upon him through the roof, and still its strongest rays scarcely succeeded in rousing the lie-a-bed before midday.

At last the parish took pity on him and set about patching his roof, at least, before the rainy season set in.

His friends and patrons, as well as the other inhabitants of the village, who wished him well on account of his kindheartedness and sweet nature, took this opportunity of urging him to abandon his lazy ways, and to become a thrifty, useful man. But when he began to tell them of his Dreams, asserting them to be no mere visions, but living figures; when he pictured to them things which could never happen in the whole wide world, and made use of words such as no man in the village had ever heard, they grew angry and reproved him. And when he persisted in trying to convince them of the truth of his words, they left him, shrugging their shoulders and declaring him to be a thorough fool and a hopeless sluggard.

Consequently the report soon spread that Hans the Dreamer was not quite right in the upper story; there was nothing to be done with him, and no work could be intrusted to him. From that time on he received fewer and fewer orders, he sank deeper into misery, and finally starvation stared him in the face. For

no man would lend him anything, and he was too proud to beg.

But Hans was of good courage. The few articles of household furniture were disposed of bit by bit, and the proceeds supplied bread for a little longer.

What mattered it to him that it grew barer and more poverty-stricken around him day by day? He need only close his eyes and all glittered and shone before him as in no royal palace.

At last he even sold his bed, but he knew that his dreams would come just as well to his pallet of straw.

Yes, they even remained with him all day long, for work no longer obliged him to banish them; and he would have been the happiest of men were it not that he constantly mourned because none but he enjoyed his treasure.

When the proceeds from the sale of the bed were exhausted and hunger began to torture him again, he did not reflect long.

"It is summer," he thought to himself, took the panes from the windows and sold them to the glazier.

So he stilled his hunger and dreamed again.

In the same way the happy thought came to him to take down the doors, for he was well aware that thieves had nothing to do with him.

Thus he struggled on until autumn, but now all means were exhausted, and he knew not which way to turn. He could not appeal to his brothers, for they had barely enough for themselves, and all others, as we know, had given him up for a hopeless good-for-nothing.

He gathered the last crumbs together and stretched himself out on the straw to allay the gnawings of hunger. But in the night an icy storm rushed through the hut; it raged in and out of the door and window openings, and poor Hans, shivering with cold and hunger, burrowed deep in the straw. His Dreams stood by him faithfully, and shimmered and shone beautiful as ever; but he could not smile at them, for his teeth chattered with cold. And when he awoke the next morning, with a fierce whirl of snow beating in his face, he hesitated no longer. He sprang up, hastily gathered his Golden Dreams together with a heavy heart, and ran with them under his arm out into the blinding storm.

He ran quickly, fearing he might repent of his resolve, and did not pause until he stood before the shop of a goldsmith in the neighboring city.

"Master," he said, as he entered, "I have come to make you a great offer. I have here a treasure which no money can buy, but which I will dispose of to you for a small sum, for I am in great need."

The master cast a doubting glance at his shabby clothes, and said :

"Well, let us see this wonder."

"Dreams," answered Hans, undoing his pack. "Real Golden Dreams of which a king might be proud."

So saying, he released his Dreams, and they glided slowly about the room. And the glitter and sparkle which came from them was reflected from all four walls, dazzling the eyes.

But the goldsmith shook with laughter.

"Dreams!" he shouted. "Ha, ha, ha! Drea—ms!" and laughed again, until the tears streamed down his cheeks. "And I am to give you good, honest money for them! That would be a stroke of business for me, indeed! Ha, ha, ha! Oh, you good Hans!"

As Hans listened to the goldsmith's unrestrained laughter he stood as if turned to stone, and to his eyes, also, came the tears, but they were not tears of amusement.

But there was a third person in the room. He was a tall, gaunt stranger, who until now had stood by the window holding a pair of bracelets against the light to test them. He had noticed that all the precious stones in the shop paled before the lustre that came from the Golden Dreams. He turned his haggard face towards Hans and his deep-set eyes gleamed with covetousness as he said :

"How much do you want for your Golden Dreams? I will pay you any price you ask."

When the goldsmith heard these words from a man whom he knew to be a connoisseur, the thought came to him that after all it might be a profitable transaction, and he feared that he had lost a good bargain through his untimely levity. He became serious at once, and said to Hans :

"Excuse me; I did not mean to laugh at you, but at times I am seized with an hysterical fit of laughter which I cannot control. I will willingly arrange the business with you, but I must convince myself of the worth of your puppets by a thorough test. Let us see what they really are."

He put on his spectacles, waddled up to the Dreams, and was about to seize one, but Hans stepped before him and cried:

"No, you shall not have them now! I would rather starve than see my dear Dreams fall into your fat hands!"

At these words it was wonderful to see how the Dreams nestled of their own accord in the arms of their rightful owner, and huddled so close together that they only made a very little bundle.

With this bundle Hans ran out of the door again, as he had come, without a look at the stranger.

The latter threw the bracelets to the stupefied goldsmith.

"Master, another time," he said, and with a bound was out of the door and running hurriedly after Hans.

Hans ran as hard as he could, and held his Dreams pressed closely to him.

When he had left the city gates behind, he paused for breath. He heard a "St! st!" behind him, and on looking back he saw the stranger.

Hans now looked at him more closely, and took no pleasure at all in his company.

The stranger had a sharp face, which betrayed no age; that is to say, he might just as well have been thirty as sixty; piercing gray eyes and immaculate black clothes.

He approached Hans in a friendly manner, and clapped him on the shoulder. Hans shrank back from his sinister companion and kept him off at arm's length.

"Do not be vexed that the goldsmith did not know how to appreciate your treasure," he said to the startled Hans.

"He belongs to the work-a-day world, and Golden Dreams are not in his line of business. But for my part, I can say that I am well versed in such things, and would gladly close with you."

"I have a disturber of my peace in there," he went on with a hoarse laugh; "an intruder who allows me no sleep, and I can wish for nothing better than to have your Golden Dreams to stand around my bed by night."

"You shall fix the price yourself. Come, tell me how much you want for them?"

Hans hesitated long, but hunger tormented him so sorely, and the stranger was so pressing and made him such large offers, that he finally gave in.

"Good Heavens! with such a purse full of money I can buy all the pleasures of this world and will have no further need of my Dreams!"

So the affair was settled, and Hans carried away a heavy purse, and the stranger the Golden Dreams.

But as they separated, the stranger turned once more to Hans, and described his home minutely, and finally said :

“ If you should repent of your bargain, come to me and we will arrange matters,” and before Hans could answer, the stranger had vanished, as though the ground had swallowed him up.

From this moment an entirely new life began for Hans.

He did not return to his village, but went to an inn, and ordered the best the house afforded. Here he fell in with a gay company. He entertained them at his own expense, and spent the night in carousing.

The next morning, when he rubbed the leaden sleep from his eyes, he found himself in a neat room, on a soft bed, but the world seemed gray and insipid to him, and not until he looked around vainly for his Golden Dreams, did he recollect what had happened.

But he had no time for reflection, for his new friends made their appearance and carried him off to a sumptuous breakfast. He, of course, footed the bill. They said so many flattering things to him about his wit, his fine manners, his good looks, and the landlord treated him with much respect, in spite of his wretched clothes, that the poor weaver's son did not know what to make of it, and, in spite of the fact that he did not relish his breakfast, he was still in a very good humor.

After breakfast they escorted him to a tailor's, and he selected the finest clothes, paying for them without a word. When his friends saw his pile of money, they were more attentive than ever, and urged him to buy a house and settle down in their city for good.

This suited Hans perfectly, and the purchase was completed that very day.

So now he lived in a magnificent house, kept up a great establishment with horses and carriages and servants, and spent his days in riotous living.

He gave daily banquets ; and it goes without saying, that his friends did not desert him for a moment, and that their number constantly increased. Moreover, it was a remarkable fact that, although he scattered his money broadcast, his purse was never empty.

Our Hans, now called Herr Johannes, revelled in the seventh

heaven. One thing alone disturbed his happiness: he slept very badly, and, when after long wakeful hours he dozed off at last, bad, disquieting dreams tortured him. Hoping to banish these tormenting spirits, he had musicians come every evening and strove to turn night into day with music and feasting, never going to rest until the gray light of the morning appeared.

The news soon reached his native village that Hans the Dreamer had suddenly become a rich man. Many who had shrugged their shoulders over him, now took it upon themselves to visit him in the city. His brothers, also, who lived in the neighborhood, came, and he received them with the greatest joy, and gave each one his heart's desire. His brothers must come and live with him and share his pleasures.

He made such costly presents to his old village friends, who had once repaired his thatched roof, that they could not only have repaired all the old roofs in the village, but could have performed many beneficial works of public utility.

After living many months like a bird in a hemp field, a great uneasiness crept over him. The feasting and reveling, the sleepless nights, added to the bad dreams, wore upon his mind and body. His common sense soon told him that his city friends were a crowd of parasites who only made use of his wealth, and jeered at him behind his back for a stupid country bumpkin.

He endured it a few months longer, and then the whole company became so distasteful to him that he was heartily sick of life. He noticed, too, that his money brought no blessing with it. Many whom he had enriched became so wild that they ended their days as criminals. Houses which he gave away as gifts were invariably burnt down over night, and once, when he presented a friend with a valuable horse, his new owner found the animal dead in the stable the following morning.

These, and many other circumstances, prejudiced people against him. It was whispered that he was a magician who received his ill-gotten gains from Satan in exchange for his soul, and had he not flung his money among the people with both hands, he would probably have been banished from the city.

One dreadful day two of his brothers commenced a quarrel during one of the nightly revels. Maddened with anger and drink, they snatched up knives, and, before any one could interfere, one lay dead upon the floor.

This accident affected Hans deeply. He managed, by a

huge outlay of money, to secure the murderer's acquittal, but when he entered the prison to bring the news to his brother, he found that he had strangled himself with his pocket handkerchief.

Deeply shocked, Johannes returned to his house, shut himself in his room and would see no one.

In the night he was racked by frightful visions. Look where he would, grotesque demons grinned at him; snakes and scorpions crawled over his bed, and he could not lift a finger to push them away.

Suddenly the door slowly opened, noiselessly, and his two dead brothers glided into the room, arm in arm. One seated himself on the right, and the other on the left of the bed, and they both whispered in his ears:

"Judas, Judas, you have sold your good angels for base silver."

"You lie!" cried Johannes, emboldened by anger. "It was gold, honest gold, and you have wallowed in it long enough to know it. But there shall be an end to it now!"

He awoke at the sound of his own voice. The morning peeped in at the window, misty and gray.

Johannes rubbed the drops of anguish from his forehead, sprang hastily into his clothes, ran to the cupboard where his purse lay, and thrust it in his pocket, heavy as on the day the stranger had given it to him. Then he despatched one of his servants to the priest asking him to say a hundred masses for his brothers' souls. This done, he left his home without once looking back, and went in search of the house which the stranger had described to him. He found it without difficulty.

It was a magnificent country-seat, far grander than the one Johannes himself owned, and lay a few minutes' walk from the city at the entrance of a dark pine forest. A stately park, ornamented with lakes, tall foreign plants, and marble statues surrounded the entire house, and stretched far back into the forest, in which it was finally merged.

But the whole place struck Johannes as being desolate and melancholy. Still he did not stop to look at it more closely, for he had but one thought: to recover his Golden Dreams.

He pulled the bell, and the footman, an impudent fellow with a sly face, conducted Hans up many marble staircases and through glittering halls, in which reigned a deathly stillness, until they finally entered the master's study.

The latter, in his funereal black garb, sat before a desk, bent closely over a huge folio.

Hans' heart contracted as he stepped into the room and looked once more at the sinister face before him, which bore no trace of human feeling. He would gladly have turned and fled, but the man sprang up at his entrance and cried in a pleased voice:

"Good-day, my friend, I have been looking for you. Ha, it is easy to understand that you have come for your pretty puppets, and I am quite prepared for it. I have taken good care of them for you. They are as beautiful as ever, and not one of them is missing. See, here they are altogether. They have done me good service in the mean time."

He opened a side door and there issued a clear radiance, flooding the gloomy walls of the study with a soft, mellow light.

Hans sprang to the door with a cry of joy, but his host closed it hurriedly and said:

"Softly, softly! You shall have them again. I only ask of you, first, one little favor.

"I am a passionate collector of autographs: I mean to express myself more clearly—I collect, besides other curiosities, the handwriting of remarkable men. As the first, and, so to speak, natural possessor of Golden Dreams belongs to the interesting contemporaneous phenomena, I am very anxious that your name should appear in my collection.

"See," he continued, lifting the folio from the table, "here you will find the most famous men represented, who, in addition, were good enough to accede to my unusual request: to make a small cut on their fingers and to dip the pen in their own blood. Thus they are perpetuated to me in body. I ask the same of you. It is a simple thing, which you cannot refuse. In return, I will give you back your Dreams."

With a low bow he held out the book, on whose last page stood a long list of blood-red names. All, however, were erased with the exception of the last.

But every drop of blood fled from Hans' face at the stranger's last words. Uttering a loud cry, he let the book fall, and exclaimed, while the hair on his head rose in horror:

"Away from me, Satan, tempter! I know what you want of me—my soul. But you shall not have it. Either you are the Devil himself or one of his envoys. Here is your cursed money"—and he dashed the purse jingling at the other's feet. "And

now give me back my Dreams, and I will wash my hands of you."

"Your Dreams!" answered the other, scornfully, his ashen face distorted with anger. "You shall never see your Dreams again until you have written in this book. You sold them to me for a purse of gold. Now you are the buyer, and I am the one to set the price. Here is a knife, and here a pen—only a little cut——"

But as he was about to approach him, Hans dashed out of the door with a "God protect me!" and ran, without looking back, through the corridors and down the stairs, out into the open air.

Mechanically he went back the way he had come, but when he reached the city, he saw a dense crowd at a distance, and heard his name spoken by some passers-by who did not know him.

Terrified, he drew aside, for he had gathered from their conversation that the house of the rich Herr Johannes had suddenly come crashing down in broad daylight, and that the whole community was in the greatest excitement. Later, it had been found that at the same hour, everything procured with his money, with the exception of gifts for pious purposes, had disappeared without leaving a trace.

At this news Johannes dared not return to the city, but took another road and walked the whole day, until at evening he reached a strange township.

It seemed to him as if the passers-by cast suspicious looks at him, and he walked at the side of the road, with downcast eyes, asking no one the way. He found the inn himself and passed another fearful night, for he had the same dream of the snakes and scorpions and of the two brothers, who reviled him as a Judas.

The next morning he set out, eating nothing, and hurried, as though pursued by furies, to the next town, where he put up for the night. But as the same dream was repeated in tenfold horror, Johannes resolved to risk one more attempt before leaving his Golden Dreams entirely behind.

He rose in the early morning and had himself driven back to the vicinity of the city. There he kept in hiding, and at night-fall he crept, with a beating heart and crossing himself continually, to the house of the man whom he knew now to be a magician.

With a crucifix in his hand to preserve him against all evil, he climbed the park wall and looked searchingly at the windows to determine which was the sleeping chamber. As he crept around the house he perceived a tall cypress-tree, whose interlaced branches overshadowed the windows. He knew from this sign that he stood before the magician's study, for he had noticed the same tree from the room two days before.

He cautiously climbed the tree and swung himself from its branches to the window casement. He heard a long-drawn sound, which left him no further doubt.

He drew himself up still farther and looking in saw the sinister stranger, who now lay in peaceful sleep, as though he had the easiest conscience in the world, and looked as innocent as a newborn babe.

Around him stood, gleaming and shimmering like pure gold, the dear, old, familiar Dreams!

As Hans appeared at the window-pane, they turned towards him and looked sorrowfully at him.

Hans sprang in and tried to seize them, but they slipped from his hands and shook their heads.

At the same moment the magician started up, half awake, and Hans took hasty flight in the way he had come.

The unhappy Johannes now remained lost to sight for many years. He wandered from city to city; he hired out as a day-laborer to earn his bread, for he was now poor as ever.

But he could not endure it much longer, for he found no rest. Even when he closed his eyes after a hard day's work his spectres haunted him. At last the idea came to him to return to his old hut, for there alone, where he had slumbered so happily, could he hope to find peace.

After endless privations he succeeded in reaching his native village. He made himself known to no one, but went straight to his hut, finding it as he had left it; for the parish, in spite of the evil reports spread throughout the land concerning him, still honored him as their benefactor. They took a pride in keeping his former home from complete decay, in remembrance of him.

Doors and windows were lacking, and the roof was ruinous as when he left; but it was a warm summer night, and he had no snowstorm to fear; during his wanderings he had often been obliged to put up with worse.

He stretched himself out on his accustomed spot, and for the

first time in many years he slept easily and calmly, with no disturbing spectres to haunt him.

During the night his father, the old weaver, came to him and muttered, shaking his head peevishly :

“A fine business this! So it always happens with absurd presents. But come to me to-morrow. Perhaps I can help you.”

When Hans awoke the next morning, strengthened by a refreshing sleep, and bethought himself of his dream, he understood nothing of what it might mean, but a ray of hope dawned upon him.

He searched in his pack and gathered a few crusts together for a frugal breakfast, and then wended his way to the cemetery, for thus only could he interpret his father's bequest.

He seated himself on the simple, weather-beaten stone and waited for something to happen. Finally he got up and paced to and fro in the churchyard, examining the crosses and headstones.

But hour after hour passed, and he remained alone in the shadow of the great trees listening to the twittering of the birds in the branches. Although his heart was light and it seemed to him that the small singers had never acquitted themselves so bravely, he lost patience when he saw the sun beginning to sink in the west.

“It is just like the dead,” he muttered angrily to himself; “they are never to be depended upon.”

He rose to go, but as he reached the gates he looked up once more into the sky suffused with the dazzling evening glow. The sight reminded him of his lost, his only friends, his Dreams, golden as the clouds sinking behind the hills, and he wept bitterly.

At this moment a beautiful white-robed woman went by, bending over each grave and carrying a great nosegay of white roses.

“What is the matter, my good man?” she asked, pausing compassionately. “Have you laid a dear one to rest here?”

As he raised his head she looked at him sharply, and asked suddenly :

“Are you not Hans the Dreamer, the son of the weaver who lies near here?”

As Hans assented in astonishment, the woman went on :

“I know you well. I held you in my arms when you were a

baby. Tell me, honestly, what troubles you. I can, perhaps, help you."

Thereupon Hans told the woman the whole story: how he had sold his Dreams to save him from starvation, and how things had gone with him since.

She listened attentively and answered kindly:

"Unless all signs fail, your Dreams can still be saved. A few



hours more and they would have been lost to you forever. You must now set speedily about rescuing them."

As Hans looked at her, startled, she continued:

"Never fear, I will help you to outwit the old slyboots."

She felt in her white robe and drew out a glass tube filled with a red fluid, and a pen fitted to the end of it. She handed it to Hans, and gave him the minutest instructions as to how he

was to act. She urged him not to lose a moment, but to set out at once so as to reach the magician's house before sunset.

Hans thanked her with tears in his eyes and hurried towards the familiar woods. He seemed to be carried along on wings, for with the last rays of the departing sun he stood before the door.

He was received by the same servant with the crafty face, who grinned more insolently than ever, for he had firm hopes of succeeding his master that day. As he conducted Hans into the magician's study there sat the latter over his book as he had sat years before.

He no longer looked as distinguished as formerly; his dress was disorderly, his figure bent, his face ghastly and distorted; his eyes were fastened upon the book in deadly anxiety; in short, he looked like a criminal awaiting the executioner.

As Hans stepped into the room the magician sprang up with a shrill cry; his face brightened.

He controlled himself with a violent effort, and came towards him courteous as ever.

Hans explained curtly that he had come to settle the business proposed so many years ago.

At these words the face of the other lighted up, and his evil eyes flashed as he said:

"I am glad for your own sake, my dear friend, that you have thought better of it in time. Two hours and I, myself, should not have been in a position to restore your property. Come, make haste and lose no time."

"Oh, you hellhound!" thought Hans. He said nothing, but took up the proffered knife and walked to the window, ostensibly to make a cut in his finger. In the mean time he drew out his tube, unscrewed it so that a few drops fell upon the pen, and the remainder he smeared on his finger.

Then he wrote his name in the book.

The other requested him to cross out the last name and Hans complied.

This name was the magician's own, by which he had sold himself to the Devil as a substitute for another, whose name had stood before in the book, but was now crossed out.

The magician cast one more glance at the book to convince himself that all was right, then closed it with a sardonic grin, saying:

"It is well. Your Dreams are now at your service. But let

me make a suggestion : Dine with me to-night. I think there will be a third, later on—a merry fellow. I shall be glad to have you make his acquaintance."

Hans willingly assented. He had eaten nothing all day but a few dry crusts, and hunger tormented him sorely.

The magician ordered up a dainty meal, with the finest wines, and both did ample justice to it.

It was long since Hans had eaten and drunk so well, and his contentment was doubled by the presence of his beloved Dreams, who surrounded his chair and looked at him with friendly smiles.

The magician was transformed. He was in the best of humors, jested, and retailed a thousand choice stories, so that Hans, who did his duty by the wines, quite forgot to rise from the table.

Midnight approached. The two revelers became more uproarious. They sang the liveliest ballads and ditties, in which Hans was not backward.

All the gay reminiscences of his wild city life awakened in him. His eyes sparkled. He had quite forgotten in whose company he was, and was about to throw himself on his brother revelers' neck, when the clock struck.

At that instant the sound of hoofs reverberated in the distance.

The magician sprang up, but sat down again and filled Hans' glass. But his hand shook so feverishly that he spilt the wine on his guest's sleeve. Hans laughed good-naturedly.

A clanking sound was heard on the stairs. The door burst open and a stranger in hunting-dress stood on the threshold. His green hat with cocks' feathers was stuck jauntily on his black hair. His face was even more pallid and drawn than the magician's, and from his eyes flashed a greenish flame like a brand from hell, so that the malicious face of the other actually seemed benignant in comparison.

"Good-evening, comrade," he said with mocking friendliness, approaching the magician, who had risen and advanced towards him, "I find you in merry company. You probably wish to strengthen yourself for your journey. Well, you cannot complain that I have kept you waiting."

He drew out his watch.

It pointed to one minute before midnight.

"Excuse me," returned the other, with forced politeness ; "to my sorrow, I find myself prevented from accompanying

my honored guest to-night. In the mean while this gentleman here (and he pointed to Hans) will have the honor of taking my place."

"You lie!" cried the other, and two clear flames shot from his eyes. "You fall to me. I have no power over this man!"

"See for yourself, gracious master," answered the magician, with a grin of satisfaction.

Hans, in the meantime, had reeled up to the stranger with a glass of wine, and stammered thickly :



"Drink, brother Satan! You must have a hellish thirst in your warm lodgings!"

The stranger took no notice of him, but kept his blazing eyes fixed on the magician, who had brought the great book to the light and had turned to the last page.

With a yell of agony he let the book fall to the ground.

Hans' name, as well as the line striking out his own signature had vanished.

The magical ink had the property of fading in a few hours' time.

The wretched man cowered back into the farthest corner of the room, with ashen face and shaking limbs.

Satan broke into a peal of infernal laughter before which the walls tottered.

Even Hans was brought somewhat to his senses by these diabolical sounds, and shrank back, while his Golden Dreams huddled anxiously around him like chickens about the mother hen.

The clock on the wall sounded the first stroke.

Satan ceased laughing and looked at his prey as a snake transfixes a bird with its gaze. It was impossible to portray this basilisk-like stare and the agony of death painted on the doomed man's face.

The most blood-curdling of all was that he himself, fascinated by this gaze, shaking and tottering, lifted his foot and mechanically advanced at each stroke of the clock a step nearer his destroyer.

At the twelfth stroke there was a terrible crash, and the earth shook as in an earthquake.

Hans lost consciousness. When he came to, he stood alone in the wood, in the black night.

But around him shone a clear radiance like shimmering gold. It was his dear Dreams, who glided before him and lighted him on his way to his hut.

The next morning the report spread throughout the village that Hans the Dreamer had come back and lay as before in his tumble-down hut.

All came to see him—partly from curiosity, partly from sympathy.

He took good care not to tell his visitors his true story. He only told them that after varying fortunes he wished to end his days in his native village.

Concerning his Golden Dreams he was silent, as the wise woman had commanded him.

The parish helped him in every way. They repaired his hut and provided work for him. And when he was old and could work no longer, he sat the whole day long in his armchair by the fire, and his face shone so brightly that he was a wonder to behold.

But he told no one what he saw.

Only in the evening, when school was over, and the children came running to him and crowded around his knee to listen to his wonderful fairy tales, did he tell them of his Golden Dreams, for *that* the wise woman permitted.

The children listened to him seriously, and did not laugh at him as their elders had done, for *they* understood him.

Years passed away. His brothers and sisters were long since dead. The children who had listened to his stories had grown up and troubled themselves no more about him, for they had other things to do. His Dreams alone remained true to him and brightened his old age as they had his youth.

And when after long years he lay alone in his hut, a weary old man, without chick or child, and felt his last hour approaching, his Dreams pressed closer around his bed. He raised his dying eyes to them, smiled a last time, stretched out his hand to them, let it sink, and bade farewell.

Over his head hung a shimmering crown of radiance. It was the Golden Dreams' last greeting to their friend.



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N. XX., No. 3

November, 1895

Price, 25 cts.
\$2.50 a Year

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A ROMANCE OF ACADIE *

BY MARION AMES TAGGART

THERE is a village on a point of land in Acadia that runs out between two bodies of water. On one side is the harbor, called, like the settlement itself, Leboncoup; on the other the bay, which flows from the ocean past the point for many miles, and is dotted throughout its length with more than three hundred fir-clad islands. This was appropriately called by the

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French Baie des Iles, which in English speech became corrupted into Eel Bay, as it is now known.

Two years after the expulsion from Grand Prè the French settlers were driven from this point and carried, like the exiles from the valley, to the neighboring colonies, whence they gladly returned twelve years later to the sterile point which had been their home. Here they found the clearings made by their fathers at the head and east side of their pretty harbor adopted by English settlers, and they gathered upon the unbroken forest-clad west shore to begin a third Leboncoup, which should be purely French Acadian. All this happened a hundred and twenty-five years ago, and now the descendants of these people are living on the point, having preserved their tongue, faith and traditions, and the waters of bay and harbor wash a singular remnant of Acadian life.

In the doorway of a house overlooking the harbor a young girl stood shading her eyes from the rays of the setting sun. It was Saturday afternoon, and the fishing smacks, with their sails all set to catch the most of the light breeze, were coming up the harbor, for the fishermen returned regularly for their Sunday Mass-going and to get bait for the next week's cod-fishing.

The girl in the doorway watched their coming with a face which the sunlight could not brighten, so glad a look rested on the soft lips and wide brown eyes. It was a face of the real Acadian type: oval in contour, chin small, lips full and sweet, nose straight, with fine, quivering nostrils; complexion which the frequent fogs made like the inside of a shell, and under a low brow and clearly defined eyebrows large eyes of hazel brown, drooping in the outer corners, the whole framed in glossy dark brown hair. This was Colombe Pellerin, whose father, drowned at sea, had descended from one of the three families who had populated Leboncoup, and whose names had supplanted all others in the settlement, so that there was none but Theriaults, Pellerins, and De Villiers in the place—the De Villiers far predominating.

In the simple life of this little village there is no inequality, and there was no suggestion of degradation in Colombe's going, at the death of her father, to help her mother and the numberless younger children, by serving as maid and companion to the widow De Villier, whose only daughter was dead, and with whom the young girl worked with no thought on either side of the difference implied elsewhere by the terms maid and mistress.

As she stood watching the coming of the fishing-boats the widow De Villier—called Mrs. Amand to distinguish her from all the others of the same name—came up behind the girl, and, laying a hand on either casement of the door, peered over her shoulder to see how near the boats had come. Her thin face and dark eyes looked content, but though her son was on the boat that led the others, she had none of the rapture of expression which lit up Colombe's face. To her the weekly return had become a matter of custom, and though always a thing to rejoice over, had lost the wonder of the miracle of bliss it had been in her youth, when love was new, and hard work had not made her angular and thin.

She laid her hand on Colombe's shoulder, pointed outward without speaking, and nodded pleasantly. The girl turned in an irrepressible rapture, waved her hands, palms outward, with a graceful motion toward the water, and lifting Mrs. Amand's hand from her shoulder, kissed it twice passionately. It was only in this pantomime that one learned that she was deaf and dumb.

An hour later Colombe knelt before the kitchen fire, coaxing the reluctant sticks to kindle. The room was very clean, the floor covered with sailcloth, painted by skillful hands in figures to represent oilcloth. Dark wooden chairs were ranged against the wall, upon which hung pictures of the sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary, that even when at work the women might not quite forget heavenly matters.

A young man in rough woolen shirt, weather-stained trousers, and battered hat had entered; the girl's sealed senses could not perceive his presence, but an added sense supplied her lack. She felt his coming, and springing to her feet, darted forward, grasping his hands in a rapture which needed no speech for expression.

Toussaint de Villier was young, and the joy of the fair face so near his, born of happiness at his return, could not be displeasing.

He bent toward her his comely face, and putting his arm gently around her would have kissed her, but she drew back. The conventionality which taught other maidens to conceal their delight at such returns could never be conveyed to the deaf and dumb girl, but the instinct of maidenhood needed no teaching, and she shrank from his embrace while she fondled his hand.

Toussaint did not press her; fair as she was, he felt only a manly tenderness for his mother's good, little, silent helper, and

his mind was very full of his own affairs. Withdrawing his hand with a kindly pat on the girl's dark hair, he went into the little bedroom off the kitchen, whence he presently issued resplendent in best clothes, and the week's growth removed from his bronzed young face.

Tea was a short meal, and while Colombe and Mrs. Amand gathered up the dishes, Toussaint went out to join the group of men that had collected on the steps of the tiny shop opposite, where on Saturday and Sunday nights the entire male portion of the village assembled to discuss the week's fishing, and the prospects for the coming six days' haul.

By eight o'clock the group had dispersed; the admiring fringe of small boys which surrounded it had gone to bed, the older men had returned to their firesides, and the younger had gone to seek those who would one day preside over theirs.

The widow Amand glanced from time to time at Colombe's happy face. Toussaint, she well knew, had gone to see the pretty Odelle Theriault, whom his mother would gladly welcome in her dead daughter's place—but Colombe! Better than Toussaint, in his selfish happiness, Mrs. Amand knew that love had found its way into the secluded soul of the deaf and dumb girl. She knew, too, that she lacked the self-knowledge that could tell her what its coming meant, and without experience of books or men, had not yet felt jealousy, nor dreamed of desire; what would the rude awakening that lay before her bring to Colombe?

The elder women of Leboncoup are thin and lank, not unlike the prevailing firs—the effect in both cases of bleak climate, sharp winds, and sterile land; but in the worn bodies beat kindly hearts.

Mrs. Amand arose and laid her hand gently on the shoulder of the brooding girl, breaking into her happy reverie with the signal for bed.

Colombe obeyed with the ready docility she always showed, and except that the door was left ajar for Toussaint, the house was soon settled for the night.

The next day was, in the parlance of Leboncoup, “east-side Sunday.” This means that on that day the priest, whose parish extends for sixty miles, would go to say Mass on the other side of the harbor, whither, as the tide served, a large portion of his west-side parishioners would follow him. At half-past nine the harbor was dotted with the white sails of the little crafts, pret-

tilly varied by the Venetian effects of those sloops, the sails of which were painted orange or red, all winding picturesquely through the dark islands, in their solemn fir and spruce growth ;



the blue of the water, and the peculiarly clear air of this northern land giving the brilliancy that completed the picture.

Toussaint de Villier sat with his mother in the stern of a small boat, his face full of repressed, excited joy as he steered. In the bow, alone, sat Colombe ; alone as no one else in the little community could ever be ; wrapped in her unbroken silence like

a consecration. Her eyes were dreamy, her lips smiling, and the fresh breeze ruffled her hair into little rings upon her flushing cheeks. No one could guess what the Mass-going meant to Colombe; no one could ever conjecture what anything in life meant to her hidden soul; but she loved to pray, and the priest had permitted her to make her first communion like the other girls, doubly unlike them though she was through the difficulty in instructing her, and her innocence which knew no taint.

Toussaint, with his hand on the tiller and his eyes carefully ahead over the water, spoke, his dark cheek flushing. They used a patois French, at once a corruption and preservation of the French of two centuries ago.

"I spoke to Odelle last night, mother, and we settled it. We shall be married in September, after the fishing." His mother glanced hastily at Colombe; the sunshine rested on her happy face, and Mrs. Amand lowered her voice, though no sound could pain her.

"Ah, poor Colombe," she whispered.

"Colombe!" exclaimed Toussaint. "What of Colombe? She never thought to marry me."

"She never thought at all. What does she know of plans? But she can feel," answered his mother.

"Ah, well, she likes Odelle; she will be happy with us. She expects nothing better, a girl like that," said Toussaint, easily.

"A girl like that is a girl like this," responded his mother. "But if she could hear, we would not discuss her; let us not now. My poor little tender one," she added, in spite of herself.

"Oh, Colombe! Colombe!" exclaimed Toussaint, pettishly. "Odelle is the question. She will come home to supper to-night. Are you sorry to have me marry her? I thought you would be delighted, and now you talk of Colombe."

"I am very glad to have you marry her. She is the wife I would have chosen for you," said his mother, and they shook hands gravely. Colombe looked up, and, seeing the movement, nodded gayly, and, rising, took a hand of each and shook it merrily. Even Toussaint looked disconcerted for a moment, but seeing Odelle upon the wharf forgot Colombe in nodding to her. But Mrs. Amand's eyes were so dim, that she needed Colombe's guiding hand as she climbed the steps.

The little fleet sailed back on the afternoon tide after vespers, and Odelle came to take tea in her future home. She was a pretty girl, and she looked very sweet in her happiness, which

lent a grace to her every movement. Toussaint hovered around her, and Colombe sat forgotten by all but Mrs. Amand, who thought best to seem to forget her, too, as she saw in stolen glances the growing trouble in her face.

Odelle went away early to gain a longer time alone with Toussaint, who would start in the dawn for another week's fishing, and a lover's eternity of separation.

When they were gone, Colombe came swiftly forth from the corner where she had watched Toussaint fold Odelle's cape about her with a tenderness that she had never seen in him, and which had made her cold and trembling with her first uncomprehended agony. Seizing the widow's hand in her shaking ones, she mutely asked the meaning of what she had seen. Words could have added nothing to the passion of her entreaty, and Mrs. Amand met it with the truth it deserved.

"*Oui*," she said aloud, forgetting her interlocutor's deafness. "*Oui, ma pauvre petite, il l'aime, mais nous l'aimons itou (aussi).*" Colombe understood, if not the words, the manner. Stretching out her hands in supplication to know all, she waited.

By gestures Mrs. Amand told her that Toussaint loved Odelle. Lifting the leaves of the calendar, she showed her the three months that intervened before the day when Odelle should come, and the capacity in which she would come she explained by leading Colombe into the adjoining bedroom—Toussaint's. Colombe stood quivering for a moment, trying to grasp this new thing, which was life, and yet agony to her to whom hitherto life had meant joy and peace. Then she threw herself upon the floor beside the bed in a passion of weeping, more dreadful that it was inarticulate.

The great festival of the year was approaching, the church picnic, at which the country assembled for an area of thirty miles. During the three weeks preceding it Colombe crept about her duties, the shadow of herself. A gray mask seemed to have settled upon her sunny face, out of which her brown eyes looked with the helpless expression of suffering seen sometimes in dogs. She carefully avoided the window, Mrs. Amand knew, lest she should see Odelle passing.

The day of the picnic was bright and clear; the frequent fogs did not gather at its close. A great Ferris wheel was raised on the grounds, and targets for shooting, booths for food, and booths for the sale of fancy articles; for the picnic was a curious mixture of bazaar and country fête. A covered platform for dan-

cing was the most important feature, where, upon a stand at one end, the men who could play upon the fiddle or triangle took turns in furnishing the music for quadrilles and "country eights."

The fishing boats did not go out that Monday, the day purposely chosen that the men might have a chance to stay at home for the picnic, and all day the crowd around the stand waiting for a chance to dance was considerable. Colombe stood among them watching the quadrilles listlessly. Odelle had not yet arrived, and Toussaint was not dancing. No one but these two and Mrs. Amand guessed the girl's secret, and many commented with wonder upon her altered looks.

Suddenly Toussaint's face brightened, and he started forward. Colombe followed him with her eyes, saw Odelle, and set her teeth with a look not pleasant to see. The young lovers took their places in the set forming, and Colombe watched them with an expression her childish face had never worn, and which many noted with sudden enlightenment as to the change in her.

It all happened in a moment after that. Toussaint took his partner in his arms to turn. Odelle stepped back into place, and Colombe sprang on her like a panther, bore her to the ground, and began an assault that might have ended tragically, had not Toussaint, recovering from his surprise, thrown her off, and lifted Odelle from the floor. The music ceased in confusion, a dozen hands were laid on Colombe, who lay quite still, except for the sobs which shook her slender body.

Odelle interposed between her and the gathering crowd. "Leave her to me," she said. "She was crazy for a moment, and could bear no more. She will be her own gentle self again. Poor, poor Colombe! Toussaint, lift her, forgive her."

"Forgive her! never," said the young man, wrathfully. "The treacherous cat! I will not forgive her, now or ever."

Odelle bent over the girl, and softly stroked her hair. "For shame, when we are so happy," she said reproachfully. "She was mad, I tell you; she has no help in her dumb misery; who can wonder if it broke bounds?"

As if to verify her words, Colombe raised her head, and turned to Odelle a face so heartbroken that the bystanders burst into involuntary exclamations of pity, and clasped Odelle's dress in mute imploring for pardon. Odelle stooped and kissed her, but when Colombe turned to Toussaint he moved away, muttering between his teeth that he could not forget her face as she sprang

on the girl he loved, and that while he remembered it forgiveness was out of the question.

The two months that intervened between the picnic and the marriage of Odelle Theriault and Toussaint de Villier were filled for Leboncoup by interest in the little tragedy enacting in the widow Amand's house. The village, among its virtues, shared the vice common to all places where larger interests are wanting, of a lively concern as to others' affairs, and it was only natural that tongues were busy over the unhappy fate of Colombe. In the one outbreak of her life the passion that had turned her sweetness into bitterness had been vented, and those who had condemned her at first ended by accepting the theory of a temporary insanity of grief, and pitied her.

No one would have known her for the bright creature who had watched the boats come home in the June sunshine a few weeks before. All color had faded from her cheeks, her step was slow, her form drooping; she never smiled, but went about her tasks in patient apathy, which touched all hearts. All but one, for whose mercy she vainly plead with all the eloquence of her speechlessness. Toussaint, whom she followed with heart-broken eyes, Toussaint alone withheld the forgiving smile she craved. And so the week before the wedding came, and Colombe was eager in her efforts to make the house ready for Toussaint's bride, for he was the youngest son, and, according to the Leboncoup custom, to him as such belonged the right of bringing his wife to the paternal roof.

It was impossible to say what the practice of her religion meant to the dumb girl, but two days before the wedding she sought the priest in confession, and after that seemed at peace.

She had followed Odelle with imploring meekness and every sign of sorrow from the day of the picnic, and the happier girl had done all in her power to lighten the lot of her to whom she had brought pain.

In response to Colombe's appeal to be allowed to help in her preparations, she had given her the wedding veil to hem, and had insisted that Colombe alone should be her bridesmaid.

It was to her entreaties, and to the necessity of forgiving all wrongs before the marriage sacraments, that Colombe owed at last Toussaint's reluctant pardon, accorded as a good-night benediction on the eve of the marriage. When the girl saw him coming toward her with a half-smile for the first time in so many weeks, she went to meet him, and knelt suddenly at his

feet. Toussaint extended his hand, but she did not take it. Instead, she bent her head beneath it, and laid her cheek tenderly for a moment on his foot. Then she raised her face,



trembling but tearless, and with a smile of strange brightness, signified that not then, but to-morrow he would truly forgive poor Colombe. And they wondered later if her life, sinless except for her one bitterly repented fault, had won for her the right to hear with her sealed ears the rush of coming events, and her silent lips to prophesy.

The wedding-day was fair, with piled-up clouds in the west that betokened the coming of wind. The nuptial mass was early, but from far and wide everyone came to see the marriage about which so much interest had gathered. Pretty as the bride was in her simple gown of rose-colored cashmere and soft tulle veil, all eyes turned on the bridesmaid, whose face was as white as her snowy muslin dress, and whose eyes shone with strange luster under her dark hair, as she walked as one set apart for some great purpose, or so they said later when they recalled her face, and interpreted her look by the light of subsequent knowledge. According to the custom of the village, one meal of the day was eaten under the groom's roof, another under the bride's. As Odelle lived on the east side, the wedding breakfast, more probably dinner, was given at Mrs. Amand's,

whence the bridal pair would go to take supper and spend the night in Odelle's maiden home. Old Nicholas Theriault, the fiddler, had come, and dinner over, dancing began, where every one claimed the honor of dancing with the bride. Pretty Odelle, flushed and gay, was breathless and glad to rest, when the summons came for her to make ready for the sail across the harbor for the early supper, and to meet the friends who waited her upon the east side.

During the dancing Colombe had been absent. She had sat through dinner, not eating, but calm, with the same uplifted look upon her white face which it had worn in the church, and had immediately retired to the solitude of her room, whither many thoughts followed her with loving pity. Now in her capacity of bridesmaid she was to accompany Odelle across the harbor, she and Louis de Villier, Toussaint's cousin and groomsmen. Odelle came down soon, with a dark cloak covering her rose-colored gown, but Colombe lingered.

At last she came, stepping loiteringly down the stairs, still in her thin white dress, though the wind had risen.

As they saw her face, an involuntary exclamation broke from the guests who had gathered at the foot of the stairs to wish the bride God-speed, and an old woman crossed herself, as she drew tighter the black silk kerchief worn, after the manner of Acadians, in lieu of bonnet, saying : "*Mon Dieu, elle voit les anges.*"

Colombe's mother, softly crying, and Mrs. Amand pressed forward to the girl, lifting her thin dress protestingly, signifying that it was growing cold. But Colombe shook her head smilingly, spreading wide her arms, as if she were indeed the dove she was called, about to fly.

Then she clasped her mother's face and Mrs. Amand's in turn in her hands, kissed them each, and turned again to kiss Mrs. Amand, pointing to Toussaint waiting outside.

"*Dépêche-toi, dépêche-toi,*" he cried, turning at that moment, and beckoning, and Colombe hastened to obey.

The bridal party went on board a little boat that waited them at the wharf. Louis de Villier sat far forward in the bow, Colombe on the side, Toussaint and his wife in the stern. The wind blew in puffs, and the sky was darkening ; Odelle shivered as Toussaint wrapped her cloak about her, but Colombe looked straight over the water with the gaze of one who felt neither cold nor heat.

It was in the channel, half-way across, that the squall struck

them. It was the work of a moment. The boat careened, then jibed; the young bride, wrapped in her cloak, the heavy folds of which made her helpless, was swept into the water. Odelle fainted and sank at once, when a white figure plunged after her, seized her as she rose, and held her up. It was Colombe, and she could not swim.

"Quick, Louis; take her," cried Toussaint in agony, for the girls rose near the bow, and he could not reach them.

But when Louis leaned over to take Odelle, Colombe motioned him away, and pointing to Toussaint, sank with her burden.

Toussaint, with a dreadful oath, cursed her as a murderess; but in a moment they rose again, Colombe struggling to support the unconscious Odelle, and this time it was Toussaint who leaned out to seize her.

With a supreme effort, Colombe raised Odelle, and placed her in her husband's arms, and both men saw the bright smile with which she did so. Then she folded her arms upon her breast, and sank at once, and forever.

In vain they hovered around the spot, and the boats from shore, bringing those who had seen the accident, came to their assistance. Colombe did not rise again, and in the last rays of the setting sun a sorrowful wedding party sailed silently to shore.

There could be no sleep that night, and everyone sat through the long hours, talking softly of the sweet dove's innocent life and tragic end.

Odelle sobbed on her husband's breast, seeking the comfort he could not give, as he remembered the pardon he had withheld from the dead girl, the price she had paid to win it, and read at last the meaning of her dying smile.

It was early in the dawn when they went once more to the shore of the little harbor, hoping the incoming tide had brought them that which they had sought in vain.

And the kindly waters had done their work, for white and still in the gray light, her dark hair clinging to her cheeks, her lips smiling with her last thought that now Toussaint would look gently on her, among the soft green sea-grass lay Colombe Pellerin.



THE PORTRAIT OF A SINGER *

BY NEITH BOYCE



It had been a white morning for Kenyon.

A quick lightness and elation marked his step as he vibrated to and fro before his easel. His head was high, his gray eyes bright, and his shrill whistle rang joyously through the studio, flooded from the lofty skylight with pale April radiance. His brush dashed at the canvas impetuously, confidently; a hundred little inspirations of the happy moment guiding it to the desired effect. It seemed he could do nothing amiss.

The slim white-armed girl on the model-throne—an exquisite harmony of singing tones—appeared to glow with some reflection of the painter's fire. She had posed in perfection, with but a five-minutes' rest, for two hours. Two hours which seemed like twenty minutes to Kenyon, tramping absordedly back and forth over the fragments of his cherished meerschaum, an old friend unheedingly sacrificed in a moment's frenzy of delight.

Now and then he warbled contentedly, in a thin falsetto, an air which resembled nothing in particular; and then fell to whistling again, with short intervals of contemplative silence, always succeeded by a simultaneous outburst of paint and vocal jubilation.

It was a morning of a thousand. And there yet remained another good hour of the sitting, with much to be done. When, therefore, on a sudden the little electric bell at the door thrilled out sharply, Kenyon only stopped short in the midst of the "Habanera," scowled viciously, and went on with his work. The dead silence which fell upon the room had not the desired effect of routing the unwelcome visitor. After the lapse of a

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long minute the bell rang again; and this appeal, evoking from within nothing except an imprecation sufficiently deep, bu



audible, was succeeded by a smart knock on the panel of the door.

Kenyon crossed the room to assure himself that the bolt protected him from forcible invasion; and, satisfied that it did, he was about to turn away, when a woman's visiting-card was

pushed over the lintel. He waited another minute and then, assuming that the owner had departed, went and picked up the card. It read, "Baroness Folkner von Tannhausen," and, written in pencil below the name, "begs that Mr. Kenyon will give her a short interview on urgent business."

Whether from gallantry or curiosity or apparent necessity, Kenyon yielded. He shrugged his shoulders with a look of bored vexation, called to the model, "Rest, Mamie," and, when the shimmer of her green robes had disappeared in the little corridor which separated his living-rooms from the studio, he unbolted and opened the outer door.

A short woman, dressed richly in mourning, rustled past him, bending her head slightly in answer to his somewhat ironical bow. Kenyon silently set a chair for her and she seated herself, putting aside the heavy crape veil from her face.

"Mr. Kenyon," she said, "I hope you'll forgive me for intruding this way. I know you were busy, but I was so anxious to see you—and I sail to-morrow morning."

She spoke with perfect fluency, but yet with an undefinable accent, which was not German; while her mature and faded charms were of a surprising type, half Spanish, half Oriental. Her manner had a certain authority which fitted better, perhaps, than her title, but not so well as her gown. It was the self-confidence of a woman accustomed to admiration and applause—hardly that of the "great lady" to whom the title and name, by no means unknown, seemed to point.

Kenyon walked to a small table near by, laid down his palette and brushes, and returned.

"I am at your disposal, madame," he said, coldly.

"I wish—I wish to ask you to execute a commission for me—a portrait."

A slight nervousness here manifested itself in her manner. Her long black eyes, which, with the straight brows and narrow forehead, were now the sole charm of her face, left Kenyon's and roved restlessly over the pale-toned walls, lined half-way up with canvases framed and unframed, in all stages of evolution. Other canvases were stacked at the back of the studio, partly concealed by a large screen of Moorish fretwork, over which had been thrown a heap of gauzy orange-colored draperies, and the black eyes rested on these.

She went on abruptly: "You painted not long ago, I believe, a portrait of Karl Savary, the singer—is it not so?"

"Yes," said Kenyon, in some surprise.

"What has become of that picture?"

"It is here."

"Here—in this place?"

"Yes, madame."

"How is that—it is not your property?"

"Yes," said Kenyon. He went on, half unwillingly, half amused, at this catechism. "You see, the picture was not quite finished at the time of Savary's death. His affairs were left in confusion. His relatives are poor people in Germany—and, in short, the portrait remains with me."

"Is it for sale?—but why do I ask that? Mr. Kenyon, what I want is a small copy of that picture. Will you make it for me?"

Kenyon hesitated a few moments, looking curiously at his visitor. Her request had suggested to him an odd train of ideas. Across these suddenly flashed into his mind the remembrance of a face like and unlike this matronly, double-chinned, coarse-fleshed countenance—a young face, with the same glancing eyes and narrow brow, but full of life, color.

"I have seen you somewhere," he said, with unconscious brusqueness.

She made a quick movement of exasperation, and the color rose dully in her dark cheeks.

"Very likely. But what difference does that make? You have not answered me."

"I beg your pardon," said Kenyon, slowly, realizing that her eyes had been fixed on his with an intense eagerness. Plainly she attached no little importance to the request. His first impulse had been to refuse, but after a moment he said, slowly:

"I don't know. I am very busy just at present——"

"A month—two months, then? Can I have it in two months?"

"Well—yes. In two months."

She drew a long breath. "And now, may I see the picture? I have heard much of it. I have even seen a photograph of it. It has been exhibited here, yes? But show it to me, please."

She rose to her feet and threw the long veil back over her shoulders. Her eyes were very bright, her whole face almost childishly eager. Despite her years and the stoutness which the lines of her well-cut gown did not succeed in concealing, she still

possessed a certain attraction—the charm of a woman secure of herself, accustomed to please.

Kenyon withdrew his eyes from her with an effort due less to this charm than to the faint-floating ghost of a recollection which teased him with its persistent intangibility. He dragged out from behind the Moorish screen a large canvas, and with some difficulty, due to its unwieldy size, got it across the room and put it into the gilt frame destined for it when complete. The Baroness stood with her back to him. He spoke to her twice. Then sud-



denly she wheeled about and faced the picture. Her eyes dilated, her pale lips parted.

“*Dios mio!* it is he!” she murmured.

Her face seemed like a translucent mask, behind which some pale radiance flickered in gusts. All at once her eyes brimmed over. Her gloves, which she had stripped off, fell to the floor, and her hands, glittering with immense diamonds, clasped a richly-jeweled cross, which flashed from the crape folds of her corsage. After some moments she turned and looked up at Kenyon through her tears as frankly as a child.

"He was a dear friend of mine," she said, softly. "He died here, far away from—from his home. You must have seen him often; you must have known him well—to paint him like that. Tell me—tell me something of him."

"Yes, I knew him in a way," said Kenyon, absently. "I saw him nearly every day while that was going on," indicating the picture. "And yet I didn't know him well. But"—here he hesitated and his voice softened—"I was with him when he died."

"Ah—h!"

She moved backward, her eyes still on his, and sank into a chair, and Kenyon, momentarily forgetting his interrupted work and the model waiting behind the screen, sat down near her.

"You know it was pneumonia," he went on. "He had taken a bad cold somehow, and he persisted in working on in spite of the doctors. It was the first big season of Wagner opera here, and the success of it depended on Savary; and, of course, he knew it. He finished the week with a great performance of 'Tannhäuser'—then went home to his hotel and gave up. Before morning he was delirious; they had to take him to the hospital. He died there three days later at day-break."

The Baroness dried her eyes, and twisted her handkerchief in and out her begemmed fingers.

"And you were with him those two days?"

"Yes. He was delirious nearly all the time. He never knew me."

"He—suffered?"

"Poor fellow—yes."

She shivered and caught her breath.

"It was very—good of you, Mr. Kenyon——"

"No. There seemed to be no one else."

"No one else? No one—out of all who loved him? Oh, my God!"

She bowed her face in her hands; then, after a little while, looked up, carefully dried her eyes again, and said, with an effort at composure:

"Pardon me for distressing you. It is very bad taste, I know. But tell me one thing more. When he was delirious—he talked a great deal, of course."

"Yes. But mostly in some German dialect with which I am not familiar. I caught only a word here and there—gener-

ally something about his home, or the lake and the linden-trees——”

“ Ah, yes—poor boy! He was so young and strong, to die like that. His beautiful face, his beautiful voice—gone, gone forever! But the good God knows best.” She bent her head and pressed the diamond cross to her lips. Then she looked up quickly, piercingly, at Kenyon. “ Did he speak any name, do you remember? any woman’s name? ”

“ No. He called several times for his mother.”

“ Poor boy, he has found her now. You are quite sure—no other name? ”

“ I heard no other,” said Kenyon, with a little frown of distaste.

She turned her head and looked long and silently at the picture.

“ I have seen him like that so often,” she murmured. “ What a chest—what arms! Golden hair, golden voice—heart of gold! He was a man! ”

Suddenly she rose. “ Pardon me for taking so much of your time, Mr. Kenyon. I am ashamed of my thoughtlessness. And now—my picture? ”

“ You shall have it in two months.”

“ Thank you. I will give you the address of my banker in Berlin. Please send it to him, securely packed, as soon as it is finished.” She handed Kenyon a card and a slip of blue paper. “ I had brought that check with me, but if it is not right——”

“ It is quite right, thank you.”

She gave a last long look at the picture, then dropped her veil over her face, thanked Kenyon again and finally departed.

Kenyon went back to his easel, and the model came out and resumed her pose. But somehow the light and atmosphere—or perhaps the painter’s mood—had changed. He was preoccupied and absent. The delicious problem of his color scheme—pale terra cotta and golden green as a setting for youthful pink flesh and auburn hair—had ceased to promise a near solution. The splendid vision of the early morning had begun to fade into the inevitable light of common day. Yet he worked on conscientiously until the half-past-twelve whistle announced the end of the sitting. Very promptly then he laid down his palette, nodded to the model, and began to clean his brushes, whistling pensively the while. By the time he had washed his hands and put on his coat and hat, the girl, too, was ready, and they went out together.

On the days when the little Irishwoman sat to Kenyon—and these were frequent, for she was a favorite model (the head and hands and the draped figure)—the two were accustomed to lunch in company at a small French restaurant on—or, rather, under—the dingy little square. This establishment consisted of a single basement room, low-ceiled, and lit perpetually by sparse, unshaded gas-jets, which flared strongly at intervals, leaving the greater part of the place in darkness. But it was clean and cheap, had a reputation among the Bohemians of the quarter for old cheese, crusty bread and fresh salads, and was accordingly frequented by many who might have afforded a more pretentious *ménage*.

Kenyon, habited to the place, had his special seat at a small table in a corner, where it was his pleasure, while imbibing the foaming beer or the mild red wines, to lie in wait for savage effects of light and shade, which he always thought he would utilize, but never did.

To-day he was in an unresponsive mood. He drank his bock and ate his bread and cheese, half listening to his companion's brisk chatter, putting in a word now and then, or smiling at



some flash of her mischievous wit, but oftener ignoring her altogether. When he had finished his frugal meal, he fished out a short black pipe from his inner pocket, and proceeded to add his quota to the coil of blue smoke that undulated along the ceiling. After a long silence, he said, abruptly, shutting his teeth on the stem of his pipe:

"Bother the woman! I wish I knew where I've seen her!"

"Seen who? The lady in mourning, you mean? I'll tell you, if you like," said the girl, readily.

"Pooh! You don't know her, do you?"

"Never saw her till I looked through the crack of the door this morning. But I'll bet a cookie I can tell where *you* saw her. On the stage."

"By Jove! I believe you're right!" exclaimed Kenyon, instantly. "I wonder," he added, meditatively.

"Yes, a singer—or dancer. Retired, of course, and rich—probably married," she added, nodding her head, sagely.

"Look here, Mamie, I'll tell you a story," began Kenyon, smiling, whimsically. Then he stopped suddenly and said to himself, "No, I won't either. I'll tell it to Her," and added, aloud, "Some other day."

With that he got up unceremoniously, and after paying toll to fat Madame Lefebvre at the desk, went out, followed by the model's twinkling glance.

Perhaps it was the idea of Constance which drove Kenyon out of that tobacco and garlic-scented atmosphere, away from the red-haired girl sitting with her elbows on the table and her narrow eyes blinking in the glare of the gas. In there it seemed somehow a profanation to think of Her. He strolled on around the little square, pipe in mouth, his hat pulled down over his eyes and his hands plunged deep in the pockets of his loose overcoat. It was an unfashionable neighborhood, and he attracted no more than a passing stare from the noisy children crowding the sidewalks. He noted abstractedly that the thin branches of the few maple-trees were studded with swelling buds, and that a faint green was suffusing the dusty plots where the fat sparrows wrangled; and recollected suddenly that the morrow would be Easter Sunday. A faint brooding smile lit his dreamy eyes as a



radiant figure all in palest gray, gray-eyed and bright-haired, dawned on his inward vision. The incident of the morning had by this time quite faded from his mind. He was thinking now of the woman whom his love and reverence set apart

from all other women. He was thinking that he was to see Her that same afternoon.



He went back to his rooms, spent two hours over an edition of Maurice de Guérin, which he was interleaving with drawings; then dressed and, stopping in midway at a florist's, took his way up-town.

The ladies were at home, the butler told him, and after a brief delay he was

shown into the "morning-room," a small apartment separated from the library by Indian hangings, and opening into a miniature conservatory. The little nook, with its tempered light and soft blending of dull pinks and greens, had the air of a hothouse, and the slender girl on the divan among the gold cushions was like a lily grown under glass."

"But you are going out!" exclaimed Kenyon, disappointedly, releasing her long gloved fingers.

"Yes—to drive and afterwards to a tea or two," said Constance, smiling. "Aunt Jem insists on my driving an hour every day—to bring back my color, she says. As though I ever had color!"

"Then I won't repine," said Kenyon, taking a chair near her and dropping his violets in her lap. "For you certainly look paler than I like. Aren't you dissipating too much?"

"Dissipating—in Lent?"

"You know you're scarcely strong yet. If you don't look out you'll be packed off for another ocean voyage."

Constance laughed and turned the question.

The acquaintance between these two was of little more than half-a-year's duration, the latter three months of which time Constance had spent in Provence and Southern Spain. But

before her sudden departure in the beginning of the season, this acquaintance had progressed so far that there was—at least on Kenyon's side—no question of allowing it to drop, and it had been continued through those three months by letter. It may have been due to the interest and charm which Kenyon was able to infuse into his share of the correspondence that the two met again not as acquaintances, but as friends at least. For he wrote with his soul in his finger-tips, alive and alert to seek out that other soul to which all his hope addressed itself. Almost from the very first meeting of all, he had acknowledged to himself—this philosophic dreamer of forty—that henceforth life held something for him beyond philosophy, or dreams, or love as he had known it, or, perhaps, art even, the master and crucible of all. She was so completely what a woman worth winning must be! Her patrician grace, her reserve, her youthful coldness, caprice even, seemed the entire fulfillment of an ideal which must always have lurked somewhere in his heart! He had never even wondered at his own swift and utter subjugation. It was part of the scheme of things, and so, too, was the promise which had begun to shine for him in her serene eyes. The definite word had not yet been spoken. The lingering on the threshold had its charm, to Kenyon even.

Meantime his position in the house was perfectly assured, if not defined exactly. Mrs. Ferriss, the aunt with whom Constance lived, approved of him, both from the worldly and the personal point of view. Indeed, she had been known privately to declare that were it not for Mr. Ferriss she would have married him herself.

“You shall drive with us this afternoon, if you like,” said Constance, graciously, fastening the violets into the belt of her gown. “And you may as well go to the Caswell's tea, too. I hope you were intending to go? Just think of the dinners you've eaten in that house!”

“I know, but there won't be any more—dinners, I mean—till next season. However, I'll accept for the drive, with many thanks. And, by the way, when are you going to let me sketch you in that gown? You promised, you know. And I've been dreaming of it. That gray, with the pink and lavender lights—it looks like a mist with a rainbow caught in it!”

“How poetical—if you could only paint your dream! You should have done it some time in Lent. You might have painted me in this Paris hat, and called the picture ‘A Peni-

tent!' But you must be too busy now. We haven't seen you for days. What have you been doing ever since—let me see—Thursday?"

"Oh, pegging away, as usual. I've been working hard on the 'Oread'—and it's coming, I think! Our exhibition opens in two weeks, you know, and I want that to go in. It's going to be the best thing I've done. The color of that girl in her green gown—it's great!"

"Yes, I daresay. You painters all rave over red-haired girls. But what else shall you send?"

"Oh, a landscape or two—just to show those fellows that I *can* paint landscape—and the portrait of Savary."

"Savary! I thought—I did not know you had that yet."

"Yes, for the present. I've been touching up some details a bit. I shall give it to some gallery eventually, I think. It's the best thing I've done so far. You think so, don't you?"

"Well, I hardly know. I didn't see it after it was finished. It promised to be—very good, I remember."

"It has attracted a good deal of attention. Principally, of course, because of Savary's sudden death, and because it's the only decent portrait of him. You remember the sensation his death made, don't you? Or was it just after you sailed? No, it was just before, I recollect now. Well, the portrait was well along then; fortunately, the figure was complete, or fairly so. People kept coming in and begging to see it. So I sent it to a little exhibition at the Paint and Clay, unfinished as it was. But that was after you went away. I thought, though, that I had shown it to you since you came back!"

"I never saw it but once; no, twice. The first time, you remember, Aunt Jem and I came to the studio——"

"I remember. You spoiled the sitting. Savary wouldn't keep his head in pose for looking at you. And then you went to the piano and sang something from 'Carmen,' and Savary struck in with the Toreador's song, and then you sang some duet or other. And I sat on the model-throne and twiddled my thumbs. It was good music, though. What a voice he had!"

Constance laughed suddenly. "And I went to your studio again one day. You weren't there, but I made your boy let me in, and I went poking around among your things."

"You did! Well! He never told me!"

Kenyon regarded her with puzzled surprise. She took the violets from her belt and nervously pulled them apart.

"Yes. I always meant to tell you. It was a freak. And I saw the picture again. That was the last time."

There was a short silence.

"Speaking of Savary reminds me," began Kenyon; but paused there at the sibilant rustle of silken petticoats approaching.

"Dear Mr. Kenyon, so glad to see you! You are just in time to drive with us. No, do sit down again; there is no hurry—and don't let me interrupt you. You were talking about a pet enthusiasm of mine, weren't you, Constance, love? I mean Karl Savary. Mr. Kenyon, I had an immense admiration for that man—his voice, his beauty, his genius! His death was a great shock to me. You know he sang here on several of our Sunday evenings when he wouldn't sing at other houses for love or money. The last time was just a week before he died—think of it!"

Mrs. Ferriss, sank gently into a chair and nodded her pretty head, crowned with the gayest of French bonnets.

"He was rather a favorite with your charming sex, I think," said Kenyon, smoothly. "That is to say, behind the glitter of the footlights; or, perhaps, as the lion of a soirée—a lion with a well-kept mane and a most musical roar, certainly. For I don't suppose you knew him personally?"

"Oh, no, I don't mean that, of course. No doubt in private life he drank too much beer and ate unpleasant things, and was generally unromantic—poor fellow! I never talked with him, really, for he spoke very little English, you know—Constance got on better with him, I believe. But just to sit and look at him! And when he sang—who could be coldly rational with that voice fairly drawing the heart out of your breast——"

"Don't be absurd, Aunt Jem," said Constance, rather sharply, decapitating violets.

"Constance, dear, you used to think so yourself. You were very fond of Herr Savary's singing."

"Was I?" said Constance, coldly. "Mr. Kenyon, you were saying something when Aunt Jem came in. Go on, please."

"Oh," said Kenyon, after a moment, "I remember. It was a rather curious little coincidence that occurred this morning; that is, one incident did. The other happened some time ago."

He went on to describe his visitor of the morning, ending with:

"She appears now as a German baroness, but I am quite certain that I recollect her eight or ten years ago as a distinguished ornament of the burlesque stage. She was a Cuban, and a beautiful creature, too. No doubt her title and rank are genuine enough, for I indistinctly remember that she retired from the public eye at the zenith of her fame, and married an admirer who was said to be both rich and noble. Ease and prosperity haven't altogether agreed with her, though. She has lost her beauty."

"And her husband, too—you said she was in widow's weeds. Though, perhaps, that wasn't much of loss, for she must have been in love with Savary. Probably he didn't care for her—she must have been ages older than he. Still, it is quite a romance——"

"Are you going to paint the picture?" asked Constance, in a low voice. She sat erect and still, her head turned away, only her proud profile showing against the pink curtain.

"I suppose so, though I am not fond of doing copies. But I haven't told you the rest of the story."

"Oh, is there more of it? Do go on then, Mr. Kenyon, I'm quite curious."

Constance did not move or speak.

"Well, perhaps, not exactly the same story, but, as I said, a curious coincidence. Some three months ago, just after Savary's death, I executed another commission of exactly the same sort—a small copy of this very picture—for a woman, too. Odd, isn't it?"

"Odd—it's fascinating! But, tell us, who was the other woman?"

"I don't know. I never saw her. A messenger-boy brought me her note—written on the sort of paper and in the sort of hieroglyphic-hand that most women, ladies, I mean, use nowadays. The note was unsigned and undated, and simply asked if I would make such a copy at once, on my own terms. I was to send a reply by the messenger, stating the earliest date when I could complete it. As it happened, I wasn't very busy just at that time, and I despatched an acceptance. A week later came another note in the same way, thanking me, enclosing—no, not a check, dear Mrs. Ferriss, but a packet of notes, and asking me to have the picture, when finished, put into an ebony frame, fitted with doors that could be locked. I sent an answer, promising to do so.

“Well, that is about all. I finished the picture. On the appointed day another messenger came and carried it away. And that was the end of it.”

Mrs. Ferriss exclaimed, softly, “How mysterious! I should have tried to find out who she was. But are you sure it was a



woman? Of course, though, it must have been. But why the locked doors, do you suppose? Altogether it is a real story—you ought to write it up and print it. I shall always look at your portrait now with a new interest. But it is odd that you never mentioned anything of this to us before, isn't it, Constance? And about you being with that poor young man in

his illness, and when he died—he never told us of it, did he, Constance ? ”

“ No, he never told us of it,” echoed the girl. She got up, dropping the violets from her lap, and crossed the room to the fireplace, where a small bed of coals smoldered dimly under a veil of gray ashes.

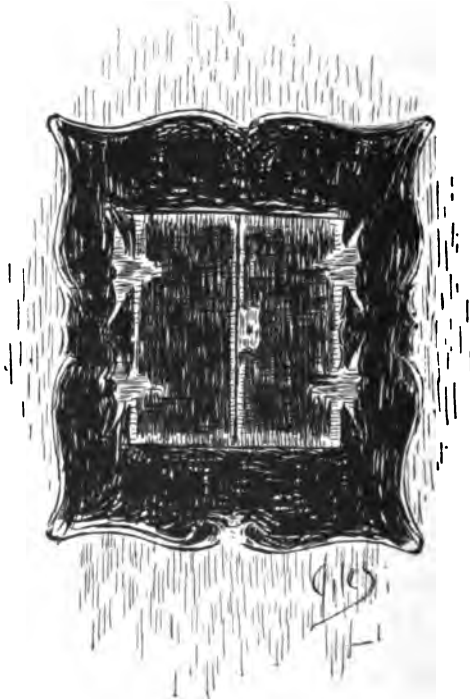
“ And now we must really be going,” said Mrs. Ferriss, briskly, rising and drawing her velvet wrap about her shoulders.

“ I’m afraid I’ve kept you——” began Kenyon.

“ Indeed you haven’t. We are in plenty of time for our drive—a good long one, too, that ought to bring a little color to this girl’s pale cheeks.”

Kenyon held the portière aside for her, and she called over her shoulder, “ Come, Constance ! ”

The girl, standing with her back to them, started imperceptibly. There was a little crash, and the fragments of a Sévres cup tinkled on the tiles of the fireplace, as she swept past Kenyon out of the room.



WITH MADNESS IN HIS METHOD*

BY FLORENCE I. CUERTIN



COURTRIGHT went quickly up the steps looking at his watch, and touched the bell. Her brougham was standing in front of the door, and he knew that she would be ready.

She came down-stairs in a plain dark travelling gown, with the violets he had sent her pinned to her top-coat, and with a maid, bearing her satchel and umbrella, behind her.

"To the Forty-second Street Station," he said to the man on the box, and the sleek-looking cobs sprang forward.

It was about a year since Courtright had first met Miss Schuyler. The acquaintance had begun on board a train bound for California, and they had become very good friends. The following winter found him a steady caller at the Schuyler domicile, yet in no way receiving preference above the other men who called quite as frequently, and who were also more or less enamored of Miss Schuyler's healthy type of loveliness. At least, if he was preferred, it was not made known, and he was treated with the same cordial frankness that characterized her manner toward all. Someone had once sagaciously remarked that Constance Schuyler could not be a flirt, for she was too much interested in every man she met; and perhaps the secret of her popularity lay in the fact that she was interested in people, which always flatters, and generally awakens interest in return. Courtright said she possessed adaptability in a very marked degree, and that it was that quality which enabled her to make friends with the oldest and crustiest of bachelors, or with the youngest and most swaggering of college youths; and that with all her vivacity and high spirits there was an under-current of sympathetic womanliness that appealed to you; and

* From The English Illustrated Magazine.

he summed it up by saying that she was the most delightfully human and thoroughly lovable girl he had ever met.

In the absence from town of her father, he had said that he wanted the privilege of escorting her to the station, and as they bowled along in the snug little brougham, he told her that there was something else he wanted; and then repeated the sweet, ancient story in a manly, nineteenth-century fashion.

It was no novel recital to Constance Schuyler, yet she wondered why it had never before been so hard to say "No." But she said it very firmly and decidedly, for if she loved him now she had not found it out, and it was much better to tell him how sure she was rather than to let him go on deluding himself with the vain idea that some time she might grow fond of him. After her frank words Courtright, looking out of the window, replied, meditatively—

"No, I should not want to hang around a woman for years, hoping that some day she might care for me, and bothering her about it. I should want her to come to me gladly and because she wanted to, and I would not marry Venus herself unless she loved me." Then he looked at her critically and continued, with delightful audacity: "I think I could marry you, though, if I did persevere, but I should always feel that perhaps you were not giving me your best love. It seems to me that that sort of thing ought to be spontaneous. I shouldn't care to be married to be gotten rid of."

"But you believe that love is a gradual growth, don't you?" Constance asked, wishing, in spite of herself, to explore further into this partly known but still fascinating territory.

"Not necessarily," he answered. "Do you remember the morning that I first saw you, going out to California? The train had stopped, and Peters and I got out to walk up and down the station. You came out of the car and stood on the platform, talking to someone below the steps. I heard you laugh, and looked up, and saw you standing there with your head a little thrown back, and your white teeth and dimples showing. I think I succumbed on the spot. I couldn't get you out of my thoughts anyway, and didn't rest until I had met you. It entailed two days of conversation on the general state of the country with your father, in the smoking-car, and the consuming of no end of cigars, but I was rewarded at last."

Miss Schuyler laughed.

"And all the time poor father never suspected the deep

scheme you were laying, and gave you no end of credit for being clever, because you listened to his views on the silver question and the tariff and everything else he was interested in. He used to come back from the smoking-car to mother and me and tell us about the bright chap with whom he had been 'settling the affairs of the nation.'

She congratulated herself that she had steered the conversation off dangerous ground and that it had taken a less serious turn. Personalities, above all, she felt were to be avoided. But Courtright evidently did not agree with her, and plunged boldly in again.

"I saw something in your face that day, as you stood there, that I had never seen in any woman's before. I don't believe I could explain it to you"—as she looked at him inquiringly—"but"—coming down to what he could explain—"you know you're an awfully fetching girl, Miss Schuyler, and I think, even if I were married to you, I'd always be a little jealous. I used to want to make jelly of that young Whitney who tried to monopolize you in Pasadena. You're the sort of girl"—continuing to analyze her as if she were not present—"that will always attract men without effort. I suppose it's magnetism, and besides"—turning and looking straight at her—"you're so peachy, and so—so—ridiculously kissable," ending with a half-apologetic laugh.

Constance Schuyler grew "peachier," and felt that she ought to frown, yet was conscious of a little exultant feeling within her, almost as if she were glad Courtright thought all those absurd things about her. But she said aloud she was very sorry he felt as he did, and that as long as he continued in the same frame of mind he must not come to see her, as it would hardly be fair for him, when she felt so very certain about herself. Then the carriage drew up in front of the big, red station, and there was not time to answer this rather depressing remark. They passed through the crowded waiting-room out into the vast skeleton-like building beyond, and proceeded to "walk a mile" to the train.

Courtright thought of her last remark, and made up his mind he would never adhere to it. He felt very downcast as he realized that he was giving her up, for a time at least, and that she was going to a place where, of course, every man there would want to marry her. He glanced down sidewise at her, thinking how sweet she was, and found that she, too, did not look particularly cheerful.

"Constance," he said, quite low, "if this is the end, won't you let me kiss you good-by—just once?"

Miss Schuyler almost stood still with astonishment, and grew at least three inches taller.

"Certainly *not*," she replied, in the most emphatic tones of which she was capable, looking at him so severely and with such utter consternation on her face that Courtright had to bite his lip and pull hard at his mustache to keep **from** smiling. She saw that he wanted to laugh, and felt that she had not succeeded in properly snubbing him. She went on indignantly, taking the first argument that came into her mind, and in which her conventional training and desire for appearances asserted itself:

"What a frantic idea! What would the people on the train think of you?"

"Oh, they wouldn't think anything of it," he said, and added drolly, "I'd say, 'Give my love to Maria,' or something like that, and then simply kiss you."

It sounded so absurd that Constance laughed, in spite of herself, but had no fear. In her eyes it would have been a heinous crime, and Courtright, she knew, was a man to be trusted. Then the train made a feint of starting and they ran a little for fear of losing it. There was but one chair vacant in the centre of the car, holding out its arms to receive her, when they entered, and she dropped into it, panting a little.

"Good-by," she said, looking up at him, and holding out a neat tan-gloved hand. "Good-by," he answered, taking it in his own and holding it a second longer than was necessary; and then, before she knew what he was about, he stooped, and saying, "Give my love to Maria!" lightly kissed her cheek.

It was only a very little kiss, and landed almost on her ear, just above the high fur collar of her coat, and was taken through one of the little dotted veils she generally wore, but it was enough to send the hot blood surging to her eyebrows, and to awaken indignation and rebellion within her.

He saw instantly the mistake he had made and regretted bitterly the spirit of mischief that had prompted him to the act. She was leaving him in anger, and there was not time to prevent it. The train was puffing and catching its breath, as if to collect enough to propel it, and was already slowly moving. He glanced down at her pleadingly.

"You will send me your card when you return?" he said.

"Never!" she replied, shortly, returning his glance with a look that contained fire and swords and other deadly weapons, and almost petrified him on the spot. He was obliged to leave the car or go with it, and he did the former, half-dazed, realizing, as he stood on the platform watching the receding train, that he had gone a step too far. Of course she was hurt and insulted, and he called himself a cad, and other hard names, and said no penance would be too great for him. Then an idea came into his troubled brain, and turning, he walked quickly back to put it into execution.

For one hour Miss Schuyler remained motionless in her chair, too stunned to move. That Courtright, of all men, should offer her such an affront had almost taken her breath away. It not only outraged her inbred ideas of propriety, but destroyed every particle of her faith in men, and she told herself she could "never forgive him." She was still wearing her heavy coat in the warm car, till she felt her forehead and found that it was feverish, and that she herself was almost stifling. Slipping off the coat, she hung it up, laying his violets scornfully on the window-sill. She would not wear them. Then she resumed her former position, with her head on the back of the chair, repeating to herself: "How could he do it? How could he do it?"

The train was pulling into Stamford when a very small messenger boy boarded the car, calling, in a voice that was a credit to his size—

"Is Miss Schuyler here?"

Constance sprang to her feet. Her first thought was of home. Had her mother been taken suddenly ill and had they sent for her? Or had her father met with one of those horrible accidents with which the papers abounded? A thousand awful possibilities flashed like meteors through her mind, as with trembling fingers she tore the envelope open.

"Regret exceedingly my conduct on train—Courtright," were the words that met her frightened eyes. In the reaction that came she felt almost grateful to Courtright for having something for which to apologize. Then the impropriety and rudeness of it rushed back, and she hardened her heart against listening to his repentance. Of course he regretted it—she would give him credit for that—but the act had been altogether unpardonable. She repeated this to herself a great many times for fear she might forget it.

The train was now at Bridgeport, but she was hardly conscious

that they were stopping until her reveries were suddenly broken by again hearing her name. A second blue-coated envoy stood at one end of the car, bawling, like the first, for "Miss Constance Schuyler!" With flaming cheeks she half rose and announced that she answered to that title, feeling that the eyes of every one in the car were fastened upon her, and wishing that Courtright was out of existence. What did he mean? she asked angrily. Had he not made her conspicuous enough for one day? What would these people say of her, to board a train with a man who had kissed her good-by and sent her telegrams at every station? And what was old Mr. De Peyster, who sat near her, and was a political friend of her father's, thinking of her, as he lowered his paper and peered over his glasses at her, watching her open the yellow envelope? She glanced at it leisurely, knowing now that there was no cause for great alarm.

"I realize that it was rude and ungentlemanly.—C." she read.

Constance's lip curled with disdain as she thought that she, too, realized it, and she took a novel from her bag and tried to lose herself in it. But her mind, in its present volcanic state, refused to follow the placid path of the heroine, and would not concentrate itself. She kept her eyes on the open pages, preferring not to meet the inquisitive glances of those near her. She had never felt so uncomfortable, and blamed Courtright more than ever. The very car-wheels were singing a monotonous song, of which the refrain was: "Give my love to Maria—Give my love—to Maria," at any other time appealing to her sense of humor, but now only fanning her ire. But it was to rise yet higher, for at New Haven a third messenger entered and followed the example of his strong-lunged predecessors. It was the first time she had ever wished to disown the proud name of Schuyler, and she felt a further strong inclination to throw the telegram unopened out of the window. It proved to be a continuation of the other two, reading—

"And sincerely beg your pardon. Please answer.—Courtright."

But she told the boy that there was no answer, and, signing the book, watched him depart, as he wondered what made the young lady's cheeks so red. There was no mistaking the fact that now she was an object of much more interest to the occupants of the car than the books and magazines they held. With one accord her travelling companions glanced curiously at her, and the young man with the checked clothes, who had stolen

furtive glances before, now stared at her quite boldly, making her cheeks burn as if all the blood in her body had settled there. She thought her anger at Courtright had long since reached the boiling point, but it now bubbled over and effervesced. How dared he humiliate her so? She would give anything to escape those awful looks. Even the porter and the conductor were eying her suspiciously, conversing with heads together at one end of the car, she felt sure, about her. And when the latter moved towards her and stopped at her chair, she almost thought he had come to request her to leave; and so he had, but merely to the car in front, as she had taken a seat in the wrong one. She welcomed gladly any escape, and he helped to move her things. She glanced at the violets on the window-sill, hesitating about taking them. It was too bad to leave them there to fade, she told herself, and snatching them up hastily she followed the conductor.

She breathed a long sigh of relief when she was re-established in the preceding car, with her back to the "fresh" youth and his inquisitive neighbors.

When the train reached Hartford, Constance watched the door with anxious eyes, fearing to be confronted by a fourth telegraphic emissary, but was spared any further ordeal. The time from now on dragged wearily, and was spent in ringing the changes on the proceedings of the morning, and in bitter arraignment of Courtright for daring to kiss her, and for his inconsiderateness in sending her the telegrams. As she stepped off the train in Boston she felt that it had been the most uncomfortable journey she had ever taken, and that her visit in Boston was not commencing under the most auspicious circumstances.

But after a busy week of rushing from one thing to another—recitals, lectures, teas, and symphonies, mornings with Browning and afternoons with Ibsen, Mental Science, Darwinian and other clubs, with now and then a frivolous dance thrown in—she found to her surprise that Courtright still remained uppermost in her thoughts. Though his conduct yet awoke indignation, she was able to review it more calmly, and at length caught herself drawing comparisons between him and the men she now met, with the credit in his favor. She realized that he was a man of daring—one who would make his mark in the world by bold strokes—and was surprised to find how closely associated he was as well with the little things of her life. Her very umbrella suggested him, as she recalled the morning they had chanced to meet on Broad-

way, when Courtright was up-town buying a wedding present for someone, and had turned to walk with her. They were caught in the rain that soon fell, and he had rushed her into Gorham's for shelter, and had insisted on her choosing a pretty umbrella from the "affluence of selection" offered them, and she recalled how they had gone home together under it, in preference to taking a cab. It had been such fun, and she sighed to think that it was all over. Then she went back to that last morning, and found that out of the chaos of resentment that had then wrought such tumult in her soul one thing only now seemed to stand out clearly: Courtright loved her and she had refused him, putting an end to all companionship whatever. She thought of the time when she would return home and would not see him, except to meet him occasionally at the big affairs to which they would both be invited. She thought of the walks and drives and box parties that would continue, but at which he would be missing, and was surprised to find how unattractive they appeared. Other men would be ready to step into the breach, but could they fill his place? she asked herself. Whom did she know as bright and amusing as he? Or as thoughtful and kind? Or even as good-looking? she added, after exhausting all his other attributes. The idea of putting him out of her life entirely was so distasteful to her that she resolved to think no more about it—a little way she had with things she considered unpleasant and which proved that she was, in her fashion, something of a philosopher.

Two weeks after Miss Schuyler's arrival in Boston Mrs. Mortimer Stanton gave one of her famous dinners. When all were established in their places she glanced around the mahogany board at her guests and the perfect appointments, drew a little sigh breathing content, and said that "it was well." She eyed Constance critically, affirming she had never seen her look better, and admiring again that proud little poise of head, more noticeable now that the curves of her neck and shoulders could be seen. Young Searles, who sat on her right, and between whom and Constance Mrs. Stanton hoped to make a match, said that he had never seen a head so well set, and that the poise was bird-like, and made no secret of his admiration of it. And although Miss Schuyler had accepted and found rather pleasant his devotion on her previous visit, and knew that the Searles' ancient family tree and the golden apples that hung from it were hers if she chose to but reach forth her hand for them, she felt a

little wearied now by his constant chatter, and turned to the man on her left, who was new material, and, she hoped, more interesting. Since those repentant telegrams she had received no word from Courtright. To be sure, he did not know her address, but he might easily have obtained that, she said, of her father or mother, if he had really cared for it, and she almost regretted not having sent him some little reply.

The enlivening hum of conversation around the table was broken by Mr. Stanton, who glanced across at his young guest, and said—

“By the way, Constance, a rather mysterious episode occurred in the office to-day that concerned you.” The laughter and talk almost ceased.

“Someone called me up on the telephone, and said, ‘Is this Mr. Mortimer Stanton of — Beacon Street?’ ‘Yes,’ I answered. ‘Good,’ he said; ‘is Miss Schuyler visiting you?’” In the silence now the soft tread of the servants moving around the table was the only sound.

“I asked him what he wished of you, but he said, ‘Oh, nothing, merely a package I have been commissioned to have delivered to her, and I wanted to make sure of her address.’ He was going to shut me off, but I told him to hold on a minute and tell me who he was. Then he said his identity didn’t make the slightest difference, as he was simply acting for another party.”

Miss Schuyler’s heart gave a bound, but she calmly reached for an olive.

“I pressed him still further,” Mr. Stanton went on, “and he replied, a little impatiently, that it wasn’t of the least importance, but that he was from the Treasury Department.”

Everyone looked at Miss Schuyler to see if she could solve the riddle, but she laughed, and said that it was probably a joke. Young Searles suggested that “perhaps the package was bank-notes,” and someone else asked if she “couldn’t include them all in her ‘pull’ in the Treasury Department?” But in her heart she felt sure that Courtright was the “other party,” and that with the aid of a friend in Boston he was hunting her out. The package, she thought, might be bonbons, or some conciliatory token, and she felt that in a few days she would hear from him; and the thought caused the dimples to break out around her mouth, and young Searles’ conversation, even, to seem not so exhaustingly insipid.

She had wavered long between her strong inclination to for-

give Courtright and the very just cause she felt she had to be angry with him. But she knew, now, what she should do.

The next day, when Mr. Stanton's solemn-faced "inside man" knocked on her door and silently presented a salver with a box upon it, she knew that her heart had told her truly. The box contained clusters of great double purple and white violets, and a note, with the inscription in Courtright's masculine hand. She tore the envelope open, letting it drop to the floor, while she read the contents almost breathlessly. He said that as she had not answered the telegram ("sent in serial form to see if he could not amuse her, and take away from the seriousness of the situation"), nor written him even one line to say she forgave him, he supposed that she was still annoyed. And when he thought *why*, he blushed with shame at what he had done, and could say nothing in justification unless it was that their conversation in the brougham had made him not quite himself. And he sent her violets, knowing she loved them, and hoped that they, in their sweetness, would plead for him better than he could for himself.

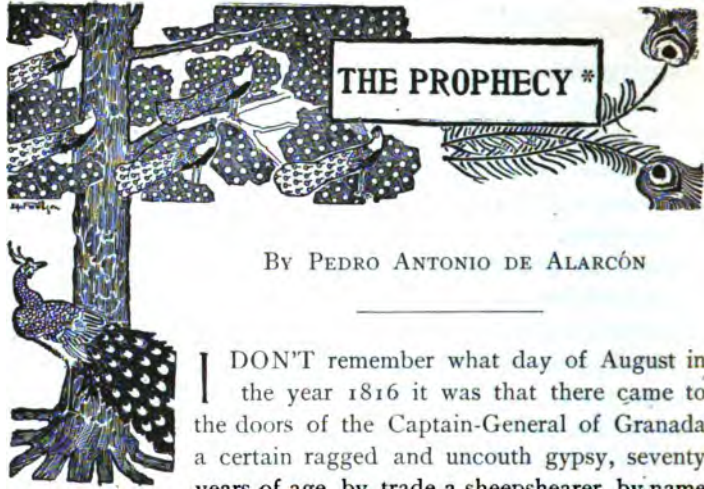
Miss Schuyler read the note through, then read it again, going over it as she used to a difficult page of her psychology in her schoolgirl days, until she could almost repeat it backwards. She put the flowers in a cut-glass bowl, and set it among the silver things on her dressing-table. Then she went to find Mrs. Stanton, humming a snatch from the opera that the Bostonians were singing, and told her that she really could not remain any longer than till Saturday.

The Van Houghtons gave a large reception in New York a few days after Miss Schuyler's return, with "dancing after eleven" on the cards. Constance attended with her mother, and held quite a little court of people, who said they were more than glad to see her at home again, and who asked the usual sarcastic questions about the Boston "savants." She chatted with them charmingly, listening all the while to the names announced at the door, and glancing occasionally in that direction. But midnight came, and Courtright had not appeared. She took an arm that was offered her, and moved slowly towards the ballroom, stopping in a small conservatory, for the moment vacant, while her escort went to bring her an ice. Her throat was parched, and she confessed to herself that the evening had not been a success. Then she buried her face in a cool bowl of

roses standing near, half wishing that she were one of them. As she stooped there, someone moved swiftly across the floor, and a dark head almost touched hers on the other side, while a repentant voice inquired, " Did you give my love to Maria ? "

Lifting her head, Constance saw Courtright standing before her, looking at her with twinkling eyes. Their expression was irresistible. She struggled with herself but a moment; then she threw back her head and laughed, as she had done when he first saw her in Colorado. When she stretched out her hand it was to put it in his, as she replied: " No—I didn't, but—I will."





THE PROPHECY *

BY PEDRO ANTONIO DE ALARCÓN

I DON'T remember what day of August in the year 1816 it was that there came to the doors of the Captain-General of Granada a certain ragged and uncouth gypsy, seventy years of age, by trade a sheepshearer, by name Heredia, astride of a lean and shambling black donkey whose whole equipment consisted of a halter about its neck.

The man, immediately on dismounting, said, "I want to see the Captain-General."

Needless to say such presumption awoke in turn the resistance of the sentinel, the laugh of the orderlies, and the doubt and hesitancy of the aides-de-camp, before he was brought to the notice of the Most Excellent Señor Don Eugenio Portocarrero, then Captain-General of the ancient kingdom of Granada; but as that dignitary was a man of kindly disposition, and already knew of Heredia, renowned for his tricks, his bargains, and his love for his neighbor's goods, order was given to let the gypsy enter.

Once within the office, he fell on his knees, exclaiming, "Blessed be Mary, Most Holy, and long life to your Honor, ruler of this little world."

"Get up and leave off ceremony and say to me what you have to tell," replied the Count with seeming severity.

Heredia at once drew a long face, and said, "Well, my lord, I have come that the thousand *reals* may be given me."

"What thousand *reals*?"

"Those offered a few days ago by proclamation to anyone bringing information about Parrón."

"Indeed! You knew him, then?"

"No, sir."

"Well?"

* Translated by John H. Ames, from the Spanish, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

"I know him now."

"How?"

"Very simply; I tracked him, I saw him, I bring the information, I claim the reward."

"Are you sure you have *seen* him?" said the Captain-General, with an interest that overcame his doubts.

The gypsy burst out laughing, and said: "It's very evident that your Honor thinks 'this gypsy is like them all, and wants to cheat me.' May God never forgive me if I lie! I *saw* Parrón yesterday."

"But do you realize the importance of what you are saying? Do you know that for years we have pursued this monster, this bloody bandit, whom nobody knows or has ever seen? Do you know that every day, in different parts of the *sierra*, he robs wayfarers and then shoots them, for, as he says, dead men tell no tales; and by this means only has he escaped being brought to justice? Finally, do you know that *to see Parrón means death?*"

The gypsy laughed again, and said: "Doesn't your Honor know that what a gypsy cannot do, no one on earth can? Does anyone know when our laughing or crying is real? Does your Honor know a fox as tricky as we are? I repeat, General, that not only have I seen Parrón, but I have talked with him."

"Where?"

"On the road to Tózar."

"Give me proof."

"Listen, your Honor! Yesterday morning, eight days since, my donkey and I fell into the hands of some robbers. They bound me fast, and led me through some bewildering hollows till we came to the clearing where the bandits camped; a cruel suspicion laid hold on me. 'Can these be Parrón's people,' I was constantly asking myself; 'if so, there's no remedy, for this devil has decreed that eyes that have seen *his* face shall never see another.'

"While I was thus cogitating, there approached me a man, strangely but elegantly dressed, who slapping me on the shoulder, said, 'Friend! I am Parrón!'"*

"To hear this and fall backward was one and the same thing. The bandit burst out laughing. I arose, trembling, fell on my knees, and cried out in every tone of voice I could muster 'Blessed be thy soul, king of men! Who would not have known

* The wild vine.

thee by the princely bearing God has given thee! May there be mothers to bear more such sons! Let me kiss you, my son! May this little gypsy die in torment if he was not wishing to meet you and tell your fortune, and kiss your lordly hands. Behold me at your service. Do you want to know how to trade dead donkeys for live ones? Do you want to sell your old horses for the price of young ones? Do you want to teach French to a mule?"

The Count of Montijo could not suppress a laugh. Then he asked, "And what said Parrón to all this; what did he do?"

"The same as your Honor, he laughed with all his might."

"And you?"

"I, my Lord, laughed too, while tears as big as oranges ran down my cheeks."

"Proceed!"

"Presently he held out his hand to me, and said, 'Friend, you are the only man of talent that has fallen in my power; all the others have had the bad taste to annoy me by weeping and wailing and the like nonsense, which puts me into bad humor; you, alone, have made me laugh, and if it were not for these tears——'

"'What? Good Lord, they are for joy!'

"'I believe it. Devil knows it's the first time for six or seven years that I have laughed; truth is, I haven't wept either. But let us hasten. Eh, boys?'

"For Parrón to say this, and for me to be surrounded by a ring of blunderbusses was quicker than a wink. 'Lord have mercy on me!' I began to screech.

"'Halt!' cried Parrón. 'We are not ready for this yet. I called you to find out what you took from this man.'

"'A donkey with his hide on.'

"'Any money?'

"'Three *duros* and seventy *reals*.'

"'Now, then, leave us alone,' and they all withdrew.

"'Now, tell me my fortune,' said the robber, extending his hand to me. I took hold of it and thought a moment. I knew I was in a position to speak freely, so I said to him, with all the conviction of my heart: 'Parrón, sooner or later, whether you take my life or leave it to me, you will die on the gallows!'

"'I know that already,' answered the bandit with perfect calmness. 'Tell me *when*!'

"I began to consider. This man, said I to myself, is going to free me; to-morrow I'll be in Granada, and *peach*; the next day they'll take him; then the trial will begin. 'Do you ask *when*?' I said, aloud. 'Then, take notice, it will be during next month.'

"Parrón shuddered and so did I, fearing my love of fortune-telling would be my death.'

"'Look you, gypsy,' replied Parrón, very deliberately, 'you will remain in my power, and if by the end of next month they do not hang *me*, I will hang *you*, as sure as they hung my father. If I die by that time, you will go free.'

"'Much obliged,' said I to myself, 'to pardon me after death,' and I repented for having made the time so short. We staid at the aforesaid camp, and I was locked up in a cave, while Parrón mounted his mare and took the track through the bushes."

"All right," said the Count, "I understand, Parrón is dead; you are free; and therefore you know his whereabouts."

"Quite the contrary, my General! Parrón is alive! And now comes the blackest part of my story.

"A week passed without the Captain coming to see us, and, as far as I could make out, he had not shown himself in the neighborhood since the evening I told his fortune; a thing not at all extraordinary, as my guards told me. For, do you know, the chief goes to hell occasionally, and doesn't return till it suits him. The fact is, we know nothing whatever of him during these long absences. About this time, by force of entreaty, and having told the fortunes of the band, prognosticating freedom from hanging and comfortable old age for all, I had succeeded in getting them to take me out of the cave, evenings, and bind me to a tree, for I was smothering with heat in the cell. Needless to say, there was a pair of watchers continually at my side.

"One evening, about 6 o'clock, the robbers who had been on 'duty' by command of Parrón's lieutenant, returned to camp, bringing with them a miserable reaper, forty to fifty years old, manacled, and crying fit to break one's heart. 'Give me back my twenty *duros*!' he said. 'Ah, if you only knew what it cost me to earn them: a whole summer's reaping in the sun! A whole summer away from wife and children! and so I scraped together by my toil and self-denial this sum, that we might live this winter, and that, on reaching home, I might embrace them, and

pay the debts the unfortunate ones have contracted, so that they might live. Ought I lose this money, which is a fortune to me? Pity, gentlemen! Give me my twenty *duros*, for the sake of the most Holy Mary of Sorrows!

"A mocking laugh answered the complaints of the old man. Bound as I was to the tree I shook with horror! For gypsies, too, have families.

"'Don't be a fool!' finally said a bandit, going to the reaper. 'You do wrong in thinking of money when more important matters should occupy your thoughts.'

"'How?' said the reaper, not supposing there could be a greater misfortune than his children going without bread.

"'You are in Parrón's hands.'

"'Parrón? I don't know him—never heard of him; I come a long way; I belong in Alicante, and was reaping in Sevilla.'

"'But, my friend, Parrón means *death*. Everyone that falls into our hands must die; therefore, make your will in two minutes, and your peace with God in the next two. Make ready! Aim! You have four minutes.'

"'I am going to improve them. Hear me for pity's sake.'

"'Speak.'

"'I have six children and one unfortunate—*widow*, I will say, since I must die, for I read in your eyes that you are worse than wild beasts—yes, worse—for beasts of the same species do not destroy each other. Oh! pardon! I know not what I say. Gentlemen, some one of you must be a father! Is there not a father among you? Do you know what it is to have children starving all winter? Do you know what it is for a mother to see the children of her blood die, crying, "I am hungry; I am cold?" Gentlemen, I don't want to live without them; for what would life be to me?—a chain of toil and privation. But I must live for my children's sake—oh, my children, children of my heart!'

"The father dragged himself along the ground and turned his face to the robbers. Such a face! It seemed like one of those saints that King Nero threw to the tigers, as the preachers say. The robbers felt something stir within their breasts; then they looked at one another, and, seeing all were of one accord, one made bold to say——"

"What said he?" asked the Captain-General, deeply affected by the story.

"He said, 'Comrades, what we are about to do must never be known to Parrón.'

"'Never! Never!' muttered the rest of the bandits.

"'Go thy way, good man,' said another, almost weeping, and I made signs to the reaper that he should instantly go.

"'Quick! March!' they said, and all turned their backs. The reaper held out his hand, beseechingly.

"'Aren't you satisfied?' growled one. 'Do you want your money, besides? Go! Go! Do not try our patience!'

"The poor father went away weeping, and soon was out of sight.

"Perhaps a half hour later, and which was taken up by the bandits swearing one another not to tell the Captain they had freed a man, there suddenly appeared Parrón, leading the reaper alongside his mare.

"The bandits fell back astounded. Parrón dismounted leisurely, unslung his two-barreled carbine, and aiming at his comrades, said, 'Fools! Idiots! I know not why I do not shoot every one of you! Quick! give back to this man the twenty *duros* you took from him!' The robbers produced the money and gave it to the reaper, who cast himself at the feet of the bandit chief who had so kind a heart.

"Parrón said to him, 'By the peace of God! without your directions I never should have found them. Now, you see you mistrusted me without cause. I have fulfilled my promise—you have your twenty *duros*. Now be off!'

"The reaper kissed him again and again, and departed full of joy; but he had gone hardly fifty paces when his benefactor called him anew, and the poor man hastened to retrace his steps.

"'What is your command?' said he, anxious to do a service to him who had restored happiness to his family.

"'Do you know Parrón?' asked the man himself.

"'I know him not.'

"'You mistake,' said the chief, 'I am he!'

"The reaper stood stupefied. Parrón brought his carbine to his cheek and fired both barrels at the reaper, who fell rolling on the ground.

"'May you be accursed,' were the only words he spoke. During the terror that blinded me, I felt the tree to which I was bound quiver slightly, and that my bonds were loose. One of the balls after having wounded the reaper, hit the cord which held me

fast, and cut it. I concealed my freedom and waited a chance for escape. Meantime Parrón, pointing to the reaper, said to his men, 'Now you can rob him. You pack of idiots! you lot of fools! to free this man that he might go as he did, howling along the highway! Fortunately it was I that met him, and learned what had happened, for had it been the soldiers, he would have shown them the way to this camp, same as he did to me, and we would all have been in prison by this. See the result of robbing and not killing; but enough of preaching, bury this body before it rot.'

"While the robbers were digging a grave, Parrón was lurching, with his back to me. Little by little I moved from the tree, and slipped down into a hollow nearby. It was already night, and shielded by the darkness, I set out with all haste. By the starlight I found my donkey who was quietly feeding, tied to an ash-tree. I mounted him and never stopped till I got here. Therefore, my Lord, give me the thousand *reales*, and I will put you on Parrón's track, who, by the by, has kept my three-and-a-half *duros*."

The gypsy, having given a description of the bandit, afterward received the promised reward, and departed from the General's office, leaving the Count and a person then present, from whom I had these details, utterly confounded. It remains to be seen whether Heredia guessed aright when he foretold Parrón's destiny.

Fifteen days after the scene we have just described took place, about 9 in the morning, a large crowd of idlers attended the assembling of two companies of soldiers in the streets of San Juan de Dios and part of that of San Felipe, in the aforesaid capital city, who, about a half-hour later, were to set out in quest of Parrón, the description of his hiding-place, his person, and his comrades having finally been approved by the Count of Montijo. The interest and excitement of the public was extraordinary, and none the less so was the soberness with which the soldiers took leave of families and friends before starting on so important an expedition, such fear had Parrón aroused throughout the old kingdom of Grenada.

"Seems we are ready to fall in," said one soldier to his comrade. "But I don't see Cabo-López."

"That's strange, too, for he was always on hand first of any when there was talk of hunting Parrón. He hated him with all his heart."

"So, don't you know what has happened?" said a third one, joining in the talk.

"Hello! this must be our new man. How do you like our company?"

"Very well, indeed," answered the one inquired of, a man of pale complexion and fine shape, which was partly hidden by the uniform.

"What were you saying?" asked the first.

"Ah, yes! Cabo-López is dead," replied the palefaced one.

"Manuel! What are you talking about? This can't be. I, myself, saw López this morning, surely as I see you now."

He, called Manuel, coolly said, "Half an hour ago Parrón killed him."

"Parrón! Where?"

"Right here in Granada. They found López's dead body on the Dog's Hill."

All kept silence except Manuel, who began to whistle a patriotic air.

"Eleven soldiers gone in six days," said a sergeant. "Parrón means to exterminate us! But how comes it that he is in Granada? Aren't we going to look for him in the Sierra-de-Loja?"

Manuel ceased whistling, and said with his usual recklessness, "An old woman, who saw the deed, says, that since he killed López, she hopes if we look for him we may have the pleasure of seeing him."

"Comrade! aren't you pretty bold to speak of Parrón with such contempt?"

"Well, is Parrón more than a man!" asked Manuel with a shrug.

Just then "Fall in!" was shouted by various tongues. The two companies formed and roll call was begun.

Now it happened that at the moment Heredia was going by, and, like everyone else, stopped to admire the soldiery.

It seemed as if Manuel, the new soldier, gave a start, and fell back a little so as to hide behind his comrades, when Heredia caught sight of him, gave a yell, and, jumping as if he had stepped on a viper, started to run up San Yeronimos Street.

Manuel raised his musket and aimed at the gypsy, but another soldier was quick enough to strike the gun up, and the shot was spent in the air.

"He's crazy! Manuel has gone mad! A soldier has lost his wits!" was shouted in succession by the lookers-on, and officers,

sergeants, and countrymen fell on the man, who was struggling to escape, and who, after they had subdued him, they plied with questions, accusations and insults which drew from him no response whatever. Meantime, Heredia had been seized by some passers-by, who, seeing him running and hearing the musket-shot, took him for a malefactor.

“Lead me to the Captain-General,” said the gypsy; “I must speak to the Count of Montijo—Count of Montijo, indeed!”

“Who have you killed?” asked his captors. “Here comes the guard and they’ll know what to do with you.”

“I think so, too,” said Heredia, “but be careful not to let Parrón kill me.”

“What do you mean by Parrón? What’s the man talking about?”

“Come and you will see,” and, so saying, the gypsy made them take him to the Commandant of the platoon, and, pointing to Manuel, he said: “Commandant, this is Parrón, and I am the gypsy who two weeks ago gave a description of him to the Count of Montijo.”

“Parrón! Parrón is taken! A soldier proved to be Parrón!” shouted the crowd.

“No doubt about it,” said the Commandant, reading the order given him by the Captain-General. “We certainly have been very stupid; but who would have thought of looking for the robber chief among the very soldiers that were searching for him?”

“Fool that I am,” Parrón was saying to himself, regarding the gypsy with eyes like a wounded lion’s. “He is the only man to whom I ever granted life. I deserve what has happened.”

The week following, Parrón was executed, and so the gypsy’s prophecy was literally fulfilled.



IN PRISON FOR DEBT*

BY AUGUSTE CLAES



THE incident which I am going to relate happened about forty years ago.

It was at the time that Antoine Wiertz, the Belgian artist, was astonishing the world, particularly the world of art, by his productions so powerfully conceived and so fittingly executed, which are to-day to be seen in the Wiertz Museum. Henri Conscience, the celebrated Flemish novelist, was at one time guardian of that museum.

As a rule, Wiertz would only paint grand historical and philosophical subjects, but he occasionally broke his rule and painted a portrait. The number of those who solicited the honor of sitting to him was, naturally, great. But the artist did not make the favor too common; as a rule, he would only grant it to his intimate personal friends, or to someone whose physiognomy attracted his attention by reason of its peculiarity.

One day he was called on by a wealthy lawyer named Van Speck, who was anxious to sit for his portrait, and who came to inquire about Wiertz's terms.

The lawyer had a physiognomy which was known among artists from Brussels to Brabant. He was the head of a large and flourishing business, but was known to be very miserly. He was niggardly in all things. There were many rumors current illustrating his stinginess, but the artist did not care about them. What conquered Wiertz at once was the man's head and face, which he resolved to put on canvas.

That head was a real delight to the artist. The top of the skull was bald, the forehead gathered into many wrinkles; the heavy eyelids lay on two eyes that, little and piercing, gleamed

* Translated by Lisle de Vaux, from the French, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

out like those of a cat. His nose was of approved Semitic pattern; his lips, properly speaking, had disappeared and nothing remained to indicate the position they had formerly occupied save a thin streak of faint red, about as broad as the edge of a sharp knife. His cheeks were pallid, and his chin came to a point. He was clean shaven, and looked exceedingly sharp and angular as he posed before the artist.

Wiertz darted a keen glance at his visitor's interesting face, and as the lawyer talked the artist was drawing him in his mind—the lines, the traits, and the *tout ensemble* were secured unknown to the sitter, who, in fact, did not suspect that he was sitting for his picture. Wiertz knew that he would make a masterpiece of the work.

"What are your terms, sir?"

"Ten thousand francs."

Whereupon Master Van Speck leaped out of his chair with surprise at the announcement. Were it a matter of time only, he could quite understand that ten thousand francs should be demanded for a short sitting; in fact, he often charged so much himself; but to think that he was going to pay so much to a man for simply daubing a piece of canvas with paints of different colors—no, that was a little too much.

So Wiertz reconsidered the matter, as he did not wish to lose the opportunity.

"Well, sir," he said, "it is my ordinary price, but as your face interests me, and I hope to be able to make a good picture out of it, I don't mind reducing my terms. How much do you value your portrait at yourself?"

The lawyer offered a ridiculously low sum, about which the artist disputed—less for the sake of the money than to keep his visitor as long as possible, so as to make the best mental photograph of him. At last the price of three thousand francs was fixed upon, and Van Speck rose to leave, saying:

"When do you want me to come for a sitting?"

"Oh, there's no hurry," replied the artist. "I am very busy at present. If it makes no difference to you, we will take a day next week. I'll write and let you know what day."

"That will suit me very well. Good-by for the present."

As soon as Van Speck had left the *atelier*, Wiertz rushed to his easel and began to sketch feverishly. He knew that he should make a brilliant success of the lawyer's picture, and he

wished to have it done as soon as possible. He painted through the day without intermission, and when night closed in the picture was already in its frame. The portrait was a living likeness. Van Speck stared straight at the spectator; his elbows rested on a table which was covered with books, letters, pens—in short, everything that would surround a lawyer who had posed in his office.

On the following day the artist retouched, improved and finished the picture. Then he had it packed up and sent to the notary by a porter.

“Take that to M. Van Speck, the lawyer of *Rue des Vieux Parchemins*,” said he. “Wait till it is opened, and bring an answer back with you.”

Then Wiertz rubbed his hands gleefully. He expected the lawyer to burst in upon him, anxious to congratulate him on his brilliant success. But an hour later the porter returned with the case on his back, and a note in his hand for the artist.

“What’s that?”

“Why, the case was opened in the hall, and M. Van Speck came down to see it. When he saw the picture, he made an ugly face—nothing more. He seemed quite furious. He turned his back on me and wrote this note. Then he told me to bring the case back to you; so I’ve brought it. You owe me four francs.”

Wiertz dismissed the porter and read the note :

SIR:—I do not believe in letting people make a laughing-stock of me; particularly, I object to an artist doing it. It was agreed that I should come to you for sittings, and that you should paint my portrait. Naturally, I took it for granted that it would be done properly. You have allowed yourself to act towards me with very doubtful taste, and you seem to hint that I am not worth a sitting. It is no less insulting to me than it is contemptible of you. I wanted my portrait, and here you send me a thing which bears no resemblance to me. I am sending it back to you, and shall not give you sittings. I don’t care to have anything more to do with an artist who has such a low idea of the dignity of his profession.

Yours, etc.,

VAN SPECK.

Wiertz burst into a roar of laughter when he had finished reading the epistle.

Then he began, in the quiet of his *atelier*, to express his opinion of the lawyer in language which will not bear repeating.

But he soon recovered his composure, and became convinced that the work which the lawyer disdained would be enthusiastically praised by *connoisseurs*. To his boisterous anger succeeded quiet wrath and a desire to be revenged on his insulter.

Suddenly he started, as a brilliant idea entered his head. The thought was as droll as it was brilliant. With a smile on his lips he replaced the picture on the easel, and began to paint as feverishly as before. In next to no time a considerable change was noticeable. The face remained untouched, full of life, but the attitude became a little less stiff. The eyes lost somewhat of their defiant pride, the lips closed still tighter, the nose grew a little more hooked, and the chin a little more distinctly pointed. Then the background was changed to resemble a prison wall with a grated cell-window. The books, papers and pens disappeared, as well as the table. They were replaced by a wretched wooden trestle, on which were a crust of mouldy bread and a bottle of dirty water. The rest of the furniture consisted of a dirty mattress.

The artist entitled this, "In Prison for Debt," and signed his name in large, staring characters in a corner of the canvas.

Then he hired a carriage, put in the picture, and drove off to find Signor Melchior, the well-known picture-dealer of *Rue de la Madeleine*, whose window was always surrounded by admiring crowds of the people of Brussels.

"I have got something here for you, which I think is pretty good. It is a study of a Shylock head. Will you put it in your window?"

"Certainly," replied the dealer, delighted at the idea of having a real Wiertz to exhibit in his window; "when shall I send for it?"

"I have it with me. Come and look at it."

Melchior was extravagantly delighted. It was superb. There would be a scramble for such a picture. What was to be the price?

"I don't know yet," said Wiertz, who had an idea which he wanted to work out. "Place it well, and we'll see. If anyone inquires about it, who seems really anxious to buy it, let me know."

The picture was immediately placed in a post of honor in the window, and the crowd soon began to gather. The next morn-

ing all the papers were full of the new picture which was to be seen at Melchior's.

Now it happened that a friend of Van Speck's, in passing the window, cast an eye on the picture. "Great goodness!" he exclaimed, and within five minutes had informed Van Speck of what he had seen. That worthy at once hastened posthaste to the window to convince himself of what his friend told him.

Yes, it was he. Exactly. "In Prison for Debt;" he, the most respected and respectable lawyer in Brussels. Was it possible that such a thing could be permitted? Pilloried by a beggarly artist in one of the most public places of the city. No; that was too much for flesh and blood. It must be put a stop to immediately. First of all, the artist must be compelled to withdraw his picture. Then they would see who would laugh last.

And the lawyer went off in a fury to see the artist.

Wiertz was idly lolling about in his easy-chair, smoking an exquisite cigar, when Van Speck entered, furious, like an avenging whirlwind. "How d' you do, sir," said the artist to the angry intruder; "to what do I owe the favor of your visit? Do you smoke? These are capital cigars."

"Sir," replied the lawyer, without deigning to notice the artist's attempts at civility, "let us get our affair settled promptly, please. At this moment there is exhibited in Melchior's window a picture which attracts the attention of every passer-by, and which is making me the laughing-stock of the town. I want that stupid nonsense to cease immediately—immediately, sir, I repeat. You'll have the kindness, therefore, to order the picture to be removed from the window and brought back here to your house. Then I shall know what steps to take. Do you understand me?"

"Why, not perfectly, I must confess. I don't quite follow. There certainly is a picture of mine in Melchior's window, but I cannot see what harm or annoyance that can cause you; in fact, I fail to understand how it can affect you in any way. You say it is making you the laughing-stock of the town, but then——"

"How dare you try to fool me thus? That picture, sir, is my portrait!"

"Your portrait?"

"Yes, my portrait. Completely and absolutely mine."

"I beg your pardon. Let us get at the facts. You came to me and asked me to paint your portrait, which I at last agreed to do for the sum of three thousand francs, after considerable haggling on your part. Wishing to do you a pleasure, I painted you from memory, and thought I had succeeded pretty well. But you soon disabused my mind of that idea. You sent the picture back to me with the announcement—*in writing, if you please*—that there was nothing in common between your own honorable person and the picture which I had painted. Is that so, or is it not?" Master Van Speck, seeing that there was no loophole, remained silent,

"With that," continued Wiertz, "of course, I didn't consider that I had any obligations towards you, and, of course, I wanted to get the best possible price I could for my picture. I was at liberty to do that, I hope."

Van Speck took two or three turns about the room, and then said:

"Look here; I don't like scandal of any kind, and I should like to arrange this matter amicably. I'll pay you the three thousand francs, and will withdraw the horror from the window."

"One moment," replied Wiertz, as he nonchalantly stretched out his feet and knocked the ash from the end of his cigar. "You must know that the improvements which have been made to the picture since it left your hands have considerably augmented its value. It is an exceedingly fine work and very impressive. It has cost me a lot of work and study. It did not come of itself. I may confess, *entre nous*, that I consider it to be the most valuable of all my works. In short, I will not part with it for three thousand francs, nor yet for ten thousand, nor even for twelve thousand. I won't take anything less than fifteen thousand francs."

And Wiertz looked at the lawyer with an earnestness which was crushing.

Van Speck burst forth into loud ejaculation and expostulation.

"Fifteen thousand francs! But you must be mad! Where could you find an idiot to pay fifteen thousand francs for such a fright? It's scandalous, sir, to push a man to such extremities, particularly a man of my character and standing—an eminently respectable lawyer, a captain of the civic guard. Fifteen thousand francs! I must say again that you must be mad."

"Allow me to interrupt. You live from your legal documents, and you make as much as you can out of them. I live

from my brush, and I don't see that I am acting in any way reprehensibly if I try to make as much as I can out of my painting, especially when I know that it is worth the money. So the fixed price is fifteen thousand francs, sir. Not a *sou* less. Take it or leave it, as you please."

"Then I'll leave it, and you may go to the——." The last word was fortunately cut off short by the violent slamming of the door, as the enraged lawyer rushed from the room. His avarice had got the better of him.

When, however, he reached the street, Van Speck paused to give audience to feelings which were unpleasant, but which he couldn't stifle. He reflected that if the picture remained on view he would get to be more and more the laughing-stock of all, until at last he would not be able to venture his head out of doors. Such an occurrence must be prevented at any cost. It would be better, after all, to make the best bargain with necessity, and submit with all the calmness possible to the painful inevitable. But fifteen thousand francs was an enormous price. It would certainly make him ill to pay so much. After all, he was in the snare, and he would have to submit to his captor's terms. "All's fair in love and war," sighed he.

He retraced his steps to Wiertz's *atelier*, and entering, said :

"I've thought the matter over again, and I'll accept your terms. I'll take the picture at fifteen thousand. You can have the money whenever your like."

Wiertz rose slowly from his seat with :

"Sir, you are too good, and I really ought to thank you warmly for your generosity. But do you know, since you went out, I, too, have thought the matter over, and I have had an inspiration."

The lawyer shivered. He began to feel a wholesome awe of the artist's ideas, and he presaged another misfortune.

"What idea?" he asked, anxiously.

"I've been thinking that the more my picture is seen, the more it will gain in value. I have a great mind to let it stay in Melchior's window for a fortnight or so, and then advertise it for a lottery, at a hundred sous per ticket. I should also send it round the town—show it round the streets. I am sure I should gain greatly by it."

Van Speck looked at Wiertz with terror.

"You would never do that!"

"Why not? At a hundred sous per ticket, and with public

taste in my favor, I should certainly dispose of a great number of tickets. I am so sure that it would be a brilliant success, that I won't relinquish the idea for less than thirty thousand francs—cash down."

The unfortunate Van Speck had another access of anger. He felt a prompting to fall on the painter and beat him to death with his heavy walking-stick. But on second thoughts the lawyer thought that the artist was a little too muscular, and might possibly save complication by thrashing *him*, so he decided to desist. So, instead, he alternately stormed and besought. It couldn't be possible that the artist was so stony as to pillory him to that extent—make him still more of a laughing-stock by sending that miserable caricature round the streets. And Van Speck begged his tormentor to have mercy.

"Here," he said, "is a draft for thirty thousand francs on my banker; give me formal authorization to take the picture out of Melchior's window."

The artist could not hold out against such earnest entreaty, so he finally yielded.

On the following day he cashed the check. He retained three thousand francs, the price originally agreed upon. The balance he distributed among the poor.

As to Van Speck, he tore down to Melchior's in *Rue de la Madeleine*, got the hated picture, which he took home with him, and bursting into a fit of fury, he danced upon it, and then hacked it with a knife until it was in rags. All the time he was cursing his folly which had led him to pay thirty thousand francs for a picture to destroy.





A NATURAL ADJUSTMENT*

BY WILLIAM MCKENDREE BANGS

IT was long past the hour at which it was his custom to leave his office for the day, but yet Richard Holt lingered. Up and down his small private room he walked, often looking impatiently at his watch. "Richard never will harvest his grain before it is ripe; he will never be guilty of that," his father had said of him once; but Holt was not unduly given to procrastination. He was a strong and resolute and determined man; he could patiently bide his time; but when he thought his grain was ripe he proceeded with the harvesting with energy and diligence. He was waiting now for the time to come when, after the vigorous daily walk he liked, and without other interruption, he might arrive at the residence of Marian Saunders at an hour when he thought she would be at home and alone. For many months he had loved her; but he had made no manifestation of his love, and had waited until now to speak to her and tell her of his love and devotion. He had had no doubt of the depth and intensity and

* Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted. Illustrations by Carol M. Albright.

lasting character of his own love, nor any question of the wisdom of his choice; his judgment approved his passion. He had only waited, modestly, that her love for him might have time to grow, and, wisely, until his affairs were promising enough to enable him to offer her such a home as he thought worthy of her. Now, as he believed, the time had come. Marian plainly was interested in him and had in various ways shown her regard for him; new and important clients had given him their business. In a little while he would be with Marian, and, holding her hands in his, would listen to the sweetest words it could ever be his lot to hear.

Presently the clock in the neighboring steeple of old Trinity struck the hour, and Holt's time of waiting was over. He walked quickly; but quickly as he walked, his fancy ran on before. He did not fail to anticipate the pleasure of the coming interview, and he dreamed of the time to come when Marian, his wife, would gladly welcome him upon his daily return to her. He pictured to himself the home that would be theirs, and he thought of its tasteful beauty and of all the comfort it would contain for them, and of all the joy and happiness the future had in store for him. Although no word of love had passed between them he had no misgivings, and it was almost in an ecstasy that he at length ascended the steps of the house where Marian lived with her father.

Holt had not long to wait. Soon he heard Marian coming, and then she entered the drawing-room and came to him with both her hands extended.

"I am so glad you came to-day," she said, warmly; and then, impulsively, she continued: "I so wished you would! I want you to congratulate me."

"Why?" he asked, smiling, misled by his own preoccupation and her light and cordial manner. "Has your father given you a horse?"

"No," she answered, smiling in return.

"A new gown, perhaps? Or promised you a trip to Europe?"

"No," she returned, with pretended indignation; and then, speaking slowly, and with emphasis, continued, "I am engaged to be married to Harry Crane. He told me—it only happened last night. I am so glad you came! I did so hope I would be the first to tell you!"

Holt's face paled. He felt cold; he was afraid that he would reel and fall; but he was able to save himself that, and in her

consciousness of her own happiness, Marian did not notice his distress.

"Why do you not congratulate me?" she asked, after a little silence.

"Pardon me!" Holt replied. "The surprise——"

"The surprise!" Marian repeated, interrupting him. "Why, you must have seen how much I—how much we cared for each other. But congratulate me," she added, imperiously.

"I—I do congratulate you," Holt stammered. "No, I never saw it. It was shabby of Crane not to tell me of his hopes—of his coming happiness. I hope you will be happy!"

"Why, how cold you are!" Marian returned in disappointment. "Anyone might have said that. You 'hope I will be happy!' Of course I shall be happy."

"Yes," Holt returned, as he recovered a little of his composure, "of course, I shall speak more warmly to Crane."

Holt never quite knew how the interview was ended. It was a hard blow for him. It was hard to bear that it had come upon him without any premonition whatever, and it was still harder to bear that it was Crane who was successful where he had failed. It would never have occurred to him that Crane could be a dangerous rival in any competition. They had long been intimate; but Holt liked Crane without altogether respecting him. Crane had always leaned upon him, and Holt had always been kind and helpful. Even in their college days Holt had aided him in his tasks, encouraged and led him in athletic exercises; and, later, when Holt had been admitted to the bar, he had taken full charge of Crane's inherited estate.

It was a hard blow to Holt, but he bore it manfully. His disappointment and sorrow were great, but he did not let them overwhelm him. He went about his affairs regularly.

Holt, in his determination not to permit his disappointment to affect his life otherwise, did not spare himself; he would not avoid Marian, and, after her marriage to Crane, he was their intimate friend and most frequent visitor. He knew Crane well. He knew how weak and how unstable he was, and he feared that Marian's future happiness was not so certain as he would wish it. And, as time went on, he found no reason to dismiss his fears as unreasonable or groundless.

One evening, a little more than a year after the wedding, Holt found Crane awaiting him in his own apartments.

"I say," Crane explained, "I wanted to see you."

"That is pleasant," Holt answered. "You have not shown any very strong desire to see me for a long time. You might have found me at your own home."

"As usual?" Crane asked.

"Yes, as usual," Holt returned as, standing before the fire, he looked down upon Crane. "I have just come from there. By



the way, I think I may safely say you would be warmly welcomed there yourself. Mrs. Crane has really a very attractive and comfortable library. Have you seen it recently?"

"Your sarcasm may be very good of its kind—very good," Crane responded; "but you are making a very wasteful use of it. Marian was glad to see you, I have no doubt."

"I trust so. She was very agreeable; she always is. I did the best I could to make her unmindful of your absence."

"Indeed! Was that fair?" And Crane laughed, but presently he went on more seriously. "I am sorry you are in such a mood, Holt. You are unpleasantly and aggressively hostile. But, it makes no difference, I need your help; I must have it. I am in trouble."

Crane had long been accustomed to seek Holt's help when he needed it, and he did not question now that, whatever Holt's mood, all of his judgment and energy and professional skill would be placed as loyally at his service as they ever had been.

"Of course you are in trouble," was Holt's response. "Trouble comes to all of us; but it seems to me you seek it. I have tried to point out to you your danger; but you would not heed. I have tried to remonstrate with you; but you have resented my interference. You were bound to go your own way, whether it should lead to destruction or not. Of course you are in trouble. Now, who is the woman?"

"Oh!" Crane cried, with a chuckle; and then with a broader laugh, added, "You take her for granted?"

"Certainly," Holt answered. "You are much like other men. No man loses the affection he has had for one woman until he falls in love with another. No man neglects his wife as you——"

"That has nothing to do with it," Crane broke in, impatiently. "Marian and I would have grown apart——"

"Grown apart!" Holt interrupted in turn, angrily. "Pshaw! It is so common a story! You and Marian have not grown apart; you have been drawn aside by a pretty face. Who is the woman? But wait," he went on, as Crane was about to reply. "I don't want to know. Your fancy has wandered before; but it has returned. It will return now."

"But this is different," Crane returned. "This is final. I love this one. I love her, don't you understand? I love her with all my heart and soul, with all the strength I have."

"Oh!" Holt exclaimed, in derision, and then he asked, "She is beautiful, this paragon?"

"Yes."

"Charming, too?"

"Certainly, very charming," Crane returned, with determination.

"Of course," Holt sneered. "And I suppose you will say she is very good—this woman who has come between your wife and you—between Marian and her happiness?"

"She is good. If you knew Katharine Perry——"

"Katharine Perry?" Holt repeated. "The girl you presented me to at the picture-store the other day?"

"Yes, if you knew her. I will hear no word against her. What fault is it of hers?"

"Fault?" Holt repeated. "To steal a husband from his wife!" Then, as a suspicion of the truth came to him, quickly he asked, "Does—does Miss Perry know you are married?"

"No," Crane answered, defiantly. "She has but recently come to the city; no one has told her yet."

Holt looked at Crane silently for a moment or so. Then he spoke slowly and contemptuously: "You have not fought fair. It was a rascal's work—to trick a woman into love, and into wrong, too."

"Oh, hold on!" Crane cried. "I don't want you to preach to me. I want you to help me."

"What can I do but preach to you, as you call it? I can show you the wrong; it is you who must correct it. What can I do to help you? What is it you can want me to do? Must I go to her and tell her my friend is a villain—a weak villain—and beg her to remove temptation from his way? Shall I insist that she take herself out of harm's way?"

"She is not in harm's way," Crane replied, angrily. "I intend her no harm."

"No harm?" Holt repeated in astonishment. "Then what in heaven's name do you intend?"

"Oh, come, now. That is what I want your help for. I intend to marry her."

"To marry her?" Holt found it hard to comprehend.

"Yes," Crane went on, impatiently. "You seem to be very dull. I mean to be free from Marian as soon as possible."

As Holt perceived how serious was the menace to Marian's happiness his manner changed instantly. He became furiously angry. He lost utterly his self-control. He threw himself upon Crane and shook him violently. The difference in the lives the two men had led would have made any struggle between them very unequal; but, indeed, there was no struggle. Crane was so much the weaker, and was placed at such further disadvantage by the suddenness of the attack upon him, that he was helpless in Holt's hands. His very helplessness soon ended his punishment, for Holt was not one to continue a conflict with an unresisting opponent. He released Crane. He felt that his anger was just, but he was ashamed of the outbreak.

"I—I beg your pardon," he said, haltingly; and then he continued, bitterly, "How dare you! How dare you think of being free? Do you care for nothing but your own selfish pleasure? You care nothing for Marian! Her happiness is nothing to you;

it is something to me! How dared you think that I would help you to wreck her life! to break her heart! How dared you!"

Crane, as he was released by Holt, had risen, and had walked angrily toward the door; but he had paused as Holt had spoken. Now he returned.

"You must be in love with Marian," he said, slowly and impressively, "or you would not have been so violent. I say, you must be in love with Marian," he repeated, as Holt made no reply.

"I am, I am, I am," Holt replied, boldly advancing toward Crane. "I have loved her for long. I am proud to love her, and I shall love her forever. My love has done her no harm. It can never harm her. I have helped her. I have been good to her. I have aided her to bear your neglect. I have made light of your wickedness. I have hidden your follies as best I could. I have done my best to save her happiness. I have done all that I could to help her keep her faith in you. I have loved her well enough to be her friend, when to be that, and only that, almost tore my heart in two. For her I would do anything. I would leave my friends, my profession. I would abandon hope, ambition; anything to be of service to her. I would dismiss even my dreams of what might have been. I would give up anything, everything, save only my respect for her, to help her to endurance and content and happiness. For her, I tell you, I would give all that I have, all that I can hope to have. For her, I would give far more than I would for my life. There is nothing I would not do to serve and help her."

Holt spoke with a quiet, almost fierce intensity. As he paused, Crane whistled in affectation of amused astonishment. He was astonished; but he was not amused and he was frightened. He had not even suspected Holt's affection for his wife.

"I came to you as my lawyer," he said, at length, "and as my friend. You are my lawyer, and——"

Crane hesitated, but Holt made no reply. He turned his back upon him, and Crane regaining his courage, went on. He knew that he had nothing more to lose, he had so utterly betrayed himself. He felt that he might gain, even now, Holt's help, notwithstanding Holt's attitude and bitter words; at least, he hoped that he might.

"After all, why can't you help me?" he pleaded. "There are other lawyers in plenty, I know, but you have always been

mine. I know you; I trust you in spite of all you have now said. And—and, besides, you will look out for Marian's interests. Of course, I want to do the fair thing for Marian."

"How very kind you are!" Holt sneered.

"Yes, I do," Crane returned. "You know they have made this sort of thing easy. I have only to go to some Western State, and it can all be managed without harm to anyone. Don't force me to seek another lawyer. It will be so much better if you will help me. Will you?"

Angry words rose to Holt's lips; but he repressed them. He was very tired; he had felt strongly and suffered keenly. "I wish you would go," was all he said.

"But will you help me?" Crane persisted.

"I will do the best I can for Marian," Holt answered, and then repeated, wearily, "I wish you would go."

Holt, left alone, did not find it easy to decide what would be best for Marian. He knew that Crane was willful and that to oppose him would but make him the more determined. He might, he felt, with the forewarning now given him, successfully conduct Marian's cause should Crane proceed in the way he proposed; but that would be a barren victory. Marian's happiness was at stake; and that could not be won by any action which should retain by her side, with the law's aid, an unloving husband. For many hours he debated with himself what was best to do, often walking to and fro in his small library, after sitting by the table with his hands supporting his tired head. The light of the lamp was paling before the newcoming day when at last he said to himself, "There is one way." He rose so quickly now that his chair was noisily upset upon the floor; he crossed and recrossed the room impatiently, as though he felt himself confined, imprisoned. His face was worn and haggard; it bore evidence of his long struggle; but it also bore a determined look as he added, resolutely, "That shall be my way."

The lamp on the table in the Crane's library was burning brightly. On one side of the table Marian was occupied with her sewing. Upon the other side Crane, with the evening paper in his hands, sat in a comfortable chair, his slippered feet upon a footrest before him. Every now and then his head would nod and the paper would fall into his lap; but then he would rouse himself and resume his reading or answer, in monosyllables, the occasional remarks of his wife.

"It is so good to have you home so often in the evenings now," Marian said, presently. "It makes me very happy, dear—so much happier than I was when you staid so frequently away. But that is all over now, and I will not speak of it. I won't think of it; I must not. I never did reproach you though, did I?"

"No," Crane answered, rousing himself slightly.

"I don't believe you will ever know how very much I love you," she continued, "and yet I have tried to show you, because—oh, because I have always wished so that you might know."

"What is the occasion for this?" Crane asked, lightly, as she paused.

"Oh, nothing," she returned, "except that I do love you, and I am very happy. I don't want the time to come when we shall not want to confess our love and to speak of it. I think I should die if I should ever lose your love or you. But why do I ever speak of that?" And she rose and, crossing to her husband, kissed him.

"I am very foolish," she went on, as she returned to her seat. "I am very foolish, I dare say. But, I have been almost beside myself ever since you said you might go West for so long a time. At first, I so dreaded your going—the very thought of it simply overwhelmed me. I was so apprehensive; it seemed to me that something dreadful was so certain to happen. And then, since, after you told me that you had given up the trip, I have been almost delirious. I think I have wakened every morning with a smile on my lips and a song in my heart. 'He is not going!' 'He is not going!' I say over and over to myself all day long.

Marian's simple, loving words embarrassed Crane, for his conscience had not been inactive latterly, and, as though to close the conversation, he said, lightly, "That is all over now. I didn't go."

"No," Marian answered, and continued, "I never would have said anything to deter you. If you had gone, I would have borne it all as best I could. I would not have spoken of it now if you had not decided to remain at home. And you have quite decided?" she asked, with a quick sinking of the heart. Crane looked up quickly, perceiving the note of anxiety in her voice.

"Oh, you needn't worry," he answered. "I have quite decided. I am not going."

For a time Marian was silent, but soon she spoke again.

"How strange it is about Mr. Holt. It seems an age since

he was here last. I quite miss him. He was so good a friend. Of course, I know he must be very busy; but I do think he might spare an occasional evening."

"Oh, you may be sure his evenings are spent satisfactorily enough," Crane responded, consciously. "I am afraid you will have to try to be content with me."

"Content?" she repeated. "You know how content I am. I am blissfully content."

Marian was silent now, and Crane resumed his reading; but he found it difficult to fasten his attention. At length, however, after he had read one article through two or three times without even then quite understanding it, he was greatly relieved by the



entrance of a servant, who handed him a note. He looked at it curiously and then again at Marian.

"It is from Holt," he said, at last. "And for you."

As Marian read it she uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"What is it?" Crane asked.

"Well!" Marian said, and then she read the note through once more.

"What is it?" Crane repeated, impatiently.

"To think that it should come at just this moment! It is a very pretty note. He reminds me that he was the first to be told

of my engagement, and now he wants me to be the first to be told of his. He is engaged to be married to Miss Katharine Perry."

"I knew it," Crane said, unguardedly and bitterly.

"You knew it!" cried Marian, "and never told me!"

"Well, I—I knew it would be so."

"That explains so many things," Marian commented. "I suppose that is the pretty girl we have seen him driving with."

"Yes," Crane responded.

"Oh, do you know her?"

"Slightly," Crane answered, with assumed indifference. "She came to the city in search of employment as a music-teacher, or—something. Her father lost his money, and then he died. She was very poor, I believe."

"How very romantic!" Marian cried. "Do tell me all about her!"

"There is nothing to tell; that is, more than I have told."

"Nothing to tell!" Marian repeated. "What is she like? I know she is pretty. Is she charming?"

"Very," Crane replied, curtly.

"How serious you are! Where did he meet her?"

"She brought a letter of introduction to me, and—and I presented him," Crane answered, the conversation now becoming a bore to him.

"How delightful!" Marian exclaimed, "to think that you brought them together! You are responsible for it all. How delightful!"

"Yes," Crane responded, grimly. "I am responsible. Now, go write your little note of congratulation and be sure that you tell him how glad you are that he has made happy the woman he loves."

"Has made?" Marian repeated, as she opened her desk. "Is to make happy, you mean?"



THE LAME MAN OF KUROWIZA*

BY SACHER-MASOCH



IN a narrow street, bordered on each side by low, straw-roofed cottages, the village children were at play.

Suddenly, however, the shouting, the merry laughter died away. The children drew back in frightened groups to let a man pass through their midst.

"It is the old lame-leg," whispered one to the other. Schuba, the cripple, was not only disliked and feared by the children, but by the older inhabitants of the village as well.

He had had a lonely and unhappy childhood, and a joyless, lonely youth.

Everyone despised and looked down upon him, the only cripple for miles about.

When he grew old enough to choose a trade for himself, he chose that of a potter, as he could sit at his work and would not be obliged to travel about from place to place to sell his wares. Schuba had been born in Kurowiza, and grew up and married there.

He married his master's daughter. The woman he married took care, however, to let him know she would never have done so had she not by that time reached the mature age of thirty without a more eligible suitor presenting himself. Schuba, in his turn, revenged himself on his wife for this unflattering frankness of hers by neglecting and ill-using her, so that when she died, after a few years, the neighbors affirmed that the happiest day of the poor woman's wedded life was the one on which Death released her from it.

She left a child behind her, a daughter, whom Schuba reared as he himself had been. The child had no playmates; for the other children never dared to come near the savage cripple's dwelling. When Schuba was obliged to leave his house on

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some errand, he locked the child up in it, and this practice he continued, although the child was now a girl of eighteen.

The thought that poisoned Schuba's whole existence was that he was the only cripple in the place. Deformed, misshapen people are, as it happens, almost unknown in Galicia.

Schuba never went to church, nor was even a picture of a saint to be seen hanging up in his house.

He came now limping past the trembling, whispering children. Lean, with bowed shoulders, a yellow, wrinkled visage, fierce eyes under dark, bushy eyebrows, he went by, looking neither to the right nor left.

He had left the village some distance behind him when he heard the sound of singing. Someone was approaching from the opposite direction, singing as gayly as the lark above his head. Schuba glanced up a moment and then stood still, staring. A young, handsome, strongly-built man, a knapsack on his back, a thick stick in his hand, was coming towards him. And this stranger, he who looked about him with such bright, merry eyes and sang as sweetly as the lark, was lame. He was the first lame man Schuba had ever come across in his life before.

"Ha!" cried Schuba, for the first time in his life speaking kindly to a stranger. "Where are you going, brother?"

The young man smiled at Schuba, who for a wonder smiled in answer.

"Why, brother?"

"Don't you see I am lame like you?"

"And that is why you call me brother?"

"My name is Schuba. My house is not far off from here. What is your name?"

"Ranzanko," returned the stranger, flinging off his knapsack and throwing himself down in the shade of a tree by the roadside.

Schuba seated himself by the stranger's side.

"Where are you going, companion in misery?"

"Misery! I am not miserable at all. Why should I be?"

"Has not God afflicted us both?" returned Schuba, bitterly.

"Does not everyone point the finger of scorn at us?"

"What strange ideas you have of your neighbors," answered Ranzanko, shaking his head.

"And you have as much reason to deplore your lot as I," continued Schuba, "if not more. I am lame in the left leg; you, however, in the right. Which is worse?"

"I was wounded in the leg on the battlefield. Are you lame from a bullet wound in your leg, too?"

"No, I was born so. Your lot is therefore harder even than mine, I take it. For you once had two sound, whole legs."

"Probably. But what is the use of grumbling over what cannot be helped. Look around you. See how perfect, how beautiful God's works are—the trees above us, how tall and green. Listen how the lark, yonder, is singing, and be miserable if you can."

"You are an odd fellow," returned Schuba, after a pause. "Where are you going?"

"I hardly know. I am looking for work."

"What kind of work?"

"I am a potter."

"A potter!" cried the other, joyfully. "I was just on the way to look for someone to help me at my work. I am a potter, too. Come home with me."

"Willingly," answered Ranzanko; "and I hope I shall be able to please you and drive away, besides, the gloomy thoughts with which your head seems to be filled."

As they came limping back together through the village street, not only the children, but the grown people, came running out of their houses to look after them in astonishment.

Two lame men walking in the street together was a sight never seen before in Kurowiza.

When they reached Schuba's house, the latter took out a key and unlocked the garden gate. Then a second key was brought out to unlock the house door. Ranzanko, supposing the house empty, was much surprised to see in a room they entered a pretty, pale girl sitting at a table sewing—Antusa, Schuba's daughter. At the sight of the newcomer she pushed with one hand the hair off her forehead and stood gazing at him out of a pair of great, expressive blue eyes.

"Welcome the stranger," her father commanded her. "His name is Ranzanko. He will stay here with us. He is a potter, and lame, too, like me."

As Antusa stepped forward, with one little hand held out in greeting, Ranzanko, taking off his cap, took two red roses out of it and handed them to her.

She accepted the gift timidly, and presently disappeared into the kitchen to prepare supper.

The next morning Schuba and Ranzanko went early to work.

"You must not be vexed with me," said the latter, after some hours' work, "if I tell you your pottery is old-fashioned and ugly. The wares nowadays which bring the best prices and are most in demand are painted and glazed, and are at once pretty and durable."

"I know that," grumbled Schuba, "but I am too old to learn new fashions."

"If you will allow me, I can paint and glaze your wares for you."

"You have made up your mind to remain here, then."

"If you care to have me."

"Hurrah!" cried Schuba. "Antusa!" he called, directly afterwards. Antusa's pale, pretty face looked in at the door of the workshop, inquiringly. "Fetch glasses; he will stay here with us."

Antusa disappeared, reappearing presently with a bottle containing brandy and two wineglasses. Filling one of them to the brim she sipped a little from it, handed it to Ranzanko, then gave the other to her father. The men grasped each other's hands and drained their glasses at a draught.

Schuba grew every day fonder of his journeyman.

Ranzanko sang at his wheel from morning to night. The old house, once so gloomy, dark and silent, was now filled with song and sunshine.

"How can you be always singing?" inquired Schuba, peevishly, one day of Ranzanko. "You, a cripple."

"Why should I not sing?"

"I never sing."

"Then you do not love your work."

"Indeed, I do not. Why should I?"

"How can a man not love his work?"

Schuba made no answer, and Ranzanko sang no more that day or the next. The day after, however, Schuba exclaimed, irritably, "Sing! I do not seem to get on with my work while you sit so silent there."

The first Sunday after his coming to Schuba's, Ranzanko went out at daybreak to the forest and brought back a great bunch of flowers with him for Antusa. She put them into a pot with water, and placed the pot on the sill of the window where she usually sat with her sewing. The third day she drew Ranzanko's attention to the flowers, which were quite withered.

"It was a pity," she murmured, "to bring them from the forest to die."

"You are right," he answered, "and you also, like the flowers, are dying for fresh air and sunshine. Do you never go out of the house?" Antusa glanced over at her father timidly, but said nothing.

When they were at work in the shop together, Ranzanko, stopping his wheel, suddenly exclaimed: "Poor Antusa, her cheeks are as white as a nun's. Why do you always keep her shut up in the house?"

"Take her out with you then, if you like," screamed Schuba. "She is not a prisoner."

The next Sunday, before Schuba was up, Ranzanko and Antusa set off for the forest. And every flower the girl admired, the young man dug up carefully by the roots and carried home with him. Then he dug up a bed under Antusa's chamber-window and planted them. Soon a little garden was blooming there, as though planted by a fairy-hand. Ranzanko began to paint the jugs, pots and dishes as he had been taught to do them in the town where he had learned his trade.

Schuba was delighted with his workman's skill, and exclaimed joyfully, "God has not then forsaken me; he has sent you to me to be the stay and comfort of my old age."

When the time came to carry the pottery to the fair, which was to be held in the town nearby, Antusa begged to be allowed to go thither with her father and his journeyman.

"Who will be left to take care of the house, then?" inquired her father.

"Let a maid be hired for that purpose," interposed Ranzanko.

"Very well. But she will freeze to death on the way."

"I will wrap myself up well, father," pleaded Antusa. "Take me with you. I have never seen a town or a fair. Old Ursa will come and take care of the house while we are away, and lend me her sheepskin cloak to wear on the way, besides."

"Ursa shall come if you choose," cried Schuba, "but she can keep her greasy sheepskin for herself; you shall have a new one."

"And you will really buy," asked Ranzanko, astonished, "a sheepskin cloak for a girl who would grace the *kasaibaika* of a countess?"

Schuba made no answer. Ursa, however, was sent for, and Antusa given a *kasaibaika* by her father, a *kasaibaika* of blue, cloth-lined, and trimmed with gray squirrel-skin.

It was a pretty sight to see Ranzanko gallantly holding the garment up for her, which Antusa, blushing, slipped into.

"Does she not look like a princess?" he asked her father, exultantly.

A cart, driven by a Jew, was laden with the pottery; Schuba and the two young people following some hours later in a *britscha* drawn by two lean horses. Schuba sat on the front seat and drove; at back, Antusa and Ranzanko, wrapped in furs, sat side by side.

Schuba's wares sold rapidly at the fair and fetched good prices. He was consequently in a good humor, bought presents for both the young people, and complimented his daughter on her appearance.

"How she has improved!" he exclaimed, pointing to the girl's blushing cheeks. "That is because she now has sunshine and fresh air. In the shade the brightest flower will lose its color."

Winter, the season most dreaded, hitherto, by Antusa, was now a pleasant season enough. Ursa did the housework, while Antusa, her little hands thrust down into the pockets of her *kazaiwaika*, walked about like a countess.

She sauntered into the workshop one day where her father and Ranzanko sat at work. She stood there watching the latter painting gay flowers on a jug. She came afterwards, day after day, and from watching him she began to help him. Under her clever fingers, roses, pinks, and forget-me-nots blossomed on the pots and jugs and dishes. Spring had come again. One morning Schuba, awaking before daybreak, heard Ranzanko walking about in the garden beneath his windows.

He dressed himself and hurried downstairs to see what the young man could be doing. "Why are you up so early?" he asked, standing on the threshold of the door and peering out curiously. "The cock has not yet crowed."

"Wait a moment and you will hear how, at the peep of day, all the birds awake at once and burst out into a hymn of praise to God."

Schuba came out of the house and seated himself on the bench before the door.

In the East a thin white streak was visible. A soft breeze now began to blow over the fields of grain and grass and over the flowers, carrying their perfume with it on its wings.

The trees began to rustle and murmur mysteriously, and from the forest in the distance came the music of the finch.

Now a cock in the barnyard crowed loud and shrill.

Then the sun arose, crimsoning his attendant clouds, and the birds set up their song.

Another time Schuba, coming home late from the tavern where he had been to give some commissions to a Jew dealer there, was surprised to find that Ranzanko was nowhere to be found in the house. Antusa was sleeping quietly in her little chamber and Ursa's snoring shook the roof.

Schuba, seeking anxiously, discovered him he sought at last, lying prone upon the ground beneath a blossoming lilac-bush.

"What are you doing here?"

"I am looking at the trees and listening to the nightingale."

Schuba stretched himself by the other's side. He, too, gazed up at the glorious, starry arch, and then, as if they had waited for him, the nightingales began their song again.

One Sunday morning Ranzanko was nowhere to be seen. Antusa went about with her head hanging down, and Schuba let his pipe go out. "Where can he have gone now?" he grumbled.

"Who?" asked Antusa.

"Ranzanko, of course. He will not have gone to the tavern, I hope."

"Father, how can you think such a thing of him?"

"He has gone to the forest," broke in Ursa's coarse voice here, "to try to hive a swarm of bees for Antusa."

"Father," cried the girl, joyfully, "let us go in search of him."

They found Ranzanko seated beside a brook in the forest. He had some reeds by his side; out of one he was engaged in cutting a little flute. Catching sight of Antusa and her father, he was about to spring up and come forward to meet them. "Do not rise," cried Schuba, "we will sit down by you."

The sun came filtering down through the leaves, sparkling and dancing on the waters of the brook. The banks were as blue as the sky above, with the forget-me-nots growing in thick clusters. Beyond, in a marshy spot, stood tall white lilies and slender swaying reeds. Dark blue dragon flies darted hither and thither above the brook, and butterflies flew around and about the flowers. The scent of raspberries was in the air. Blackbirds, thrushes and finches sang from the branches of the trees and amongst the thick-growing bushes. A jay screamed and laughed from the top of a tall pine. "Is not God's world a beautiful one?" inquired Ranzanko of Schuba, suddenly.

"It is, indeed," returned the other. "It is a pity that my eyes are only opened to its beauty now, when it is too late."

"Oh, it is never too late to be happy," answered Ranzanko. He had finished his pipe by this time, and began playing softly on it a sweet, yearning Little Russian air.

Again winter arrived with its storms of snow and driving sleet, its long icicles, its winds, which howled among and bent and tossed the bare tree-tops. When the snow lay white and smooth upon the ground, Ranzanko made a sledge with his own hands, to take Antusa out in.

He harnessed Schuba's horses before it, which, during the year he had been there, had grown fat and sleek; filled the sledge with furs, and lifting Antusa into it, he sprang into the seat by her side, took the reins and they were off like the wind.

Schuba stood in the door looking after them. "Can it be," he asked himself, as he turned to go into the house again, "that those two can have fallen in love with each other? Impossible, for he sings from morning to night and her cheeks are as red as the roses in summer."

Not long after this, Schuba, coming home unexpectedly, heard Ranzanko's voice singing. He stepped softly up to the door of the workshop and stood there listening, unseen by the two young people inside.

As he stood, he could hear the words of the song which Ranzanko sang at his wheel, looking over at Antusa, who sat painting in her seat at the window.

He sang :

- Her lips are red as roses are,
Bright are her eyes as brightest star ;
But, ah, from me how far
Those lips so red, those bright eyes are.

"Well, God be praised you are happy, you two," Schuba exclaimed, as he came into the workshop.

"And why should we not be happy?"

"I do not say you should not be."

"But you are astonished, father, to see me no longer silent and sad as I used to be," cried Antusa.

"It is Ranzanko who has made the house so cheerful, so merry, and me so happy, I could dance and sing all day."

"Dance, then, if you have a mind to. I should like to see you dancing."

"Come," she cried, springing from her chair and holding out both hands to Ranzanko; "Come, dance with me."

"He dance; he dance with his lame leg!"

"Oh, father, he dances beautifully!"

"Does he? Then I will fetch my fiddle and play a tune for you to dance by."

Schuba fetched his fiddle and played the music of a *Kosak*, whilst Ranzanko and Antusa danced together. How they danced! those two. Schuba could not take his eyes away from them. From Antusa, who with heartless, smiling coquetry, one small hand holding up her skirt daintily, the other resting against her hip, went circling round and round her partner; from Ranzanko who, in spite of his lame leg, sprang as high and stamped as loud as the most nimble National-dance-of-Little-Russia dancer could have done.

Faster and faster went the music, faster and faster danced the pair, until at last, with a shout of triumph, Ranzanko caught his partner around her slender waist and held her up high in his arms.

"Father," cried Antusa, "now do you not know why we are so happy? It is because we love each other."

"What must you think of me, Father Schuba?" said Ranzanko, putting Antusa down gently, and standing there with bashful, downcast looks.

"What should I think of you? Am I a Tartar—a Turk, that you are so afraid of me? And you love him, Antusa—love him, although he is lame?"

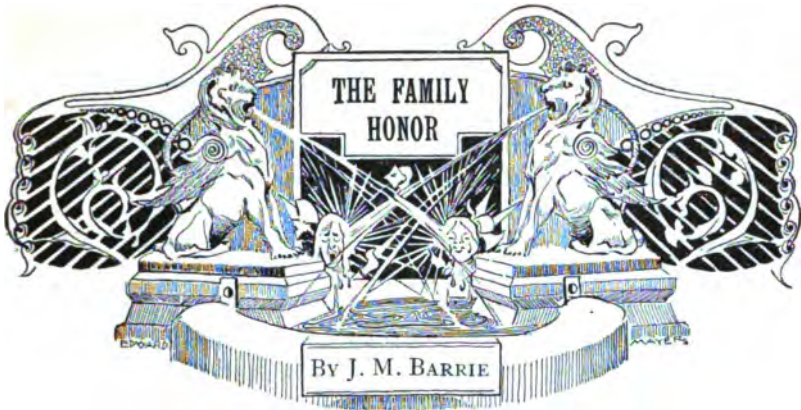
"I love him all the more for that," she answered, softly.

"Well, you have my consent to your marriage—and my blessing," said Schuba, and to hide his emotion he took up his fiddle and began playing again.

The wedding took place during the Carnival.

Schuba since that day is a different man. He dances his second grandchild on his knee now, while the elder plays on the floor at his feet. The village children no longer fear and flee from him, but come in troops to visit him. He tells them tales and sings to them; he even plays hide-and-seek with them now and then, and never gives a thought to the pottery which, as it sometimes happens, is broken in the course of the game.





MUCH of the story of the Glendowie Monster, now on the tongues of all in the north who are not afraid to speak, has been born of ugly fancies since the night of September 4, 1890, when that happened which sent the country to bed with long candles for the rest of the month. I was at Glendowie Castle that night, and I heard the scream that made nigh two hundred people suddenly stand still in the dance ; but of what is now being said I take no stock, thinking it damning to a noble house ; and of what was said before that night I will repeat only the native gossip and the story of the children, which I take to be human rather than the worst horror of all, as some would have it.

There are those in Glendowie who hold that this Thing has been in the castle, and there held down by chains, since the year 1200, when the wild Lady Mildred gave it birth and died of sight of it ; and in the daylight (but never before wine), they will speak the name of her lover, and so account for 1200 A. D. being known in the annals of that house, not as a year of our Lord, but as the year of the Devil. I am not sufficiently old-fashioned for such a story, and rather believe that the Thing was never in the castle until the coming home from Africa of him who was known as the Left-Handed Earl, which happened a matter of seventy years ago. The secret manner of his coming and the oddness of his attendants, with a wild story of his clearing the house of all other servants for fifteen days, during which he was not idle, raised a crop of scandal that has not yet been cut level with the earth. To be plain, it is said by those who believe witchcraft to be done with, that the Left-Handed Earl brought the Thing from Africa, and in fifteen days had a home made for it in the castle—a home that none could find the way to,

save himself and a black servant, who frequently disappeared for many days at a time, yet was known always to be within whistle of his master. Men said furtively that this Thing was the heir, and again there was the devil's shadow in the story, as if the devil could be a woman.

Half a century ago the Left-Handed Earl died, and they will tell you of a three-days' search for a minister brave enough to pray by the open coffin, and that, in the middle of the prayer, the mourners rose to their feet and ran out of the room, because of something squatting on the corpse's chest. There are many such stories of the Thing, against which all who might have seen shut their eyes so quickly that no two drew the same likeness. But this is no great matter, for what they say they saw I will not tell, and I would that none had ever told me.

There have been four earls since then; but, if the tale of the Thing be true, not one of them lawful earls. Yet until the 4th of September, 1890, since the time of the Left-Handed Earl, it has always been the same black servant who waited on the Thing, so that many marveled and called these two one, as they are not. Of the earls I have nothing to tell that could not be told by other men, save this, that they paced their halls by night, and have ever had an ear of listening, not to what was being said to them, but as if for some sudden cry from beyond.

It is not a pretty story, except what is told of the monster's love of children; and though, until the 4th of September, 1890, I never believed what was told of the Thing and these children, I believe it now. What they say is, that it was so savage that not even the black servant could have gone within reach of it and lived; yet with children scarce strong enough to walk, save on all-fours, it would play for hours, even as they played, but with a mother's care for them. There are men of all ages in these parts who hold that they were with it in their childhood and loved it, though now they shudder at a picture they recall, I think, but vaguely. And some of them, doubtless, are liars. It may be wondered why the Lords of Glendowie dared let a child into the power of one that would have broken themselves across its knee; and two reasons are given: the first, that it knew when there were children in the castle, and would have broken down walls to reach them had they not been brought to it; the other, that compassion induced the earls to give it the only pleasure it knew. Of these children some were of the tenantry and others of guests in the castle, and I have not heard of one

who dreaded the monster. If half of the stories be true, they would let it toss them sportively in the air, and they would sit with their arms around its neck while it made toys for them of splinters of wood or music by rattling its chains. I need not say that care was taken to keep these meetings from the parents of the children, in which conspiracy the children unconsciously joined, for the pleasant prattle of their new friend allayed suspicion rather than roused it. Nevertheless, queer rumors arose in recent times which, I dare say, few believed who came from a distance; yet were they sufficiently disquieting to make guests leave their children at home, and, as I understand, on the 4th of September, 1890, several years had passed since a child had slept in the castle. On that night there were many guests and one child, who had been in bed for some hours when the Thing broke loose.

The occasion was the coming of age of the heir, and seldom, I suppose, has there been such a company in a house renowned for hospitality. There were many persons from distant parts, which means London, and all the great folk of our country, with others not so great in that gathering, though capable of making a show at most. After the dancing begins, no man is ever a prominent figure in a room to those who are there merely to look on, as I was; and I now remember, as the two which my eyes followed with greatest pleasure, our hostess, a woman of winning manners, yet cold when need be, and the lady who was shortly to become her daughter, a languid girl, pretty to look at when her lover, the heir, was by her side. I know that nearly all present that night speak now of a haggard look on the earl's face, and of quick glances between him and his wife; I know they say that the heir danced much to keep himself from thinking, and that his arm chattered on the waists of his partners; I know the story that he had learned of the existence of the Thing that night. But I was present, and I am persuaded that at the time all thought, as I did, that never was a gayer scene even at Glendowie, never a host and hostess more cordial, never a merry-eyed heir more anxious to be courteous to all and more than courteous to one. Dance succeeded dance. The hour was late, but another waltz was begun. Then suddenly——

And at once the music stopped and the dancers were as still as stone figures. It had been a horrible, inhuman scream, so loud and shrill as to tear a way through all the walls of the castle;

a scream not of pain, but of triumph. I think it must have lasted half a minute, and then came silence, but still no one moved; we waited as if after lightning for the thunder.

The first person I saw was the earl. His face was not white, but gray. His teeth were fixed and he was staring at the door, waiting for it to open. Some men hastened to the door, and he cast out his arms and drove them back. But he never looked at them. The heir I saw with his hands over his face. Many of the men stepped in front of the women. There was no whispering, I think. We all turned our eyes to the door.

Some ladies screamed (one, I have heard, swooned, but we gave her not a glance) when the door opened. It was only the African servant who entered, a man most of us had heard of, but few had seen. He made a sign to the earl, who drew back from him and then stepped forward. The heir hurried to the door, and some of us heard this conversation:

“Not you, father—me.”

“Stay here, my son; I entreat; I command.”

“Both,” said the servant, authoritatively; and then they went out with him, and the door closed.

The dancing was resumed almost immediately. This is a strange thing to tell. Only a woman could have forced us to seem once more as we were before that horrid cry; and the woman was our hostess. As the door closed, my eyes met hers, and I saw that she had been speaking to the musicians. She was smiling graciously, as if what had occurred had been but an amusing interlude. I saw her take her place beside her partner, and begin the waltz again with the music. All looked at her with amazement, dread, pity, suspicion, but they had to dance. “Does she know nothing?” I asked myself, overhearing her laughing merrily as she was whirled past me. Or was this the woman’s part in the tragedy while the men were doing theirs? What were they doing? It was whispered in the ballroom that they were in the open, looking for something that had escaped from the castle.

An hour, I dare say, passed, and neither the earl nor his son had returned. By this time it was known to all of us that the door of the ballroom was locked on the outside. Guests bade their hostess good-night, but could retire no further. One man dared request her to bid the servants unlock the door, and she smiled and asked him for the next waltz.

About two o’clock in the morning many of us heard a child’s

scream, that came, as we thought, from the hall in the castle. A moment afterward we again heard it—this time from the shrubbery. I saw the countess shake with fear at last, but it was only for a moment. Already she was beckoning to the musicians to continue playing. One of the guests stopped them, by raising his hand. He was the child's father.

"You must bid the servants unbar the door," he said to the countess, sternly, "or I will force it open."

"You cannot leave this room, sir," she answered, quite composedly. And then he broke out passionately, fear for his child mastering him. Something about devil's work, he said.

"There is someone on the other side of that door who would not hesitate to kill you," she replied. And we knew that she spoke of the native servant.

"Order him to open the door."

"I will not."

In another moment the door would have been broken open had she not put her back against it. Her eyes were now flashing. The men looked at each other in doubt; and each of them, I know, were for tearing her from the door. It was then that we heard the report of a gun.

It is my belief that the countess saved the life of her guest by preventing his leaving the ballroom. For close on another hour she stood at the door, and the servants gathered round her like men ready to support their mistress.

We were now in groups, whispering and listening, and I shall tell you what I heard, believing it to be all that was heard by any of us, though some of those present that night now tell stranger tales. I heard a child laughing, and I doubt not that we were meant to hear it, to appease the parents' fear; I heard the tramp of men in the hall, and on the stairs, and afterward an unpleasant dirge from above. A carriage drove up the walk and stopped at the door. Then came heavy noises on the stair, as of some weight being slowly moved down it. By and by the carriage drove off. The earl returned to the ballroom, but no one was allowed to leave it until daybreak. I lost sight of the countess when the earl came in, but many say that he whispered something to her, to which she replied, "Thank God!" and then fainted. No explanation of this odd affair was given to the company; but it is believed that the Thing, whatever it was, was shot that night and taken away by the heir and the servant to Africa, there to be buried.



AN HONORABLE PRECEDENT*

BY H. B. MARRIOTT-WATSON



UT don't you think," said I to Miss Hewitt, "that the end justifies the means?" She shook her head. "Oh, no," she said; "that's Jesuitical." "Well now, here's an example," I suggested. "You are anxious to sell the contents of this stall, aren't you?" "Oh, yes," responded Miss Hewitt. "And you would be delighted if someone were to come and buy it all up? It would be of such use to the Charity." "Certainly," said Miss Hewitt, promptly. "And would vex Miss Chudleigh over the way?" I added. Miss Hewitt looked at me with suspicion, but I'm sure I was very demure. "Oh, it would be nice, of course, to be successful," she assented. "It would mean fifty pounds." "May I trouble you for another ice," said I, feeling that I was

* From Black and White. Illustrated for Short Stories by Gertrude Greene.

bound to do something after that. "Thank you—strawberry. Well, as I was saying, if you could find a means of getting rid of all this, and thereby benefiting the Charity by so much, you would feel disposed to take it, even if it wasn't quite—well—quite, you know." "I wouldn't do anything dishonest," put in Miss Hewitt, quickly. "Oh, I wasn't talking of anything dishonest," I protested. "I was only thinking that there might be other means, not dishonest, you know, but just a little—well, not quite conventional, you know."

"What sort of means?" asked Miss Hewitt, curiously. "Why now," I said, "you have sold very little all the day, haven't you?" Miss Hewitt bit her lips, and a disconsolate look came into her face. "While I've been here," I said, "you have only disposed of two pairs of stockings, one woolen comforter for the hot weather, and a sort of—a kind of—I didn't quite see, but I thought it looked like a——" "I know I haven't sold much," broke in Miss Hewitt, hastily, and with a slight accession of color. "You have only bought a few ices." I looked meditative. "So I have," I said, feeling that another call was made upon me. "I wonder if I might—no; perhaps better not. I suppose you haven't such a thing as a baby's perambulator, Miss Hewitt?" Miss Hewitt was not amused; she had only an eye to a bargain. "No," she said, eagerly, "I'm afraid I haven't; but I've got a very nicely-dressed cradle, and some rattles—and——" "Ah," said I, shaking my head, "I'm afraid it's not old enough for those things." She sighed, and glanced across the way, where Miss Chudleigh was engaged in a roaring trade. "I think I might have one more ice," I said, very bravely. It was not so very hard, after all; the heat was very great and they soon melted.

Miss Hewitt was very nice about it. "Are you sure you ought to?" she asked, doubtfully. "Miss Hewitt," said I, "you are much too scrupulous. That is the reason of your failure. And yet you would have sold me a cradle and rattles with perfect equanimity, knowing that I am a bachelor. The inconsistency of your sex is a puzzle," I remarked, shaking my head. "Oh, but I didn't think about that," she said, with a blush. "I only thought you wanted——" "Come then," I said, "what would you do to get rid of all your articles of commerce?" Miss Hewitt's eyes opened. "Oh, if I could only do that," she exclaimed. "Well, how far would you be prepared to go for it?" said I, insinuatingly. She paused. "I'd—I'd

give up the ball to-night," she exclaimed, impulsively. I shook my head. "I have no means of gauging the value of that renunciation," I said, thoughtfully; "but possibly it is greater than the one I know which would enable you to sell your stall." "Oh, do you know a way?" cried she, breathlessly. "Why, certainly," said I, still reflectively. "Mr. Randall, tell me," she pleaded, clasping her hands and putting her elbows on the stall. She looked eagerly into my face. I really had no notion until that moment, but somehow her action put it into my head. "Have you ever heard of the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, Miss Hewitt?" I asked.

Miss Hewitt leaned, staring at me for a moment, and then a look of intelligence came into her eyes, her color started, and she moved away. "I don't think you should make those kind of jests," she remarked, disdainfully. "It's not a jest," I answered, reassuringly. "Then, you're all the horrider," she returned, feigning to be busy with her commerce. "But," I said, in perplexity, "I don't see—I only asked you if you remembered the Duchess of Devonshire—the one what's-his-name painted, you know." Miss Hewitt was much embarrassed; her face took on many expressions. "But you——" she began, and stopped. "Do you remember her?" I asked. "Of course," said Miss Hewitt, snappishly. "Well then," I said, "why am I horrid?" She paid me no attention, but began shifting the things upon the stall in a reckless way. "Oh!" I exclaimed, suddenly, "I see what you were thinking of—you thought I meant—I see now. You thought that I was advising you to sell——" Miss Hewitt got redder than ever. "I didn't think anything of the sort," she exclaimed, hurriedly, and dusting away at nothing, "and I wish you'd go away if you're not going to buy anything." "I should like another ice, please," said I.

Miss Hewitt was somewhat taken aback, and looked as if she would like to speak, but she only frowned and dumped another ice upon the counter. "But now you have suggested it," I went on, considering, "it's not at all a bad idea." Miss Hewitt moved to the further end of the stall, and sold another pair of stockings. "It's quite worth thinking of," I said, when she was within hearing again; "I am glad you mentioned it." "I never mentioned anything," she retorted, hotly. "No, of course, you didn't mention it," I agreed, "but I don't see why you should be angry, because we are discussing calmly——" "I'm not discussing anything," she observed, tartly. "No,"

said I, "but if the Duchess of Devonshire thought it a good deed to purchase what she considered the welfare of her country by allowing voters to kiss her, I don't think you should be offended if for the sake of an excellent Charity——" "I am not the Duchess of Devonshire," said Miss Hewitt, shortly. "I don't suppose," I said, "that it was much of a kiss." Miss Hewitt's nostrils curled in scorn. "Good people are always so particular," I said, philosophically. Miss Hewitt's indignation broke forth. "Do you suppose, Mr. Randall," said she, sarcastically, "that one would allow anyone that wished to——" "Oh, I never said anyone," I interrupted, hastily. "No, certainly not anyone." She looked at me with undisguised hauteur. I glanced about the stall. "I should like to have a lot of those things," I said. "I could send them to a children's hospital, you know." Miss Hewitt's face relaxed slightly. "They would be very useful," she said. "It would be fifty pounds, wouldn't it?" I asked, as if entering on a calculation. "Yes," said Miss Hewitt, with a little show of excitement; "forty-five if anyone took the lot." I fingered in my pocket, and hesitated. "I'm afraid——" said I. "You see, I forgot I had promised to buy a quantity of flowers for the infirmary," I remarked, glancing at Miss Chudleigh's stall. Miss Hewitt's face fell, but she said nothing. I took out my pocketbook and extracted some notes, dividing my looks between the two stalls in a hesitating way. "I think the children in the hospital would like the toys very much," said Miss Hewitt, nervously. "Yes, they could play with the stockings nicely, couldn't they?" said I. She paid no heed to this remark.

"I wonder if Miss Chudleigh would do what the Duchess did," I observed, presently. "Perhaps you had better ask her," said Miss Hewitt, sarcastically. "Oh, no," I said, hurriedly; "I was only wondering. For the sake of the poor, people do make sacrifices, I suppose." "I don't believe she did let them—let them kiss her," remarked Miss Hewitt after a pause, and contemplating a wooden horse. "Don't you?" I asked, looking up, "What did they do, do you think?" Miss Hewitt examined the toy carefully. "Oh," she said, indifferently, "I should think she merely pretended." "Pretended?" I echoed. "Yes, they only kissed—just—not quite—I mean they didn't really touch her," she explained, with more interest in the horse. I considered this. "But some of them," I objected, "would not have been content to be put off that way. They must have really——"

"Oh, if anyone liked to be rude and take advantage like that," she said, disdainfully, "she couldn't help it, poor thing." "No," I assented, "I suppose she couldn't, and she must have hated it all the time." "Of course she did," said Miss Hewitt, now inspecting a doll. "But she did it out of a sense of duty—to benefit her country," I concluded. "A man would never have been so unselfish," said Miss Hewitt. "Never," I said, emphatically. "But do you think that women are capable of such an act of self-sacrifice in these days?" I asked. "Of course," said Miss Hewitt, watching some people go by with great interest, "if—if they only—only pretended to." "But if there was an accident?" I ventured. Miss Hewitt apparently did not hear this. "Do you really think," I persisted, "that a woman—a girl would do a thing like that?" "She wouldn't—she couldn't—of course the Duchess did not let it pretend to be done—in—before anyone else." "Not, for example, in a room like this," I said, looking round the bazaar. "How then?" "Afterwards," murmured Miss Hewitt, bending down to pick up a pin, I suppose. "Oh," I said, "she would only promise then?" Miss Hewitt said nothing. I rose. "Well, I'm afraid I must be really going," I said, holding out my hand. "I think if she were really honest she would have to keep her promise," said Miss Hewitt in a low voice.

I looked at her, but she was not looking at me. "I think you have given me two waltzes to-night," I observed. "It isn't very generous usage." "I'm sure it's quite enough," said Miss Hewitt, firmly. "Well, at any rate, let us sit out the second," I suggested. Miss Hewitt looked at me in surprise. "I thought you liked dancing," she said, innocently. "Oh, sometimes," I said. "But we might have a talk in the conservatory. It's sure to be very hot." "Do you think it is," said she. "Certain." "Oh, we'll see," said she, nonchalantly. I turned to go. "By the way," said I, leaning on the stall confidentially, "shall I leave you the fifty pounds now? And then you can send the things to the hospital at once, you know." Miss Hewitt avoided my eye. "I didn't know," she began, and broke off. "Perhaps it would be better," she murmured. I offered my hand. "To-night, then," I said. She did look at me at last, but it was quite by accident—just the sort of accident that happened in the conservatory.

THE RED LIGHT*

BY A. OSCAR KLAUZMAN



TWO years ago I had qualified as stoker, and together with the engineer, Häusler, ran the Berlin-Vienna express on the Berlin-Falkenberg division. Our train left the Central station at 5:30 in the afternoon, and on that particular day I was in the roundhouse at 3 o'clock to see that the fires were good and everything in running order. According to rules, the engineer had to be in the roundhouse an hour before the departure of the train, and usually Häusler complied with the greatest punctuality. Nevertheless, to-day it was a quarter to five and still he had not come. I tried the sandbox, the two steam pumps that force the water from the tender into the boiler, and saw diligently to the fire, which required to be in the best possible condition if we were to make the required run of ninety-one minutes in the given time. We could not allow ourselves full speed until we had passed the station Grosz-Lichterfelde. Then there were still almost sixty-two miles in a stretch, and only at the larger stations through which we passed was it necessary to slacken our speed.

It was nearing 5, and still no sign of Häusler. I had come to the conclusion that he was ill or that some accident had happened to him, and was just on the point of going to the superintendent of the locomotive house and reporting the case to him when I saw Häusler approaching in considerable haste. He gave me a hasty nod and merely asked if everything were ready. Then he mounted the locomotive and tried all the valves for himself; but while at other times he made this most important inspection of the locomotive with great care, to-day he did

* Translated by Frances A. Van Santford, from the German, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

it hastily and with a lack of attention. In the midst of his inspection he stopped suddenly and seated himself upon the tool-chest which is attached to the tender. For a good five minutes he sat staring blankly before him; then he laughed outright and asked me again, "Is everything ready, Max?"

"Of course, Herr Häusler," I replied. "It's about time we ran out of the shed, for we have to push a couple of locomotives out of the way before we get a clear track to the depot."

"Yes, yes," returned Häusler, hurriedly; then rose and went to his post. If I had not known that he was a remarkably abstemious man, I should almost have thought he had drunk too much; but that our conscientious Häusler should come on duty with his brain befogged was inconceivable. We ran out of the roundhouse quite slowly, made our way carefully between the locomotives and, according to orders, stood outside the depot at ten minutes before the train was to start, not having coupled as yet. We had a good head of steam and all the valves let off the superfluous vapor.

"How is your wife?" I asked, to rouse Häusler from his lethargy.

"My wife?" he asked, with a start; "she is very well, very well, she knows of nothing yet."

"Has something unpleasant happened to you, Herr Häusler?"

"Unpleasant to me? No, I know of nothing. Did I say anything? It was only a way I have of talking, and my wife must not know about it."

Two great tears rolled down his cheeks, but he turned quickly away to hide his sobs from me. I was at a loss to understand his behavior, but, after a few seconds, he turned to me again and his face was calm, even sinister.

"Don't you feel well?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," he answered, hastily, "I am very well, very well, indeed."

The three strokes of the bell announced the time for departure; the twice-repeated signal of the conductor gave us the order to start. Häusler woke out of his reverie, gave the whistle of response and then, as deftly as ever, he set the train in motion.

Unless some accident should occur we would make our ninety-one minutes. It was exactly 7.01 when we at last pulled up in Herzberg, and punctually at 7 o'clock 11 minutes, we steamed into Falkenberg. We were uncoupled and ran upon a side

track; four minutes later the train sped on its way. We ran our locomotive first to the water-crane, and filled for the return trip; then we took in coal and ran upon the turntable to be set right for the home run. Lastly, we ran across on a siding, and after Häusler had fulfilled his duties as engineer he went into the engineers' house to rest a bit. I had to stay upon the engine, but could take a little turn off for relaxation, thanks to the polisher. The fire in the boiler was kept low, so that it did not go out and could be brought to full heat a half hour before starting. The machine could not run away, for it stood on a "dead" track and the pressure of steam was lowered so quickly that I was safe in leaving it to the care of the polisher. It was an hour after our arrival when I went into the engineers' quarters and hunted up Häusler in the large waiting-room. The engineers' room in Falkenberg is fitted up with tables, chairs, and some sleeping couches. There is a small library at hand from which one can inform himself by various technical works, and Häusler formerly made use of this library to study different treatises on locomotive construction, the science of mechanics, and so on.

To-day I found him busy writing. There were, besides ourselves, two engineers who lay upon the couches, asleep. Häusler wrote with a speed which I was not accustomed to see in him. He nodded to me as I entered, and went on with his writing. I thought I noticed that the letter upon which he was engaged, and which already covered at least three octavo sheets, concerned large sums of money, and the name, Rothschild, too, I observed repeatedly.

I asked Häusler whether he would not take a little something in the way of refreshment. He was, as I have said before, never inclined to be dissipated; but he was accustomed to drink at least one glass of beer and eat a trifle, because he did not get home for supper until 11 o'clock. To-day, however, he refused, explaining:

"I have no money. I shall, in fact, have to go hungry, for I cannot eat again. Everything is gone, quite gone."

This manner of talking naturally struck me as strange. It was not intended as a joke, for Häusler did not look as if he could joke. But if it was meant in earnest it gave me cause to fear for Häusler's reason, and the uneasiness which had taken possession of me increased.

I could only stay in the engineers' room long enough to get a bite to eat and to drink a glass of beer; then I had to go back

to my engine to start the fires into fresh life and get up the pressure of steam. I threw coal into the firebox, raked the fire until it burned briskly, and had steam up again in a short time. When it came time to run across to the track where we were to be coupled to the Vienna express, I sent the polisher to Häusler, for the latter, contrary to his custom, did not appear of his own accord. He did not test the working of the feeding pumps and valves, either, as was his wont. He seemed to-day to rely entirely upon me and my conscientiousness.

The train came promptly into Falkenberg, a little before 9 o'clock, and the change of locomotives had to be made as quickly as possible. This train was full of passengers, and had over a dozen coaches.

As far as Herzberg we ran at a normal rate in twelve minutes. Then to Jüterbog we had fifteen minutes, schedule time, and I noticed a constantly growing agitation on the part of Häusler. He talked to himself, flung out angry words which sounded sometimes like a curse, gesticulated violently with his hands and seemed to forget entirely where we were.

Through the three intervening stations to Jüterbog, we ran at a terrific rate, with no slackening of speed. I did not dare to call Häusler's attention to his gauge, for on this point he was very sensitive; but when, before reaching the Jüterbog station, we received the telegraphic signal to slow up, and Häusler did not mind it in the least, I stepped up beside him and turned the lever a little myself, for otherwise we would not, under any circumstances, have been able to bring the train to a standstill in the station. Whereupon Häusler closed the regulator himself and kept his place doggedly at the step.

At 9 o'clock 52 minutes, we pulled out of Jüterbog, and fourteen minutes later drew up in Lückenwalde. Contrary to his deportment on the preceding trip, Häusler had become very quiet, but his face darkened perceptibly, and when, shortly before coming to the station, I reached for the throttle, thinking that Häusler would again forget to slow up the train, I received from him a rough push, and his voice was raised to almost a scream as he called to me: "What do you want? That is my business!"

The stop of a minute in Lückenwalde was utilized by me to put on fresh coal; then we sped away again. Nearly thirty-one miles, that is, half the run to Berlin, now lay before us. Häusler was at his post. Suddenly he laid hold of my arm and said:

"Did you see him?"

"Whom?" I asked, in astonishment.

"He looked out of the coupé in Falkenberg," said Häusler.

"He comes from Vienna, and I've got him this time."

"Whom do you mean?" I asked, naturally surprised.

"Rothschild," said Häusler. "He is coming from Vienna to carry off the gold that he has stolen from me, and now he intends to carry me off, too. But I've got him fast this time. Throw on coal, we need steam!"

I opened the door of the firebox, and saw that enough coal had been put in.

"It is not yet time to throw on more, Herr Häusler," I explained.

In a rage he seized the chain, by means of which one opens the self-closing door of the firebox, and exclaimed, angrily:

"Shovel in the coal, I need more steam. I am going to run straight through Berlin, directly into the sea. There I will drown Rothschild, and then he shall not take my gold again. Will you obey me or not?"

Häusler suddenly seized a double screw-wrench which hung convenient to the engineer's deck, raised it aloft, and looked as if he would strike me down. I threw on coal until Häusler cried:

"Enough, for the time! But look after the fire; I need sixty atmospheres pressure. We are going to run three hours yet, without stopping."

Any man is likely to find it uncomfortable to be alone with a person in whom he suddenly discovers traces of insanity. But the matter becomes somewhat graver and more complicated when one is in the company of a madman upon an express locomotive which is forging ahead with a velocity of fifty-six miles an hour. I will add, just here, that I did not tremble for my own life, but I thought with terror of the three hundred passengers in the train behind us, who had no suspicion of the danger which hovered over them. The engineer, out of his mind, as it appeared, standing close on the brink of insanity, and determined, under no circumstances, to bring the train to a stop in the terminal station at Berlin, but to forge ahead with it; that is, to cause a catastrophe in which probably half the passengers would meet their death!

Of what use was it for me to try to force Häusler from his position at the decisive hour, and bring the locomotive to a

standstill? He would strike me down if I merely reached out a hand. I looked at his eyes, flaming with anger, as he watched me suspiciously. I might gesticulate, and call never so loudly, to draw the attention of the officials in the stations through which we passed; it would be of no avail, for only one man could stop the train, and that was Häusler, the mad engineer.

At first, I was as one paralyzed; but then I told myself it was sheer cowardice to give everything up for lost. I would gladly have talked to Häusler, but I knew not what I ought to say. I should only provoke him by opposition, and to begin an indifferent conversation—that was a task to which I did not feel myself equal. Nevertheless, I must do something to divert his attention from me. He continued to regard me with the suspicion that is peculiar to all demented persons, and only ordered me, now and then, in crisp words, to throw fresh coal into the firebox. The iron wrench he held firmly, and every time he gave me the command to throw on coal, he raised it threateningly. It was necessary for me to calm him and distract his attention, because my aim was to get possession of the two large screw-bars which lay in the chest behind me. There was no other possibility of saving the train and passengers but to strike Häusler down at the critical moment.

God knows it came hard enough for me to fell to the floor, like a wild beast, a man whom I honored and loved. But when it was a question of the rescue of three hundred human beings, there could be no room for hesitation.

Ludingsfelde was passed; we had nearly fifteen miles yet to make, and before us lay, perhaps, twenty minutes of time.

I shall never forget how frightfully absurd, in spite of the horror of the situation, I seemed to myself when I addressed to Häusler the remark:

“It is cooler than usual, this evening.”

Häusler cast a look of distrust upon me, and was silent.

“Your wife will be waiting for you at the station,” I remarked, as calmly as possible.

“That’s no matter!” he exclaimed. “I shall run through, anyway. I shall run straight through, at one stretch, into the North Sea. I shall not stop again.”

“Won’t your wife wonder at it?” I asked, as innocently as I could.

“Of course she will wonder,” said Häusler, laughing. “But when she sees Rothschild on the train she will wonder no longer.

She will know then that I am going to drown him. Besides, we shall return at once. She will only be kept waiting half an hour."

We flew past Groszbeeren without lessening, in the slightest degree, the speed of the train. We were nearing Grosslichterfelde where, owing to our being ahead of time, we might easily find a Berlin local standing on the track. The train had been announced from the last station, and the signal "open" was up. Enveloped in a thick cloud of dust, which had been whirled up by our wild flight, we rushed through this place also. The engine, as it passed through Herzstücke and Weichenkreuze, seemed to make veritable leaps.

Like a vision Lichterfelde, with its houses, flew past, and we sped onward toward the mighty Berlin station whose hundreds of lights gleamed far ahead of us.

I looked out toward the right and thought I could not be deceived when I noted in the far distance the red light of the danger signal for our train. We stood on the verge of a catastrophe; in a few seconds not only my own fate, but that of the three hundred passengers behind me would be sealed.

Plainly I saw the signal "stop" for our train; the station was not free to us.

I could feel that my hair was standing erect on my head from fright and apprehension. I became in a certain sense insane myself.

With mad swiftness we were nearing the danger signal. I seized Häusler's arm and cried with an awful voice in his ear:

"Red light!" (*Roth licht.*)

Häusler stared at me, and then cried:

"Rothschild! Where is he?"

"Red light, there ahead!" I shouted again, with all the force of my lungs.

"Rothschild, there ahead!" said Häusler, after me.

Then with a piercing yell he suddenly broke away and swung himself out upon the narrow little gallery which runs along the locomotive's boiler, and is provided with a railing. He supposed, in his madness, that his enemy, Rothschild, was there in front of us and wished to get at him. I tore the heavy screw-bar out of the tool chest; then I sprang into the empty place. I dared not shut off the steam at once, lest the train should close up on itself like a hand-harmonica, and a fearful disaster be the result. Gradually I pushed in the throttle and noticed that the train was running slower. I turned on the steam for the air-

brakes, and heard directly the grinding and rumbling of the brakes. Then I shut off the steam—the train came to a stop close to the danger signal.

Again I heard the piercing yell from Häusler, who had crouched on the front of the locomotive. I saw him raise himself and leap from the engine; then he sprang up and ran shrieking away between the shining rails.

Not a human being on that train had any intimation of the danger which had threatened us. Out of the station came the Leipzig express headed toward us. With this train, which was closely packed with passengers as is usual at that hour of the evening, we should have come into collision at full speed in the station.

Our train received the signal to go ahead and I steamed slowly into the station. We arrived ten minutes ahead of time. The inspector hurried up at once with the conductor and demanded an explanation; they were amazed to find me alone, and I was so overcome by all that I had gone through in those last few moments that I could with difficulty give them the desired information. Frau Häusler was naturally surprised when she did not see her husband, and I could not keep back the sad news that he had gone insane.

I was myself so broken down mentally that I remained off duty for several days by direction of the road's physician.

When I reported for duty once more, I learned that Häusler, who was stark mad, had been captured in the station that same night, and the following morning had been taken to a lunatic asylum. The cause of this outbreak of insanity in him was the loss of his entire savings. He had intrusted them to a small banker, and the latter had absconded with all his deposits.



THE LAST DRUMMER*

BY GEORGE D'ESPARBÈS

AFTER the passage of the Beresina by Marshal Victor, who, on the evening of the 28th of November, 1812, had lost so heavily in attacking the bridges, the fragments of the French army, having twice dispersed the Russian bands, were resting for a little in the suburbs of Smorgoni.

Two officers on horseback, wrapped in their cloaks, with heads bent low, were passing along the road.

"You say, Colonel, that there are many French in the rear, in spite of the butchery at the bridges?"

"There are thousands! Stragglers of every corps, lying in the snow, unarmed!"

"You should have rallied them!"

"I could not carry ten thousand men in my holsters!"

"True! But you should have sounded the alarm!"

"The alarm—for dead men!"

There was a moment of silence.

"You know that *he* will review the Third to-morrow. Ney charged me to inform you. You will head the column."

The Colonel uttered a formidable laugh.

"A review of the Third Corps!"

He turned towards the General, who appeared impassive—and his gayety at once subsided.

"You are jesting."

"Colonel Champeaux!"

"By the sword of Jehovah!" cried the Colonel; "there is but one Emperor who can review those men!"

He lifted his arm in the darkness, with a vague gesture, towards heaven.

"A review!" he went on; "but it will be a battalion review! The Third Corps numbered thirty-five thousand infantrymen and two thousand four hundred cavalrymen at the opening of the

* Translated by Reuben B. Davenport, from the French, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

campaign ; it had ten thousand, all told, on quitting Moscow. Do you know how many yet remain ? ”

He did not wait for the response.

“ There remain one hundred and thirty. I say nothing of the horses. They have been digested ! I—Colonel Champeaux—do you know how many men I myself have ? ”

“ How many ? ”

“ Seven ; the remnant of a fine regiment of grenadiers.”

The General shuddered, and his horse made a movement.

“ How many wounded ? ”

“ Six.”

“ Officers ? ”

“ One, and the sole effective. I am he.”

And the Colonel burst out laughing. It seemed a “ good one.”

“ Very well,” said the General. “ This is the Fourth. Tomorrow, at nine o'clock, the Third Corps must be assembled. You must find these survivors.”

The Colonel interrupted violently :

“ Look out for an army corps—in this desert ! ”

“ Bah ! ” said the General. “ The Emperor wishes it. Understand, Champeaux, the EMPEROR ! ”

And he plunged into the darkness.

Champeaux, erect amidst the snow, reflected a moment, snapped his jaws together, and turned back toward the plain.

“ The Emperor——”

This luminous word he passed again and again, mechanically, before his imagination.

“ The Emperor—— If it's the Emperor—— All the same. if it is he——”

The French army was encamped in the midst of an immense circle of wagons and tethered horses, that is to say, in disorder, Bands of stragglers and wounded—the straying of the former, and the creeping pace of the latter directed by chance—had assembled around thousands of fires, which they fed with rotted planks, tops of caissons, saddle-pads, and broken wheels. Everywhere was a shoreless sea of phantoms, with here and there, looming in the midst of it, a miserable shelter.

From time to time the heavy, immense, indefinable breadth of the storm swept by ; and again a terrific detonation was heard—a caisson of shells exploding !

Champeaux, savage and irresolute, made his way through the groups of shadows, cursed by those whose despondent reveries he disturbed.

“A review—an Imperial review! To-morrow! These car- rion have no longer any uniform! How are corps and regi- ments to be recognized? Their only raiment is wounds, saddle- cloths, horse-blankets. Find the different battalions, if you can!”

He grasped a shoulder at hazard.

“What regiment?”

The man was stretched out in sleep. He opened one eye; then closed it heavily.

Champeaux drew his sabre a little way from its scabbard, entered the edge of the fire, the flames licking his tall boots, and turned towards the men, whose blackened hands and arms were extended towards the coals, dripping as they thawed. They did not so much as look at him. But Champeaux was already roar- ing out the order of the Emperor. Immediately, when this name was pronounced, a few heads were lifted—the oldest—and twelve cavalymen of the Third Corps came and ranged them- selves behind the Colonel.

“Have you your horses?”

The soldiers began to laugh, softly, in the manner of young girls.

“Well, we will do without them,” said the Colonel. “March!”

He went on. He and his men boldly entered the fire circles. Champeaux delivered the Emperor's orders, which, in propor- tion as the difficulties increased, he magnified by dint of vocifera- tion, until it became a sort of proclamation to the troops. This reminder of Napoleon drew thirty men from the bivouac fires, of whom eight were grenadiers.

“Fall in!” said the Colonel.

As he moved forward, he stumbled upon the recumbent forms of men imbedded in the ice. Then all would bend down and would loosen these stiffened forms, wrenching them from the ground as though they were so many sticks of timber. They planted them upright, and Champeaux, with a sort of congestive exultation, brawled out his chant:

“Blockheads! It's for the Emperor!——”

These words straightened them up as if Murat himself had grabbed them by the scruff of the neck, and they set forth, laughing. After four hours, the effective strength of the Third Corps reached sixty men.

Towards midnight recruiting became difficult. A black, bitter cold that would have frozen Vesuvius or the four ideas of a fever-ridden brain laid the men in heaps by the bivouac-fires, even among the glowing embers, rolled, massed together, curled up like balls, heads and limbs confounded. To get them on their feet, Champeaux, who now seemed transfigured, promised them the Cross! Twenty-nine arose. They were young; they were of the last conscription.

"*Vive l'AUTRE!** (Long live the OTHER!)" cried Champeaux. "Forward!"

But his horse would not budge. Prophetic, shuddering, steaming, its neck extended, its hoofs as if glued to the soil, it stood over the body of a sleeper, snorting and nibbling at the leather trappings.

"Who goes there?" growled Champeaux, bending so low that he seemed to be hanging from his saddle.

"No one *goes*," said one of the grenadiers of his following. "It's the skeleton of an artilleryman."

The man who lay there did not budge. The Colonel drew his sabre. Then a rugged head emerged from a mask of snow, and two clear eyes surveyed Champeaux's pelisse.

"What do you want with me?"

"Get up!"

The man grew angry. He believed they were joking.

"You there, take care—one step more and I'll run you through the gullet, Colonel though you be!"

He said this at a single breath. Then, panting like a dumb brute, he fell back, exposing his body to view, from which a leg had been severed close to the trunk.

Champeaux made the round of two other bivouacs, and towards three o'clock, the troop numbering one hundred and twenty-five men, he despaired of finding the five others.

"We will return," he said.

They set out; but on the way the Colonel found a light infantryman beating his feet together between the shafts of a wagon, and scraping the ice from a piece of a horse's leg.

"Follow us!" shouted the troop.

"I am not to be disturbed; I am dining," answered the spectre.

Champeaux raised one of his pistols, and the soldier sprang aside.

* Nickname of Napoleon.

"Anyhow, let me get my drum!"

Champeaux did not stop him. He was struck by an idea which struck him to the very soul. He laid hold of the man.

"You are a drummer?"

"Yes."

He was a little fellow, without beard; slender, with hair like a child's.

"And you have kept your drum?"

"Here it is," said the conscript. "Why not! Since I am a drummer—I have my drum. If I hadn't my drum——"

Champeaux seized him, put him in the saddle, kissed him on both cheeks, as he would a woman. Alone in the midst of that agonized army, which had abandoned its arms and insignia, this child, who had guarded his drum, appeared to him a prodigy.

"Forward!"

They returned to the plain and sheltered themselves under the wagons. Champeaux watched until morning.

Towards eight o'clock Napoleon appeared. He had just inspected certain corps, and had dictated the Twenty-ninth bulletin, by which France was startled and dumfounded. Ney was at his side. Ledru des Essarts came in search of Champeaux.

"Come," said he.

The Emperor was on a slight eminence. The Third Corps, erect, drawn up four files deep, was posted a hundred yards away.

Champeaux, who was mounted, drew his sabre.

"Attention, my fine fellows," he said, in a subdued voice. "L'AUTRE *vous regarde* (the OTHER is gazing at you)! Forward! Limber your legs! Tramp, I say! Make believe you are an army! *Martirche!*"

At once, more impetuous than a hunter's pack in full cry, with greater impulse, more ringing, more sonorous than the vanished bugles of the entire corps, there burst forth a terrible rann-plann-plann!—and those one hundred and twenty-five men, relics of the superb thirty-eight thousand of Elkingen, defiled before the cold gaze of the Emperor.

Pann-r-rann! plann-plann! chanted the drumsticks.

Four files front, accurate of step, elbows touching, heads thrown back, those human remnants crossed a corner of the plain, to the consecrated roll of the drum! Champeaux, with his sabre aloft as at the Carrousel, rode behind the little drummer.

This tragic parade, amidst the snow, amidst unequaled suffering, before a stupefied army, so shocked the stern old Marshal that—beside the impassive Napoleon—his knees trembled under him. They were without uniforms, those one hundred and twenty-five, but they had the noble mien of martyrs. Even the drummer was known as such only by the tragic fury of his rataplan!

Pann! pann! sounded the drum. Plann! plann!

At the head, as directed by the regulations, there were eight Grenadiers of the Guard, with chimerical faces, some topped with soiled caps, stained with the smoke of the battle and bivouac; others, a six-months' beard on their cheeks, with their heads thrust into tall cylinders of fur. And all were old, their bodies barred with solemn cicatrices.

Rrrann! pann! pann! rrrrann—rrann—pan! pan! pan!

The drummer wrought himself into a rage, sounding, beating, smiting his drum at the head of the column.

Next came sixty-eight light infantrymen, old like the grenadiers, one-third of them in black gaiters and the others shod with strips of leather.

“Steady! Beware the Emperor!” cried Champeaux.

Rrrann! plann! plann!—pataplann! plann! plann!

Following, bareheaded, were two soldiers of the engineer corps, with neither sabres nor cartridge boxes, frightfully slashed by the Cossacks, but still carrying their spades.

Rrrra—rrra—rrra—pataplann! paum! paum! clamored the tireless drummer.

Then appeared a disordered cavalry, without horses, hobbling, limping along, but so proudly courageous that they would have retraced their steps on the instant and have reconquered the Russians; eight cuirassiers, without cuirasses, lifting toward the Emperor their seamed faces, the fur bands of their helmets tightened about their necks, the most of them clad in Russian pelisses, which they had won by dint of sword-play. One, an enormous fellow, had no trousers, and had tied a pair of blue saddle-cloths about his thighs. He marched with bare ankles through the snow. Beside him trailed a dismounted grenadier, with a cap that had been shorn by musket-balls, hairless, plaqueless, without cordon or plume.

Bravely, drumsticks, rattle away! And you, drummer, roll, roll, for the tattered Pandours of love!

Rrrann! rrrann!—pataplann!

Last, approached in four close lines, the artillerymen, in num-

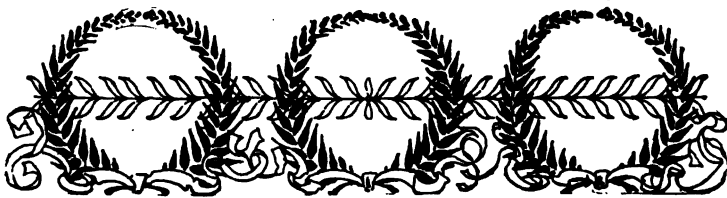
ber fifteen, cannoniers of Piedmont, with neither white-looped cordons nor drumsticks ; twelve dragoons, riddled with grape-shot, in bloody coats that once were green, with tigerskin casques ; and twenty crack hussars, in loose trousers blackened with powder and rent with lance-thrusts, their silver dolmans flapping in formless tatters.

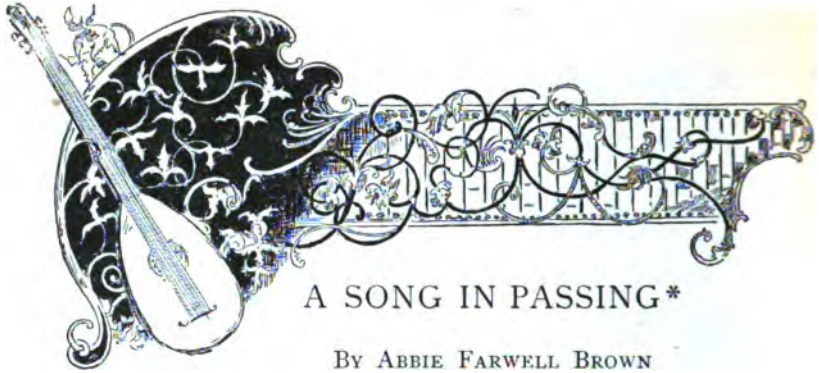
Rrrann! rrrataplann! Beat with your might ; beat again, spare not, oh, drummer of Tabor! oh, death's drummer! Pata-plann! rrrataplann! plaum! plaum!

"Don't look like sausages!" said Champeaux. "Yonder is the Emperor!"

Napoleon, in fact, erect upon his steed, unmoved and fatal as destiny, was awaiting them.

This knot of heroes, one of the few that remained of that great epic, defiled past him, their eyes turned towards his face. The drummer continued through the plain to beat his drum ; the pitiful battalion followed him ; and as if muffled in funereal crape, the rolling of the drum reverberated against the rigid walls of that imperial soul ; already distant, becoming vaguer and vaguer, dying upon the ear, it seemed to the Emperor like the tolling of brazen tongues, announcing a foregone conclusion, the supreme alarm, the irremediable knell of his puissant armies.





A SONG IN PASSING*

BY ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

SIGNOR IL PRIMO TENORE was tired and very cross. The afternoon had been most trying. At his practice hour the piano was out of tune, the accompanist had played abom-



inably, and he half suspected that he had himself made a false note. Whereupon he had called the luckless Celestino by some very hard Italian names, and seizing his hat and coat had

* Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted. Illustrations by Sophie Schneider.

started out for a walk in the Avenue to relieve his ruffled feelings.

As he walked briskly along in the clear, cold winter air, noting how people paused to look at him, nudging one another as the famous singer passed, his spirits slowly rose. He was very handsome, was *Il Tenore*, and the ladies were always wont to eye him admiringly, even when they did not know that his broad chest could send forth one of the finest voices in the world.

Il Signore was forgetting all about the opera which was to come that night, forgetting the unpleasantness of the afternoon, his hatred of the robustious basso and his jealousy of the new *secondo tenore*. He was forgetting Verdi and Meyerbeer and Gounod and contenting himself with the beautiful weather and the comfortable feeling of being alive and strong and well and good to look upon. Now he need be no languishing troubadour, no ill-starred Huguenot, nor even a bereaved lover ; but just an ordinary man like all the others—only handsomer.

Il Tenore was smiling softly to himself at the wide-eyed looks of admiration in the faces of two pretty schoolgirls who had just



passed him, when an unwelcome sound struck upon his sensitive ear. The smile faded from his lips and a frown wrinkled the complacent forehead as his eye caught sight of the obnoxious

travelling piano and the quaint little figure which was "making the music go."

Il Signore strode angrily to the curbstone.

"*Basta!*" he cried in fierce Italian to his humble little compatriot, "why do you shriek at me that horrible tune? Why do you sound it to me—to *me*, Il Tenore? *Cielo!* Do I not hear it often enough? Do I not work over it night and day, and must I always hear when I would forget for a moment? Ah—must I not sing it to-night, that note which drives me crazy—Corpo di Bacco! it is maddening!"

The poor little Italian maid had begun to cry at the first angry tones of the grand gentleman who spoke the only words she had understood since morning. But such unkind words!

"I did not know, Signore," she began.

"Bah! You did not know! Well, take yourself off; I will give you this not to sound that tune to me again," and he thrust a round silver dollar towards the girl, who was drying her eyes on her green silk apron.

But the little maid did not reach forward to take the money as he had expected.

"O Signore," she cried eagerly, "I played it this time, as I always play it oftenest, because I love it so. O Signore, do you really sing the beautiful music?" and an expression of wonder came into her soft brown eyes as she raised them admiringly to the tenor's handsome face.

"You love the music? You love my little aria?" he cried, half pleased, half scornfully. "Well, my child, and why do you love it so well that you play it always on your horrible instrument, so that I must hear it as I go by? Bah!"

"O, Signore, it is so beautiful, so tender, so full of the great feeling. I love the master who wrote it so well, and—and I feel that I could love the one who sang it, too, if he sang it as the great master meant. Oh, I feel how he would do it!" and the little brown hands clasped themselves eagerly together on the blue silk kerchief.

"So you know how I should sing it, do you? Well, my child, you shall come and hear me, and I hope, little one, that my singing will please you as the great master's would have done," and il grande Tenore hastily wrote a few words on a card and handed it to the still wonder-eyed girl.

"O, Signore, a thousand thanks," the girl began to say fervently. But the handsome gentleman was already gone, and

Bettina, looking after his departing figure, then glanced down at the bit of cardboard in her hand and breathed a quick sigh of wondering delight. Could it be really true, and was she going to hear the grand gentleman with the dark, shining eyes and the lovely long mustachios sing her song—her beautiful song?

Bettina crept between the shafts of the piano and dragged her heavy instrument to the next block. Her 'day's work was not ended yet, and many weary hours must pass before that would come to pass for which her little soul was longing. But all that afternoon the tired little feet trudged manfully over the cobblestones and the round weary arms turned the heavy crank with new zest and dragged the heavy machine with a back aching less than usual. For, tucked into her bodice, close over her eager little heart, she felt a magic talisman against weariness and unkindness and disappointment. But she played her favorite tune no more that day.

Bettina's father was a paper-flower maker. He had been lamed by a horse one day when he was dragging the piano with her; and since then his leg had never straightened out, so Bettina had to drag the piano and make the music alone. And hard work it was for a girl of sixteen. But he made the dingy room where he worked to blossom with flowers of the most intricate designs known to botany—flowers such as do not grow in the cold America, nor blossom in any but the most tropic of climes; flowers of such varied hue as only an Italian imagination could recall from the gardens of its own *bella patria*.

He made little windmills, too, that spun prettily and with kaleidoscopic effect when there was just breeze enough to fill them, but not too much to tear the mimic sails. But as this was a delightful combination of weather which Boston seldom vouchsafed to the little would-be buyers of windmills, the old man's trade was slender. For even his roses were viewed askance by the skeptical eyes accustomed to the frail, pale beauties of our less florid meadows. These green, purple, yellow and blue blossoms were too impressionistic for even the Boston taste.

Bettina had no mother to insist upon the polite conventions of good society, nor to act as chaperon when her daughter attended the opera. So when, after their scanty supper, Bettina announced that she was going to the opera that night, her father expressed only wonder at her good fortune and rejoiced thereat with her. For he was fond of his pretty daughter, though he was sometimes a harsh master and made her work very hard.

Hastily, for it was already very late, Bettina made her humble toilet, adding a ribbon here and there, and a fresh white kerchief. Then she put on a bonnet of gorgeous feathers and tarnished



silver lace, and behold! she was attired ready to start. But first, when she was sure that her father was not looking, timidly and blushing at her own wickedness, she stole to the box where he kept the wonderful paper roses and lilies. Bettina picked out a dozen of the very handsomest, with gold and silver centres and wonderful green leaves. These she tied into a huge bunch with a scrap of yellow cigar ribbon which she had been long cherishing for the Easter. And with this crowning adornment, and feeling like a great lady indeed, Bettina put on her shawl, hiding the precious bouquet under-

neath, and all unattended and alone stole forth to the opera.

Oh the wonder and the beauty and the mystery of it all! Bettina sat like one in a trance in the seat which the usher gave her in the side of the balcony close to the great stage. The people about her wondered at the quaint little figure in its gorgeous bonnet and red velvet waist with a huge bouquet of paper roses clasped close to the white kerchief. But Bettina never noticed their smiles and glances of amusement towards her. She was in an unknown land of fair ladies and beautiful gowns, of soft lights and sweet perfumes.

Bettina had never been to the opera. Her acquaintance with the stage was limited to sundry visits at the dime museums and the galleries of the cheaper theatres. But this was to her a land of pure delight. She watched the surging crowd, the beautiful ladies and their attendant cavaliers, the rows upon rows of happy, smiling faces, and she knew that she, too, was a part of it all.

Then came the overture—the dear, blessed music that she

loved—and then, oh wonderful ! another fairy world, even more bewildering than the one about her, was opened to her dazzled sight.

Bettina sat motionless, rigid, the tears standing in her soft brown eyes, her head bent forward with parted lips, her hands clasped close about the great bouquet. More than one of that vast audience noticed the girl sitting there alone in her great, self-unconscious delight. And their eyes moistened, too, seeing her happiness, and they wished that it was all as new to them, as real and as beautiful, that they, too, might enjoy it as a child, with all its glamour.

Then *he* came forth—oh, the beautiful gentleman ! her Signore in his plumed hat and velvet cloak. A prince he was ; the glittering jeweled hero of Bettina's dreams, of the fairy tales which the dark Italian mother used to tell long ago in that sunny land across the sea.

Breathlessly she watched him, the color flushing deeper in her olive cheeks, the soft eyes growing bright and luminous with excitement as his clear voice rose high among the rafters of the great hall.

Oh, how he sang ! Bettina had never heard or imagined such music as this, and her little soul thrilled with the delight of sweet sound. The beautiful ladies in their satin gowns, the jewels flashing in the soft light, the bright colors which the chorus wore, the music of the great opera itself, all these were to her but an indistinguishable blur of color and of melody. It was all only a background to that central, glorious figure which was the essence of it all ; the divine spirit of music itself ; the good genius who had permitted her this taste of bliss.

So the opera went on, act by act, and Bettina sat there like one entranced, drinking in deep draughts of ecstasy.

At last, at the very end, came the tenor's grand solo. A few soft flourishes, a tremulous note of prelude, and then—her song ; her own little song which she ground out day after day, and a hundred times a day, in the rain and the snow, in the cold and the heat. But it was her tune, so glorified and made perfect that to Bettina it seemed an air chanted by one of the very angels of heaven, so flute-like was it and so clear, so round and full, so tremulously soft and tender.

It was a farewell love-song which he caroled to the beautiful lady with golden hair as she stood on the balcony above. But as he finished Bettina's eyes were full of tears and her heart was

lifted far above the dome of the great hall into another world: for she felt that it had been sung to her.

Yes, he sang as the master would have wished, but better, oh, better than any one but the angels could!

Then came the mighty storm of applause that wakened Bettina from her trance, and through her tear-dimmed eyes she saw the whole house wildly waving handkerchiefs and cheering. She heard the cries of "Bravo! Bravo," in her dear native tongue as the great bouquets fell at his feet, at the feet of the grand gentleman who sang her little song.

Then Bettina rose, and as she leaned far over the balcony, she, too, shouted "Bravo! Bravo, Signore!" in her soft Italian



tongue. And with all the might of her little brown arms she, too, flung her offering, the great, gorgeous bouquet, quite at the tenor's feet.

He picked it up, the huge bunch of paper roses. He picked it up, smiling and bowing, and held it there before the great audience, a bewildering mass of bright colors and vivid green.

There was a hush, a moment's pause, and then, thinking it some huge joke, the great hall resounded again with clapping and cheering and shouts of laughter.

But he turned and looked up at her, and singled her out from among them all for his sweetest smile and his lowest bow—her, the little Bettina, at whom the whole house was looking in laughing wonder.

And as the great curtain opened again and again at the demands of the people for one last glimpse of the great singer, Bettina saw him standing there radiant, beautiful, holding her flowers alone to his breast, but with all the others lying at his feet.

Then the bright vision faded from Bettina's sight, and she wakened from her blissful dream of brief, unreal happiness, of light and beauty and melody; wakened into the dark night, alone.

Often, oh often after that, whenever Il Tenore sang the little aria, he would glance instinctively up at the right-hand balcony close to the stage. But the two brown eyes were never there, brimmed full of tears, to tell him he was singing as the master would have wished.

Still the little song always brought before his eyes the vision of a quaint, small figure in kerchief and apron and beflowered bonnet; of a sweet, olive face and glorious eyes beaming softly into his; a vision which would gradually fade and grow dim and vanish, leaving him, too, in the dark alone.



MINIONS OF THE MOON

BY F. W. ROBINSON

Famous Story Series



OUR story is of the time when George the Third was king; and our scene of action lies only at an old farmhouse, six miles or so from Finchley—a quaint, ramshackle, commodious, old-fashioned, thatched farmhouse that we see only in pictures now, and which has long since been improved off the face of the earth.

It was a farm-estate that was flourishing bravely in those dear, disreputable days when the people paid fivepence a pound for bread and only dared curse Protection in their hearts; when few throve, and many starved, and younger sons of gentry, without interest at court or parliament, either cut the country which served them so badly, or took to business on the King's highway, and served the country badly in return.

The Maythorpe Farm belonged to the Pemberthys, and had descended from father to son from days lying too far back to reckon up just now; and a rare, exclusive, conservative, bad-tempered, long-headed race the Pemberthys had always borne the reputation of being, feathering their own nests well, and dying in them fat and prosperous.

There were a good many Pemberthys scattered about the home and midland counties, but it was generally understood in the family that the head of the clan, as it were, lived at Maythorpe Farm, near Finchley, and here the Pemberthys would foregather on any great occasion, such as a marriage, a funeral, or a christening—the funeral taking precedence for numbers. There had been a grand funeral at Maythorpe Farm only a few days before our story opens, for Reuben Pemberthy had been consigned to his fathers at the early age of forty-nine. Reuben Pemberthy had left one son behind him, also named Reuben, a stalwart, heavy-browed, good-looking young fellow, who, at two-

and-twenty, was quite as well able to manage the farm, and everybody on it, as his father had been before him. He had got rid of all his relatives, save two, six days after his father's funeral, and those two were stopping by general consent, because it was signed, sealed and delivered by those whom it most concerned, that the younger woman, his cousin, pretty Sophie Tarne, was to be married before the year was out to the present Reuben Pemberthy, who had wooed her and won her consent when he went down to her mother's house at King's Norton for a few days' trip last summer. Being a steady, handsome fellow, who made love in downright earnest, he impressed Sophie's eighteen years, and was somewhat timidly but graciously accepted as an affianced suitor. It was thought at King's Norton that Mrs. Tarne had done a better stroke of business in the first year of her widowhood than her late husband had done—always an unlucky wretch, Timothy—in the whole course of his life. And now Sophie Tarne and her mother were staying for a few days longer at Maythorpe Farm after the funeral.

Mrs. Tarne, having been a real Pemberthy before her unfortunate marriage with the improvident draper of King's Norton, was quite one of the family, and seemed more at home at Finchley than was the new widow, Mrs. Pemberthy—a poor, shaky lady, a victim to a chronic state of twittering and jingling and twitching, but one who, despite her shivers, had made the late Reuben a good wife, and was a fair housekeeper even now, although superintending housekeeping in jumps, like a palsy-stricken kangaroo.

So Sophie and her bustling mother were of material assistance to Mrs. Pemberthy, and the presence of Sophie in that house of mourning—where the mourning had been speedily got over and business had begun again with commendable celerity—was a considerable source of comfort to young Reuben, when he had leisure after business hours—which was not always the case—to resume those tender relations which had borne to him last autumn such happy fruit of promise.

Though there was not much work to do at the farm in the winter time, when the nights were long and the days short, yet Reuben Pemberthy was generally busy in one way or another, and on the particular day on which our story opens Reuben was away at High Barnet.

It had been a dull, dark day, followed by a dull, dark night. The farm servants had gone to their homes, save the few that

were attached to the premises—such as scullerymaids and dairymaids—and Mrs. Pemberthy, Mrs. Tarne, and her daughter Sophie were waiting early supper for Reuben, and wondering what kept him so long from his home and his sweetheart.

Mrs. Tarne, accustomed, mayhap, to the roar and bustle of King's Norton, found the farm at Finchley a trifle dull and lonely—not that in a few days after a funeral she could expect any excessive display of life or frivolity—and, oppressed a bit that evening, was a trifle nervous as to the whereabouts of her future son-in-law, who had faithfully promised to be home a clear hour-and-a-half before the present time, and whose word might be always taken to be as good as his bond. Mrs. Tarne was the most restless of the three women. Good Mrs. Pemberthy, though physically shaken, was not likely to be nervous concerning her son; and, indeed, was at any time only fidgety over her own special complaints—a remarkable trait of character deserving of passing comment here.

Sophie was not of a nervous temperament; indeed, for her eighteen years, was apparently a little too cool and methodical. And she was not flurried that evening over the delay in the arrival home of Reuben Pemberthy. She was not imaginative like her mother, and did not associate delay with the dangers of a dark night, though the nights *were* full of danger in the good old times of the third George. She went to the door to look out, after her mother had tripped there for the seventh or eighth time, not for appearances' sake, for she was above that, but to keep her mother company, and to suggest that these frequent excursions to the front door would end in a bad cold.

"I can't help fearing that something has happened to Reu," said the mother; "he is always so true to time."

"There are so many things to keep a man late, mother."

"Not to keep Reuben. If he said what hour he'd be back—he's like his father, my poor brother—he'd do it to the minute, even if there weren't any reason for his hurry."

"Which there is," said Sophie, archly.

"Which there is, Sophie. And why you are so quiet over this I don't know. I am sure when poor Mr. Tarne was out late—and he was often very, very late, and the Lord knows where he'd been either!—I couldn't keep a limb of me still till he came home again. I was as bad as your aunt indoors there, till I was sure he was safe and sound."

"But he always came home safe and sound, mother."

"Nearly always. I mind the time once, though—bless us and save us, what a gust!" she cried, as the wind came swooping down the hill at them, swirling past them into the dark passage and puffing the lights out in the big pantry beyond, where the maids began to scream. "I hope he hasn't been blown off his horse."

"Not very likely that," said Sophie, "and Reuben the best horseman in the county. But come in out of the gale, mother. The sleet cuts like a knife, too, and he will not come home any the sooner for your letting the wind into the house. And—why, here he comes, after all. Hark!"

There was a rattling of horses' hoofs on the frostbound road; it was a long way in the distance, but it was the unmistakable signal of a well-mounted traveller approaching. Of more than one well-mounted traveller it became quickly apparent, the clattering was so loud and incessant and manifold.

"Soldiers!" said Sophie; "what can bring them this way?"

"It's the farmers coming the same way as Reuben, for protection's sake these winter nights, child."

"Protection?"

"Haven't you heard of the highwaymen about, and how a single traveller is never safe in these parts? Or a double one either—or——"

"Perhaps these are highwaymen."

"Oh, good gracious! Let us get indoors and bar up," cried Mrs. Tarne, wholly forgetful of Reuben Pemberthy's safety after this suggestion. "Yes, it's as likely to be highwaymen as soldiers."

It was more likely. It was pretty conclusive that the odds were in favor of highwaymen, when, five minutes afterward, eight mounted men rode up to the Maythorpe farmhouse, dismounted with considerable noise and bustle, and commenced at the stout oaken door with the butt ends of their riding whips—hammering away incessantly and shouting out much strong language in their vehemence. This, being fortunately bawled forth all at once, was incomprehensible to the dwellers within-doors, now all scared together and no longer cool and self-possessed.

"Robbers!" said Mrs. Tarne.

"We've never been molested before—at least not for twenty years or more," said Mrs. Pemberthy, "and then I mind——"

"Is it likely to be any of Reuben's friends?" asked Sophie, timidly.

"Oh, no; Reuben has no bellowing crowd like that for friends. Ask who is there—somebody."

But nobody would go to the door save Sophie Tarne herself. The maids were huddled in a heap together in a corner of the dairy, and refused to budge an inch; and Mrs. Tarne was shaking more than Mrs. Pemberthy.

Sophie, with the color gone from her face, went boldly back to the door, where the hammering on the panels continued, and would have split anything of a less tough fibre than the English oak of which they were constructed.

"Who is there? What do you want?" she gave out in a shrill falsetto; but no one heard her till the questions were repeated about an octave and a half higher.

"Hold hard, Stango; there's a woman calling to us. Stop your row, will you?"

A sudden cessation of the battering ensued, and someone was heard going rapidly backward over cobblestones amidst the laughter of the rest, who had dismounted and were standing outside in the cold, with their hands upon their horses' bridles.

"Who is there?" asked Sophie Tarne again.

"Travellers in need of assistance, and who——" began a polite and even musical voice, which was interrupted by a hoarse voice.

"Open in the King's name, will you?"

"Open in the fiend's name, won't you?" called out a third and hoarser voice, "or we'll fire through the windows, and burn the place down."

"What do you want?"

"Silence," shouted the first one again; "let me explain, you dogs, before you bark again."

There was a pause, and the polite gentleman began again in his mellifluous voice:

"We are travellers belated. We require corn for our horses, food for ourselves. There is no occasion for alarm; my friends are noisy but harmless, I assure you, and the favor of admittance and entertainment here will be duly appreciated. To refuse your hospitality—the hospitality of a Pemberthy—is only to expose yourselves to considerable inconvenience, I fear."

"Spoken like a book, captain."

"And as we intend to come in at all risks," added a deeper

voice, "it will be better for you not to try and keep us out, d'ye hear? D'ye—Captain, if you shake me by the collar again, I'll put a bullet through you. I——"

"Silence! Let the worthy folks inside consider the position for five minutes."

"Not a minute longer, if they don't want the place burned about their ears, mind you," cried a voice that had not spoken yet.

"Who are you?" asked Sophie, still inclined to parley.

"Travellers, I have told you."

"Thieves, cutthroats, and murderers—eight of us—knights of the road, gentlemen of the highway, and not to be trifled with when half-starved and hard driven," cried the hoarse man; "there, will that satisfy you, wench? Will you let us in or not? It's easy enough for us to smash in the windows and get in that way, isn't it?"

Yes, it was very easy.

"Wait five minutes, please," said Sophie.

She went back to the parlor and to the two shivering women and the crowd of maids who had crept from the dairy to the farm-parlor, having greater faith in numbers now.

"They had better come in, aunt, especially as we are quite helpless to keep them out. I could fire that gun," Sophie said, pointing to an unwieldy old blunderbuss slung by straps to the ceiling, "and I know it's loaded. But I'm afraid it wouldn't be of much use."

"It might make them angry," said Mrs. Pemberthy.

"It would only kill one at the best," remarked Mrs. Tarne, with a heavy sigh.

"And the rest of the men would kill us, the brutes," said Mrs. Pemberthy. "Yes, they'd better come in."

"Lord have mercy upon us," said Mrs. Tarne.

"There's no help for it," said Mrs. Pemberthy. "Even Reuben would not have dared to keep them out. I mind now their coming like this twenty years ago. It was——"

"I will see to them," said Sophie, who had become in her young, brave strength quite the mistress of the ceremonies. "Leave the rest to me."

"And if you can persuade them to go away——" began Mrs. Tarne; but her daughter had already disappeared, and was parleying through the keyhole with the strangers without.

"Such hospitality as we can offer, gentlemen, shall be at your

service, providing always that you treat us with the respect due to gentlewomen and your hosts."

"Trust to that," was the reply. "I will answer for myself and my companions, Mistress Pemberthy."

"You give me your word of honor?"

"My word of honor," he repeated; "our words of honor, and speaking for all my good friends present; is it not so, men?"

"Aye, aye—that's right," chorused the good friends, and then Sophie Tarne, not without an extra plunging of the heart beneath her white crossover, unlocked the stout oaken door and let in her unwelcome visitors.

Seven out of the eight seemed to tumble in all at once, pushing against each other in their eagerness to enter, laughing, shouting and stamping with the heels of their jackboots on the bright red pantiles of the hall. The eighth intruder followed—a tall, thin man, pale-faced and stern and young, with a heavy horseman's cloak falling from his shoulders, the front of which was gathered up across his arms. A handsome and yet worn face—the face of one who had seen better days and known brighter times—a picturesque kind of vagabond, take him in the candlelight. He raised his hat and bowed low to Sophie Tarne, not offering to shake hands as the rest of them had done who were crowding around her; then he seemed to stand suddenly between them and their salutations, and to brush them unceremoniously aside.

"You see to those horses, Stango and Grapp," he said, singling out the most obtrusive and the most black-muzzled of his gang. "Mistress Pemberthy will perhaps kindly trust us for a while with the keys of the stables and cornbins."

"They are here," said Sophie, detaching them from a bunch of keys which in true housewifely fashion hung from her giridle. "The farm-servants are away in the village, or they should help you, sir."

"We are in the habit of helping ourselves—very much," said one of the highwaymen, dryly. "Pray don't apologize on that score, mistress."

Two of the men departed, five of them stalked into the farm-parlor, flourishing their big hats and executing clumsy scrapings with their feet while bowing in mock fashion to the two nervous widows who sat in one corner, regarding them askance; the leader of these lawless ones dropped his cloak from his

shoulders, left it trailing on the pantile floor, and made a rapid signal with his hand to Sophie to pause an instant before she entered the room.

"Treat them with fair words, and not too much strong waters," he said, quickly; "we have a long ride before us."

He said it like a warning, and Sophie nodded as though she took his advice and was not ungrateful for it. Then they both went into the parlor and joined the company; and the maid-servants becoming used to the position, or making the best of it, began to bustle about and wait upon their visitors, who had already drawn up their seats to the supper-table, which had been spread with good things two hours ago anticipative of the return of Reuben Pemberthy to Maythorpe.

It was an odd supper party at which Sophie Tarne presided, the highwaymen insisting, with much clamor and some emphatic oaths that they would have no old women like Mrs. Tarne and Mrs. Pemberthy at the head of the table. Sophie was a pretty wench, and so must do the honors of the feast.

"The young girl's health, gentlemen, with three times three, and may her husband be a match for her in good looks," cried one admiring knight of the road; and then the toast was drunk. The ale flowed freely, and there was much laughter and loud jesting.

The man whom they called "Guy" and "Captain" sat by Sophie's side. He ate very little, and kept a watchful eye upon his men, after Stango and his companion had come in from the stable, and completed the number. He exchanged at first but few words with Sophie, though he surveyed her with a grave attention that brought the color to her cheeks. He was a man upon guard. Presently he said:

"You bear your position well. You are not alarmed at these wild fellows?"

"No—not now. I don't think they would hurt me. Besides——"

"Besides—what?" he asked, as she paused.

"I have your word for them."

"Yes," he answered, "but it is only a highwayman's word."

"I can trust it."

"These men can be demons when they like, Mistress Pemberthy."

Sophie did not think it worth while to inform the gentleman that her name was not Pemberthy; it could not possibly matter

to him, and there was a difficulty in explaining the relationship she bore to the family.

"Why are you with such men as these?" she asked, wonderingly.

"Where should I be? Where can I be else?" he asked, lightly now; but it was with a forced lightness of demeanor, or Sophie Tarne was very much deceived.

"Helping your king, not warring against him and his laws," said Sophie, very quickly.

"I owe no allegiance to King George. I have always been a ne'er-do-well, despised and scouted by a hard father and a villainous brother or two—and life with these good fellows here is, after all, to my mind. There's independence in it—and I prefer to be independent—and danger, and I like danger. A wronged man wrongs others in his turn, Mistress. And it is my turn now."

"Two wrongs cannot make a right."

"Oh, I do not attempt the impossible, Mistress Pemberthy."

"What will be the end of this—to you?"

"The gallows—if I cannot get my pistol out in time."

He laughed lightly and naturally enough, as Sophie shrank in terror from him. One could see he was a desperate man enough, despite his better manners—probably as great an outcast as the rest of them, and as little to be trusted.

"That is a dreadful end to look forward to," she said.

"I don't look forward. What is the use—when *that* is the prospect?"

"Your father—your brothers——"

"Would be glad that the end came soon," he concluded.

"They are waiting for it patiently. They have prophesied it for the last five years."

"They know, then?"

"Oh, yes; I have taken care that they should know," he answered, laughing defiantly again.

"And your mother—does she know?"

He paused, and looked at her very hard.

"God forbid."

"She is——"

"She is in Heaven, where nothing is known of what goes on upon earth."

"How can you tell that?"

"There would be no peace in Heaven, otherwise, Mistress

Pemberthy. Only great grief, intense shame, misery, despair, madness, at the true knowledge of us all," he said, passionately. "On earth, we men are hypocrites and liars, devils and slaves."

"Not all men," said Sophie, thinking of Reu Pemberthy.

"I have met none other. Perhaps I have sought none other—all my own fault, they will tell you where my father is. Where," he added bitterly, "they are worse than I am, and yet, oh! so respectable."

"You turned highwayman to—to——"

"To spite them, say. It is very near the truth."

"It will be a poor excuse to the mother, when you see her again."

"Eh?"

But Sophie had no time to continue so abstruse a subject with this misanthropical freebooter. She clapped her hand to her side and gave a little squeak of astonishment.

"What is the matter?" asked Captain Guy.

"My keys! They have taken my keys."

And sure enough, while Sophie Tarne had been talking to the captain, someone had severed the keys from her girdle and made off with them, and there was only a clean-cut black ribbon dangling at her waist instead.

"That villain, Stango," exclaimed the captain. "I saw him pass a minute ago. He leaned over and whispered to you, Kits. You remember?"

"Stango?" said Kits, with far too innocent an expression to be genuine.

"Yes, Stango. You know he did."

"I dare say he did. I don't gainsay it, Captain; but I don't know where he has gone."

"But I will know," cried the captain, striking his hand upon the table and making every glass and plate jump thereon. "I will have no tricks played here without my consent. Am I your master, or are you all mine?"

And here, we regret to say, Captain Guy swore a good deal, and became perfectly unheroic and inelegant and unromantic: But his oaths had more effect upon his unruly followers than his protests; and they sat looking at him in a half-sullen, half-shamefaced manner, and would have probably succumbed to his influence had not attention been diverted and aroused by the reappearance of Stango, who staggered in with four or five

great black bottles heaped high in his arms. A tremendous shout of applause and delight heralded his return to the parlor.

"We have been treated scurvily, my men," cried Stango, "exceedingly scurvily; the best and strongest stuff in the cellar has been kept back from us. It's excellent—I've been tasting it first, lest you should all be poisoned; and there's more where this come from—oceans more of it!"

"Hurrah for Stango!"

The captain's voice was heard once more above the uproar, but it was only for a minute longer. There was a rush of six men towards Stango; a shouting, scrambling, fighting for the spirits which he had discovered; a crash of one black bottle to the floor, with the spirit streaming over the polished boards, and the unceremonious tilting over of the upper part of the supper-table in the ruffians' wild eagerness for drink.

"To horse, to horse, men! Have you forgotten how far we have to go?" cried the captain.

But they had forgotten everything and did not heed him. They were drinking strong waters, and were heedless of the hour and the risks they ran by a protracted stay there. In ten minutes from that time Saturnalia had set in, and pandemonium seemed to have unloosed its choicest specimens. They sang, they danced, they raved, they blasphemed, they crowed like cocks, they fired pistols at the chimney ornaments, they chased the maidservants from one room to another, they whirled round the room with Mrs. Tarne and Mrs. Pemberthy, they would have made a plunge at Sophie Tarne for partner had not the captain, very white and stern now, stood close to her side with a pistol at full cock in his right hand.

"I shall shoot the first man down who touches you," he said, between his set teeth.

"I will get away from them soon. For Heaven's sake—for mine—do not add to the horror of this night, sir," implored Sophie.

He paused.

"I beg your pardon," he said, in a low tone of voice, "but—but I am powerless to help you, unless I quell these wolves at once. They are going off for more drink."

"What is to be done?"

"Can you sing, Mistress Pemberthy?"

"Yes, a little. At least they say so," she said, blushing at her own self-encomium.

"Sing something—to gain time. I will slip away while you are singing and get the horses round to the front door. Do not be afraid. Gentlemen," he cried, in a loud voice, and bringing the handle of his pistol smartly on the head of the man nearest to him to emphasize his discourse, "Mistress Pemberthy will oblige the company with a song. Order and attention for the lady!"

"A song! A song!" exclaimed the highwaymen, clapping their hands and stamping their heels upon the floor. And then, amidst the pause which followed, Sophie Tarne began a plaintive little ballad in a sweet, tremulous voice, which gathered strength as she proceeded.

It was a strange scene awaiting the return of Reuben Pemberthy, whose tall form stood in the doorway before Sophie had finished her sweet, simple rendering of an old English ballad. Reuben's round blue eyes were distended with surprise, and his mouth, generally very set and close, like the mouth of a steel-purse, was on this especial occasion, and for a while, wide open. Sophie Tarne singing her best to amuse this vile and disorderly crew, who sat or stood around the room half drunk, and with glasses in their hands, pipes in their mouths, and the formidable old-fashioned horse-pistols in their pockets.

And who was the handsome man, with the long, black, flowing hair, and a pale face, standing by Sophie's side—his Sophie!—in a suit of soiled brocade and tarnished lace, with a Ramalie cocked hat under his arm and a pistol in his hand? The leader of these robbers, the very man who had stopped him on the King's highway three hours ago and taken every stiver which he had brought away from Barnet; who had, with the help of these other scoundrels getting mad drunk on his brandy, taken away his horse and left him bound to a gate by the roadside, because he would not be quietly robbed, but must make a fuss over it, and fight and kick in a most unbecoming fashion, and without any regard for the numbers by whom he had been assailed.

"I did not think you could sing like that," said the captain, quietly and in a low voice, when Sophie had finished her song, and a great shout of approval was echoing throughout the farm and many hundred yards beyond it.

"You have not got the horses ready," said Sophie, becoming aware that he was still at her side. "You said—you promised——"

"I could not leave you whilst you were singing. Did you know that was my mother's song?"

"How should I know that?"

"No—no. But how strange—how—ah!—there is your brother at the door. I have had the honor of meeting Master Pemberthy of Finchley earlier this evening, I think. A brave young gentleman; you should be proud of him."

"My bro—oh! it is Reu. Oh! Reu, Reu, where have you been? Why did you not come before to help us—to tell us what to do?" And Sophie Tarne ran to him and put her arms round his neck and burst into tears. It was not a wise step on Sophie's part, but it was the reaction at the sight of her sweet-heart, at the glimpse, as it were, of deliverance.

"There, there, don't cry, Sophie, keep a stout heart!" he whispered; "if these villains have robbed us, they will not be triumphant long. It will be my turn to crow presently."

"I—I don't understand."

"I can't explain now. Keep a good face—ply them with more drink—watch me. Well, my friends," he said, in a loud voice, "you have stolen a march upon me this time; but I've got home, you see, in time to welcome you to Maythorpe, and share in your festivity. I'm a Pemberthy, and not likely to cry over spilt milk. More liquor for the gentlemen, you wenches, and be quick with it. Captain, here's to you and your companions, and next time you catch a Pemberthy, treat him more gently in return for a welcome here. More liquor, girls—the gentlemen are thirsty after their long ride."

Reuben drank to the healths of the gentlemen by whom he was surrounded; he was very much at home in his own house; very cool and undismayed, having recovered from his surprise at finding an evening party being celebrated there. The highwaymen were too much excited to see anything remarkable in the effusion of Reuben Pemberthy's greeting; these were lawless times, when farmers and highwaymen were often in accord, dealt in each other's horses, and drove various bargains at odd seasons and in odd corners of the market-places, and Reuben Pemberthy was not unknown to them, though they had treated him with scant respect upon a lonely country road, and when they were impressed by the fact that he was riding homeward with well-lined pockets after a day's huckstering. They cheered Mr. Pemberthy's sentiments, all but the captain, who regarded

him very critically, although bowing very low whilst his health was drunk.

"My cousin and my future bride, gentlemen, will sing you another song. And I don't mind following suit myself, just to show there is no ill-feeling between us. And our worthy captain, he will oblige after me, I am sure. It may be a good many years before we meet again."

"It may," said the captain, laconically.

"I—I cannot sing any more, Reuben," cried Sophie.

"Try, Sophie, for all our sakes. Our home's sake—the home they would strip, or burn to the ground, if they had only the chance."

"Why do you wish to keep them here?" Sophie whispered back to him.

"I was released by a troop of soldiers who were coming in this direction," he said, hurriedly. "They have gone on toward Finchley in search of these robbers, but failing to find them they will return here as my guests till morning. That was their promise."

"Oh!"

Sophie could not say more. Reuben had left her side, and was talking and laughing with Stango as though he loved him.

"Your sweetheart, then, this cock-o'-the-game," said the captain to Sophie, as he approached her once more.

"Yes."

"I had need wish you much joy, for I see but little toward it,' as the poet says," he remarked bluntly. "He will not make you a good husband."

"You cannot say that."

"It's a hard face that will look into yours, mistress, and when trouble comes, it will not look pleasantly. You are going to sing again? I am glad."

"You promised to go away—long since."

"I did. But the host has returned and I distrust him. I am waiting now to see the end of it."

"No—no—I hope not. Pray go, sir."

"Is there danger?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. I am fond of danger, I have told you. It braces me up; it—why are you so pale?"

"You have been kind to me, and you have saved me from indignity. Pray take your men away at once."

"They will not go, and I will not desert them."

"For my sake—do!"

"A song! A song! No more love-making to-night, Captain. A song from the farmer's pretty lass!" cried out the men.

And then Sophie began to sing again, this time a love song, the song of a maiden waiting for her soldier-boy to come back from the wars; a maiden waiting for him, listening for him, hearing the tramp of his regiment on the way toward her. She looked at Captain Guy, as she sang, and with much entreaty in her gaze, and he looked back at her from under the cock of his hat, which he had pulled over his brows; then he wavered and stole out of the room. Kits was at the door, still with his mug of brandy in his hand. Guy seized him by the ear and took him out with him into the fresh air, where the white frost was, and where the white moon was shining now.

"The soldiers are after us and know where we are, Kits. Pitch that stuff away."

"Not if——"

"And get the horses ready—quick! I will be with you in a moment."

He walked along the garden path in front of the big old farm, swung wide the farm-gates, and propped them open. Then he went down on all fours, and put his ear to the frostbound country road and listened. "Yes," he added, "two miles away, and coming on sharp. Why not let them come? What does it matter how soon?" He strode back, however, with quick steps. Five minutes afterward he was at the door of the farm-parlor again, with his cloak over his shoulder and his riding-whip in his hand.

"Boys, the redcoats are upon us!" he shouted. "Each man to his horse."

"We are betrayed, then!"

"We won't go and leave all the good things in this house," cried Stango. "Why, it's like the Bank of England upstairs, and I have the keys—I——"

"Stango, I shall certainly put a bullet through your head if you attempt to do anything more save to thank our worthy host for his hospitality and give him up his keys. Do you hear?" he thundered forth. "Will you hang us all, you fool, by your delay?"

The highwaymen were scurrying out of the room now—a

few in too much haste to thank the givers of the feast, the others bowing and shaking hands in mock burlesque of their chief. Stango had thrown down his keys and run for it.

"Sorry we must leave you, Master Pemberthy," said the captain, "but I certainly have the impression that a troop of horse soldiers is coming in this direction. Pure fancy, probably; but one cannot risk anything in these hard times. Your purse, sir, which I took this afternoon—I shall not require it. Buy Mistress Sophie a wedding present with it. Good-night."

He bowed low, but he did not smile till he met Sophie's frightened looks; then he bowed still lower, hat in hand, and said good-night with a funny break in his voice and a longing look in his dark eyes that Sophie did not readily forget.

It was all like a dream after the highwaymen had put spurs to their horses and galloped away from Maythorpe Farm.

It will be fifteen years come next winter time since the "Minions of the Moon" held high carnival at the farm of Reuben Pemberthy. Save that the trees about the homestead are full of rustling green leaves and there is sunshine where the white frost lay, the farm looks very much the same; the great thatched roof has taken a darker tinge, and all the gold in it has turned to gray, and the walls are more weather-beaten than of yore; but it is the old farm still, standing "four-square," with the high road to Finchley winding over the green hill yonder like a great, white dusty snake. Along the road comes a horseman at full speed, as though anxious to find a shelter before nightfall, for the King's highway in this direction is no safer than it used to be, and people talk of Abershaw and Barrington, and a man with sixteen strings to his hat, who are busy in this direction. But the days are long now, and it wants some hours before sundown, when the traveller leaps from his horse and stands under the broad eaves of the porch, where the creepers are growing luxuriantly and are full of fair white flowers.

The traveller is a good horseman, though he has passed the heyday of his youth. It is not for some three minutes afterward that his manservant, hot and blown, and powdered thick with dust, comes up on horseback after him and takes charge of his master's steed. The master is a man of forty years or more and looking somewhat older than his years, his hair being very gray. He stoops a little between the shoulders, too, when off his guard,

though he can look straight and stalwart enough when put to it. He is very dark—a fiercer sun than that which shines on England has burned him a copper color—and he has a mustache that Munchausen might have envied.

He knocks at the door and asks if Master Reuben Pemberthy can be seen at a moment's notice. The maidservant looks surprised, but says, "My mistress is within, sir."

"Reuben Pemberthy's wife that is," he mutters, pulling thoughtfully at his long mustache; "ah, well! perhaps she will see me."

"What name shall I say?"

"Sir Richard Isshaw; but she will not know the name."

He stands in the hall, looking about him critically; his manservant, still mounted, goes slowly back toward the roadway with his master's horse and his own, where he remains in waiting. Presently Sir Richard Isshaw is shown into the farm-parlor, very cool and full of shadow, with great green plants on the broad recesses of the open window, and bees buzzing about them from the outer world.

A young woman in deep widow's weeds rises as he enters, and makes him one of those profound courtesies which were considered appropriate for the fair sex to display to those in rank and honor in the good old days when George was king. Surely a young woman still, despite the fifteen years that have passed, with a young supple figure and a pleasant unlined face. Eighteen years and fifteen only make thirty-three, and one can scarcely believe in time's inroads looking upon Sophie Pemberthy. The man cannot. He is surprised, and he looks at her through tears in his dark eyes.

"You asked to see Mr. Reuben Pemberthy," she says, sadly. "You did not know that——"

"No, I did not know," he says, a little huskily; "I am a stranger to these parts. I have been long abroad."

"May I inquire the nature of your errand, Sir Richard?" she asks, in a low voice; "though I am afraid I cannot be of any service as regards any business of the farm."

"How is that?" he asks, steadily keeping his gaze upon her.

"The farm passes to Mr. Pemberthy's cousin in a few days' time."

"Indeed! Then you——"

He pauses half-way for a reply, but it is long in coming. Only the humming of the bees disturbs the silence of the room.

"Then you leave here?" he concludes at last.

"Yes. It is only the male Pemberthy's who rule," she says.

"Your—your children?"

"My one little boy, my dear Algy, died before his father. It was a great disappointment to my husband that he should die. We female Pemberthys," she says, with a sudden real bright little smile that settles down into sadness again very quickly, "do not count for a great deal in the family."

"How long has Mr. Pemberthy been dead?"

"Six months."

"You are left poor," he says, very quickly now.

"I—I don't think you have a right to ask me such a question, sir."

"I have no right," he replies. "These are foreign manners. Excuse them, please. Don't mind me."

Still he is persistent.

"From son to son's son, and the women left anywhere and anyhow—that is the Pemberthy law, I expect. I have seen the workings of such a law before. Not that I ought to complain," he adds, with a forced laugh—a laugh that Mrs. Pemberthy seems suddenly to remember—"for I have profited thereby."

"Indeed!" says the farmer's widow, for the want of a better answer at the moment.

"I am a younger son; but all my brothers have been swept away by wars or pestilence, and I am sent for in hot haste—I who had shaken the dust of England from my feet for fifteen years."

"Fifteen years?"

"Almost. Don't you recollect the last time I was in this room?"

"You—in this room, Sir Richard?"

"Yes; try and remember when that was. I have only come to look at the old place and you, just for once, before I go away again. Try and think, Mistress Pemberthy, as I used to call you."

She looks into the red, sunburnt face, starts, blushes and looks away.

"Yes, I remember. You are——"

"Well!"

"Captain Guy!"

"Yes, that is it; Richard Guy Isshaw, the younger son, who went wholly to the bad—who turned highwayman—whom *you*

saved. The only one out of the eight—the rest were hanged at Tyburn and Kennington, poor devils; and I thought I would ride over and thank you, and see you once more. Your husband would have hanged me, I dare say—but there, there, peace to his soul.”

“Amen,” whispers Sophie Pemberthy.

“You saved me. You set me thinking of my young mother, who died when I was a lad and loved me much too well. And you taught me there were warm and loving hearts in the world; and when I went away from here, I went away from the old life. I cannot say how that was; but,” shrugging his shoulders, “so it was.”

“It was a call,” said Sophie, piously.

“A call to arms, for I went to the wars. And what is it now that brings me back here to thank you—an old, time-worn reprobate turned soldier—and turned respectable! What is that?”

“I don’t know.”

“Another call, depend upon it. A call to Maythorpe, where I expected to find a fat farmer and his buxom partner, and a crowd of laughing boys and girls—where I hoped I might be of help to some of them, if help were needed. And,” he adds, “I find only you—and you, just the same fair, bright girl I left behind me long ago.”

“Oh, no.”

“It is like a dream. It is very remarkable to me; yes, it’s another call, Mistress Pemberthy, depend upon it.”

And it is not the last call either. The estate of Sir Richard Isshaw lies not so many miles from Maythorpe Farm that a good, long ride cannot overcome the distance between them. And the man turned respectable—the real baronet—is so very much alone and out of place in his big house that he knows not what to do.

And Mistress Pemberthy is very much alone, too, and going out alone into the world—almost friendless, and with only two hundred pounds and perhaps the second-best bed—who knows?—as her share of her late loving but rather hard and unsympathetic husband’s worldly goods.

And folks do say, Finchley way, that pretty Mistress Pemberthy will be Lady Isshaw before the winter sets in; and that it will be exactly fifteen years since these two first set eyes upon each other.

CHRISTMAS NUMBER

. XX., No. 4

December, 1895

Price, 25 cts.
\$2.50 a Year

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"THE LITTLE SHEPHERDESS."
See the Story "Painting from Memory."



PAINTING FROM MEMORY*

By CATULLE MENDÈS

THE kingdom was going to rack and ruin. The young King occupied himself no more with the affairs of State, but spent his days and nights weeping before a portrait of his dead Queen. He had executed this picture himself, having learned to paint for the express purpose.

For there is nothing more trying to a true lover or husband than to leave to another the task of reproducing the beauties of the loved one.

Artists have a way of looking at their model which does not please the jealous mind. They see much more than they put on the canvas.

* Translated by Elise F. Hinman, from the French, for Short Stories—Copyrighted. Illustrations by Arthur I. Keller.

So now this portrait was the only consolation of the young King. He could not restrain his tears when he looked at it; but he would not have exchanged those bitter tears for the sweetest smiles of another woman.

Vainly his ministers told him, "Sire, we have received disquieting news. The King of Spain is raising an enormous army to invade your kingdom!"

He pretended not to hear them; his eyes always fixed on the adored image. One day he flew into a terrible passion, and threatened to kill one of the chamberlains, because he had insinuated that even the most legitimate sorrow ought not to be eternal, and that his majesty ought to think of marrying again. "Wretch!" cried the inconsolable widower, "do you dare offer me such advice? You want me to be faithless to the loveliest of queens? Get out of my sight before I kill you. But before you go, understand, once for all, that no woman shall share my throne, unless she is the living image of my lost darling."

He knew that this would settle the matter. For, as she appeared in her golden frame, the Queen was so perfectly beautiful that her equal could not be found. Her brunette beauty was set off by a regal garment of yellow satin lined with sable. Her hair was black, like polished ebony, and her eyes, dark and melancholy as the night, looked out from under rather a high forehead. Her complexion was the color of ivory—no commonplace rosy cheeks, but a uniform creamy tint to correspond with her hair and eyes. Her mouth was parted by an enchanting smile, showing her perfect teeth.

The good fairies who presided at her birth had given her their most generous guerdon.

Many months passed—more than a year—without bringing any change in the sad state of affairs. The news from Spain was more and more alarming. The King took no notice of the increasing peril.

True, the ministers collected the taxes in his name; but as they kept the money for themselves, instead of using it to equip the army, the country was more impoverished than ever. Every day, in front of the palace, crowds of people gathered, begging for help. But the royal lover was absorbed in his postmortem courtship. He saw nothing but the portrait.

One morning, however, just as the dawn tinted the sky with rose and blue, he heard a song outside, joyous and fresh as

the lark's morning song. He rushed to the window and looked out. He could hardly keep back a cry of delight. He had never seen anything so pretty as that little shepherdess, leading her flock of sheep through the meadows. She was a blonde; her hair glistened in the sunlight as if it were gilded, her forehead was rather low, her skin like blush roses, her eyes blue and clear as the summer sky, and her mouth so small that even when she was singing she only showed the tips of two or three little teeth.

But the King, charmed though he was, tore himself away from this delightful tableau, clasping his hands over his eyes and



ashamed that he had even for a moment forgotten the beautiful departed one. He returned to the portrait, vowing that he would think no more of the shepherdess who sang under his window.

“Oh, you may be sure,” sobbed he, “that my mourning heart belongs to you forever, for there is no one like you, and should I have another Queen she must be as like you as if your image had stepped from a mirror.”

The next day, when he looked at the portrait, he had a painful surprise. He felt as if he were dreaming. He cried to himself, "How very strange! The air of this gallery must be



damp. It is good enough to breathe, but bad for pictures. For I remember, perfectly well, that my Queen's hair was not black like that. No, indeed! It glittered here and there, I recollect—the color of the morning sun, not of midnight."

He sent for his brushes and palette, and quickly removed the damage caused by the damp. "Good! There is the light golden hair I admired so much—which I shall always admire." And, full of a mournful pleasure, he fell on his knees before the portrait, and renewed his vows of constancy.

But, alas! some evil genius seemed to pursue him. Three days later he was forced to acknowledge to himself that the portrait had undergone serious changes for the worse. Why that ugly high forehead? that complexion like old ivory? He had a good memory, thank God! and he was positive that the Queen had a low forehead and a skin fresh and pink as a June rose. With a few strokes of his brush he brought the golden hair further down on the forehead, and tinted the skin a lovely



rose color. And his heart swelled with love as he looked at the restored portrait.

But the next day it was still worse! It was evident that the eyes and mouth of the picture had been changed by some mysterious agency!

Never had his beloved such sombre eyes, black as night ; nor such a wide mouth, showing nearly all her teeth. No ; on the contrary, the tender azure of the morning sky was not so sweet and blue as those eyes which used to look at him. And as for her mouth, it was so small that, even when singing, you could only see the pearly tips of her teeth.

The young King was enraged with this ridiculous picture, which contradicted all his beloved memories. If he had in his power the vile witch who had caused this change—for certainly there was every proof of witchcraft—he would have a terrible revenge.

He fell to work. He painted from his faithful memory and, some hours later, he had on the canvas a young woman with eyes blue as the morning sky, a mouth so small that, had it been a flower, it would only have held two or three dewdrops. And he looked at his Queen, full of a melancholy delight. "It is she, her very image," sighed he.

It was, indeed, so like her, that he made no objection when the chamberlain, who was in the habit of watching him through the keyhole, advised him to marry a certain dear little shepherdess who passed the palace every morning, because she resembled in every way, though perhaps she was just a trifle prettier, the portrait of the late Queen.





A CHRISTMAS EPISODE*

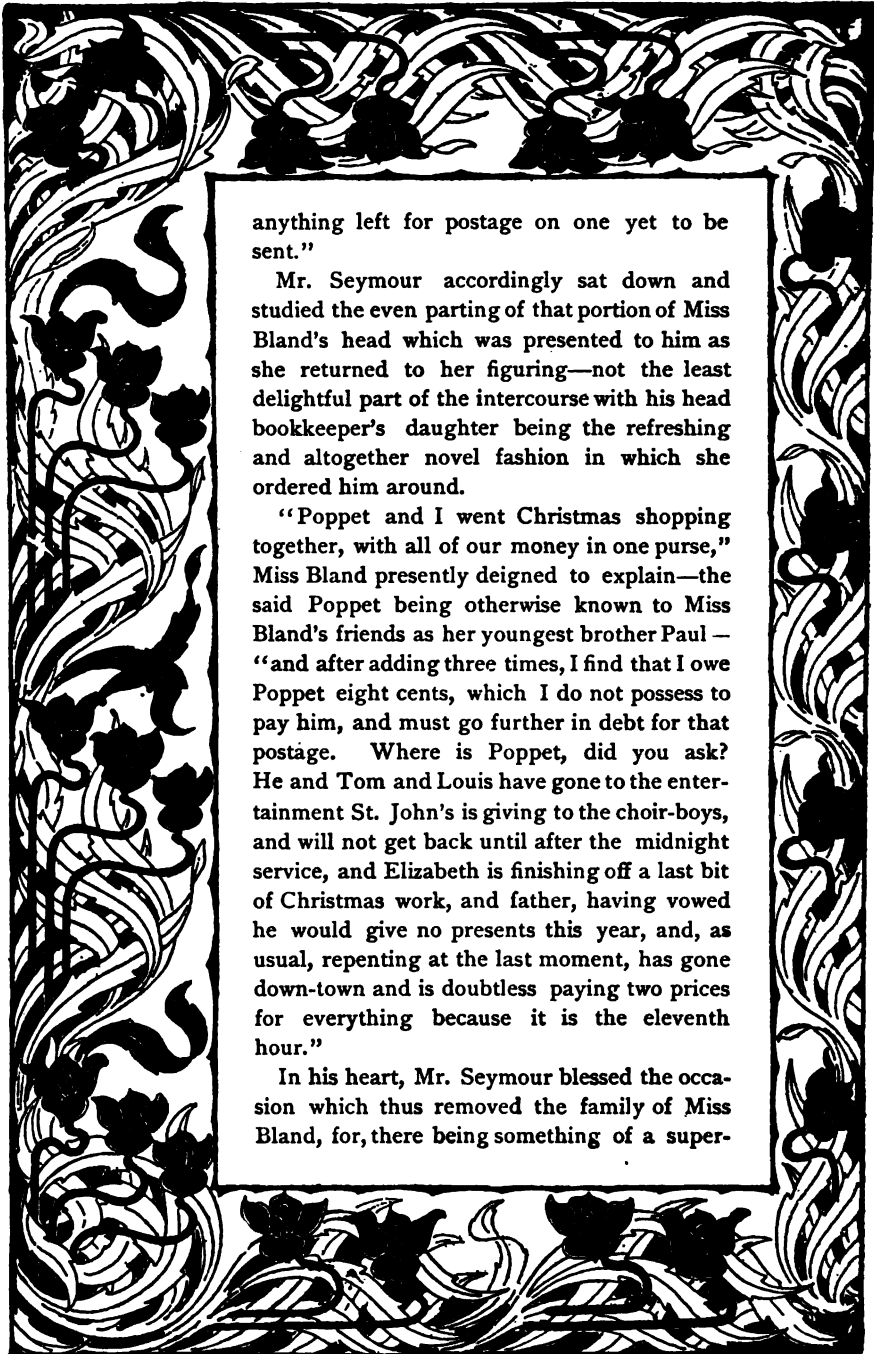
BY GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

ON the evening of the twenty-fourth day of December, Mr. Herrington Seymour rang the door bell of the residence of his head bookkeeper, it making the one hundred and thirtieth time he had so heralded himself, since calling to inquire as to the physical condition of the said head bookkeeper on the fifteenth day of July preceding.

Not that the health of the head bookkeeper longer required this attention, for he had, in fact, been back at his desk since the early part of September; but, although the illness which had laid him low was a thing of the past, the daughter who had been his nurse-in-chief was still a present fact, and it was into her presence Mr. Seymour was ushered this same evening of December the twenty-fourth.

"Now, don't interrupt!" said Miss Bland hastily, hardly glancing up from the bit of paper on which she was penciling; "I have purchased nineteen Christmas presents out of ten dollars, and I am trying to find if I have

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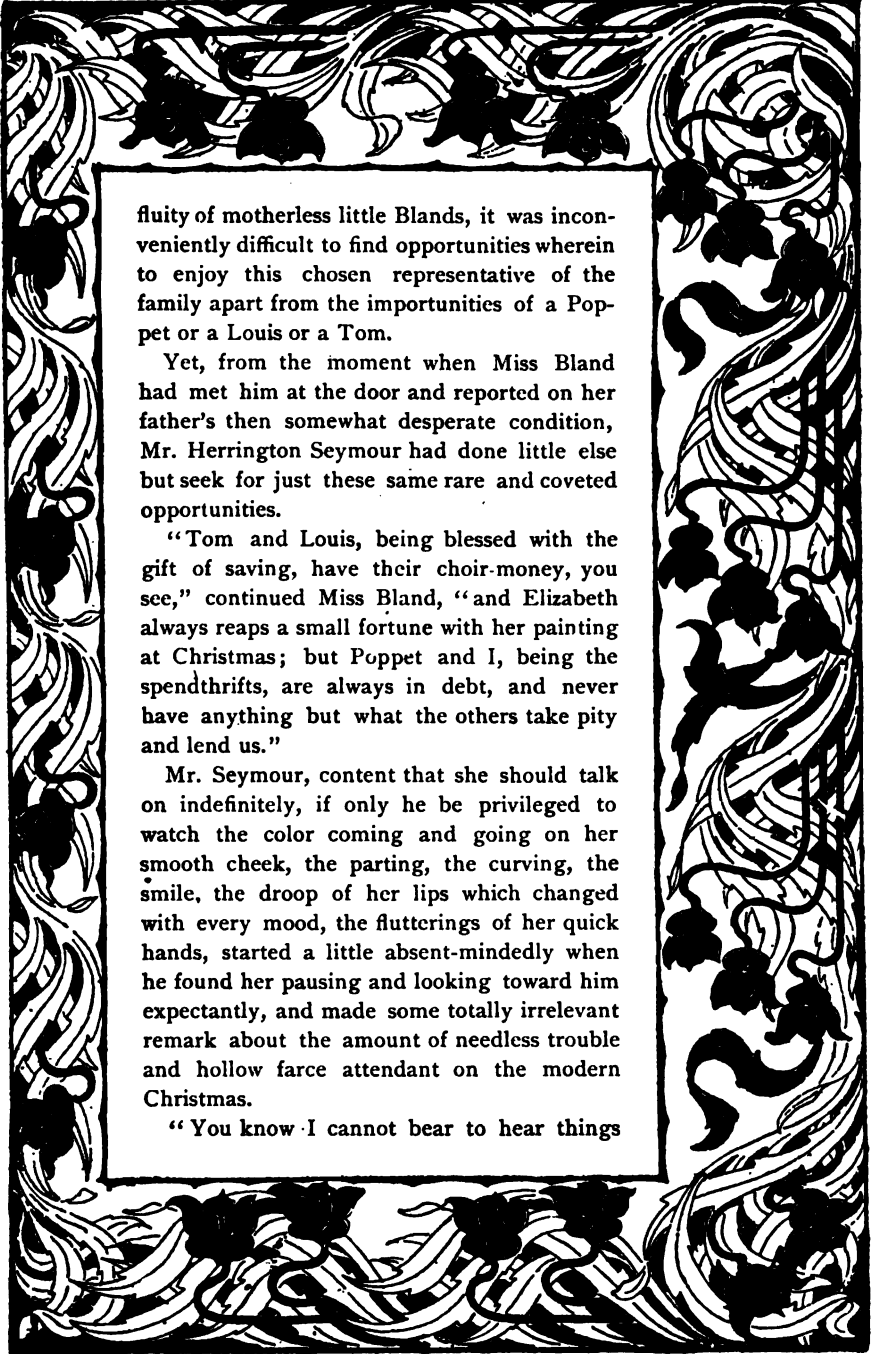


anything left for postage on one yet to be sent."

Mr. Seymour accordingly sat down and studied the even parting of that portion of Miss Bland's head which was presented to him as she returned to her figuring—not the least delightful part of the intercourse with his head bookkeeper's daughter being the refreshing and altogether novel fashion in which she ordered him around.

"Poppet and I went Christmas shopping together, with all of our money in one purse," Miss Bland presently deigned to explain—the said Poppet being otherwise known to Miss Bland's friends as her youngest brother Paul — "and after adding three times, I find that I owe Poppet eight cents, which I do not possess to pay him, and must go further in debt for that postage. Where is Poppet, did you ask? He and Tom and Louis have gone to the entertainment St. John's is giving to the choir-boys, and will not get back until after the midnight service, and Elizabeth is finishing off a last bit of Christmas work, and father, having vowed he would give no presents this year, and, as usual, repenting at the last moment, has gone down-town and is doubtless paying two prices for everything because it is the eleventh hour."

In his heart, Mr. Seymour blessed the occasion which thus removed the family of Miss Bland, for, there being something of a super-



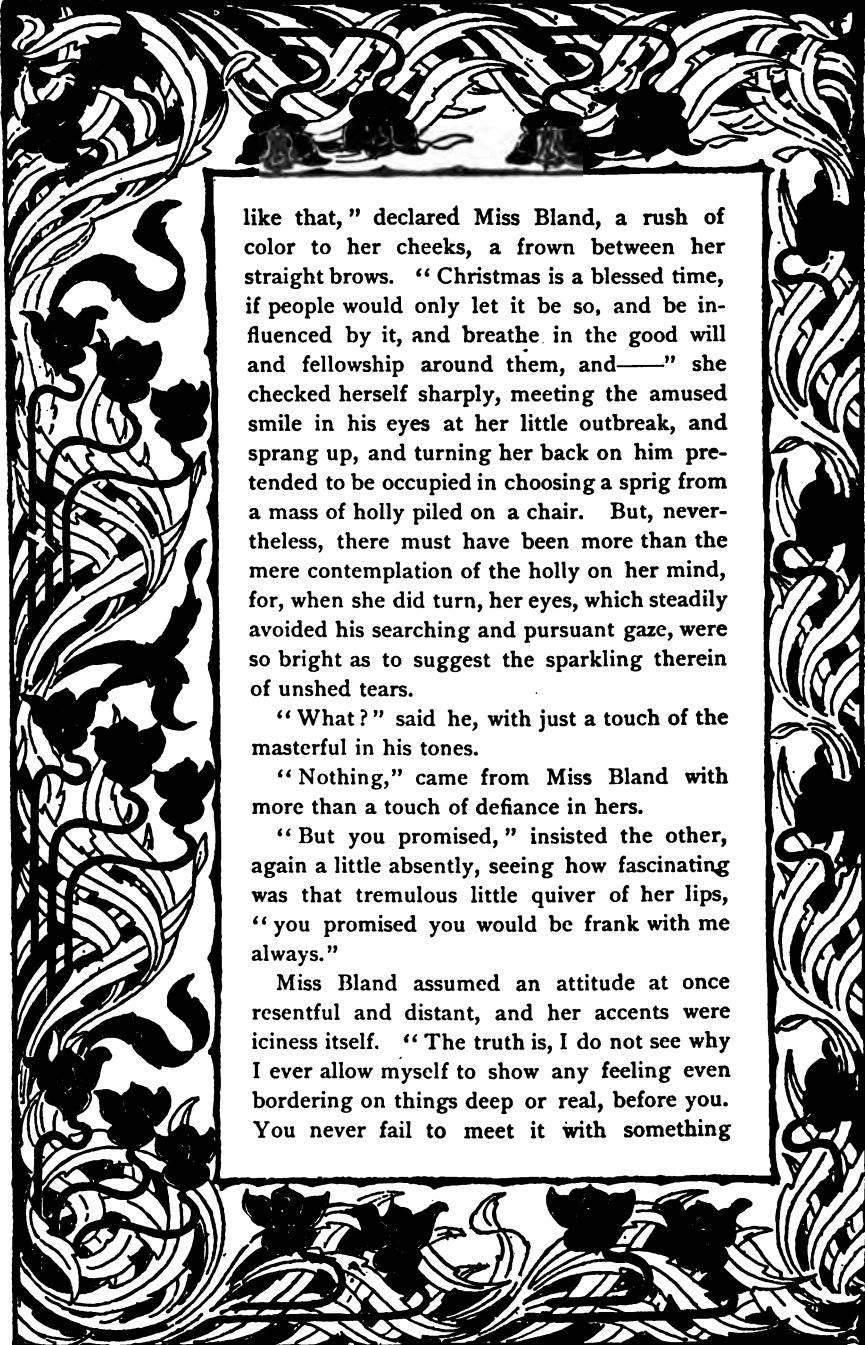
fluity of motherless little Blands, it was inconveniently difficult to find opportunities wherein to enjoy this chosen representative of the family apart from the importunities of a Poppet or a Louis or a Tom.

Yet, from the moment when Miss Bland had met him at the door and reported on her father's then somewhat desperate condition, Mr. Herrington Seymour had done little else but seek for just these same rare and coveted opportunities.

"Tom and Louis, being blessed with the gift of saving, have their choir-money, you see," continued Miss Bland, "and Elizabeth always reaps a small fortune with her painting at Christmas; but Poppet and I, being the spendthrifts, are always in debt, and never have anything but what the others take pity and lend us."

Mr. Seymour, content that she should talk on indefinitely, if only he be privileged to watch the color coming and going on her smooth cheek, the parting, the curving, the smile, the droop of her lips which changed with every mood, the flutterings of her quick hands, started a little absent-mindedly when he found her pausing and looking toward him expectantly, and made some totally irrelevant remark about the amount of needless trouble and hollow farce attendant on the modern Christmas.

"You know I cannot bear to hear things



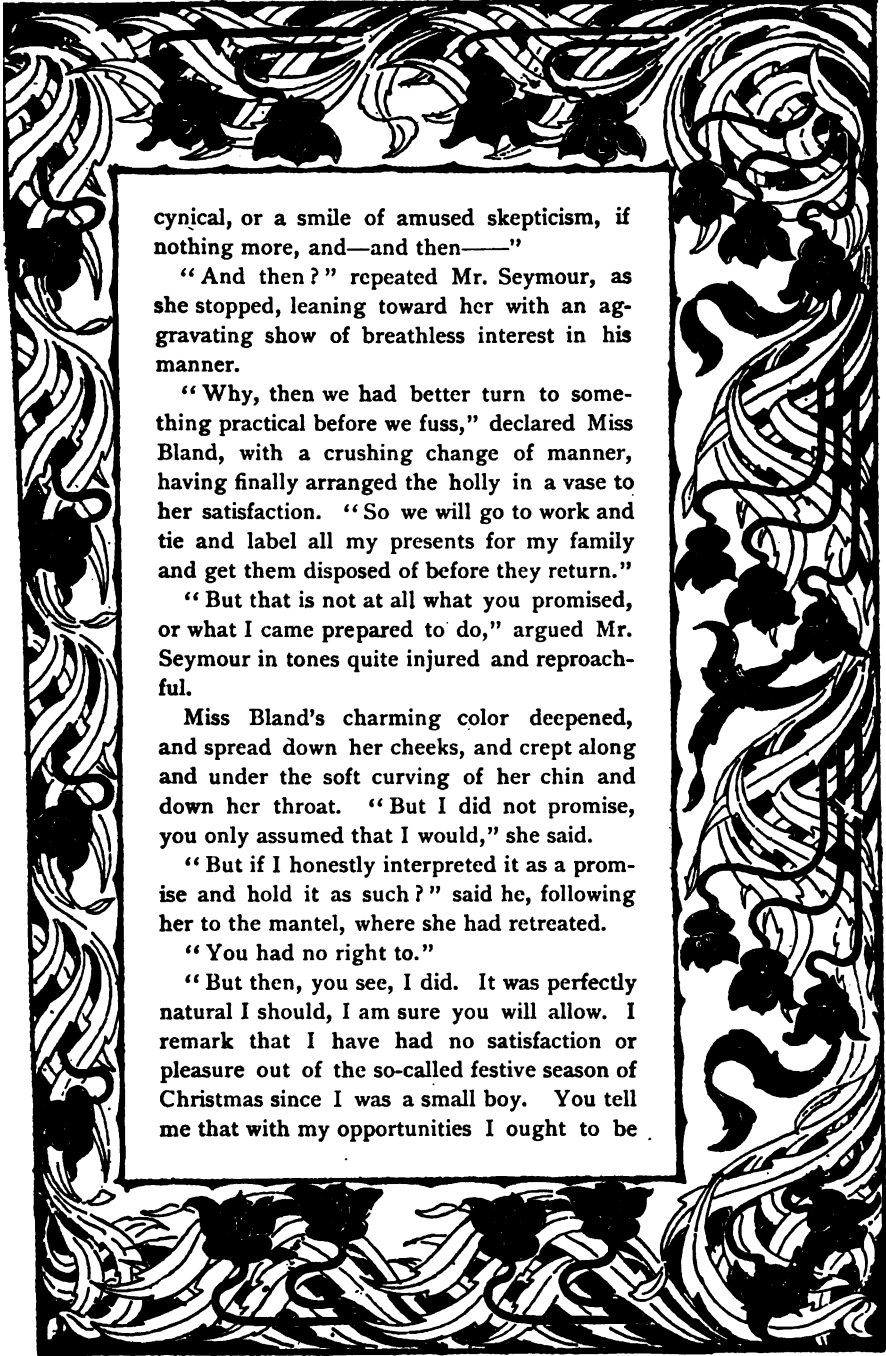
like that," declared Miss Bland, a rush of color to her cheeks, a frown between her straight brows. "Christmas is a blessed time, if people would only let it be so, and be influenced by it, and breathe in the good will and fellowship around them, and——" she checked herself sharply, meeting the amused smile in his eyes at her little outbreak, and sprang up, and turning her back on him pretended to be occupied in choosing a sprig from a mass of holly piled on a chair. But, nevertheless, there must have been more than the mere contemplation of the holly on her mind, for, when she did turn, her eyes, which steadily avoided his searching and pursuant gaze, were so bright as to suggest the sparkling therein of unshed tears.

"What?" said he, with just a touch of the masterful in his tones.

"Nothing," came from Miss Bland with more than a touch of defiance in hers.

"But you promised," insisted the other, again a little absently, seeing how fascinating was that tremulous little quiver of her lips, "you promised you would be frank with me always."

Miss Bland assumed an attitude at once resentful and distant, and her accents were iciness itself. "The truth is, I do not see why I ever allow myself to show any feeling even bordering on things deep or real, before you. You never fail to meet it with something



cynical, or a smile of amused skepticism, if nothing more, and—and then——”

“And then?” repeated Mr. Seymour, as she stopped, leaning toward her with an aggravating show of breathless interest in his manner.

“Why, then we had better turn to something practical before we fuss,” declared Miss Bland, with a crushing change of manner, having finally arranged the holly in a vase to her satisfaction. “So we will go to work and tie and label all my presents for my family and get them disposed of before they return.”

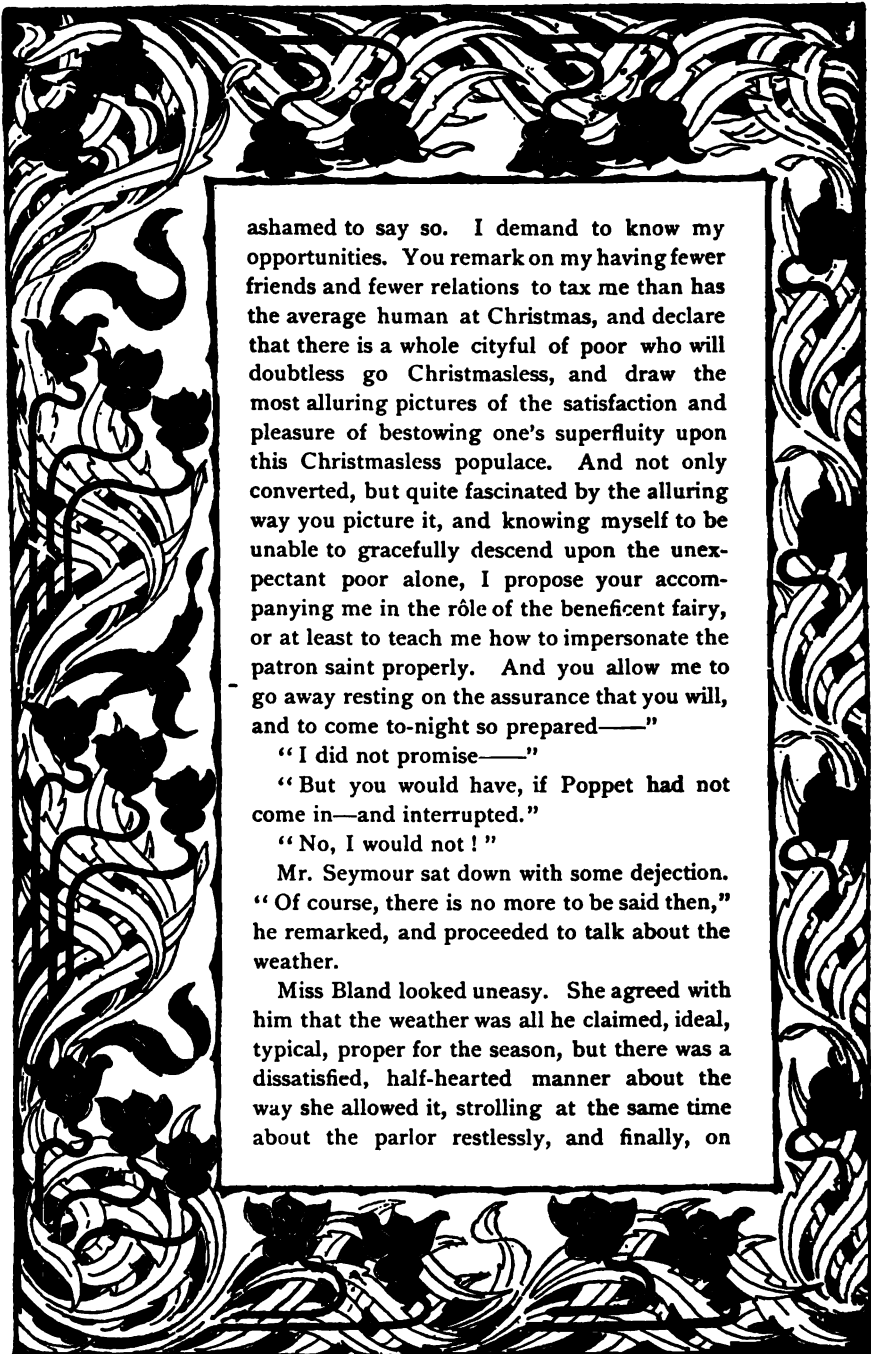
“But that is not at all what you promised, or what I came prepared to do,” argued Mr. Seymour in tones quite injured and reproachful.

Miss Bland’s charming color deepened, and spread down her cheeks, and crept along and under the soft curving of her chin and down her throat. “But I did not promise, you only assumed that I would,” she said.

“But if I honestly interpreted it as a promise and hold it as such?” said he, following her to the mantel, where she had retreated.

“You had no right to.”

“But then, you see, I did. It was perfectly natural I should, I am sure you will allow. I remark that I have had no satisfaction or pleasure out of the so-called festive season of Christmas since I was a small boy. You tell me that with my opportunities I ought to be



ashamed to say so. I demand to know my opportunities. You remark on my having fewer friends and fewer relations to tax me than has the average human at Christmas, and declare that there is a whole cityful of poor who will doubtless go Christmasless, and draw the most alluring pictures of the satisfaction and pleasure of bestowing one's superfluity upon this Christmasless populace. And not only converted, but quite fascinated by the alluring way you picture it, and knowing myself to be unable to gracefully descend upon the unexpected poor alone, I propose your accompanying me in the rôle of the beneficent fairy, or at least to teach me how to impersonate the patron saint properly. And you allow me to go away resting on the assurance that you will, and to come to-night so prepared——"

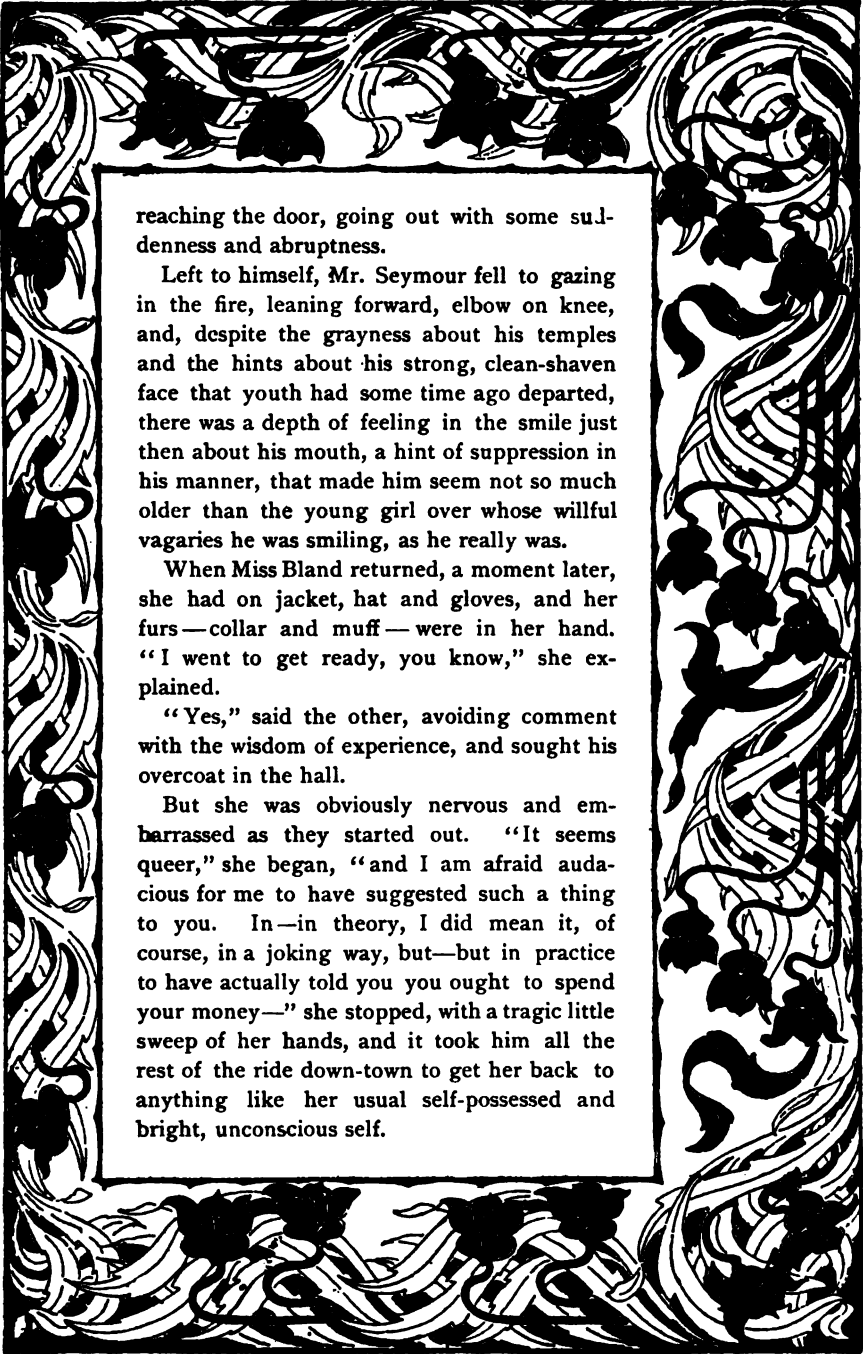
"I did not promise——"

"But you would have, if Poppet had not come in—and interrupted."

"No, I would not!"

Mr. Seymour sat down with some dejection. "Of course, there is no more to be said then," he remarked, and proceeded to talk about the weather.

Miss Bland looked uneasy. She agreed with him that the weather was all he claimed, ideal, typical, proper for the season, but there was a dissatisfied, half-hearted manner about the way she allowed it, strolling at the same time about the parlor restlessly, and finally, on



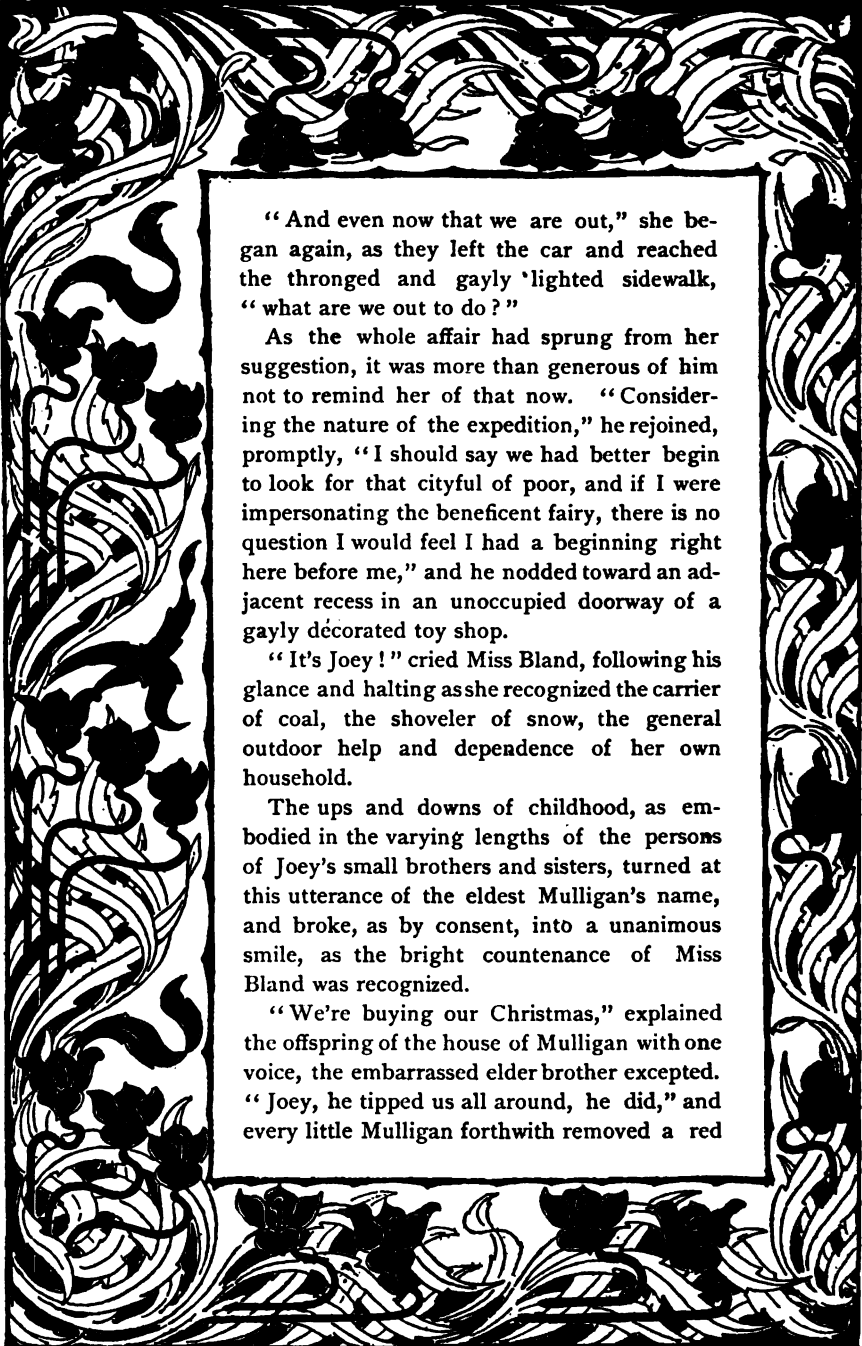
reaching the door, going out with some suddenness and abruptness.

Left to himself, Mr. Seymour fell to gazing in the fire, leaning forward, elbow on knee, and, despite the grayness about his temples and the hints about his strong, clean-shaven face that youth had some time ago departed, there was a depth of feeling in the smile just then about his mouth, a hint of suppression in his manner, that made him seem not so much older than the young girl over whose willful vagaries he was smiling, as he really was.

When Miss Bland returned, a moment later, she had on jacket, hat and gloves, and her furs—collar and muff—were in her hand. "I went to get ready, you know," she explained.

"Yes," said the other, avoiding comment with the wisdom of experience, and sought his overcoat in the hall.

But she was obviously nervous and embarrassed as they started out. "It seems queer," she began, "and I am afraid audacious for me to have suggested such a thing to you. In—in theory, I did mean it, of course, in a joking way, but—but in practice to have actually told you you ought to spend your money—" she stopped, with a tragic little sweep of her hands, and it took him all the rest of the ride down-town to get her back to anything like her usual self-possessed and bright, unconscious self.



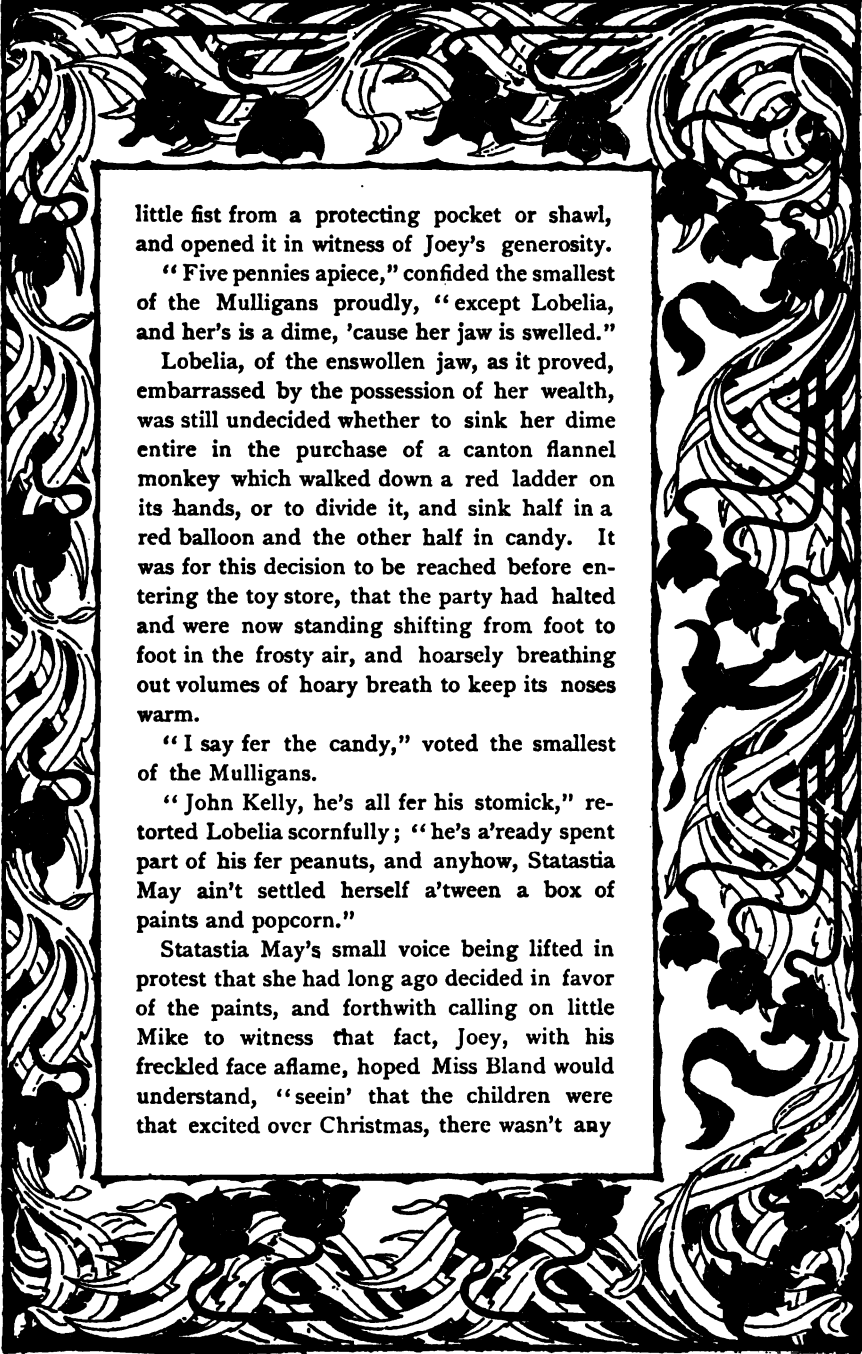
“And even now that we are out,” she began again, as they left the car and reached the thronged and gayly lighted sidewalk, “what are we out to do?”

As the whole affair had sprung from her suggestion, it was more than generous of him not to remind her of that now. “Considering the nature of the expedition,” he rejoined, promptly, “I should say we had better begin to look for that cityful of poor, and if I were impersonating the beneficent fairy, there is no question I would feel I had a beginning right here before me,” and he nodded toward an adjacent recess in an unoccupied doorway of a gayly decorated toy shop.

“It’s Joey!” cried Miss Bland, following his glance and halting as she recognized the carrier of coal, the shoveler of snow, the general outdoor help and dependence of her own household.

The ups and downs of childhood, as embodied in the varying lengths of the persons of Joey’s small brothers and sisters, turned at this utterance of the eldest Mulligan’s name, and broke, as by consent, into a unanimous smile, as the bright countenance of Miss Bland was recognized.

“We’re buying our Christmas,” explained the offspring of the house of Mulligan with one voice, the embarrassed elder brother excepted. “Joey, he tipped us all around, he did,” and every little Mulligan forthwith removed a red



little fist from a protecting pocket or shawl, and opened it in witness of Joey's generosity.

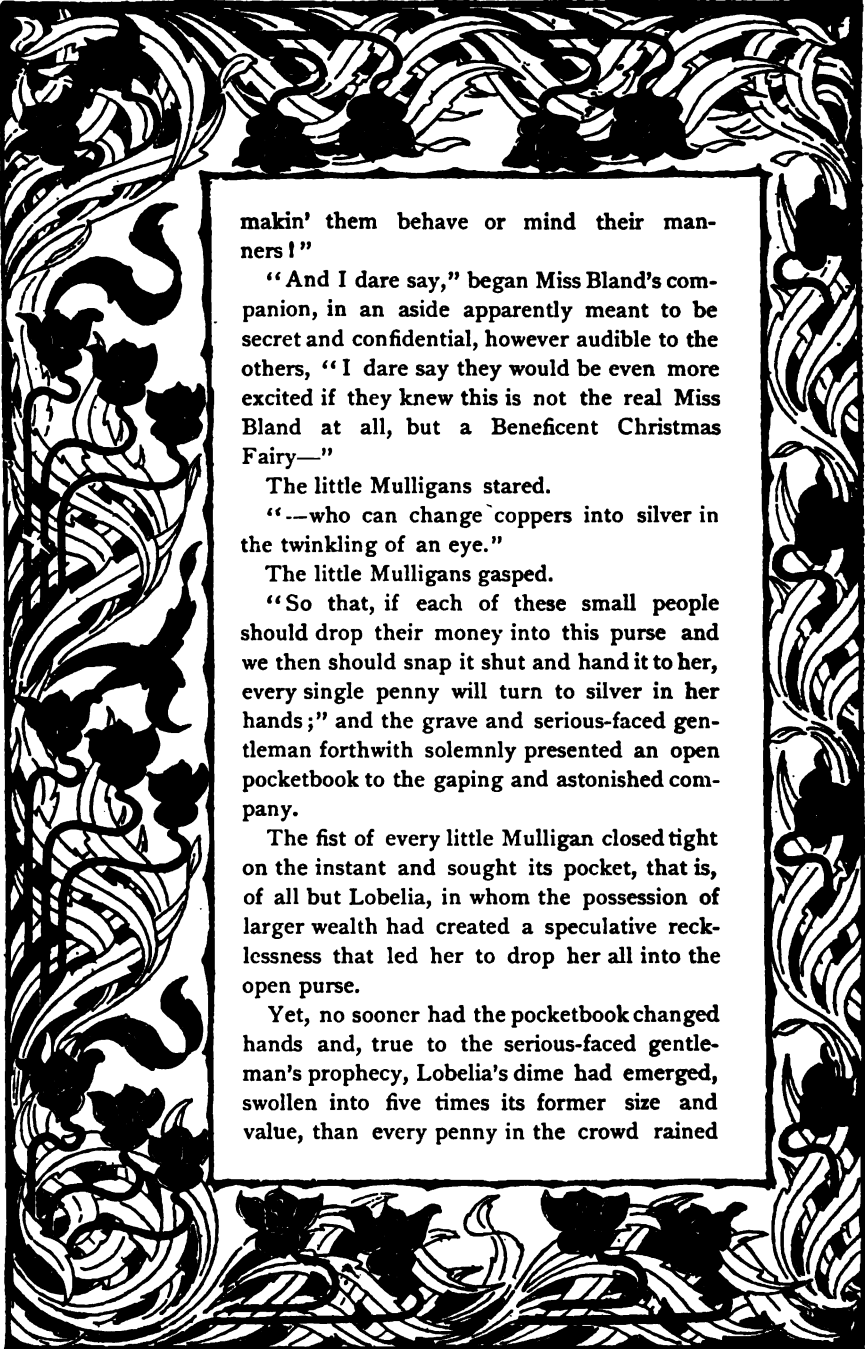
"Five pennies apiece," confided the smallest of the Mulligans proudly, "except Lobelia, and her's is a dime, 'cause her jaw is swelled."

Lobelia, of the enswollen jaw, as it proved, embarrassed by the possession of her wealth, was still undecided whether to sink her dime entire in the purchase of a canton flannel monkey which walked down a red ladder on its hands, or to divide it, and sink half in a red balloon and the other half in candy. It was for this decision to be reached before entering the toy store, that the party had halted and were now standing shifting from foot to foot in the frosty air, and hoarsely breathing out volumes of hoary breath to keep its noses warm.

"I say fer the candy," voted the smallest of the Mulligans.

"John Kelly, he's all fer his stomick," retorted Lobelia scornfully; "he's a'ready spent part of his fer peanuts, and anyhow, Stastasia May ain't settled herself a'tween a box of paints and popcorn."

Stastasia May's small voice being lifted in protest that she had long ago decided in favor of the paints, and forthwith calling on little Mike to witness that fact, Joey, with his freckled face aflame, hoped Miss Bland would understand, "seein' that the children were that excited over Christmas, there wasn't any



makin' them behave or mind their manners!"

"And I dare say," began Miss Bland's companion, in an aside apparently meant to be secret and confidential, however audible to the others, "I dare say they would be even more excited if they knew this is not the real Miss Bland at all, but a Beneficent Christmas Fairy—"

The little Mulligans stared.

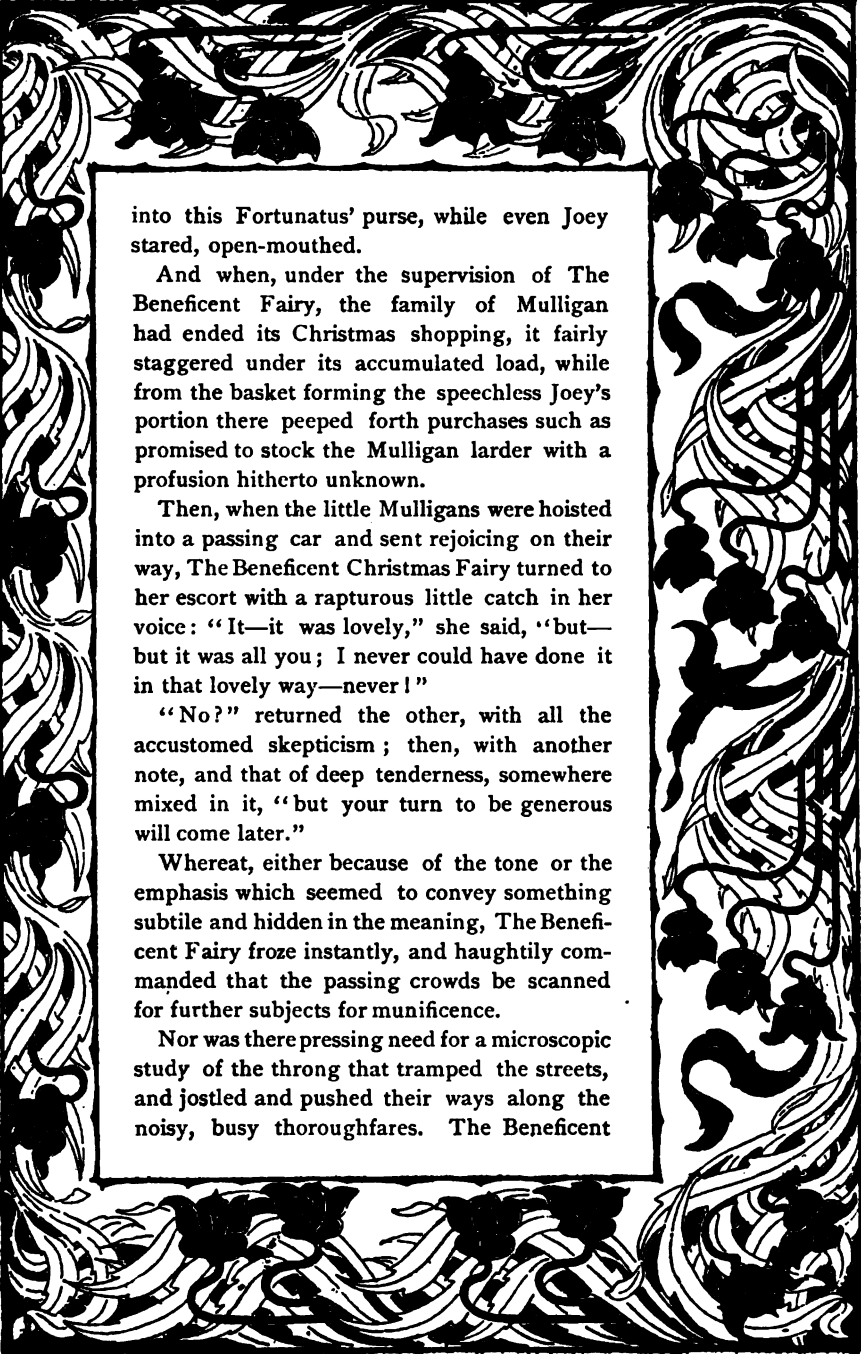
"—who can change coppers into silver in the twinkling of an eye."

The little Mulligans gasped.

"So that, if each of these small people should drop their money into this purse and we then should snap it shut and hand it to her, every single penny will turn to silver in her hands;" and the grave and serious-faced gentleman forthwith solemnly presented an open pocketbook to the gaping and astonished company.

The fist of every little Mulligan closed tight on the instant and sought its pocket, that is, of all but Lobelia, in whom the possession of larger wealth had created a speculative recklessness that led her to drop her all into the open purse.

Yet, no sooner had the pocketbook changed hands and, true to the serious-faced gentleman's prophecy, Lobelia's dime had emerged, swollen into five times its former size and value, than every penny in the crowd rained



into this Fortunatus' purse, while even Joey stared, open-mouthed.

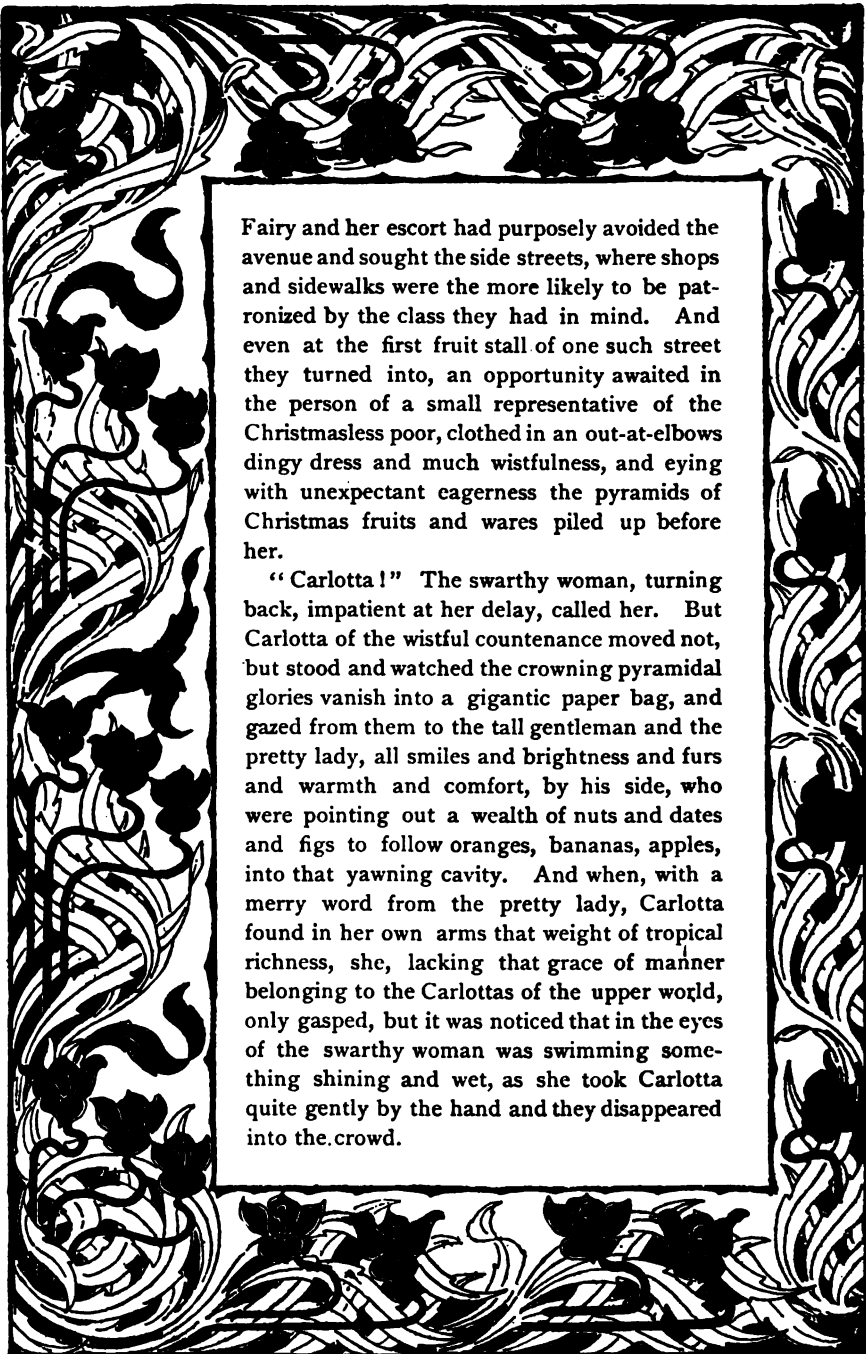
And when, under the supervision of The Beneficent Fairy, the family of Mulligan had ended its Christmas shopping, it fairly staggered under its accumulated load, while from the basket forming the speechless Joey's portion there peeped forth purchases such as promised to stock the Mulligan larder with a profusion hitherto unknown.

Then, when the little Mulligans were hoisted into a passing car and sent rejoicing on their way, The Beneficent Christmas Fairy turned to her escort with a rapturous little catch in her voice: "It—it was lovely," she said, "but—but it was all you; I never could have done it in that lovely way—never!"

"No?" returned the other, with all the accustomed skepticism; then, with another note, and that of deep tenderness, somewhere mixed in it, "but your turn to be generous will come later."

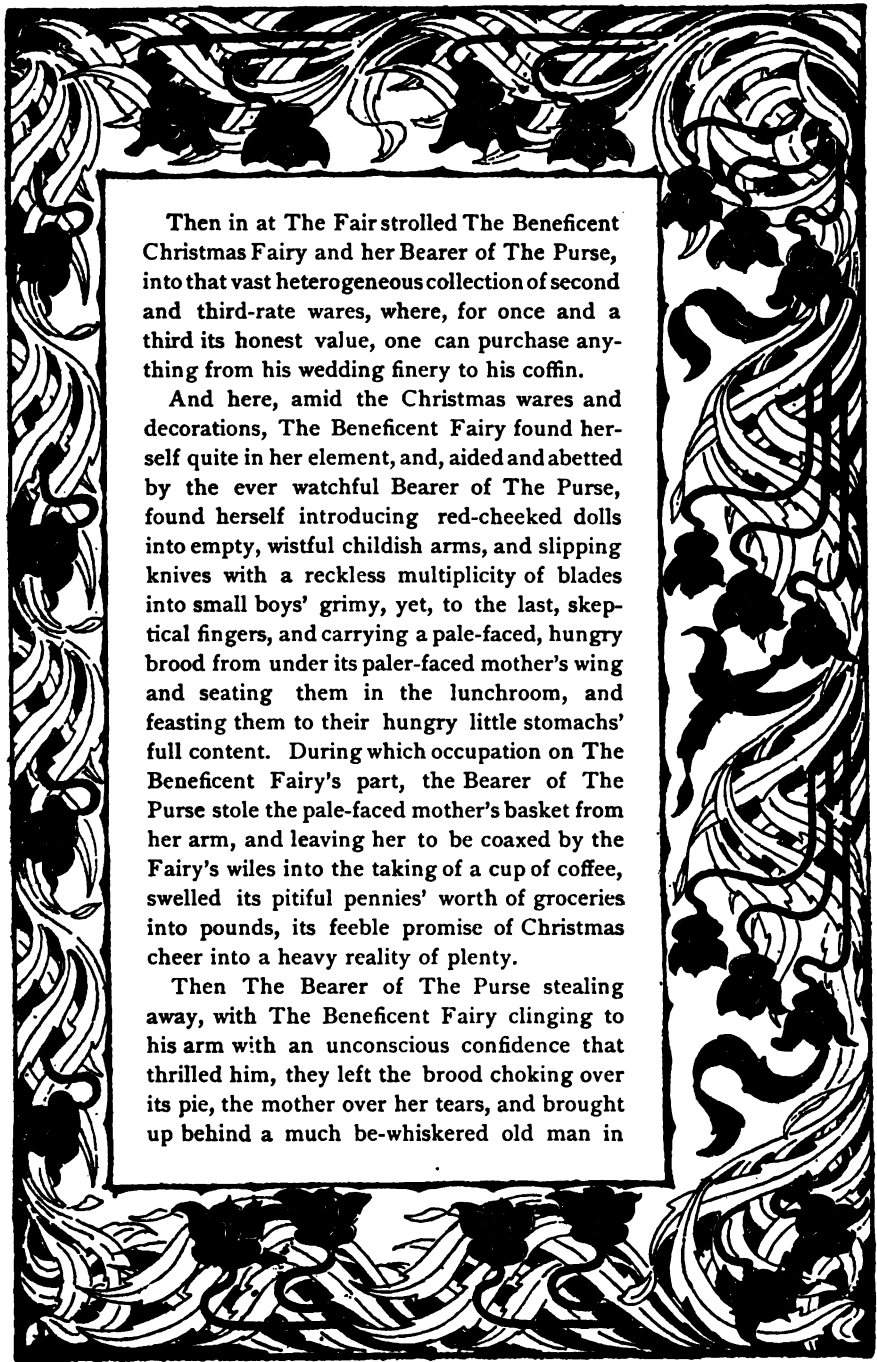
Whereat, either because of the tone or the emphasis which seemed to convey something subtle and hidden in the meaning, The Beneficent Fairy froze instantly, and haughtily commanded that the passing crowds be scanned for further subjects for munificence.

Nor was there pressing need for a microscopic study of the throng that tramped the streets, and jostled and pushed their ways along the noisy, busy thoroughfares. The Beneficent



Fairy and her escort had purposely avoided the avenue and sought the side streets, where shops and sidewalks were the more likely to be patronized by the class they had in mind. And even at the first fruit stall of one such street they turned into, an opportunity awaited in the person of a small representative of the Christmasless poor, clothed in an out-at-elbows dingy dress and much wistfulness, and eyeing with unexpectant eagerness the pyramids of Christmas fruits and wares piled up before her.

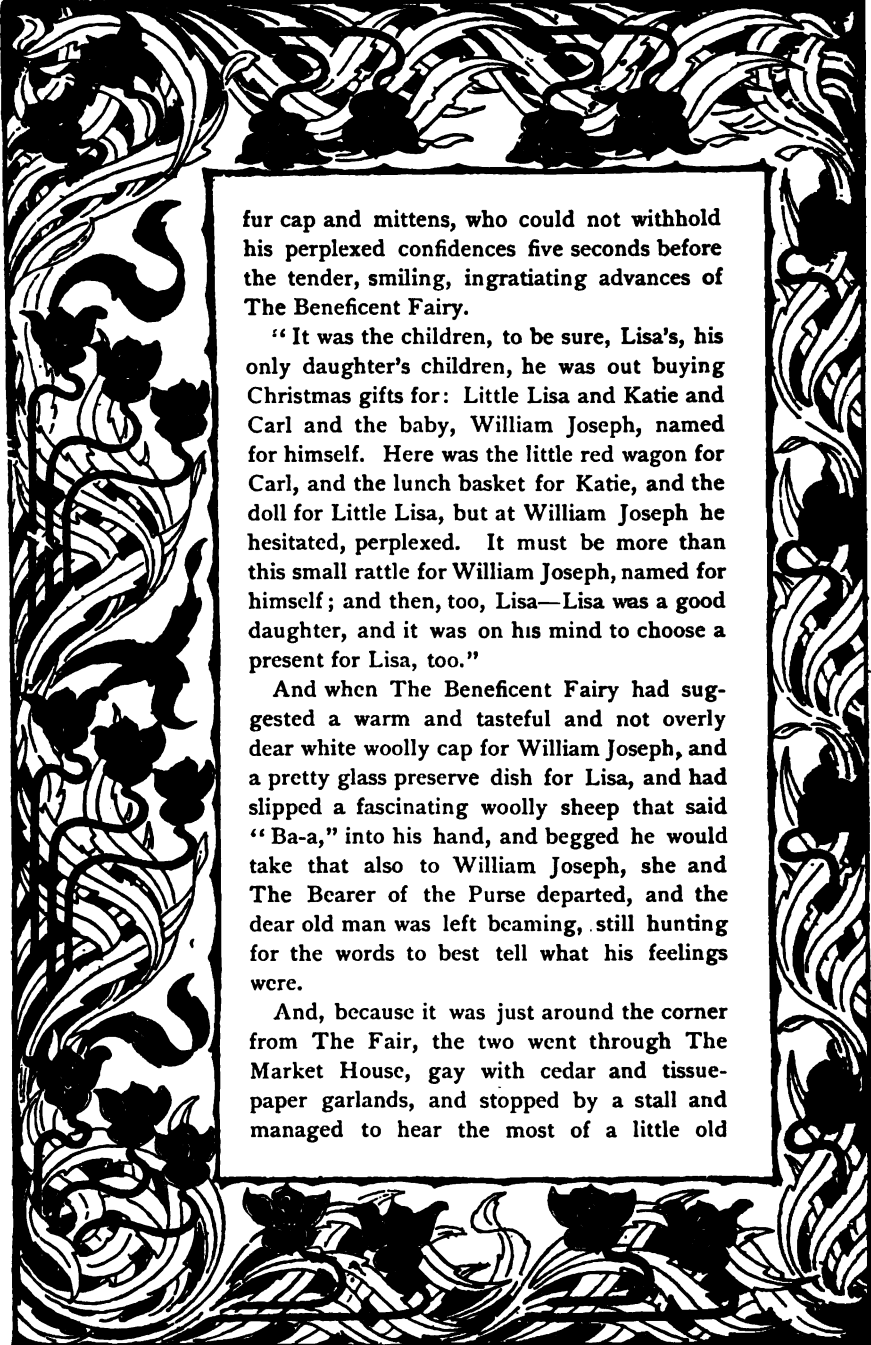
“Carlotta!” The swarthy woman, turning back, impatient at her delay, called her. But Carlotta of the wistful countenance moved not, but stood and watched the crowning pyramidal glories vanish into a gigantic paper bag, and gazed from them to the tall gentleman and the pretty lady, all smiles and brightness and furs and warmth and comfort, by his side, who were pointing out a wealth of nuts and dates and figs to follow oranges, bananas, apples, into that yawning cavity. And when, with a merry word from the pretty lady, Carlotta found in her own arms that weight of tropical richness, she, lacking that grace of manner belonging to the Carlottas of the upper world, only gasped, but it was noticed that in the eyes of the swarthy woman was swimming something shining and wet, as she took Carlotta quite gently by the hand and they disappeared into the crowd.



Then in at The Fair strolled The Beneficent Christmas Fairy and her Bearer of The Purse, into that vast heterogeneous collection of second and third-rate wares, where, for once and a third its honest value, one can purchase anything from his wedding finery to his coffin.

And here, amid the Christmas wares and decorations, The Beneficent Fairy found herself quite in her element, and, aided and abetted by the ever watchful Bearer of The Purse, found herself introducing red-cheeked dolls into empty, wistful childish arms, and slipping knives with a reckless multiplicity of blades into small boys' grimy, yet, to the last, skeptical fingers, and carrying a pale-faced, hungry brood from under its paler-faced mother's wing and seating them in the lunchroom, and feasting them to their hungry little stomachs' full content. During which occupation on The Beneficent Fairy's part, the Bearer of The Purse stole the pale-faced mother's basket from her arm, and leaving her to be coaxed by the Fairy's wiles into the taking of a cup of coffee, swelled its pitiful pennies' worth of groceries into pounds, its feeble promise of Christmas cheer into a heavy reality of plenty.

Then The Bearer of The Purse stealing away, with The Beneficent Fairy clinging to his arm with an unconscious confidence that thrilled him, they left the brood choking over its pie, the mother over her tears, and brought up behind a much be-whiskered old man in

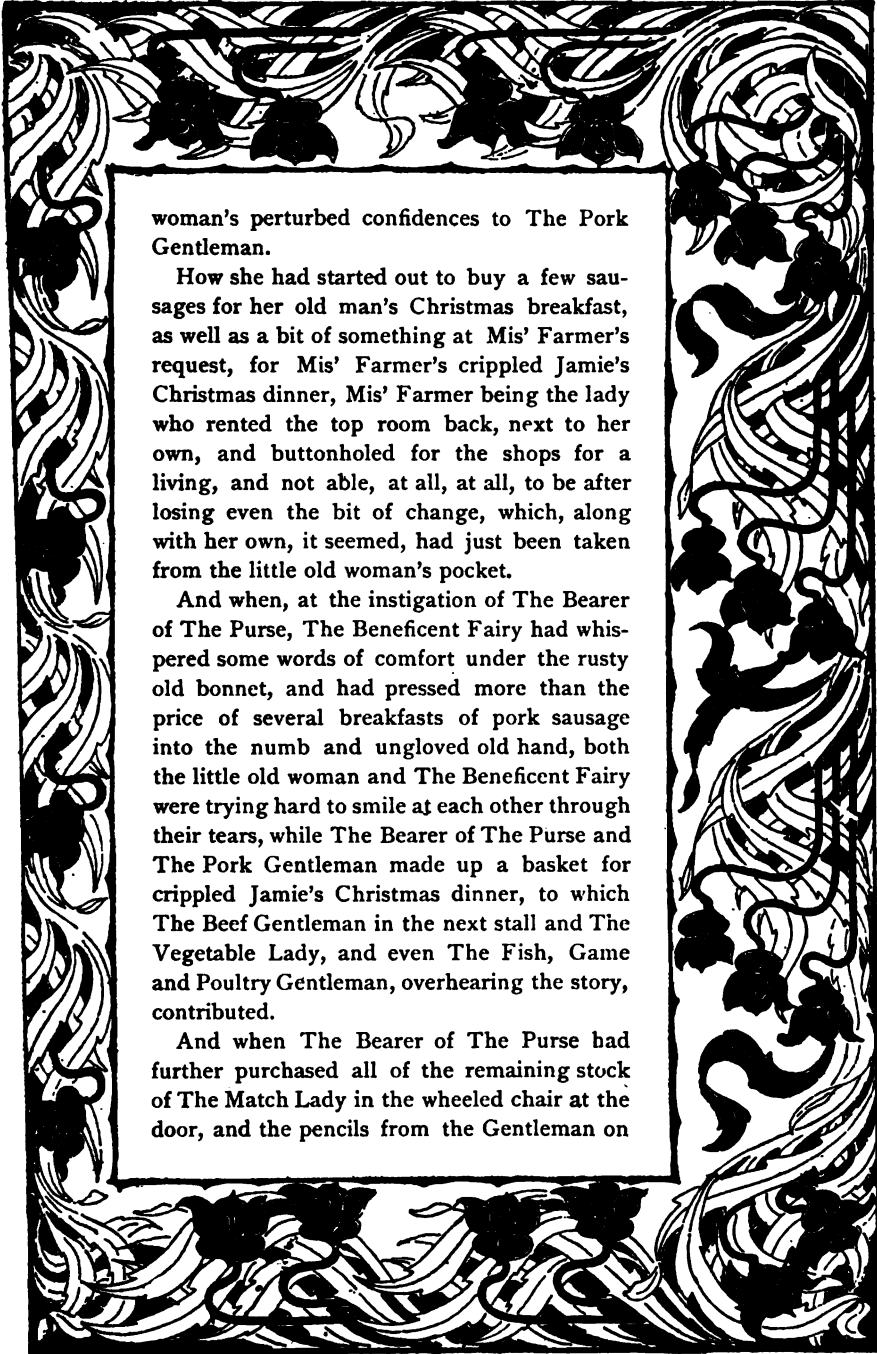


fur cap and mittens, who could not withhold his perplexed confidences five seconds before the tender, smiling, ingratiating advances of The Beneficent Fairy.

"It was the children, to be sure, Lisa's, his only daughter's children, he was out buying Christmas gifts for: Little Lisa and Katie and Carl and the baby, William Joseph, named for himself. Here was the little red wagon for Carl, and the lunch basket for Katie, and the doll for Little Lisa, but at William Joseph he hesitated, perplexed. It must be more than this small rattle for William Joseph, named for himself; and then, too, Lisa—Lisa was a good daughter, and it was on his mind to choose a present for Lisa, too."

And when The Beneficent Fairy had suggested a warm and tasteful and not overly dear white woolly cap for William Joseph, and a pretty glass preserve dish for Lisa, and had slipped a fascinating woolly sheep that said "Ba-a," into his hand, and begged he would take that also to William Joseph, she and The Bearer of the Purse departed, and the dear old man was left beaming, still hunting for the words to best tell what his feelings were.

And, because it was just around the corner from The Fair, the two went through The Market House, gay with cedar and tissue-paper garlands, and stopped by a stall and managed to hear the most of a little old

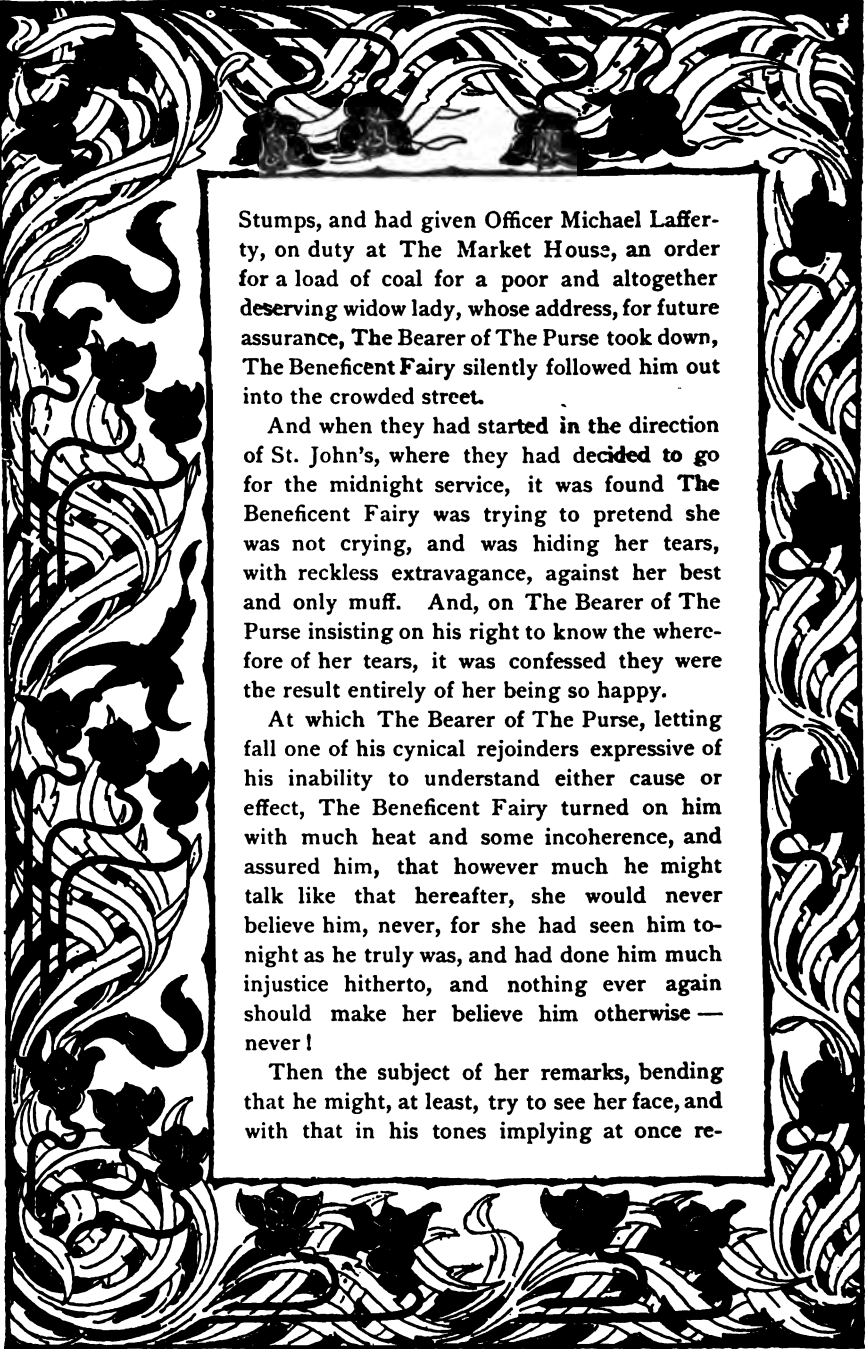


woman's perturbed confidences to The Pork Gentleman.

How she had started out to buy a few sausages for her old man's Christmas breakfast, as well as a bit of something at Mis' Farmer's request, for Mis' Farmer's crippled Jamie's Christmas dinner, Mis' Farmer being the lady who rented the top room back, next to her own, and buttonholed for the shops for a living, and not able, at all, at all, to be after losing even the bit of change, which, along with her own, it seemed, had just been taken from the little old woman's pocket.

And when, at the instigation of The Bearer of The Purse, The Beneficent Fairy had whispered some words of comfort under the rusty old bonnet, and had pressed more than the price of several breakfasts of pork sausage into the numb and ungloved old hand, both the little old woman and The Beneficent Fairy were trying hard to smile at each other through their tears, while The Bearer of The Purse and The Pork Gentleman made up a basket for crippled Jamie's Christmas dinner, to which The Beef Gentleman in the next stall and The Vegetable Lady, and even The Fish, Game and Poultry Gentleman, overhearing the story, contributed.

And when The Bearer of The Purse had further purchased all of the remaining stock of The Match Lady in the wheeled chair at the door, and the pencils from the Gentleman on

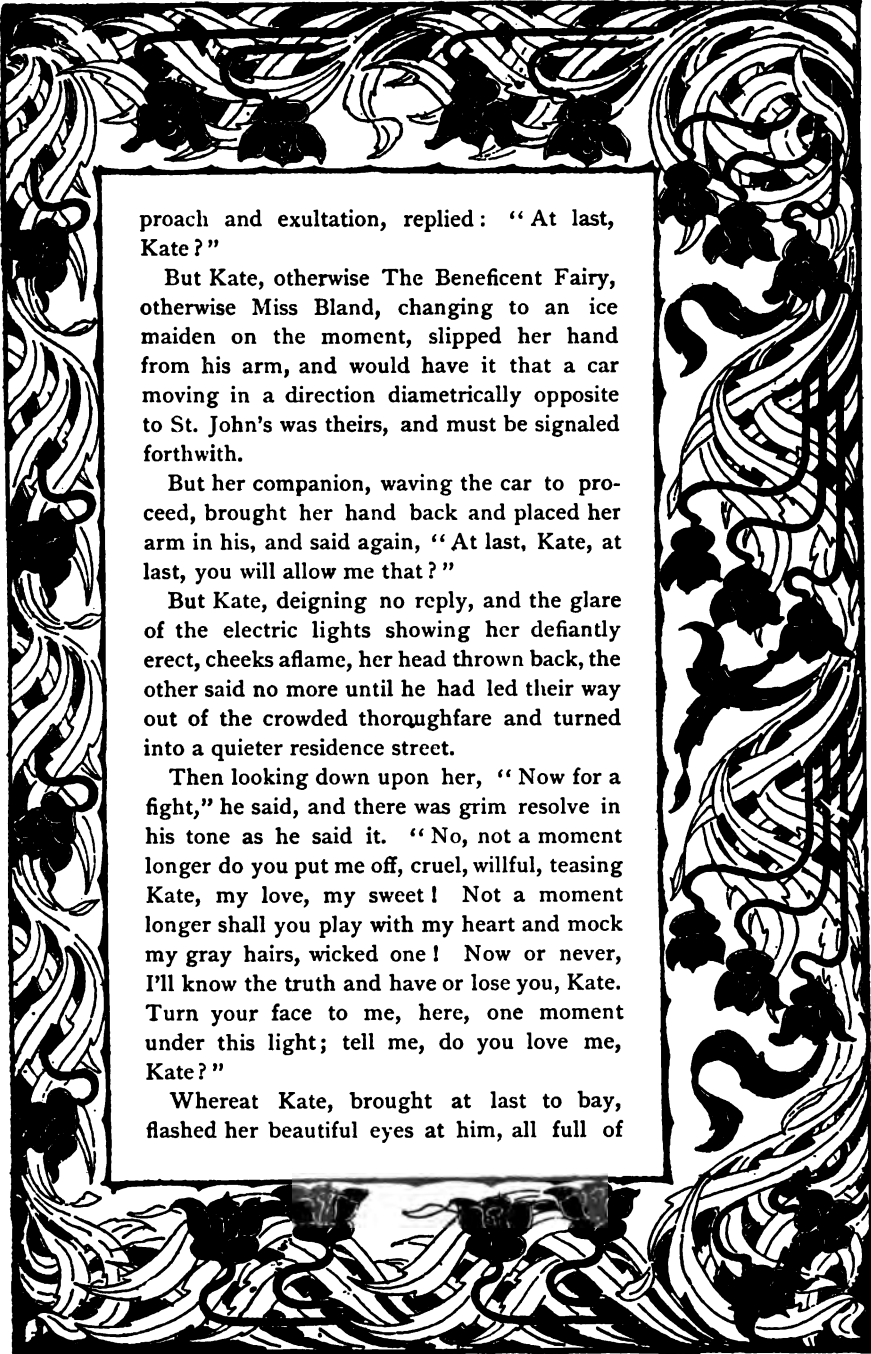


Stumps, and had given Officer Michael Lafferty, on duty at The Market House, an order for a load of coal for a poor and altogether deserving widow lady, whose address, for future assurance, The Bearer of The Purse took down, The Beneficent Fairy silently followed him out into the crowded street.

And when they had started in the direction of St. John's, where they had decided to go for the midnight service, it was found The Beneficent Fairy was trying to pretend she was not crying, and was hiding her tears, with reckless extravagance, against her best and only muff. And, on The Bearer of The Purse insisting on his right to know the wherefore of her tears, it was confessed they were the result entirely of her being so happy.

At which The Bearer of The Purse, letting fall one of his cynical rejoinders expressive of his inability to understand either cause or effect, The Beneficent Fairy turned on him with much heat and some incoherence, and assured him, that however much he might talk like that hereafter, she would never believe him, never, for she had seen him tonight as he truly was, and had done him much injustice hitherto, and nothing ever again should make her believe him otherwise — never!

Then the subject of her remarks, bending that he might, at least, try to see her face, and with that in his tones implying at once re-



proach and exultation, replied: "At last, Kate?"

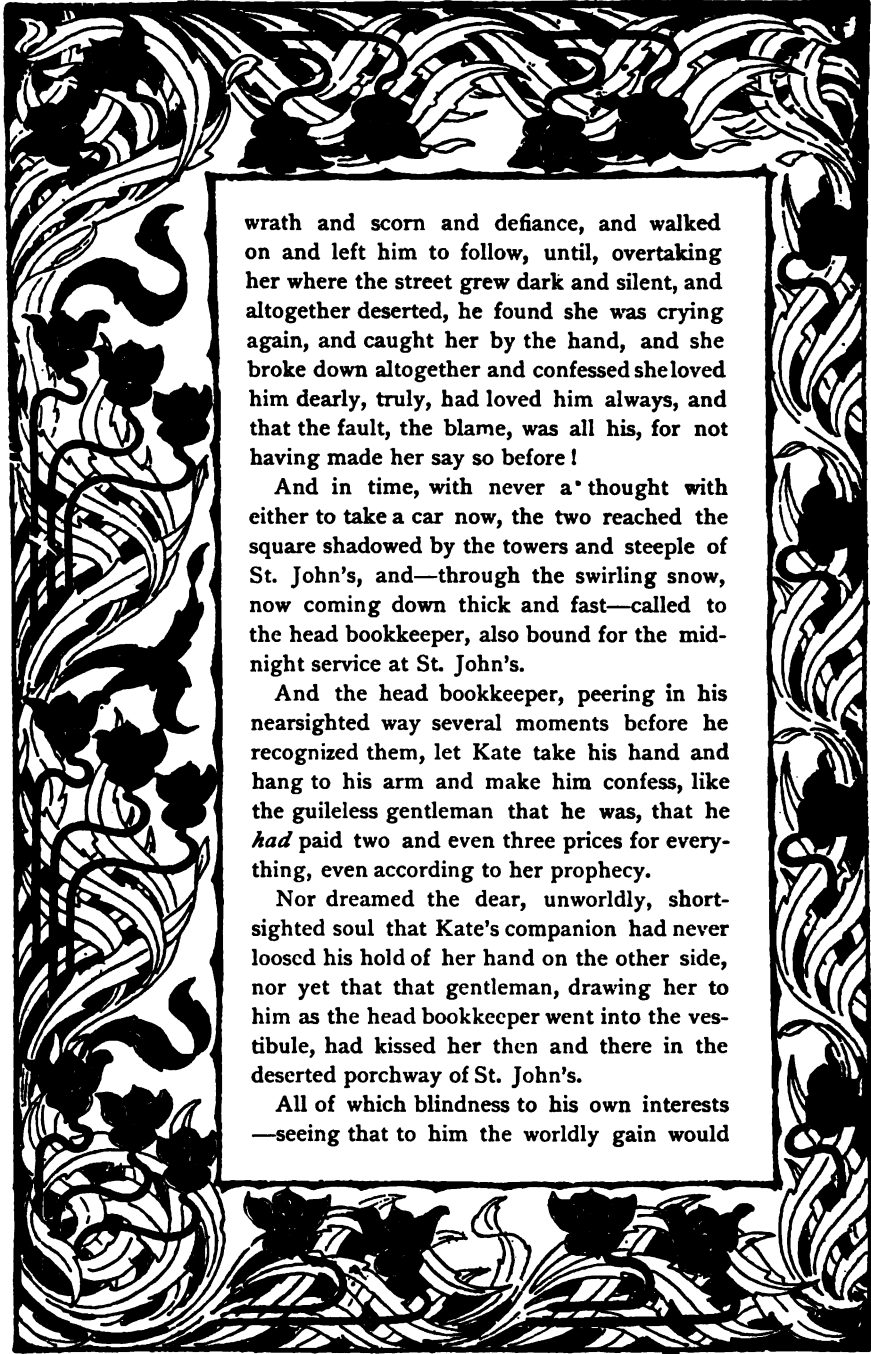
But Kate, otherwise The Beneficent Fairy, otherwise Miss Bland, changing to an ice maiden on the moment, slipped her hand from his arm, and would have it that a car moving in a direction diametrically opposite to St. John's was theirs, and must be signaled forthwith.

But her companion, waving the car to proceed, brought her hand back and placed her arm in his, and said again, "At last, Kate, at last, you will allow me that?"

But Kate, deigning no reply, and the glare of the electric lights showing her defiantly erect, cheeks aflame, her head thrown back, the other said no more until he had led their way out of the crowded thoroughfare and turned into a quieter residence street.

Then looking down upon her, "Now for a fight," he said, and there was grim resolve in his tone as he said it. "No, not a moment longer do you put me off, cruel, willful, teasing Kate, my love, my sweet! Not a moment longer shall you play with my heart and mock my gray hairs, wicked one! Now or never, I'll know the truth and have or lose you, Kate. Turn your face to me, here, one moment under this light; tell me, do you love me, Kate?"

Whereat Kate, brought at last to bay, flashed her beautiful eyes at him, all full of



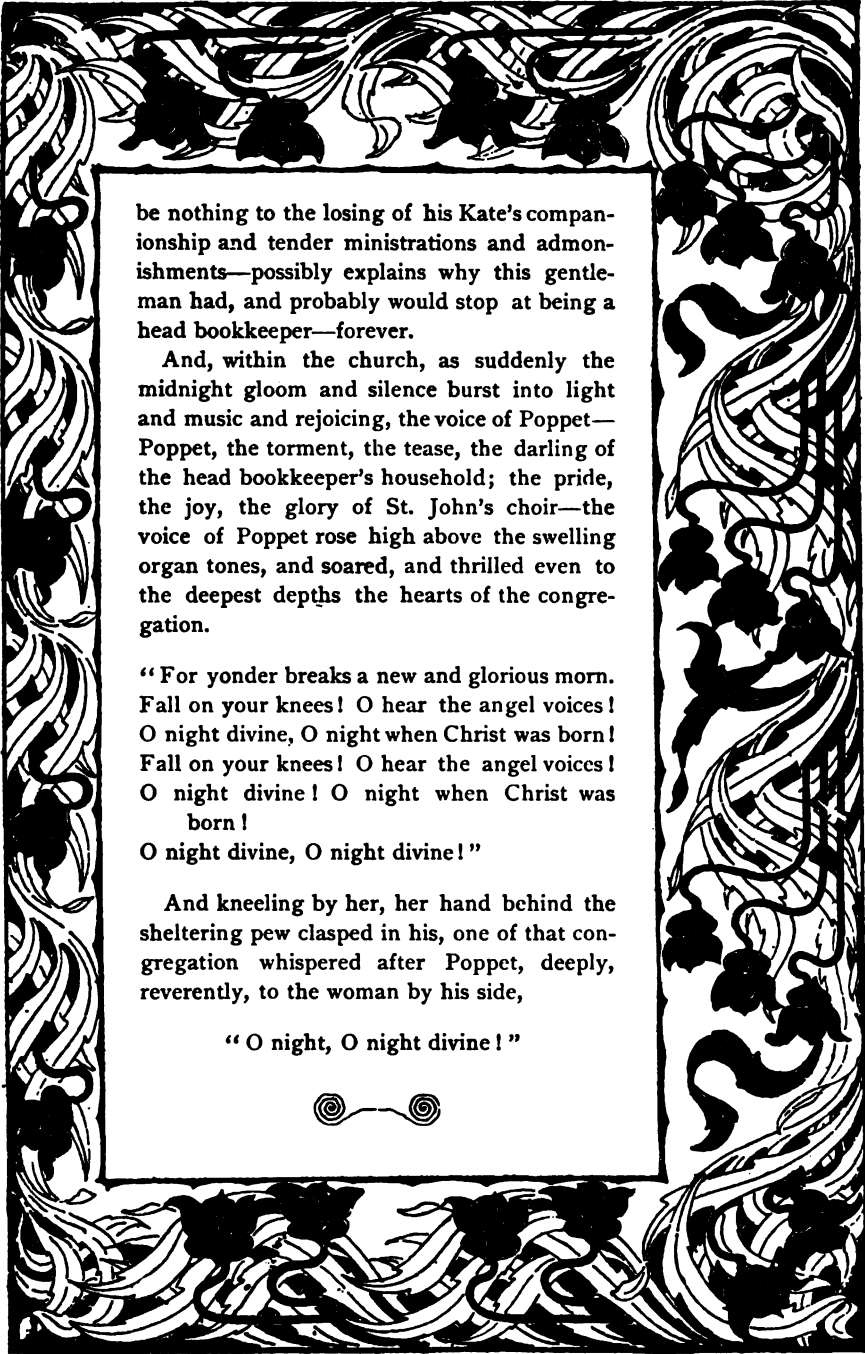
wrath and scorn and defiance, and walked on and left him to follow, until, overtaking her where the street grew dark and silent, and altogether deserted, he found she was crying again, and caught her by the hand, and she broke down altogether and confessed she loved him dearly, truly, had loved him always, and that the fault, the blame, was all his, for not having made her say so before !

And in time, with never a thought with either to take a car now, the two reached the square shadowed by the towers and steeple of St. John's, and—through the swirling snow, now coming down thick and fast—called to the head bookkeeper, also bound for the midnight service at St. John's.

And the head bookkeeper, peering in his nearsighted way several moments before he recognized them, let Kate take his hand and hang to his arm and make him confess, like the guileless gentleman that he was, that he *had* paid two and even three prices for everything, even according to her prophecy.

Nor dreamed the dear, unworldly, shortsighted soul that Kate's companion had never loosed his hold of her hand on the other side, nor yet that that gentleman, drawing her to him as the head bookkeeper went into the vestibule, had kissed her then and there in the deserted porchway of St. John's.

All of which blindness to his own interests—seeing that to him the worldly gain would



be nothing to the losing of his Kate's companionship and tender ministrations and admonishments—possibly explains why this gentleman had, and probably would stop at being a head bookkeeper—forever.

And, within the church, as suddenly the midnight gloom and silence burst into light and music and rejoicing, the voice of Poppet—Poppet, the torment, the tease, the darling of the head bookkeeper's household; the pride, the joy, the glory of St. John's choir—the voice of Poppet rose high above the swelling organ tones, and soared, and thrilled even to the deepest depths the hearts of the congregation.

“For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was
born!
O night divine, O night divine!”

And kneeling by her, her hand behind the sheltering pew clasped in his, one of that congregation whispered after Poppet, deeply, reverently, to the woman by his side,

“O night, O night divine!”





THE ANGEL OF THE
BROKEN WING *

BY MAURICE MONTÉGUT

THE darkening twilight immerses the horizon in purple, making it seem more distant; glazes the surface of the ponds, doubling their depth; and the night comes, with the cold.

At the foot of a hill is a road. A little girl, barefoot and very poor, is leading a flock, another's flock, along this road. She is the living image—though for her there be so little of living—of misery and abandonment. In her twelve short years her hands have grown feebler, more weary, even than are those of the very aged. But in her deep eyes the ideal sequences have prolonged themselves; through days of silence, doubtless, she has dreamed; and through the nights, too, under the pale light of the stars. The understanding of the lowly is sometimes divine.

Suddenly, in the middle of the road, her dog stops, as if transfixed, and stands trembling and awe-stricken. Marie, advancing, perceives, in the shadow of the thicket, a form half obscured, yet radiantly white, and encircled with an aureole.

The child has prescience of a miracle, and is not astonished. She mutely considers the mysterious Being. Yes, it is an Angel—with flowing robe, with abundant locks, with visage severely

* Translated by Reuben B. Davenport, from the French, for *Short Stories*—Copyrighted. Illustrations by L. de Bernebruck.

pure, such as one sees in the frescoes on the walls of churches. But this Angel has only one wing, and his mien is ineffably sad. Putting her hands together, palm to palm, she speaks to him



softly, and in tones of prayer :

“Oh, beautiful

Prince of Heaven, I salute you! I would serve you. Since you are come hither, it must be to bring joy on the earth, and I thank you!”

But the Immortal answers with a great sob, and then quickly exclaims :

“Where am I? On earth, in exile! Banished! Stricken! Chastised! It is joy that I bring, hast thou said, O daughter of men? Alas! behold me! What am I?

“In the fall ordained to me, I have lost a wing! No more of Heaven, nor yet am I of earth! Suspense and fear hold horrible menace for me of things unknown. On high, it seems, I yesterday declared too hard a judgment upon mankind, their pas-

sions—their vileness, as it is called—upon crimes whereof I knew not. So, as punishment for judgment temerarious, the King of Kings, the Power Supreme, hath sentenced me to test the terrestrial life, a prey to those temptations I erstwhile regarded as beneath contempt. Should I resist, and prove the victor in these successive trials, then will the azure and the gold, the unchangeable firmament and its eternal glories, be restored to me. But, should I once fail, I must dwell in this, thy world, until the final judgment of men. I am afraid—of all things. And thou—who art thou?”

“I am only a poor, kinless child, received of charity, who a farmer’s sheep must guard that I may live—sometimes hardly; sometimes well, according to the weather—and who, an Angel seeing, kneel to him in prayer, that he will bear me hence to Heaven——”

Then the Angel wept yet harder.

“Alas! Heaven is closed to me, and this one wing, that I must drag so painfully, but deepens my affliction, reminding me of my origin, and nothing serving me upon this earth where

I must walk. It is the last warning that remains to me. At my first fault, this, too, will fall, and I shall be bound to this nether sphere, inexorably delivered over to vileness, far from yonder sublimity of space—I, Cyriam the Magnificent, Bearer of Light! Oh, these temptations of men! How I dread them, child, even as before I scorned them! What is that dreadful noise?”

Strident songs disturbed the stillness of the night, and the lurid glare of torches, tossed by the wind, drew nearer, and dyed with bloody hue the desolate countryside, wakened to horror.



Amid a troop on horseback, Regina, the courtesan, was returning to her dwelling from a forest chase. The noisy cortège stopped in front of Cyriam and Marie.

“What’s there? Some vagabonds? Make way! Make way!”

The Angel, circled by the scarlet torches, looked whiter even than before. At sight of him there were bursts of laughter.

“What kind of crippled fowl is here? Loose ye the dogs, the chase is not yet done! It’s a stork—or is it, perchance, a white turkey-cock?”

The Angel, risen to his full height, snatched a sword from one of those who were pressing upon him, and laid him dead at his feet.

A peal of thunder resounded. The second wing fell, the white robe also, and the aureole vanished. A voice cried:



“The first trial—Anger!”

Already the courtesan, Regina, had thrown herself into the combat. Now she gazed upon the Angel, struck by his super-human beauty.

“Come, I love thee!” she said. “Thou didst well to slay this fellow. He insulted thee, the drunkard! Follow me!”

Then Cyriam cried:

“Since no longer I am more than man, earth’s pleasures shall be mine. I’ll follow thee—thou art beautiful—and I—I, indeed, am lost!”

And as he mingled with the throng, they did homage to him for his valor and his splendid presence.



Marie, left alone, wept in the highway, knowing that a great evil had befallen; and her dog, for pity's sake, licked the tears from her eyes, while her sheep grazed where they listed.

Cyriam, of origin divine, is great among men. He is the most beautiful, the strongest, the most beloved. He has wished for gold—he is rich; for land and titles—he has them. In war, he exterminates, and the obscure crowd of combatants give way before him, lose their footing, terrified by the supernatural. After Regina, who died for love, others have adored him. The earth is illumined by his brig' tness. And his adventures are numberless. He has succumbed successively to all human temptations. The seven capital sins are his best companions; by all his immortal force, which multiplies the evil tenfold and prolongs it indefinitely, he surpasses the worst human culprit. He acknowledges neither fatigue nor repose. He pauses not.

Sometimes, however, he looks upward and sighs. Yet the sounds about him again divert him, and he returns to his wished-for pleasure.

As time passes, bitterness comes. The immortal beholds death about him. As he is human of heart, so has he loved unreservedly both mistresses and friends. He sees them grow old, sadden and die. Others he has after them, but their fate is the same. Alone unchangeable, he sees them pass away, and each time that a loved being disappears, he suffers and weeps.

How many times did he suffer and weep during ten human centuries, which seemed to him as hardly so many days? And his martyrdom was of every hour. Renewal did not fill up the gulfs of the past.

Across the throng of faces that he had met in the abolished years, two memories haunted him implacably: That of Heaven, and, also—how strange, indeed!—that of Marie, the poor child whom he had met on that first evening, and who now, doubtless, had long been dead. And it was the women who resembled Marie that he preferred above the others.

Thus, amidst noise and commotion, Cyriam existed for century after century. Then, one day, weary of everything, envying mankind, whose inevitable escape is death (which yet may be advanced by self-killing), he drew apart from the abodes of civilized men, walking for a long time in the solitude of the fields.

At twilight, as on the evening of long ago, he sat him down at the foot of a hill, in a corner of a deserted road.

Suddenly he saw a poor, barefoot child coming towards him, leading a rich flock through the deepening gloom. With panting breath he watched her as she drew nigh, and he murmured :

“ Oh, earth! Oh, earth accursed! Yet will I pardon thee if this poor child be by a miracle the child of long ago, the first one met, whose memory—why, I know not—dwells ever in my dream. For thee have I suffered, oh, earth! I judged of men too hardly, though I knew them not. Now, more guilty myself than all mankind together, I absolve them. Have mercy upon them! But the child comes near. Who art thou, little one? ”

“ A poor, kinless child, who have ever been very unhappy. And you, oh, Prince of Heaven, beautiful Angel, for such by your wings I know you to be, I come to supplicate you to take me with you—up yonder, whither you go.”

Cyriam started. Behind him, in very truth, he felt the quivering of his wings divine. God, because he was penitent, recalled him to the light. Yet he spake again :

“ So it is thou, Marie, the first whom I met—here find I thee again, my sister, after a thousand years! ”

“ No,” said the child, guileless of heart; “ I know not what you mean. Yet hapless little girls are of all time in this world. Misery is their name, and I am one of them.”

And Cyriam, the Pardoned; Cyriam, the Charitable, opening his wide wings, quivering with rapture, took the child up in his arms, and bore her aloft into the eternal glory reconquered.





AS THE YEARS GO BY*

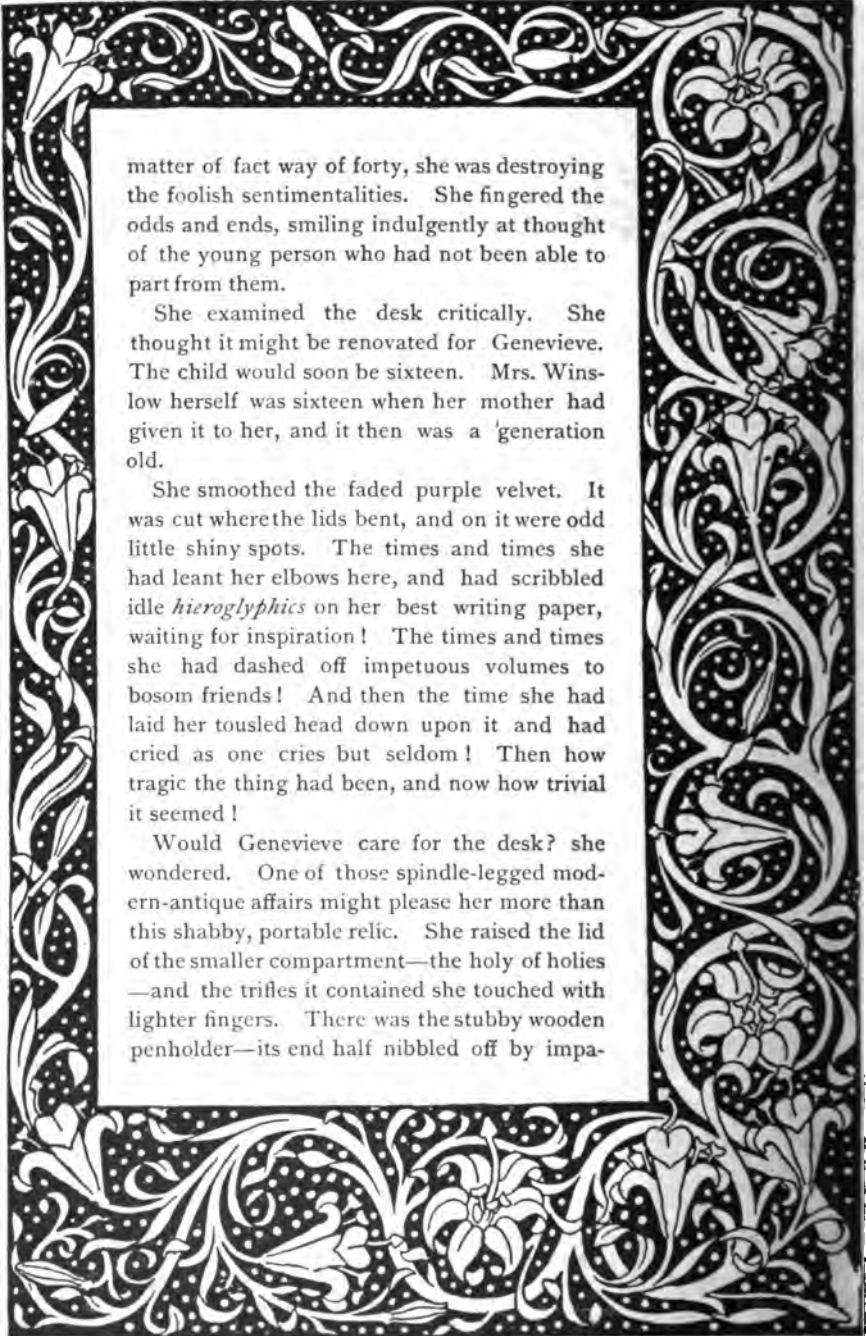
BY ALLEN BULLER.

THE rain pattered against the window panes. It fell from the gray sky to the gray street like a bead curtain that shimmered incessantly.

On the hearth a jovial log fire crackled. Mrs. Winslow shivered quite luxuriously, thinking what a horrid day it was. She was sitting at a little table and on it was a rose-wood desk. She wore an old tea gown and old slippers and she was indulging in old memories—the latter she was relentlessly tearing up. Already many scraps lay in the wastepaper basket—a limp, somewhat musty heap.

From the open lid of the desk came a faint odor of crisp rose leaves, of yellowing perfumed notes and fragrant wood. It was twenty years since the contents had been disturbed. The day before her wedding Mrs. Winslow had tucked them away, had shut them in safely, and after awhile had lost the key. To-day she had broken the lock; in the

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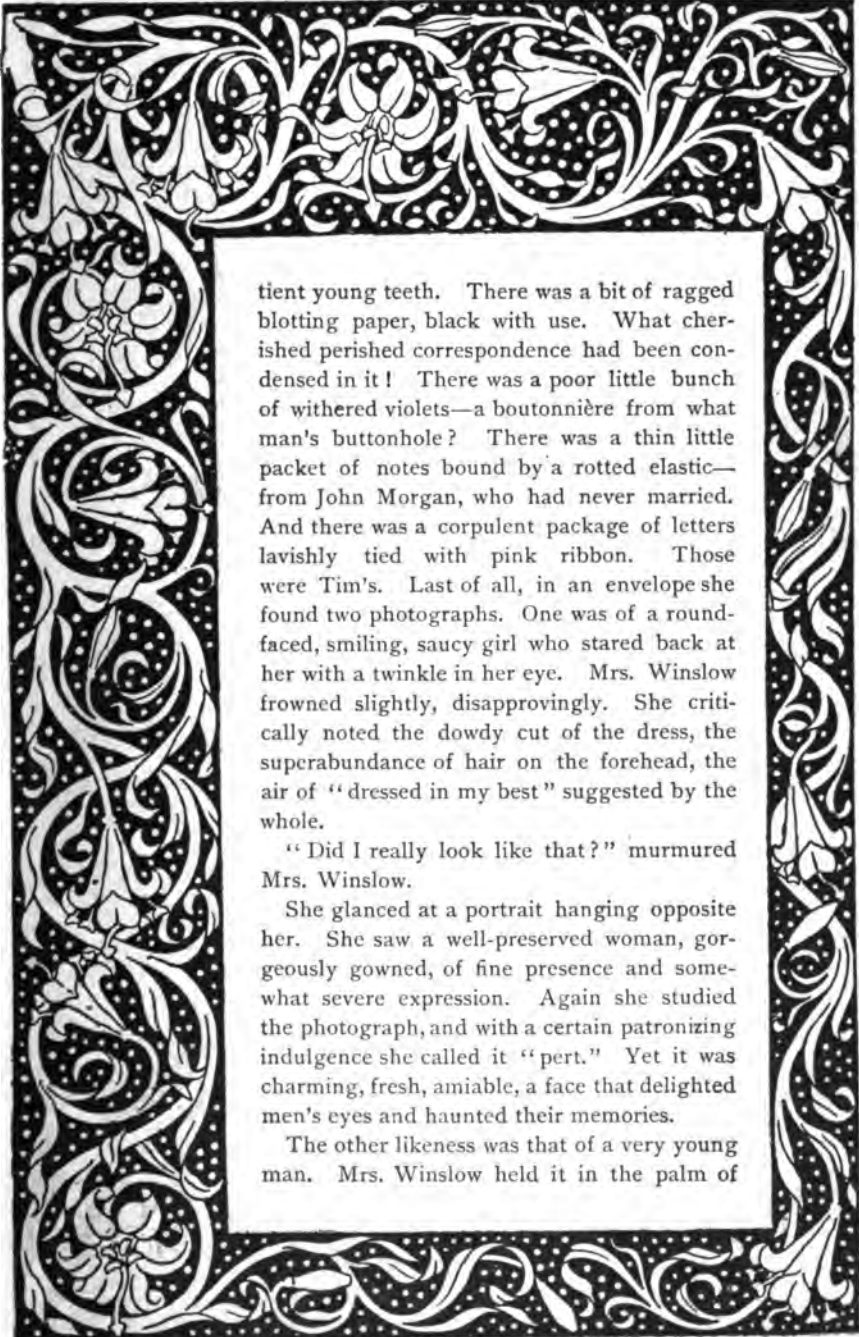


matter of fact way of forty, she was destroying the foolish sentimentalities. She fingered the odds and ends, smiling indulgently at thought of the young person who had not been able to part from them.

She examined the desk critically. She thought it might be renovated for Genevieve. The child would soon be sixteen. Mrs. Winslow herself was sixteen when her mother had given it to her, and it then was a generation old.

She smoothed the faded purple velvet. It was cut wherethe lids bent, and on it were odd little shiny spots. The times and times she had leant her elbows here, and had scribbled idle *hieroglyphics* on her best writing paper, waiting for inspiration! The times and times she had dashed off impetuous volumes to bosom friends! And then the time she had laid her tousled head down upon it and had cried as one cries but seldom! Then how tragic the thing had been, and now how trivial it seemed!

Would Genevieve care for the desk? she wondered. One of those spindle-legged modern-antique affairs might please her more than this shabby, portable relic. She raised the lid of the smaller compartment—the holy of holies—and the trifles it contained she touched with lighter fingers. There was the stubby wooden penholder—its end half nibbled off by impa-

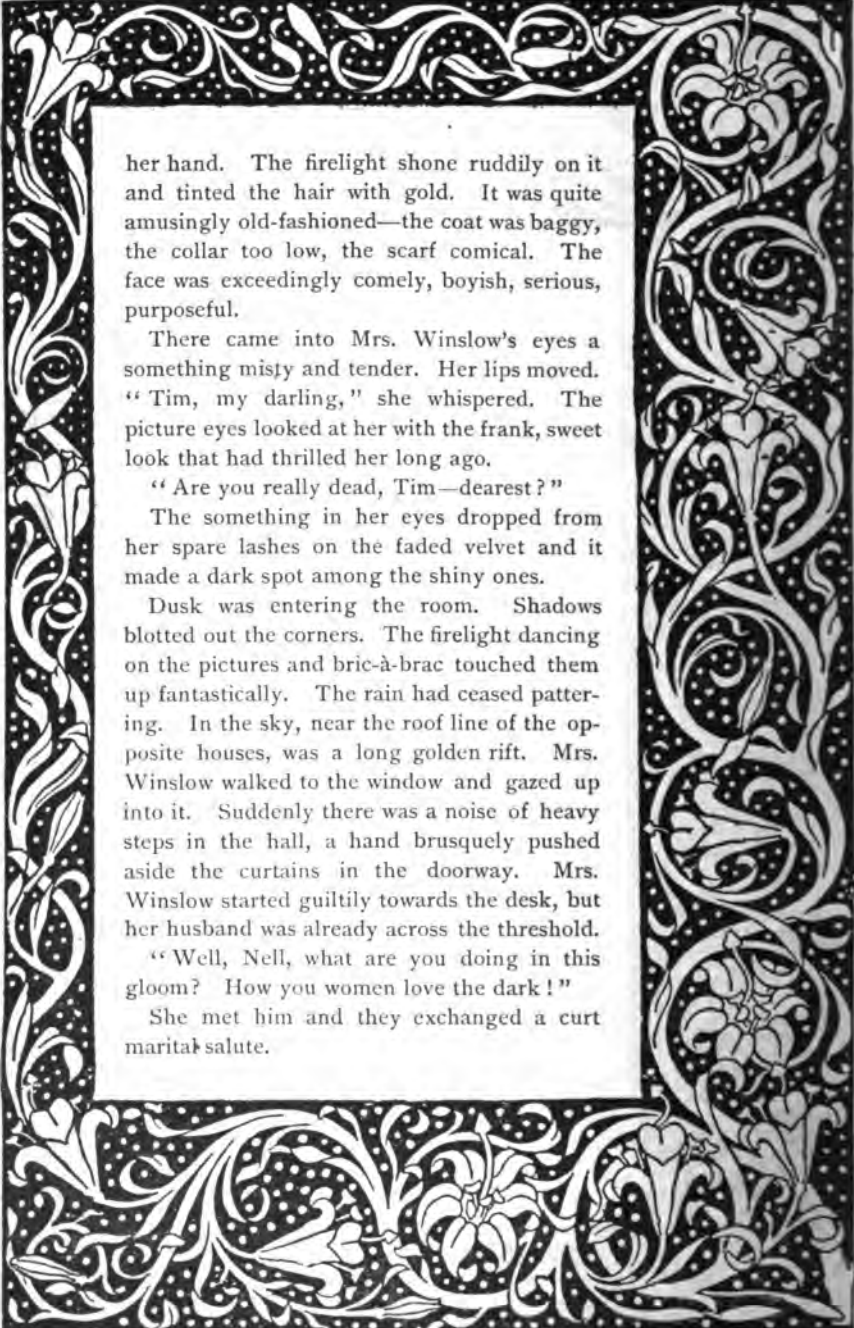


tient young teeth. There was a bit of ragged blotting paper, black with use. What cherished perished correspondence had been condensed in it! There was a poor little bunch of withered violets—a boutonniere from what man's buttonhole? There was a thin little packet of notes bound by a rotted elastic—from John Morgan, who had never married. And there was a corpulent package of letters lavishly tied with pink ribbon. Those were Tim's. Last of all, in an envelope she found two photographs. One was of a round-faced, smiling, saucy girl who stared back at her with a twinkle in her eye. Mrs. Winslow frowned slightly, disapprovingly. She critically noted the dowdy cut of the dress, the superabundance of hair on the forehead, the air of "dressed in my best" suggested by the whole.

"Did I really look like that?" murmured Mrs. Winslow.

She glanced at a portrait hanging opposite her. She saw a well-preserved woman, gorgeously gowned, of fine presence and somewhat severe expression. Again she studied the photograph, and with a certain patronizing indulgence she called it "pert." Yet it was charming, fresh, amiable, a face that delighted men's eyes and haunted their memories.

The other likeness was that of a very young man. Mrs. Winslow held it in the palm of



her hand. The firelight shone ruddily on it and tinted the hair with gold. It was quite amusingly old-fashioned—the coat was baggy, the collar too low, the scarf comical. The face was exceedingly comely, boyish, serious, purposeful.

There came into Mrs. Winslow's eyes a something misty and tender. Her lips moved. "Tim, my darling," she whispered. The picture eyes looked at her with the frank, sweet look that had thrilled her long ago.

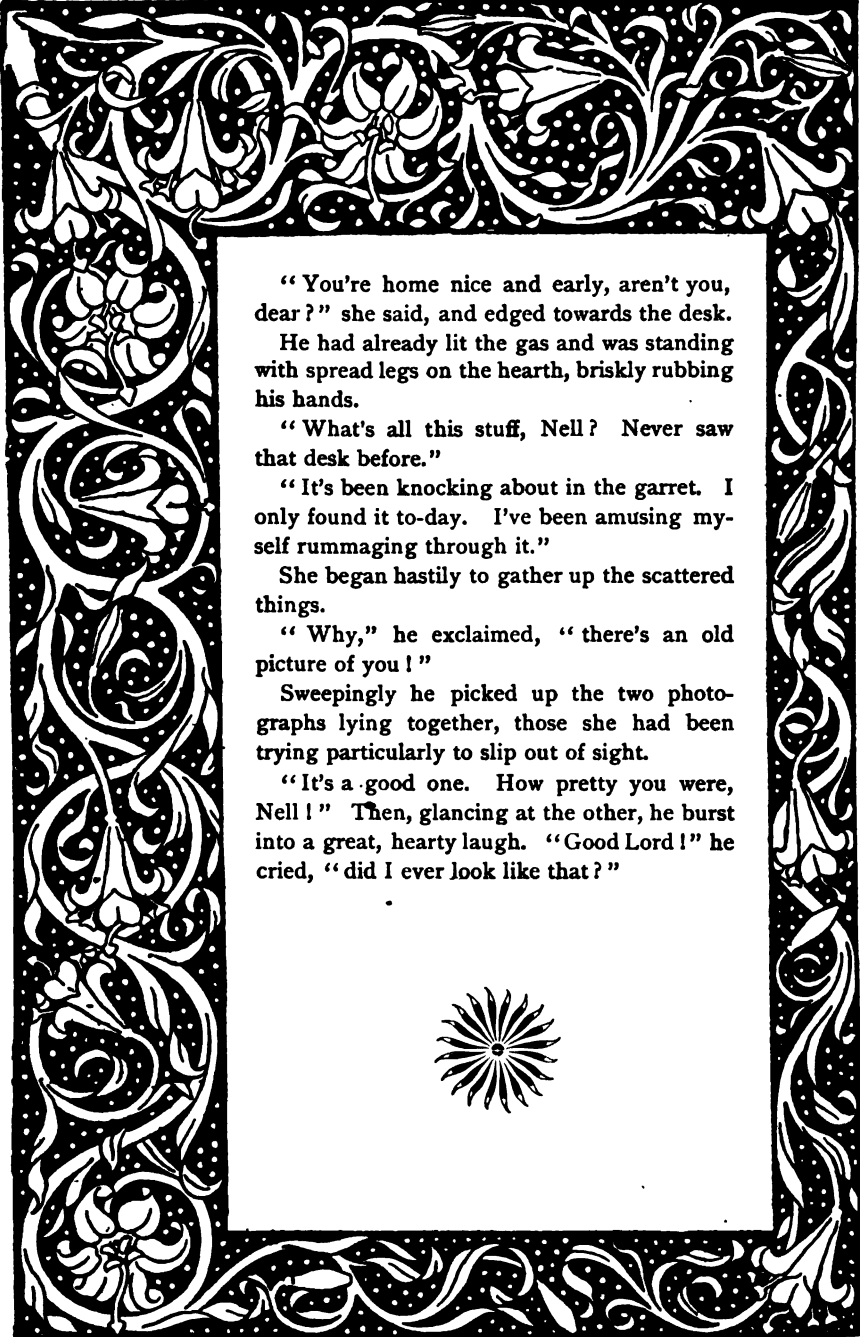
"Are you really dead, Tim—dearest?"

The something in her eyes dropped from her spare lashes on the faded velvet and it made a dark spot among the shiny ones.

Dusk was entering the room. Shadows blotted out the corners. The firelight dancing on the pictures and bric-à-brac touched them up fantastically. The rain had ceased pattering. In the sky, near the roof line of the opposite houses, was a long golden rift. Mrs. Winslow walked to the window and gazed up into it. Suddenly there was a noise of heavy steps in the hall, a hand brusquely pushed aside the curtains in the doorway. Mrs. Winslow started guiltily towards the desk, but her husband was already across the threshold.

"Well, Nell, what are you doing in this gloom? How you women love the dark!"

She met him and they exchanged a curt marital salute.



“You’re home nice and early, aren’t you, dear?” she said, and edged towards the desk.

He had already lit the gas and was standing with spread legs on the hearth, briskly rubbing his hands.

“What’s all this stuff, Nell? Never saw that desk before.”


“It’s been knocking about in the garret. I only found it to-day. I’ve been amusing myself rummaging through it.”

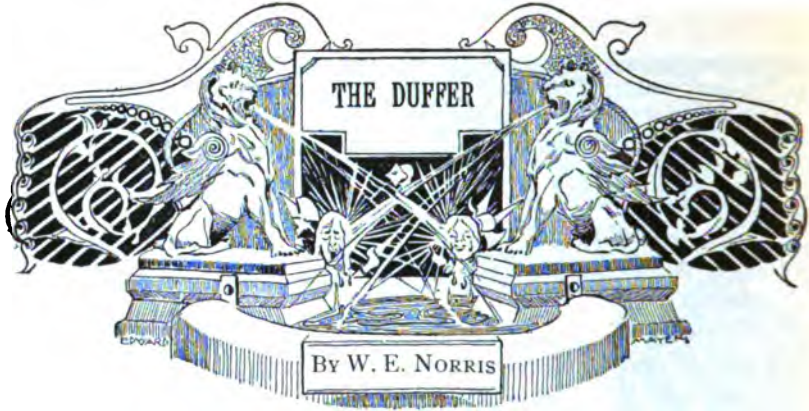
She began hastily to gather up the scattered things.

“Why,” he exclaimed, “there’s an old picture of you!”

Sweepingly he picked up the two photographs lying together, those she had been trying particularly to slip out of sight.

“It’s a good one. How pretty you were, Nell!” Then, glancing at the other, he burst into a great, hearty laugh. “Good Lord!” he cried, “did I ever look like that?”





“WHAT on earth made you call the poor brute such a name as that?” asked Mr. Belton, looking down with a certain contemptuous pity at the nondescript animal who was imprinting dirty paw-marks upon his new box-cloth gaiters.

“Well, reely, sir,” answered Mr. Markham, the horsedealer, “I don’t ’ardly see what else you *could* call him. Strayed ’ere last winter when he was on’y a pup and, as nobody claimed him, I kep’ him, thinkin’ he might turn out to be some good for somethin’. But I’m blessed if *I* can discover what the Lord created him for! Won’t fight, won’t kill a rat, won’t earn his keep in no sort o’ way. So we called him the Duffer, and he answered as nat’ral as I should if you was to sing out ‘Joe Markham!’ Give a dog a bad name and ’ang him, they say. Well, I’ve give him his name, and now I s’pose I shall have to do the rest; for I can’t afford to pay seven and six a year for the likes of him in these ’ard times.”

“He doesn’t look a well-bred one,” observed Mr. Belton.

“Oh, he’s a cur, sir; no need to tell *you* that. Got a bit of the bull in him, as you see; but what the rest of him is I couldn’t say, not if you was to put me on my hoath. Good natured creatur’, too; it goes agin’ me to put him out o’ the way. Seems to have took to you wonderful, sir. Cur’ous, ain’t it, how dogs always know a gentleman as understands ’em?”

That very smart young gentleman, Dick Belton, thought he understood a good deal about dogs. He also thought that he understood a good deal about horses, and was under the impression that he had just purchased a valuable hunter, at a great bargain, from Mr. Markham. Whether this confidence in his knowledge and capacity rested upon any solid foundation may

be open to doubt; but at any rate it sufficed to put him in a good humor, and he said, "Oh, I'll give the poor beggar a home if you like. One more dog among so many won't make much difference."

Thus it came to pass that, the same evening, smart Mr. Belton's smart groom was requested to take charge of an animal, among whose advantages (if he had any) smartness could hardly be reckoned.

"Well, you're a queer-looking customer, and no mistake!" the groom observed, eying the newcomer with extreme disfavor. "What particular species do *you* set up to belong to, I should like to know?"

The Duffer put his head on one side, cocked his right ear, and wagged his tail dubiously. He did not set up to belong to any recognized species, and, indeed, it would have puzzled the most expert judge to classify him. Viewed from a certain distance, he might, with his heavy shoulders, light hindquarters, and shambling gait, have passed for a bulldog; but closer inspection would have denied him all claim to belong to that noble breed. His rough, white coat, his stumpy tail, his deplorable floppy ears, and numerous other defects, upon which it would be ungracious to dwell, stamped him as a hopeless mongrel. There was something of the terrier in him, something of the lurcher, probably also a little of the sheep dog. His lower jaw, it is true, looked like business; but unhappily a very short acquaintance with him sufficed to show that he lacked the bulldog's first and essential characteristic, courage. All the dogs in the stableyard made inspection of him, and, it is lamentable to be obliged to add, that each and all of them forced him without any difficulty to accept a licking. Even a little toy black-and-tan terrier strutted round him on tiptoe, snorted doubtfully, and then decided to go for him. "Wah! wah!" squealed the Duffer, as he fled ignominiously into a corner with his tail between his legs.

After that, it was absurd to think of changing his name. As his former owner had said, what else could you call him?

Yet a friendly feeling for him soon sprang up among dogs and men alike. It was impossible to respect him; but it was almost equally impossible to help liking a creature so amiable, so forgiving, and so confiding. If there was a member of the establishment who did dislike him, it was the master of the establishment himself, and this, it must be confessed, was the Duffer's

own fault. Slavish, passionate, demonstrative love is, alas! never appreciated by its object in this perverse world, and such an affection it was that the poor Duffer had conceived for Dick Belton. Now, Mr. Belton, who was at this time residing in a hunting-box in the shires, which he had taken for the winter months, and who was in the habit of inviting fellow-sportsmen to dine with him pretty frequently, was, like many other young men, averse to being chaffed. He had to stand a good deal of chaff about this ridiculous dog. The Duffer refused to leave him, did not resent being kicked out of the room, insisted upon sleeping at his bedroom door, and, when he was out hunting, howled without intermission until his return. Dick Belton was a good-humored fellow, but of course he was annoyed by a method of treatment which has been found annoying by all human beings from the beginning of time. However, he submitted to it more or less uncomplainingly for a good many weeks, and doubtless his patience would have held out even longer, but for a most vexatious incident which occurred at the very end of the season.

In all the world, perhaps, there was nobody for whom Dick entertained feelings of deeper veneration and esteem than he did for Sir Brooke Scatterfield, the M. F. H., so that he was naturally much honored and flattered when Sir Brooke trotted over on an off-day to call upon him. This hale and well-preserved old gentleman, who was somewhat terrible when exercising his official functions, knew how to unbend in private, and, on this occasion, after inspecting Mr. Belton's hunters, he was pleased to unbend so far as to slap his friend on the back, calling him a devilish lucky fellow to be able to mount himself so well. Now, who could ever have supposed that this kindly and condescending act was liable to misconstruction? Who could have guessed that that idiotic dog would take it for a demonstration of hostility? Yet some such idea must, no doubt, have suggested itself to the foolish Duffer, who, without uttering a sound, promptly pinned the M. F. H. by the leg.

It was no easy matter to choke him off; but this was finally accomplished by Dick's strong fingers, and as, by the mercy of heaven, the old gentleman was wearing leather gaiters, the damage done was comparatively trifling. Nevertheless, it was a very disagreeable thing to have happened, and Sir Brooke was not quite as pleasant about it as he might have been. He said:

"Oh, never mind; only, if I were you, Belton, I wouldn't

keep those beastly curs about the place. They aren't any use, you know, and you never can trust them."

That observation decided the Duffer's fate. He received a tremendous thrashing, to which he submitted without a whimper—he who would yell if a lapdog snapped at him—and on the following day he was driven over in a dogcart to the abode of his late proprietor.

"Here, Markham!" called out Mr. Belton, "I've brought that brute of yours back to you; he's too great a fool for anything. I'll give you a couple of sovereigns for his keep and his license, but I can't stand him following me about any longer."

Joe Markham accepted the dog and the sovereigns, and Dick drove away—not, indeed, without some inward pangs of compunction, yet feeling that, upon the whole, he had behaved handsomely in the matter. Many a man would have been content to relieve himself of further responsibility by the simple but effective means of a charge of shot.

"Duffer come 'ome late'larst night, sir," remarked his groom, when he sauntered into the stable-yard next morning. "'Ad a bit o' cord round his neck—which I expect he'd gnawed it through, sir."

And there, sure enough, crouched behind the door, was the culprit, feebly agitating a penitent tail and bringing two pleading, deprecating eyes to bear upon the object of his adoration. The poor thing's eyes were not soft and eloquent, as the eyes of some dogs are; they were only two little round black beads, with ugly pink rims. Yet there was a look in them which, quite against Dick Belton's will, found its way to his heart.

"Oh, you abominable, useless, hideous beast!" he exclaimed, breaking into a vexed laugh; "I suppose you will stick to me now until one or other of us dies."

That such was the Duffer's fixed purpose seemed to be beyond question, and that he was able to give effect to it is perhaps not more surprising than other triumphs of unrequited love which have come under one's notice from time to time. He was a nuisance, of course; but Dick ended by accepting him as he accepted shaving every morning, answering letters, dining with wearisome people, and other inevitable nuisances, about which there is no use in grumbling.

When Dick moved up to London for the season, the Duffer accompanied him and shared his rooms in St. James's. The other dogs went, as usual, to the stables; but this audacious

mongrel refused to be contented with accommodation which was considered good enough for his betters, and, like all dogs and men who persistently assert themselves, he carried his point. Life is too short and too much occupied for struggles against obstinacy, and although one may not altogether enjoy being followed into the park by an animal who makes everybody laugh, one becomes accustomed to that, just as one becomes accustomed to being called "old chap" by men whom, from choice, one would rather not know. Before the month of July, the Duffer had made many friends by his general affability, and had done nothing to earn another such enemy as Sir Brooke Scatterfield. So long as he was allowed to go everywhere with his beloved master he was satisfied; and that source of satisfaction was not denied to him, because Dick soon grew tired of kicking him in the ribs and ordering him home.

At some point or other, however, the line must needs be drawn, and Dick drew it at taking this four-footed adorer of his out of the United Kingdom. It was toward the end of the season, when everybody was leaving London, that he received a pressing invitation from a friend to proceed to the Pyrenees and join a shooting expedition on the unfrequented southern slopes of that range. Dick, who was an ardent sportsman, and whose ambition was excited by the hopes held out to him of a shot at a bouquetin, readily agreed to this proposition, and at once made preparations for a start.

"Just keep your eye on the Duffer, will you?" he said to his groom at the last moment; "and you may as well chain him up for the rest of the day. He's sure to try to get on my track, and I don't want the poor devil to be lost. Though, as far as that goes, I don't suppose any dog-stealer would look at him."

He went away without bidding any formal adieu to one who had of late become his inseparable companion. Saying good-bye is always a painful process, either to him who says it or to him to whom it is said. Pleasant it can never be; so that those who omit the ceremony altogether may perhaps be credited with kindly intentions.

Dick Belton, as he settled himself comfortably in a smoking-carriage of the express which was to take him to Dover, gave a great sigh of relief. He was young and rich, and had many friends, which is as much as to say that he was not very sorry to escape from some of them for a month or two. With some modest self-approval, and with due thankfulness for mercies vouchsafed

to him, her effected that he had got through a London season without compromising himself in any way; and in mentally running through a list of those from whose society he was glad to be temporarily emancipated, he did not forget the most devoted and pertinacious of them.

"Thank heaven," he soliloquized, "I sha'n't see that beggar's ugly mug the first thing when I wake in the morning for some time to come! Perhaps, if I have any luck, he may die or decamp before I get back again."

"Dog-ticket, please, sir?" said the guard interrogatively when the train reached the Dover station.

"Haven't got a dog with me," answered Dick.

"Beg pardon, sir; under the seat, I think. I see him jump in while you was buying a paper at Victoria, sir. P'raps you didn't know as he'd followed you, sir," added the man, willing to make things pleasant for a defaulter who looked as though half-crowns were of no great importance to him.

Dick glanced hastily under his legs, and made use of an expression which is legally punishable by a fine of five shillings.

"Well, upon my word and honor," he ejaculated, "if this is not enough to make an archbishop curse and swear, I don't know what is!"

How the Duffer had made his way to Victoria station and had taken his place in the train was never explained. There, however, he was, apologetic and submissive, yet firm; and there seemed to be nothing for it but to pay his fare to Paris. Afterward, Dick was sorry that he had not sent him back to London, which, of course, might quite well have been done; but for the moment he was too utterly taken aback to adopt that obvious course. So true is it that the surest method of obtaining your own way is to take it.

As the Duffer had obtained his own way, it was only in accordance with justice that he should suffer a little for it; and, in truth, he suffered a good deal between Calais and Argeles, at which latter place he and his master took leave of railways. In French trains the accommodation for dogs leaves much to be desired; in addition to which he spent the whole journey in a state of deep mental distress, having no reason to feel sure that his master was performing it too.

He was, therefore, all the more overjoyed when Dick came to set him free from his narrow, dark prison, and even condescended to throw him a compassionate word or two. It did not take a

great deal to make the Duffer happy. So long as he was permitted to attach himself, night and day, to a man who at best treated him with disdainful toleration, he was perfectly satisfied, and asked for nothing more. Had he been more exacting he would no doubt have been thoroughly disgusted with the life which he now found himself called upon to lead, and which, indeed, was in no way suited to a dog of his build and habits. To trot behind the carriage up the high road to Gavarnie was all very well—a little tiring, still useful in the way of wearing down the claws and removing superfluous flesh from the ribs. But to cross slippery glaciers, to flounder in freshly fallen snow, to skirt the face of rocky precipices, where even a cat might have hesitated to venture herself—these were experiences of a very different kind; and that the Duffer faced them with no other protest than an occasional subdued whimper showed that somewhere or other about him there must lurk a vein of unsuspected courage.

“Come on, you idiot!” his master would call out to him if he displayed any inclination to shirk a difficulty. “You chose to join this expedition uninvited, and now you must take the rough with the smooth, unless you want to be left behind.”

Probably the Duffer quite understood that, and he may also have been aware that it had been in contemplation to leave him for a few weeks with the landlord of the little inn at Gavarnie. The first thing that Dick Belton heard, on reaching that high mountain village, was that three days previously his friend had been suddenly summoned to England, but that he hoped to return to the Pyrenees as soon as possible. Meanwhile, he was begged to start at once in quest of game, and was assured that the guide who was awaiting his arrival might be relied upon to show him sport. This guide, a grim, taciturn personage, Jacques Cazaril by name, began by objecting strongly to monsieur’s “bouledogue.” He said it would be almost impossible to get such a clumsily made creature over the high passes which they would have to cross, and that even if that feat should be accomplished, his presence would probably be fatal to any chance that they might have of getting a shot at an isard or a bouquetin. By far the best plan would be to let him remain where he was, and where monsieur would find him safe and sound on his return.

This advice, which seemed sensible, might have been acted upon if Cazaril’s employer had been in a good humor; but Dick Belton, who was something of a spoiled boy, had been put out

—in the first place by his friend's involuntary desertion of him, and, in the second, by certain criticisms in which the guide had seen fit to indulge with respect to his rifles and ammunition. He therefore replied curtly that he meant to take the dog with him.

Eventually a compromise was arrived at. In order to approach the haunts of the rarely seen bouquetin it was necessary to camp out in one or other of the lonely valleys on the Spanish side of the mountains, and Dick agreed that during the daytime the Duffer should be left in charge of the porter, who formed the only other member of the small party, and who remained at the place of encampment while the sportsmen scaled the neighboring heights. Those were sad days for the Duffer, and not entirely pleasant ones for the porter. A dog who howls from morning to night is certainly a most exasperating companion, and when no amount of blandishments will avail to reduce him to silence, it is perhaps almost pardonable to try whether a kick with a heavy boot will prove more effectual.

It did not prove more effectual—as a matter of fact, it never does—but the Duffer was one of those strangely constituted beings who seem incapable of bearing malice, and who are, therefore (justly, it may be) despised by the rest of creation. The porter gave up kicking him after a time, and did not repulse the friendly advances which he made after nightfall; while Dick was absent the Duffer was miserable and obeyed the voice of Nature by raising his own; when Dick reappeared the Duffer was happy again, and Nature prompted him to display goodwill to all around him.

Considerably less benevolence was manifested by his master, who was not happy, owing to his failure to come across any trace of a bouquetin. A fair number of isards he did succeed in bringing down; but then he had not come all the way from England for the sake of shooting isards, and he was inclined to be dissatisfied with the phlegmatic Cazaril, who merely shrugged his shoulders, remarking that it was no fault of his if bouquetins were not as common as sheep. And when, after various changes of quarters, the party arrived at the baths of Panticosa, this rather crossgrained guide was greatly displeased to hear that his employer had secured the services of two villainous-looking Spaniards, who professed to know of a district in which the evasive quarry was pretty sure to be encountered.

"They hunt a bouquetin!" he exclaimed, scornfully; "why,

they don't so much as know what a bouquetin is! What they would like to do would be to entice us into some out-of-the-way spot and cut our throats."

"Two can play that game," Mr. Belton observed, "and if they attempt anything of the kind, three of us will play it. You and I and the porter ought to be able to give a tolerably good account of those half-starved wretches, I should think. However, if you are afraid, by all means say so; I have no doubt that I can replace you."

To a suggestion so worded only one reply could be made, and Cazaril made it sullenly enough. He knew very well that, if it came to a stand-up fight, the Spaniards could have no sort of chance; but he was equally well aware that they would never risk such a thing, and he was certain that robbery was their object. "You and I," he said privately to the porter, "must take it in turns to keep watch every night. Once let these scoundrels catch the three of us asleep, and we shall be three dead men, you may be sure."

To be proved wrong is never agreeable; but what is much worse is to appear to be wrong when you are really right all the time. This was the mortifying fate of Cazaril, who could not find it in his heart to rejoice when, two days after the guidance of the Spaniards had been forced upon him, Dick Belton shot a bouquetin. To anyone conversant with such matters it was manifest that this piece of luck was in no way due to their knowledge of sport or locality, for their ignorance of both had been exhibited half-a-dozen times in as many hours; but of course there was no use in saying that to the triumphant Englishman, and Cazaril was fain to content himself with the eloquence of silence.

If Cazaril's nose was out of joint, that did not interfere with its snoring powers, which were at all times remarkable, and which might have kept his employer awake had the latter been less pleasantly weary. As it was, Dick stretched himself out luxuriously upon the hard ground, with his feet toward the bivouac fire, and was soon wrapped in a slumber more sweet and deep than any that those who slept in beds can ever hope to enjoy. He was aroused from it by a terrific yell, followed by a sound of flying footsteps; and then, before he had half collected his wits, he found himself fighting for his life.

By mere force of instinct he grasped his rifle and, clubbing it, struck down one of the Spaniards who had sprung upon him,

while at the same instant the long knife of the other was plunged sideways into the muscles of his back, inflicting a wound which he scarcely felt. In point of physique he was more than a match for his assailant; but the latter was wiry, active, and had a knife. The rapidity of his movements bewildered Dick, who was still half asleep, and who was again stabbed in the arm, while a blow which he aimed at the would-be assassin spent itself in the air and very nearly landed him upon his face. At his feet lay Cazaril, gagged and bound; the porter, who had taken to his heels, was already far away; and it is by no means certain that Mr. Belton would ever have seen his native land again if at this juncture an invaluable ally had not come to his assistance.

The Duffer, like Cazaril, was a heavy sleeper; unlike Cazaril, he had the misplaced confidence which all bull-headed dogs have in the integrity of the human face. Probably, therefore, he did not suspect foul play until he saw his master struck; but as soon as the true nature of the situation dawned upon him, he threw himself unhesitatingly into the fray. With one bound he landed upon the Spaniard's chest, and the next instant he had the fellow hard and fast by the throat. What followed can hardly be called a struggle, inasmuch as victory from the outset was assured for the right side, and, of course, it is easy enough to fell a half-throttled man. Yet even the easiest of victories is not to be won without bloodshed, and although Dick Belton could not accuse himself of having acted with any lack of promptitude, he had to see the Spaniard's knife plunged again and again into his faithful servant's body before all resistance collapsed. When he was kneeling upon the prostrate body of the foe he said, "All right, Duffer, old man; you can let him go now." But the Duffer still held on.

There is but one way of making a bulldog relax his grip, and this Dick was forced, somewhat against his will, to employ; because, however much a miscreant may deserve death, it is always a little embarrassing to have his dead body upon your hands. But the Duffer, poor fellow, did not require a great deal of choking, and perhaps it was not the pressure of his master's knuckles that caused him to give a long sigh and roll over upon his side on the grass. For some minutes Dick could pay no attention to him. He himself had lost a good deal of blood and was beginning to feel faint; also, he had to cut the cord by which Cazaril's arms were bound and utilize it to secure his prisoner. But when that was accomplished, and when a hasty examination

had been made of his wounds, and the craven porter had been duly anathematized, he remembered to whom it was due that he had escaped more or less unharmed from a very ticklish emergency.

"Upon my word," he exclaimed, "that cur of mine has more stuff in him than any one would have supposed! He's as ugly as sin and the biggest fool out; but I'll be hanged if I'll ever be ashamed of him again!"

Well, there was no danger of his being tempted to display such shabbiness and ingratitude. To live admired and envied is denied to all curs and to the majority of men; but to die nobly is a privilege which sometimes falls to the lot of the most humble and despised. The Duffer probably did not want to die—what creature that breathes does want to die?—but he accepted his fate without cry or complaint, which is more than can be said for most of us.

After glancing at him, Dick hastily snatched up a piece of burning wood from the fire. The red light fell upon the dog's glazing eyes and upon the pool of blood in which he was lying. He was still alive, but there was no need to possess Mr. Belton's veterinary knowledge in order to see that nothing could be done for him. With a sorrowful ejaculation, Dick dropped upon his knees beside him and kissed his head. It was the first time since the Duffer had come into his possession that he had done such a thing, and it may be hoped that this somewhat tardy token of affection soothed the last moments of its recipient, who wagged his stump of a tail feebly, and almost immediately afterward expired.

"It is fortunate," observed the aggrieved and sententious Cazaril, "that things are no worse. Another time, perhaps, monsieur will not be so ready to trust a couple of thieves. It is not for the sake of praising myself that I say it; but from the first moment I saw that they knew no more about game than that rascally porter, whose head it will be my duty to break when I catch him."

"Oh, you were right, and I was wrong," returned Dick impatiently; "you are welcome to that admission, if it will make you any happier."

Cazaril nodded. "We may call ourselves fortunate," he repeated. "Monsieur might very well have lost his life to-night; as it is, he has only lost a little blood and an animal who was worth nothing at all."

THE WHITE JASMINE *

BY AMALIA SOLANO



HE "Imperial Bagdad," the city of the powerful Caliphs of the East, was in mourning. The shops were closed, and the bazaars, with their thousand curiosities brought from far off regions, did not gladden the eyes of the passers-by. At the mosques, men and women, prostrated on the stone floor, prayed fervently to Allah; for the flower and pride of Bagdad, the morning star, Leila-Radyah, the beautiful, the daughter of the Caliph, was dying; dying slowly of an unknown disease; and all the science contained in the vast Caliphate of Bagdad, or the gold spent by her frantic father, had been powerless to bring back to her cheeks the beautiful roses of health.

All the men skilled in the medical science in Bagdad, Magi from Persia, Sages from Egypt, who had acquired in a wonderful way the secrets of medicine possessed by the ancient Egyptian priests, learned physicians from the Greek empire; *all* had tried their knowledge and skill on the Princess, and endeavored to bring her back from the shadowy world she was soon to enter; but after awhile they gave up in despair, and declared that only Allah, the great Allah, could restore her to health; then the Caliph, to whom Leila-Radyah was as the light of heaven is to the soul, bowed his head in mute grief, and with Eastern humility exclaimed, "Allah-il-Allah, it is fate."

One day when the sun was sinking in the far west, a traveller entered Bagdad through one of the gates which looked toward the side of the rising sun; a man advanced in years, his swarthy skin and bright youthful eyes contrasting oddly with the snowy whiteness of his beard and hair. His dress, travel-worn and stained, and made in a different fashion from the prevailing war-

in Bagdad, indicated that he came from a long distance. The man approached an Arab standing at a street corner and said with quiet dignity,

“Take me to the palace of thy master, the Caliph.”

The Arab answered simply,

“Come with me,” and the stranger followed on his footsteps.

When at the door of the palace the traveller dismissed his guide, and said to the guard:

“I wish to see the great Caliph; tell him that a ‘Wise Man’ from far away India has come to cure the Princess.”

The soldier took him to the King, for he had orders to immediately introduce into the royal presence anyone coming on such an errand as this.

With great majesty and solemn countenance, the “Wise Man” advanced toward the Caliph. When at the foot of the throne he stopped, crossed his hands on his breast, and without kneeling, bowed profoundly three times; then waited for the sovereign to speak.

“What dost thou want?” asked the King.

“Mirror of the faithful! Defender of the true faith, the fame of thy might and power has reached even to the banks of our sacred river—the purifying Ganges; also, of how thy daughter, the flower of Moslem, was ill and dying, and earthly science was powerless to save her from crossing the dreaded bridge; but I, O King! can save her.”

“How can that be?” asked the Caliph in wonder. “Thou hast not even seen her.”

“Thou hast said it; but the stars have revealed to me their secret, and I can save her from death. Take me to her.”

On a couch, surrounded by her female slaves, amid cushions and silks of Damask, lay Leila-Radyah, pale as moonlight; the two midnight stars which in health lighted her face were heavily veiled by her eyelids. She was supremely beautiful, even at her dying hour.

The Hindoo approached her couch, and with his hand touched lightly her forehead. She opened her eyes and closed them again, sinking immediately into the usual stupor.

Then the “Wise Man” walked toward the exit of the room and the Caliph went with him. The Hindoo walked by the side of the monarch, silent and thoughtful, and when they entered the throne-room, asked from the sovereign a secret audience.

Hastily dismissing everyone, the Caliph prepared himself to hear what the stranger had to say.

The Hindoo began to speak in a low, impressive voice, carrying conviction and hope to the heart of the poor father.

"It is decreed by Fate, that the Princess, thy daughter, leave this world for the one promised to the faithful, when four times the moon shall have shone full in the midnight sky; but Allah has left thee one hope. Only one thing can save her; and the remedy is as difficult to obtain as her illness is mysterious. Art thou ready to make every sacrifice for her?"

"Yes; if thou canst do aught for her, speak, and if she lives, I will give thee gold, and land, and slaves; I will make thee wealthy; more, even her hand in marriage thou shalt have."

"No, King, I ask nothing, and only wish to return to my country when the Princess is cured. Gold has no charms for me, nor woman any allurements. Her hand must be the reward of her saviour; for I will only indicate what will cure her, and a young, vigorous man must go in search of it. Listen to me, O great Caliph!

"Far away, in the west, in the region of the setting sun, is a land; the fairest land in this mortal world. Its name is Hispania. In this country the sky is always blue and pure. Its mountains shine like precious stones when stricken by the morning sun; soft breezes from the sea fan the leaves of tall, stately trees, and amid their foliage sings the bird with the flute-like voice, a song of love to the stars above. The ground is covered with a carpet of moss and flowers, with here and there a tiny rivulet crystalline as a diamond descending from the mountains, and making its way toward the sea.

"In this paradise of earth, cultivated by the hands of an houri, grows a beautiful white flower, exhaling a fragrance like unto that of the breezes of Heaven; if anyone can go to that far-off land, and bring this heavenly flower to Bagdad before thy daughter dies, then she will live; for its perfume means life and health to her. Have this fact proclaimed through all thy kingdom, and let those who wish to undertake the perilous journey go, and may Allah grant that they return in time."

Through all the kingdom the criers proclaimed the news, that if any man, however humble or poor he might be, could obtain and bring the wonderful flower from the Occident, he would have as a reward the hand of the beautiful Leila-Radyah.

Three powerful princes who loved Leila-Radyah started on the long journey in quest of the life-giving blossom.

The first, young and handsome Prince Ali, perished in the burning sands when crossing the Arabian desert.

The second, a nephew of the Caliph, Hassan, decided to make the voyage by water; so, on reaching the Mediterranean shore, embarked, and a few days after fell captive into the hands of pirates. He was set at liberty after paying a heavy ransom, and, tired of suffering misfortunes, returned to his native land.

The third, Ab-de-Rhaman, was a prince of the royal house of the Omnyades, a dynasty which had been overthrown by the grandfather of the present Caliph. Ab-de-Rhaman was young and handsome; Princess Leila-Radyah was the soul of his soul, and she also loved him, but the Caliph had sworn never to give his daughter to the young prince; but now, should he go and bring the magic flower, when the beautiful Leila rose from her couch she would belong to him, for the Caliph had promised her hand to her saviour and a Caliph never breaks his word once given to his subjects. So he started from Bagdad toward Hispania with his heart full of love for his Princess. Well he knew the perils and difficulties that he would encounter on the way; but what cared he for all the hardships he would have to suffer, if only he could come back to Bagdad in time and with the beautiful blossom in his hand?

He crossed the desert of Mesopotamia and reached the seashore. He engaged passage in a Greek trading vessel bound for Gallia and Hispania, but a tempest threw him on the coast of Africa. Nothing daunted, Ab-de-Rhaman continued his way on foot. He suffered hunger and thirst; he was taken prisoner, but he escaped, and at last, leaving behind the burning sands and barren rocks of the African soil, he crossed the narrow sea between the African continent and Hispania. That night the moon shone full in the midnight sky for the second time. He stood on the rock of "Jabel-Tarik"* and gave thanks to Allah.

Beautiful beyond description was Hispania. The sky was bluer than the Indian sapphires, and the ground was carpeted by bright-hued flowers.

The kingdom of the Goths was established in Hispania, and Ab-de-Rhaman saw that the women wore their faces uncovered. Their eyes were of the color of the sky, and their hair like sunbeams. Yet he saw no woman as beautiful as his Leila-Radyah.

* Gibraltar.

The people spoke a strange language, and could not understand him, so they took him to a wizard who passed his time collecting flowers of the field during the day, and at night looking at the stars from the top of an old turret.

The astrologer spoke to Ab-de-Rhaman in his own language, and it was like sweetest music to the ears of the exiled prince. He told the wizard his story, and received from his hands a beautiful pure white blossom with petals as white and soft as the silks of Damask, and a perfume like unto that of paradise.

The magician also gave him a box of sandal wood, of curious workmanship, inside of which the flower should be placed that it could reach the Eastern city fragrant and fresh.

How the Prince treasures his little casket, containing the wonderful life-giving flower. He thanks Allah, and then saying farewell to the astrologer, starts on his eastward journey.

Hardships, misfortunes are nothing to Ab-de-Rhaman; he has only one thought, to reach the Queen of the East, Bagdad the beautiful, before the moon has shown full for the fourth time in the midnight sky.

Night and day he presses to his heart his treasure, the sandalwood box, with the health-giving flower inside; and at last one day, Ab-de-Rhaman sees, with the first rays of the morning sun, the minarets crowned by the crescent of the queenly city of Bagdad.

He hears the ulema, that from the tall minarets calls the people to their morning prayer, and sees that the gates of the city are thrown open; then, taking off his tattered shoes, the Prince falls on his face and gives thanks to the mighty Allah; for to-day is the last day of grace, and in the night the moon will shine full for the fourth time in the midnight sky.

He enters the city. No one knows him, so soiled and torn are his garments, and his hair and beard long and unkempt. He goes to the presence of the Caliph, and, kneeling before him, says:

"Behold, oh great king! mirror of the faithful, son of our great prophet! behold, I bring here the flower that will cure the princess Leila-Radyah," and the Caliph asks in wonder, for he had lost all hope of ever having the flower:

"Who art thou?"

"I am the prince Ab-de-Rhaman," and the Caliph bows again his head, and says: "It is fate;" then, "Follow me."

Together they go to the bower of Leila-Radyah, and see her

beautiful pale face. Now she hardly breathes, but the "Wise Man" from India approaches her couch, gives utterance to some mysterious words, then places the white blossom beneath her nostrils, and calls her spirit from the shadows.

She opens her eyes, and the blood comes back to her cheeks and lips; then they know that she will live; but the beautiful white blossom, fresh and fragrant a minute before, is withered and yellow, as if scorched by fire.

There was great rejoicing at the wedding of Leila-Radyah and Ab-de-Rhaman; but after awhile the Prince yearned again for a sight of that beautiful far-off land, which was the image of paradise; and so it came to pass that he, at the head of a great army, crossed Africa, conquering everything on his way, and crossed again the Straits of "Jabel-Tarik," and defeated the effeminate Gothic King Rodrigo.

Beautiful Hispania was conquered and submitted to the Saracen rulers, and Ab-de-Rhaman was the first Caliph, the founder of the great Caliphate of Cordova, reigning many years in glory with his beautiful Sultana Leila-Radyah.

The wonderful sandal-wood box was preserved to the last of the Saracenic rule in the mosque of Cordova, then it was lost, but the jasmine was always considered by the Moslems, in Spain, a sacred flower.





FLEUR-DE-BLÉ *

BY CAMILLE LEMONNIER

IT was the eve of Saint Nicholas, and grand preparations were going on for the next day's celebration at a certain house on the market-place of the little village of Wavre, at the baker's, Hans Jans's.

Upstairs, in the large room with the two windows, over the shop, the light of a great fire and a tiny night-lamp glistened on the polished oak of the handsome spare bed, with its pink-be-flowered curtains, in which Jans' little daughter, *Fleur-de-Blé*, was lying.

Grandmamma Jans, from time to time, placed another log upon the fire, carefully turning over the blazing coals, and, push-

* Translated by Miss Favard, from the French, for Short Stories—Copyrighted. Illustrations by Minna Brown.

ing back her spectacles over the brown bands which she wore upon her white hair, she went softly to the bed.

"*Fleur*," she said, gently, opening the curtains. And the red lamp threw its light upon *Fleur-de-Blé*, cuddled down under the bedclothes, with only her tiny little arms and face showing.

Twice since the great tall clock in the shop had struck seven, Grandmamma Jans had drawn aside the curtains of the bed, calling *Fleur-de-Blé*, and the child had not awakened.

She kept hearing the tinkling of the little bell at the shop door, which rang every time a customer came in; and a great many customers were coming in that evening, for everyone knew that Jans made the finest gingerbread men in the whole village.

And every time the bell rang, Grandmamma Jans would wonder if it were for a six-sous man, or one for a franc. Those that sold for a franc had white-sugared hair and pink-sugared cheeks, while the six-sous men were nothing but dough.



Hans ought to have made some two-francs men, too, for there will always be people willing to pay two francs when their neighbors pay only one.

Madame Jans stood behind the counter, waiting on the customers and looking askance at the boys outside, who, with noses red and hands in their pockets, were gathered about the shop window, admiring the gingerbread men; while Jans in the baking-room, was saying:

"Come, boys! On with the dough! I'm going to make *Fleur's* man now."

And through the window of the little back room, Madame Jans could see Hans, with his bare arms, in his white blouse and white trousers, coming and going in the ruddy light among the baker boys bending over the kneading-trough.

He took the largest of the moulds, buttered it, poured the dough in slowly, and plunged it quickly into the oven. "Ah, *Fleur*," thought Madame Jans, "what a handsome gingerbread man your papa is making for you! There is not another man in all Wavre who can give such a shape to dough. I certainly couldn't have done better, being myself a baker's daughter, than marry Hans."

Jans, at this very moment, was drawing out from the burning coals a magnificent gingerbread man, smoking and light, which he detached from the pan with a sharp blow, and laid on a shelf sprinkled with flour. He was a portly gentleman in small clothes, with a mitred cap upon his head, a queue down his back, a cane with a bishop's cross in his hand, and pockets overflowing with toys. On his buckled shoes there was a scroll, and printed on it these words, "Saint Nicholas."

In his rapture at the sight, the first baker-boy clapped his hands to his nose, and the second slapped his thigh, and Jans, seeing them, said sharply :

"Oh, you dirty boys, how can you put to your nose and trousers the very hands you knead the dough with ? "

Then he put pink icing on the cheeks and nose of the saint, sprinkled anise-seed over his peruke, spread chocolate on his coat and currant jelly on his waistcoat, powdered the cross and cap with gold dust, and put a layer of white sugar on his hands and stockings ; then he called his wife and showed her his masterpiece, saying :

"See, Annette, the gingerbread is thick with citron, orange, and raisins. I wouldn't sell this Saint Nicholas for five francs, for I might not be able to make another one so well for ten."

Fleur-de-Blé awoke suddenly, saying in her soft little voice :

"Grandmamma, I smell something good. Has Saint Nicholas been here yet ? "

This little voice of *Fleur's* seemed like the last vibrations of sharply-struck crystal, when one hears nothing but a sound dying away.

"No, my child," replied Grandmamma Jans, putting the little arms under the bedclothes, "Saint Nicholas hasn't come yet, but he is going his rounds about town and that is what smells so good."

"Grandmamma, what makes it smell good when Saint Nicholas goes his rounds ? "

"Because Papa Jans is baking his gingerbread men in the oven. He has some six-sous men and some for a franc. Won't you have a little drink ? "

"Grandmamma," replied the child, "I have had a dream. I dreamed that Saint Nicholas came for me in my bed. And he had a long beard like that picture of our Lord that Godmother Dictus gave me. And I said, 'Good-morning, Saint Nicholas, patron of good children.' And he said to me, grandmamma, just

like this, '*Fleur-de-Blé*, I am indeed your patron, for you are a good little girl, and I like good little children. Come with me.' And I said, 'Where, good Saint Nicholas?' and he said, 'Come with me and play in Paradise.' Then papa and mamma and grandmamma gave me a pretty white dress, and said they would come later. And when I entered Paradise, there were little boys and girls there, all in white, playing. And they took me in their arms, and told me they were always at play, night and morning, and they had playthings that our Lord gave them, ever so much prettier than those papa gave me last New Year. And the little girls had dolls as large as they were, and that could courtesy and say, 'Thank you, madam.' Then Saint Nicholas kissed me, and said, 'Play, my child. I love you dearly. You shall have dolls, too, and they will say, 'Thank you, madam.' And then, grandmamma, I smelled something good and I woke up."

"Here is Doctor Trousseau coming to bid you good-morning, *Fleur-de-Blé*," said Grandmamma Jans, suddenly.

The doctor opened the door, and going straight to the bed, said:

"It is Papa Trousseau, come to see how you do, my dear. Let's feel that little pulse. Hum-hum-m, and now for the tongue. Your cheeks are flushed, little one. There's been some excitement going on. Ah, yes! I know now. Saint Nicholas' Eve. That's it."

He put his hands to the child's heart and then his ear, and his eyes suddenly began to roll under his heavy gray eyebrows, like the ball the men play ninepins with at "The Headless Rooster."

Just then Jans and his wife came in like shadows, one behind the other, on tiptoe and holding their breath, and Doctor Trousseau began to whistle softly to conceal his anxiety. Then, taking his hat and umbrella, he dashed off to the vicarage to let the vicar know.

Now, the vicar was very fond of the Jans's and used to dine with them often on Sundays in the summer.

When the clock struck nine *Fleur-de-Blé* awoke.

"Grandmamma, hasn't Saint Nicholas come yet?"

"No, *Fleur*. He isn't here yet, but he is crossing the market-place."

"O, grandmamma, let me see him go by."

"Be patient, *Fleur*. Saint Nicholas never gives anything to children if they see him on his rounds."

"O, grandmamma, I can hear little Paul out in the market-place saying that Saint Nicholas must be at Canu's house now, the butcher's—and little Maise saying, 'No, he won't come for an hour yet.'"

Father Jans, hearing them talking from below, came upstairs, and, having wrapped *Fleur-de-Blé* in a woolen shawl, carried her to the window, and drew back the little white curtain.

It had snowed in the afternoon and there were about three inches of snow on the ground. The houses in the market-place stood out black under their white wigs against the russet sky, from which the flakes continued to fall—as falls in May, under the shears of the shepherds, the fleece of the sheep. The lights flickered, and in front of the shops the lamps sketched in red on the white ground the squares of the shop windows.



But what *Fleur* looked at most of all was the great umbrellas of the market-women, who, in their warmly-lined wooden shoes, with their hands under their aprons, were seated in the middle of the market-place, at their stalls, which were covered with blue-and-white checked serge tablecloths, on which lay barley-sugar lions, flags of Our Lady of Hal, wooden-headed dolls, macaroons, shells from Durant, and spiced cakes.

And while the snow was dancing in little flakes that powdered the umbrellas and made the lights of the lamp-posts flicker, the children of the poor people, with reddened noses and with fingers in their mouths, watched, speechless, and turn by turn, the knick-knacks in the booths, and the market-women, who were blowing with great puffed-out cheeks on their earthen warming-dishes, from which clouds of sparks were flying.

At times *Fleur-de-Blé* could hear the shutting-to of a door down the street, and now a neighbor leaving his house on his way to the inn, or his wife in her wooden shoes, with her reticule on her arm, trotting along in front of the booths, after carefully locking the door; and at other times she could hear only fragments of talk floating on the evening air.

But the snow deadened every sound and made it seem as soft as velvet.

"I can see," she said, "old Lizbeth sweeping the snow from before her door, with the pail of ashes beside her all ready to throw on the sidewalk after she has swept it. I can see Mr. Onuzel, too, the pastry-cook, walking about with his hands in his pockets, and smoking his beautiful porcelain pipe—and he is looking from over yonder at the gingerbread men papa made this morning. But I'm very glad I've not seen Saint Nicholas, and now I will go back to bed."



Papa Jans put the little child to bed again, and kissed her, as he said :

"Sleep, my little *Fleur*. Papa is going to make the house fine now for St. Nicholas. We'll put the beautiful red rug with the black flowers in front of the fireplace—the one we hang out from the window between the two wax candles when Monsieur le Vicaire passes by in the procession."

And Grandmamma Jans said :

"Bless me, how could anyone help loving a child like that, who

lets herself be put to bed without crying, and who loves her grandmamma so."

Soon nothing was heard in the room but the light breathing of the child and the click-click of the knitting needles as they went to and fro in the thin hands of Grandmamma Jans.

Suddenly the vicar, with his three-cornered cap on one side, opened the door of the little shop and said to Papa and Mamma Jans, who were counting up their day's sales, laying the sous and francs each in a little pile of their own :

"Here I am, as you see. How do you do, Madame Jans? I've come to see if *Fleur-de-Blé* has put her little wooden shoes in the chimney-corner."

"Why! it is Monsieur le Vicaire," said Jans, taking his pipe

from his mouth and leading him into the little back-parlor. "Grandmamma Jans will be very glad to see you."

Just then the door of the room above was opened, and Grandmamma Jans cried quickly, "Hans, Hans!"

"Oh, yes, I know," said Jans. "*Fleur-de-Blé* keeps calling for me every minute to have me tell her about Saint Nicholas, the dear angel. Come up-stairs, Monsieur le Vicaire."

"Dear, dear!" cried grandmamma, when she saw them. "*Fleur-de-Blé* has just got up, and she wants to go down in the market-place. Your blessing, Monsieur le Vicaire."

Fleur-de-Blé, with wide-opened eyes, was gazing toward the windows with a vacant stare.

"*Fleur*," cried Jans, like a madman, and he laid the little child down in the warm blankets again.

Monsieur le Vicaire, turning toward Jans, saw that he was as white as the sheets on the bed, and that his hands were trembling.

Fleur-de-Blé gently closed her eyes and fell asleep, but her little hands, as transparent as a night-lamp in which a light is burning, moved idly in vague gesture on the counterpane.

"Courage, Jans," said the vicar, gently laying his hand on his shoulder. "Think of our Saviour who suffered the Passion."

But Jans, with haggard eyes, was looking at his child and did not hear him.

Then *Fleur* began to move her lips softly, as if she were whispering to someone on the other side of the night, and at last she said,

"I am *Fleur-de-Blé*, the daughter of Jans, the baker, who lives in the market-place."

She was silent a moment, and then went on—"Good-morning—Always at play—Dolls—Thank you, Madam."

Her voice was like the softest note of a violin, and while she spoke, a wan little smile was on her lips, which seemed like a little light cloud melting away in the night. Jans saw her pretty little arm emerge from the sheets, and she waved her hand slowly, as she did for a bow when she used to say her little pieces.

Then, after a half-hour, *Fleur-de-Blé* awoke again.

"Hasn't Saint Nicholas come yet?" she asked.

"No, *Fleur*," said Jans. "Saint Nicholas never comes before midnight."

"Oh, that is very long," said the little child. "But he comes

from far away, and his reindeer are tired. Papa, you must get an armchair ready for Saint Nicholas, and a smaller one for the reindeer."



"Indeed, I will," said Jans. "I'll let Saint Nicholas have the handsome armchair that stands in the corner—the one Aunt Catherine has when she comes to see us at Christmas."

And, at about eleven o'clock, Jans went down-stairs to prepare the Saint Nicholas gifts for *Fleur-de-Blé*. He had bought a large doll, with eyes of mother-of-pearl, blond hair, and a jointed body; and a cradle, too, lined with blue satin, and hanging from a crescent moon. He had paid fifteen francs for it all.

He put the doll in the cradle and arranged the doll's clothes in a large box—the silk mantle, the barege dress, and the rose-colored plush hat. And he laughed softly to himself, thinking of the joy of his *Fleurette*, for handling all these pretty things had brought back a little happiness into his heart.

He took off his shoes and went up-stairs twice in his stocking-feet; the first time to carry the plates of bon-bons, the second, to carry the doll, the cradle, and the box of doll-clothes. And he put them all in the little room next to that in which *Fleur-de-Blé* was lying.

And *Fleur* slept on.

"I want to see her when she gets her Saint Nicholas presents," said the vicar to Grandmamma Jans. "That is what I'm staying for."

But that was not why the vicar stayed. He drew his breviary from his pocket, and, his lips moving softly in an inaudible manner, he began to read near the little lamp. But from time to time the vicar looked at *Fleur-de-Blé*, and then he would say, in a half whisper, closing the book with his finger in it to keep the place, "O Lord, have mercy on these poor people."

When midnight came, *Fleur-de-Blé* heard a noise in the house, and, opening her eyes, she asked if it wasn't Saint Nicholas coming down the chimney. And Jans, who knew very well that it was the boys in the oven-room, said, as he raised his flour-besprinkled eyebrows, that he certainly thought he could hear the reindeers' hoofs. And he added,

"I'll go and see in a minute."

He put his ear to the door, with his head forward, as if he were listening attentively, and then went down-stairs with great, slow strides, and an air of the greatest mystery.

And suddenly, from below, they could hear great cries of joy.

It was Jans saying, "*Fleur*, my little *Fleur*, he has come! Open your little hands!" And when he returned, he was carrying the armchair, the one that Aunt Catharine used to sit in, and on it were the cradle, the doll, the box, the gingerbread man, and the plates of sweetmeats.

"Thank you, Saint Nicholas. Thank you, for *Fleur*," he called down the staircase.

And when the child saw the pretty doll and the cradle, her little lips broke into a smile, as a flower opens to the sun.

Then Jans showed her the dust on the armchair (he had put it there himself from his dusty shoes), and said, laughing with all his heart:

"See, here are the footprints of Saint Nicholas' steeds!"

Soon after, *Fleur-de-Blé* drooped her head like a stone-bruised tree whose sap is oozing away; and pale against the whiteness of the great pillow, with her pretty, sad smile still upon her lips, she fell asleep.

A heavy silence filled the house, the shop clock struck one, and a dog could be heard howling in a neighboring yard.

"Monsieur le Vicaire," said Grandmamma Jans, clasping her hands, "I fear that there is a great sorrow coming down upon this house."

"Grandmamma Jans," replied the vicar, raising his hands toward heaven, "we must think of God, with whom all things are possible."

And as the minutes went by the silence grew deeper and deeper about the great bed, where the darling of the household was asleep. Outside, the snow was falling against the panes with the soft rustling of a bird who wants to come in. And Jans, like a man in a fever, with his teeth chattering, repeated over and over to himself the name of his little *Fleur*.

While these things were going on at the Jans's, a bright, cheerful glow was lighting up one of the rooms in Butcher Canu's house. Dolls and wooden horses covered the big table, and everywhere were flags and pipes and drums.

Suddenly the good man, who was putting on his nightcap, said to his wife as he looked toward the Jans's,

"Indeed, it doesn't seem natural. I see shadows coming and going on the white curtain. If *Fleur* was as strong as our own little girls, we wouldn't need to worry; but she is like a bit of down blown by the wind."

In all the houses everywhere, in town or country, the little children of the poor and of the rich were fast asleep, dreaming, with their heads on their arms, of the toys and candies they would find on awaking.

Grandmamma Jans had let her knitting fall in her lap, and was dozing near the fire, her spectacles on her nose. But neither



Papa nor Mamma Jans thought of sleep; they stood in front of the bed with clasped hands, not daring to look at each other for fear of letting their tears be seen. And the vicar, with hands clasped like them, said: "*Fleur's* breathing is like the sound of a church bell as the summer wind carries it far into the country when it is about to cease."

The little child slumbered on so quietly that nothing was heard in the room but the crackling of the oil in the lamp and the heavy breathing of Grandmamma Jans.

When the good old lady awoke she was astonished at first to find that the vicar was still there, but as soon as she saw Papa and Mamma Jans on their knees near *Fleur*, she drew out her large-checked handkerchief and began weeping in it with the sobs of a little child.

At that very moment *Fleur-de-Blé* awoke, and, very softly, so softly that Grandmamma Hans, who was slightly deaf, could not hear her, she murmured:

"Good morning, Saint Nicholas."

And then still more softly—

"Morning, papa, mamma, gran'm'ma."

She slept till dawn. And as the day came, her life, like a chilly bird returning to the sunny lands when the cold winds blow, returned to the great light.

Softly the light went out. An awesome sadness passed over the old furniture so often caressed by her little hands. The ivory Christ on the wall seemed to bend beneath his cross.

It was the hour when cocks crow. The children of Wavre,

awakened earlier than usual, went listening at the door to see if there were any noises in the house.

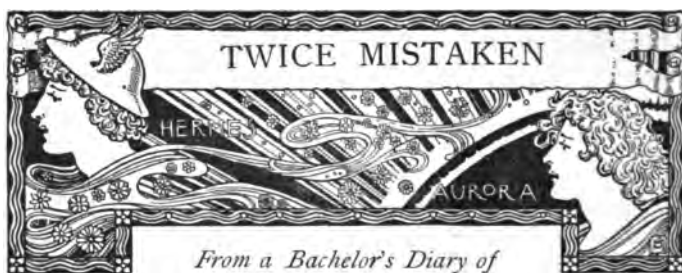
A cry rang out in the chamber.

"Ah, vicar!" cried Jans, throwing himself into the arms of the priest.

"Jans, *Fleur* has just entered Paradise!" replied the vicar.

And never from that day to this has poor Monsieur Jans ever made any more gingerbread men for Saint Nicholas' Day.





From a Bachelor's Diary of
Christmas Day

CHRISTMAS EVE—*Half-past nine.* Crumms comes to my room to clear away tea.

“I suppose, sir,” he says, as though it were a subject not admitting of a doubt, “I suppose you don’t dine home to-morrow.”

Both the tone and remark are unfortunate. I have not an invitation to dine out, and I cannot insist upon dining at home, as my arrangement with the Crummses provides for dinner on Sundays only. I had intended to put my difficulty to my landlady, who is good-natured and easily persuaded. I find, instead, I have her husband to deal with; so I close my book slowly and say, “Well,” as if I were thinking and not quite certain.

Mrs. Crumms would have waited to hear what I had to say; not so her husband. He looks surprised at my hesitation, and quickly puts in a clincher.

“Most gentlemen dine out on Christmas Day,” he says, staring at the wall some feet above my head; “and Mrs. Crumms always expects a holiday on that day.”

I feel after that statement the only thing to be done is to surrender gracefully.

“Of course; quite right. Oh, yes! I shall dine out, Crumms.”

“Very well, sir,” he replies, in a tone as if he had never raised the question, but was simply taking an order in his old capacity of hotel waiter. “Anything else, sir? Good-night, sir.”

Then Crumms goes down-stairs triumphantly, and I doubly regret having stayed in town, instead of going home, since I shall have to get my solitary Christmas dinner at a London hotel.

Christmas Day.—Mrs. Crumms this time brings in my breakfast. She has a large apron pinned over the front of her dress,

and her sleeves are tucked up, which mean, with her, cooking. As she sets out the things, she wishes me the compliments of the season. "And I hope you'll enjoy yourself, sir," she adds, "for I am sure you want a holiday, with your sitting here reading to all hours of the night."

She means it kindly, and not as a hint. I pay for my own coals and candles—for the former particularly, they being supplied by the Crummsés—so I thank her for her good wishes. I don't anticipate much enjoyment; on the contrary, I am at a loss to know what to do with myself, and heartily wish that the day was over.

One o'clock.—I see through the window, as I come back from church, that the Crummses are at high dinner. Crumms himself is in his shirt-sleeves and on his legs, and looks very much as if he were making a speech. There are cries of "Bravo, Pa!" and a great deal of laughter, both of which subside very rapidly as I knock. One of the smallest of the many small Crummses comes to the door, with her little cheeks and chin bearing unmistakable signs of pudding. She just peeps out to see who it is, and then scampers away, as if afraid of losing some of the good things in the parlor. For this want of respect to the lodger I hear her mamma rebuke her sternly, and then Crumms says, "Never mind, mother; nobody is naughty on Christmas Day." Rounds of applause. I go up-stairs, and "Pa" proceeds with his speech.

Two o'clock.—I ring the bell for some hot water, and Crumms answers it in full waiter's dress—white tie, dress-coat, and a low-cut waistcoat, showing a large amount of shirt-front with an elaborate frill. He walks into the room as if he is very proud of himself, and is more waiter-like in his manner than usual.

"Hot water to wash with, sir? Yes, sir." Disappears and reappears with the jug, which he sets down upon the table.

"Why, Crumms," I ask, "where are you going?"

"Out waiting, sir." He pauses for a minute, then becomes less majestic and more confidential. "I always go out waiting on Christmas Day," he adds, "and I have been to the same house for the last fourteen years. The gentleman and lady are a couple as came to the Crown Hotel the year I married Mrs. Crumms. We were both at the hotel, you know, and were just leaving to come up here. The lady took a great liking to Mrs. Crumms, and one day she said to me: 'So you and your wife are going up to London, Crumms. Now you must come and

wait at my house, when we want help.' And I have been there every Christmas Day since then—not missed one. I go on other days"—he says this quickly, in an off-hand manner, as if the other days were of no importance—"but they ain't regular."

"You go there and help wait, I suppose?"

"Well, I do most of the waiting; all of it, you may say," he replies. "They don't keep a man, and there are only the female servants. They ain't much good, not like Mrs. Crumms. She could wait, she could. She was wonderful handy. That's what first made me look at her!"

"And where do you go to?" I inquire.

"Bedford Square. Domville is the gentleman's name."

On the spur of the moment, just to see what Crumms will say, I ask, "Will you take me with you to-day?"

"You, sir!" he replies, in surprise. "Well—really, sir, I don't think Mr. Domville would—though I have known him these fourteen years, I am afraid he'd think it rather presumptuous of me to introduce a gentleman into his house!"

"I suppose so," I answer; the idea of the waiter introducing a friend as a guest at the dinner being certainly very absurd. "But I didn't mean that. Take me with you to wait."

"You! you go out waiting!" says Crumms, holding his breath.

"Yes, if you will take me."

"Well! I do call that a good joke," he gasps out. "Lord, sir, what an idea!" Then, dropping his waiter-like manner altogether, and becoming thoroughly human, he bursts out laughing.

I had only intended to chaff Crumms, but it strikes me that going out with him will be more lively than spending Christmas Day by myself, and I begin to hope that he will take me.

"I dare say Mr. Domville would have no objection to an extra hand," I urge, "and I could go as a young friend of yours, who is just beginning and wants to learn his business."

"Sir," pants Crumms again, "you ain't serious?"

"By Jove, I am, though," I say. "I don't know what on earth to do with myself all day. I should like to go out waiting."

Crumms' laughter, which is very prolonged and loud, and accompanied with a great deal of coughing and wheezing—for he is rather stout—brings his wife up the stairs, and finally into my room. She begs my pardon for the intrusion, and then turns to her husband.

"Crumms," she says, "you mustn't excite yourself. Remember you are going out waiting."

"Yes, yes, my dear; I remember," he answers, as soon as he recovers his breath. "But here is Mr. Herbert wanting to go out waiting, too."

"Mr. Herbert!" says my landlady, surprised in her turn.

"Yes, Mr. Herbert," repeats Crumms; and his laughter bursts out again like a smouldering fire.

I immediately began to enlist Mrs. Crumms on my side. She is a merry, good-natured woman, with rather a partiality to "wild young gents," as she calls them, and is fond of telling tales about the young fellows round Newford when she was at the hotel. There isn't anything particularly wild in my going out waiting with Crumms, but his wife seems to think there is, and it puts her in mind, she says, of Mr. Somebody at her old place.

"It is just what he would do, sir," she continues; "and I did think you were such a quiet young gentleman, Mr. Herbert. Law! Crumms," she adds, turning to him, "you wouldn't spoil a bit of fun like that, I know."

"But Mr. Domville——" begins her husband.

"Nonsense Mr. Domville!" she replies. "He needn't know; and if he does, why, he'd laugh as much as anyone."

"But you will be careful, sir, won't you?" says Crumms, yielding to the two of us. "You won't let Mr. Domville know. There isn't anyone likely to be there as will recognize you, I hope."

I satisfy him on these points; then Mrs. Crumms, with a due regard for her position among her neighbors, raises one nearer home. "It won't do, though, sir," she says, "for you and Crumms to go out together. The people about here all know that he is going out waiting; and maybe, if they saw you together, they might think you were a waiter, too." I don't see that it would matter if they did, but to my landlady such a mistake seems to represent some dreadful calamity; so it is arranged that Crumms shall go first and send a cab, and then wait for me in the crescent a little distance off.

Three o'clock.—Crumms and I are in the cab on our way to Bedford Square. The whole time he is either laughing at my going out with him, or nervous as to the result. In the latter mood he is almost piteous in his entreaties to me to be careful, and repeats over and over again his directions how to wait. We stop the cab at the corner of the street leading to the square, and walk on to the house.

It is a big house with a large hall. There is a window by the street door at one end, and a broad staircase at the other. The dining-room is fair-sized; the walls are painted and hung round with pictures. It is rather dark and heavy-looking, however, and the furniture is old and massive. There are three servants going about with trays and piles of plates, busy laying out the table. They stare at me as I stand by the side of Crumms, who introduces me as a young friend who wants to see a little genteel waiting, and whom he has made bold enough to bring. Then, as if that settled the matter, he goes off into business, and asks several questions as to the number and names of the guests. I notice that the servants all treat him with great respect, and he, in return, is condescending and polite to them. With me, when they are in the room, he assumes an authoritative air, and all the time he is very grave, and looks as if the cares of his position were too much for him. He smiles once when we are alone, as I hand him a jelly; and then, his muscles being relaxed, his old fit of laughing suddenly breaks out again. He cannot laugh aloud, but he laughs inwardly and shakes so tremendously that the jelly rolls and trembles to an alarming degree; and it is only by the means of promptly taking it under my own protection, that I save it from being shaken onto the floor.

“O Lor’! to think of you being here,” he mutters; and the next instant is gravity itself, as Mrs. Domville’s voice is heard on the stairs.

She is a middle-aged lady, and speaks in a friendly manner to Crumms, and is particular in her inquiries after his wife and children. He points me out as a young friend of his, who has come to help him; and Mrs. Domville seems quite satisfied, and goes up-stairs again to the drawing-room.

Four o’clock.—The dinner is ready, and all the guests have arrived. Crumms stations me behind the door, and goes himself to the head of the table, and I watch the people as they come into the room and take their places.

They are mostly middle-aged, like their host and hostess, and evidently old friends; for several nod to Crumms, and one gentleman is quite hearty in his greeting, and says it would not seem like a Christmas dinner without him. Mr. Domville laughs, and asks after Mrs. Crumms; but Crumms refuses to be thawed, and replies in a tone as if such trifling questions interfered with the responsibility of his position.

So far everything has gone right. Then comes a slight mis-

hap. Just as everybody is seated and silent, and Mr. Domville going to say grace, Crumms gives me a signal, and I step forward quietly to close the door. The movement attracts the attention of a young lady, who is sitting with her back to me, and she turns round. She evidently has not noticed me before, and her laughing gray eyes scan me with surprise. My face is a new one to her among the many well-known faces around the table. I suppose she thinks I am a guest, who has arrived late and just come into the room, and, seeing me standing there, and no one taking any notice of me, she says, courteously :

“Isn't there a chair for you?” Then turning round to Mrs. Domville, “Oh, aunt! here is a gentleman left outside in the cold.”

Mr. Domville, instead of saying grace, looks up, stares, and half rises from his chair, while the company all turn toward me. It is certainly an embarrassing moment; but Mrs. Domville comes to the rescue, and says, quietly : “It is quite right, Helen.” The young lady looks a little confused, and then, Crumms, in his nervousness, spoils everything by rushing up to her and calling out :

“He's come to help me wait, Miss Linton.”

My fair champion thereupon blushes very deeply, and begs my pardon; several of the guests have simultaneous twitchings of the mouth; Crumms looks half-angrily, half-apologetically at me; and at last Mr. Domville, in a shaky voice, says grace, while Miss Linton bends her head very low and hides her face. The next minute Crumms, serious and imperturbable as ever, removes the cover off the soup, and the dinner begins.

I believe I acquit myself creditably. Crumms declares that I did wonderfully well, and is inclined to think, I believe, that I have wasted natural talent by not being a waiter. At any rate, I don't spill anything over anybody's dress, or knock anybody on the head. I carefully watch Crumms for his signals, and, thanks for having been at a dinner before, though not in the capacity of a waiter, I have some idea of what ought to be done, and so remove the right covers, and hand round such dishes as ought to be handed at the proper time. The greatest difficulty I have is to keep my countenance, particularly when I hand anything to Miss Linton. She is so bright-looking, and it is such fun to see the sparkle in her eyes, and the way they drop if they meet mine, and a little repressed smile steals over her lips, that it taxes my powers to the utmost to keep from laughing. I feel

that I should very much like to change places with the young fellow sitting by her side. He does not seem to have very much to say for himself, and he examines every dish, as it is handed to him, through an eyeglass. His inspection is so long, and his nose is so close, that I have a growing inclination each time to bob the dish up in his face. For more than half the dinner he is silent, then he talks a little politics—stanch Conservatism—and Miss Linton immediately enunciates the strongest Radical principles, upholds woman's suffrage and their having seats in Parliament. This seems to overwhelm him, and he retires from the contest with a sigh.

Later on, he tries again, when the mince pies are being handed round.

"Will you have a happy-month?" he asks, with a faint smile, which disturbs his eyeglass and brings it down into his lap. He readjusts it slowly, and, not trusting himself to repeat the joke, asks to have some mince pie.

"No, thank you; I never eat them," she replies.

"Have you never tasted them?" he says, frowning as if he were a barrister cross-examining a witness, but probably because his glass gives a premonitory slip.

"Oh, yes; I have tasted them, but I don't care about them."

He has no comment to make upon her reply, and he helps himself in silence.

Six o'clock.—Crumms and I solemnly put on the wine and the glasses, push the dessert-dishes a little one way or the other, and leave the room.

"Bravo!" whispers Crumms when we are in the hall. "Bravo, sir! With a little teaching you'd make a capital waiter. And Miss Linton mistaking you for a gentleman, too. What a joke! At least," he adds, as if he suddenly feels that he has made rather a mistake himself, "of course, that is what you are, and a gent is always a gent, I say. But you understand, sir. It was so ludicrous."

"Perfectly. I understand, Crumms. What are you going to do now?"

"Well, sir," he says, coming a little nearer, "I generally have something in the housekeeper's room. Maybe you wouldn't like that, though we should be quite alone."

As I want something to eat, and am not particular where I get it, I follow Crumms down-stairs into the kitchen. The servants there are busy washing up the plates and dishes, amid a

general smell of dinner and hot water, which is far from pleasant. The housekeeper takes us at once into her room, where there is a cloth spread upon a table, and a row of the good things from upstairs on a kind of dresser.

"You are sure you don't mind, sir?" says Crumms to me, when we are alone, "because I'll wait till you are done, if you like. I am not hungry."

"But I am, and I shall not begin till you do," I answer, and we sit down together. The soup is cold and fast becoming a jelly, the fish looks mangled and unsavory—so I decline soup and fish. I find that having a little something in the kitchen, after dinner is over upstairs, requires training before it becomes really enjoyable. Crumms, evidently, has had the full amount of training that is necessary. For a man who professes not to be hungry, and who has had a good dinner a few hours before, he displays a capability for eating that is truly wonderful. I prefer the dishes that have not been touched upstairs; he, on the contrary, is on equally good terms with all of them. However, I get quite enough to satisfy me, and there is a novelty in eating one's Christmas dinner with a waiter in a back kitchen. The wine certainly is the best part. Crumms has taken care there shall be plenty of that, and makes a most liberal host with Mr. Domville's port and sherry.

Seven o'clock.—Crumms says he must take the coffee up to the gentlemen, and leaves the room. No sooner is he gone than one of the servants comes in, apparently in search of something. Whatever it is, she does not find it. She hunts about vaguely for a minute, and then stops opposite to me.

"So Miss Linton took you for a gentleman," she says, with a laugh. "How nice!"

"Miss Linton made an unfortunate mistake," I answer, gravely, imitating Crumms' manner.

"Well, I don't know about that," she replies. "There is certainly an excuse for her doing so."

This strikes me as being very open flattery, but under the circumstances it loses its point; moreover, the speaker is rather warm from standing over her tub of hot water, and very plain into the bargain. As I don't answer, she tries another subject.

"You are out of a situation, at present, ain't you?"

I nod.

"Where were you?" she asks.

"In the country."

"Notts?" she says, knowing Crumms came from that part. "And so now you've come to London."

At this moment Crumms shuts the dining-room door, and the girl, without looking further for whatever it was she had pretended to come in to fetch, immediately makes a rapid retreat.

"Been pumping you, sir?" says Crumms, jerking with his thumb in the direction of the kitchen.

"Trying to," I answer.

"I knew they would," he replies. "They are awful curious about you, them women. I wouldn't stop here too long now. There ain't anything more for you to do, and I can say you've got an appointment to keep, you know."

Acting upon his advice, we go up-stairs to the hall, and Crumms lets me out, shutting the door very quietly behind me.

It is a fine clear night, and I turn my face homeward, and stroll slowly along the deserted square. I go all up the long straight Gower Street without meeting anyone. By the university I see a figure advancing quickly. We pass under a gas-lamp, and both pull up.

"Herbert, by Jove!"

"Why, Roche, what are you doing here? Going out to dinner?"

"Just had it," he replies. "Been to see an old lady home."

He then naturally wonders what I am doing strolling along the streets on Christmas night. I tell him I have been out to dinner.

"They have broken up very early," he says, and then asks suddenly: "You haven't sneaked off to read, surely?"

This is said in a tone as if it were a mortal sin for a man to read for an examination on Christmas Day.

"That's right," he says, when I had disclaimed any idea of reading. "Well, you come home with me. My people will be very glad to see you. We always have a carpet-dance or something in the evening."

I accept readily, and go back with Roche to his house.

Nine o'clock.—We have cleared the room for dancing, and the first quadrille has just commenced. Not being able to get a partner, I am standing on the landing, when a carriage rolls up to the street door, and there is a loud knock announcing the arrival of some newcomers.

Mrs. Roche hurries down and meets them in the hall. I hear

her say as they come up-stairs, "You are just too late for the first dance, Helen."

The name quite makes me start.

"By Jove, if it should be Miss Linton!" is my muttered thought.

I half hope it may be; I half hope it may not be; and I haven't time to decide which half is the stronger, before Miss Linton herself comes laughing up the stairs.

At the very first glimpse of her, I instinctively draw back into the shade, and she and her mamma pass by without noticing me.

It seems very ridiculous to meet the same young lady twice in one evening, first as a waiter, and then as a guest; but there—it is done, it is a *fait accompli*; and Miss Linton and I are once more under the same roof. I wonder if she will recognize me, and I watch her with interest as she goes round the room. Sooner or later we must meet face to face; and the awkward moment comes sooner than I expect.

When Miss Linton reaches the door where Roche is standing with his partner, she stops there and talks to them when they are not dancing.

"Is there any lemonade, Edward?" she asks presently. "I want some, if there is."

"That's a bad sign, Nelly, after dining out," he answers with a laugh. "There is some downstairs. I would get a glass; but you see it is my turn. If you don't mind, you will find somebody outside, I think."

Roche leads off with the third figure; Miss Linton comes out upon the landing; and I move from the shadow of the wall into the light.

She gives a quick start with her head, and opens her eyes in surprise as she sees me. There is just a little tightening of the lips, a faint blush rises to her cheek, and then she asks me quietly to fetch her a glass of lemonade.

Roche had said it was downstairs, and I find it in the dining-room. I am rather glad of the excuse to get away and have my laugh out, for the whole thing is more and more absurd, since Miss Linton has made a second mistake, and thinks I am a waiter. It is a very natural error, of course, and, to keep up the deception, I put the glass on a tray and go gravely up-stairs.

She is quite composed now, and thanks me unconcernedly as I hand her the lemonade. Then we stand side by side—I hold—

ing the tray in both hands—till the dance finishes, and Roche comes out to us.

“Have you got your lemonade?” he asks. “That’s right. Now you want a partner for the next dance. Who shall it be? I am engaged till after supper, unfortunately. Oh, here! Let me introduce you. Miss Linton, Mr.——”

Instead of waiting to hear my name, the young lady puts down the glass quickly and looks indignant.

“Don’t be absurd, Edward!” she says, as she walks off.

“Some mistake, old fellow,” whispers Roche to me, and catches her up just inside the room.

They are so close I can hear what they say.

“What is the matter, Nelly?” he asks.

“How could you be so ridiculous as to introduce me to him?” she replies.

“Why shouldn’t I?”

“Why shouldn’t you! He is a waiter; I know that. He was waiting at Mr. Domville’s.”

Instead of looking contrite, Roche goes off into a roar of laughter.

“It is very stupid of you,” she says, half crossly. “It forced me to be rude to him.”

“What nonsense, Nelly! I shouldn’t play you such a trick as that, of course. That is Herbert; he is in the same office as I am.”

“You are not joking, Edward, are you?” she asks, quite seriously.

“No; upon my word I am not.”

“Oh, I am so sorry, then,” she says immediately. “But there was somebody just like him at the Domvilles’. What shall I do?”

“Come and be introduced, that’s all. I’ll put it right.” And they come together onto the landing.

“My cousin made a mistake, Herbert,” he says, while she stands by him, blushing deeply. Then he adds, laughing, “She mistook you for a——”

“I made a mistake,” she breaks in very quickly, coming a step nearer. “I beg your pardon.”

To save her from any further embarrassment, I ask her at once for the next dance, and it is immediately granted.

“By the by, Miss Linton,” I say, when the dance is over, and we are standing on the landing again, “you have never told me what you took me for. An ogre?”

"No."

"What then?"

Her laughing eyes look up with their old merry sparkle into my face. They seem at the same time to question me whether I shall be annoyed if she speaks the truth. She pauses for a moment, and then says: "A waiter," and presses her lips tightly together.

"Thank you."

"But it was quite excusable," she begins, hurriedly.

"Thank you again," I remark, interrupting her.

"You won't listen," she says, plaintively; "I want to explain——"

"That I look so much like a waiter," I added, breaking in again, "that it was quite excusable taking me for one."

"Oh, no! I didn't mean that, of course," she says, forced to laugh. "But where I was dining there was a waiter like you—so exactly like you," she emphasizes the word "exactly," and glances quickly up at me as she does so, "and I mistook him for a gentleman, and thought he was one of the guests."

"So you make up for it by taking me for a waiter," I answered. "Well, I think the waiter had the best of it."

"But it was excusable, was it not," she asks, "you two being so much alike?"

"Your mistaking the waiter for a gentleman? If he was like me, certainly."

"No," with a little stamp of her foot; "my mistaking you for a waiter."

"I can't grant that," I answer.

"Very well," she says, with a laugh. Then she adds mischievously over her shoulder, as her partner comes for the next dance, "I think my first mistake was the most excusable of the two."

"And I think the last by far the worst," I replied.

"Do you? Well, I am very sorry," she answers; but her eyes belie her as she goes off laughing into the drawing-room.

Fortunately I secure the dance before supper and take her down.

"You don't wait so well as your double," she says, as I hand her some mince pies. I had just put them before her for a minute, and then taken them away.

"I am sorry for that," I answer, "but then, you see, I know you never eat mince-pies."

"How do you know that?" she asks, turning round quickly.

"Your cousin has told me a great deal about you," I reply.

"Did he tell you, pray, that I never eat mince-pies?"

"How should I know it if he did not?" I say, with assumed simplicity.

She looks very incredulous. "He didn't tell you that, I know, though I believe you men talk a great deal of nonsense—as much nonsense as women do."

"You own that about women, then, and yet you want them to have seats in Parliament?"

"Oh, now, I am certain you must have been at Mr. Domville's," she cries, "for I never said so till to-day at dinner, and then only in opposition to my neighbor. If you were not there, how could you have known what I said?"

"Do you believe in the theory, Miss Linton," I begin, with a grave face, "of a person knowing, by a sort of affinity, the thoughts and actions of another person whom he has never seen, but whom, when he is permitted to see, he is at once, by fate, most deeply interested in?"

"No, I don't," she replies, laughing. "How nonsensical you are!"

Before I can go on expounding my impromptu theory, Roche comes up and claps me on the shoulder.

"Well, Herbert, how's Crumms?"

Roche has often been to my rooms, and knows my landlord, of course; but what demon possesses him to come at this moment and pronounce that fatal name, I can't imagine.

"Bravo!" cries Miss Linton, clapping her hands. "Now I know; you went there with Crumms."

"Went where?" asks Roche, in surprise.

"To the Domvilles'," she answers. "Mr. Herbert was there with Crumms waiting. Now, weren't you?" she asks, turning to me.

So, driven up in a corner, at last I make my confession.

"What fun!" she says. "Won't I laugh at mamma! She read me such a lecture as I came here. And I have not made a mistake after all."

"Except when you took me for a waiter, Miss Linton."

"Oh, that was your own fault. I am not a bit sorry about that now."

What Miss Linton did say to her mamma, of course I don't know; if she did laugh at her, Mrs. Linton must have taken it

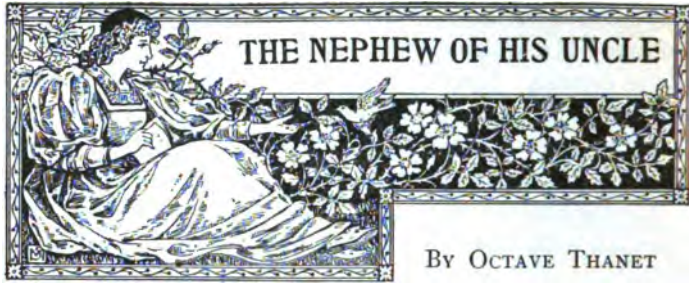
very good-naturedly, for when I go up-stairs after supper she calls me "Mr. Waiter," and the name sticks to me all the rest of the evening. Just as we are all leaving, she comes to me and invites me to a party at her house in the following week.

"How shall I come, Miss Linton?" I ask, as I put on her cloak; "as a waiter or a guest?"

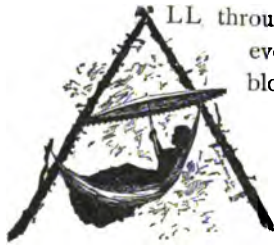
"In the capacity which you think suits you best," she answers. Then she adds more softly, "We shall be glad to see you in either."

There is a further note in my diary for that Christmas Day—something about Miss Linton—which, perhaps, it will be as well to let remain private. But about two years afterward, and not so very long ago, there was a wedding-breakfast given at the Domvilles'. Crumms was there to wait, and Crumms' feelings had overpowered him, and required soothing. From being usually calm, Crumms became unusually excited, and was with difficulty prevented from solemnly blessing the happy couple and making a speech to the effect that the joyous occasion was brought about by his taking the bridegroom out waiting on a certain Christmas Day.





BY OCTAVE THANET



ALL through the burning summer days, when even the negro lies in the shade and the blossoming cotton balls wave over the silent fields, the doors of the plantation store frame the same beautiful, cool picture. Enter from the dusty roadside, and the picture is before you; a square canvas of Nature's own painting, forest and stream and sunny sky. Green, fresh, darkly cool, with undefined recesses of rich shadow, it is the strangest contrast to the long, rank, dim store. When autumn comes, the picture changes; it glows with more vivid tints, the sky is an intenser blue, the willows mingle their gold with crimson and green of water oaks and gum-trees; the black river takes on emerald tints. But neither in summer nor in autumn is much attention paid by the store audience. Only one man of the score gathered in the store on a certain October day cast so much as a second glance at the blazonry of earth and sky.

This man was staring at the scene with eyes that saw nothing. He had a dismal medley of thoughts of his own, were the truth told, for him to contemplate. He was a young fellow, perhaps twenty, perhaps twenty-five years old; he was very clean; his hair was cut short, but was so curly that it waved out from the shears; his eyes were brown and restless; his features, as South-western features are apt to be, delicate, even refined; but the mouth did not close firmly, and quivered too readily into a nervous smile. He was dressed with unusual neatness in a dark blue suit and a white linen shirt. Anyone who noticed how carefully he brushed off the step on which he sat, before seating himself, or how he pulled up his trousers at the knees and

flicked the dust from his coat with a white handkerchief, would perceive at once that he wore his best attire.

He sat twisting his cap with fingers that shook a little. None in the store spoke to him, but every man watched him out of the tail of his eye, pretending some other reason for looking that way. And the tall, florid-faced man, sitting on the doorstep close to him, kept up a furtive stare at the back of his head. Occasionally he shifted his position, whereupon the watcher never failed to fling a hand back to a hip pocket and move something in the pocket up and down, while a visible thrill ran through the spectators. Naturally the muffled talk was all on these two men.

"Well—" it was an old man, loose-jointed, long-limbed and gray-bearded, who spoke in the languid Arkansas drawl—"well, that thar feller ain't got no call to be monkeying with his pistol the enjuring time. Ascue ain't got spunk to cut and run, even if he aims to, which I do *not* believe he does."

"If he was his uncle, Cap'n Long," said another old man, whose bald head shone in the sunlight, "I reckon he wouldn't be long."

"But he ain't his uncle. He's a timid-hearted feller, cayn't enjure to kill a chicken, I ben told. Say he ben waiting on Miss Willy Bartlett for three years, ever since his maw died, and ain't had courage gin him to ax her yit. Thar ain't nothing but his favor like his uncle; he pintedly does favor him. I admit that, Mr. Morris."

"And I admit he are a sorter pickblock feller, Cap'n Long; but I tell you he got his uncle in him, and it will shore come out some way and some day. Named aftyer him, ain't he?"

"Yes, sir—Dan'l Tyler Ascue; but owin' to his maw's hatin' Dan like pizen, she never called him nary name but Tyler. His paw warn't a bad man, but he ben twins, that's the trouble of him."

"Twins?" repeated Morris, absently, investigating the claims of sapolio on his clasp knife. "What ye mean, Cap'n?"

"Why, twins is different from other kinds er brothers; they set a heap more store on each other. Watt Ascue, he was the stillest, industriousest, peacefulest man you ever did see, and Dan was the devil's fust pickin's for badness and meanness and hell-daring owdaciousness. He was always a-fightin' and a-drinkin' and a-bettin', and the country was full er his wickedness till he finally up and killed a nigger. Case ben clear agin

him, and 'twas a right decent nigger, and the prosecuting 'torney, he swore he'd git him hanged. But I reckon you know that story well's me."

"We don't, Cap'n," spoke up several voices, and, nothing loath, the narrator continued, "They all taken him to jail, leastways there didn't be no jail then, but they put him in this here store upstairs, and Armytage, he ben the constable, he chained him to a big iron staple by a chain round his legs; but that there Watt, he got permission for his little boy to fotch him some light bread and sich, and there ben a file inside, and Dan lit out mighty briefly. Never did ben seen since. They 'rested Watt for helping of him—lawyers gave it a mighty big name that I disremember—and he taken a fever and died in this very store; his wife come over and nussed him. He did have a right smart of property, but lawyer's bills, and setting Dan up to git off, and all that, used it up, so he lost his farm. She went off and taken a little place, and she and the boy they did manage some way to pay for it, and they got right good credit. But the woman sorter lost her confidence in folkses. I dunno's I blame her so much. She taken it hard folks sided agin Watt, and she fairly despised the name of Dan Ascue, and she hadn't no kin herself, so ther they lived, and she kept the boy to herself. I don't guess she ever parted lips with anybody, less'n it ben Willy Bartlett, for her nussing her once through a spell er sickness. She did set a power er store by her."

"Did she die two or three years ago?" asked Morris.

"Three years it ben, this fall. And sich a ending, Lord forgive it; Willy Bartlett told me; she ben thar. Ye see she ben so wropped up in that boy—being the onliest living child she had—that she cudn't be satisfied no how to quit and leave him by his lone. Acted real onchristian. Kep' sendin' for doctors. Maintained she wud git well, onyhow, Lord's will or no Lord's will. The boy he were jest as funny 'bout it as her. He wudn't tell her she ben going to die in the night, like the doctor sayd; no, sir; he was all for humoring of her, and chirking her up. Wudn't 'low doctor to tell her, neither; got real violent when he proposed it. Last words she did say was, 'I feel like I'd got sleep, honey; don't you set up;' and he says, 'That's good, maw; I'll lay down and sleep byme by, tew;' and she patted him on the shoulder and she never did say another word er no kind; she went off in her sleep, and him a-setting beside her, gripping his hands tight and never making a sound no more'n a wild hog if ye stick

him. Minute Willy lifted the feather to her lips and let it drape and says, 'She done gone, Ty, you pore boy,' he jumped up like suthin' bit him and lit out, and she did not see him again for an hour, but then he come back with his eyes all swelled up, as still and decent's you want. And if you please, they didn't have nobody but Willy to the burying, and nare preaching 'tall."

The crowd agreed that it was a queer and impious way to act. "I don't know," said a man who had not yet spoken, but to whom every one seemed to listen respectfully, "I don't see nare use in worriting or pestering folks just because they are dying. Mrs. Ascue been a good woman; I knew her before she come to trouble; and I guess if there's one sin the Lord forgives easy, it is mothers loving their children too much."

"I'm with you there, squire," said Morris, "but say, what you all waiting for, swearing us out here to save time and then not calling the case?"

"We ben waiting on Mr. Francis," returned the justice of the peace, for such he was, "but I got word he cayn't come, so Miss Willy Bartlett sayd she would act as clerk, and I reckon we all better come in now. Mr. Massoner, will you and Mr. Ascue come into the office? All of you kin find a chair better fetch it."

Having thus opened court and summoned the prisoner, Squire Columbus Shinault walked ahead into the office, and settled himself in an easy attitude in the office chair. Though he took off his coat for further comfort (the day was warm, one of those belated, torrid days of August that sometimes stray into an Arkansas October), and though he sprawled one leg over the arm of his chair, the holder of the scales of justice was an awful personage in one man's eyes. Ascue knit his slim hands together, and thought of being bound over to the grand jury and sent on the first stage to the convict camp, with the horrors of which Massoner, an ex-convict guard, had been very liberal all the evening before, and his heart arose within him with fright. At a little table below the office desk, usually the refuge for yesterday's newspapers, now neatly cleared and impressive with legal cap and ink and pens, sat a young woman two or three years older than Tyler Ascue. Her regular, sharply-cut profile was bent over the pile of paper. She had a pale and handsome face, with imperious black eyes. Her dress was no better than a pink print, but it fitted her so snugly and was so trimly neat in every detail that poor Ascue thought, "How rich she is dressed!" His

timid eyes fell beneath her flashing glances; his night of misery and humiliation seemed to culminate in the hot shame he felt. He stumbled as he tried to find his chair. Thereupon Massoner righted him with no gentle hand, whispering, "Say, you better plead guilty if you so all-fired scared up!"

Tears of rage and pain rose in the lad's eyes, not unmarked by the small-featured, sallow, indifferent-looking man who swung his rough boot over the arm of the office chair. The court was opened by the remark, uttered in a conversational aside, "Well, seeing as you all ben swore out there, reckon we best begin. Where is Mr. Armytage?"

"He's having the hopper to his planter fixed; he wants you all to wait a minute." The reply came from the audience. The court nodded and occupied the time profitably by instructing the clerk in her duties. The office and the room beyond filled up with people, a few of them women. There was one baby that was audibly petted by everyone. Ascue heard his heart drumming in his ears. He remembered how his dead mother used to pray every night that he might grow up into a good and honest man; he had not thought that the time would come when he should be glad that she was dead. "And I never done a thing. 'Tain't right! 'Tain't right!" he groaned to himself.

Armytage had settled his dispute about the machine and was pushing through the crowd. Tyler could see his Roman nose and red hair against a green Japanese fan that he was waving to and fro. He was a man of stout habit and easily heated. He seated himself at just the right distance from the office stool, did one desire to convert it into a foot-rest, and affably requested the court to "fire away."

"Well, Mr. Armytage," said the justice, "you were sworn in the other room, so you can begin right away and give us your evidence. You lost a boat?"

"Yes, sir. Last night I went to get it to go fishing. I had a chain to it and a lock, 'cause the boys at the store used to borrow it. When I come to the bank it was not there, and the tree it ben tied to was chopped off."

"Have you got any reason to suspect anyone, Mr. Armytage? Was there any marks of footprints?"

"No, sir, there was *not*. But this man was at the store, and was asking for a boat, and seemed powerful anxious to borrow or to hire one, offered fifty cents and riz to a dollar, and went off mad when I refused."

"De he say anything?"

"No, sir. I told him his uncle had cheated me out of a hoss once, and I wouldn't have no truck with *him*. And he didn't seem to like it."

"But you say he didn't say anything?"

"No, sir. Just looked mad and went off."

This was Mr. Armytage's testimony, and the justice now assumed the invisible robes of prosecuting attorney, and made ready to cross-examine the witnesses. The first witness called was Daniel Tyler Ascue. Examined, he deposed (in a low voice with weak notes like a child's tones) that he lived two miles from the settlement of Sweet Sips; that he started out Wednesday evening, about three o'clock, to go to Mr. Francis' land; that his horse picked up a nail and acted kinder dumpish, and he didn't like to ride him, so he left him in the livery stable at Sweet Sips, thinking to get a boat from the store and come down that way by river, because he did hear the bridge ben down and there was a power of water over the road. Mr. Armytage would not lend or hire his boat, so he went on afoot.

Cross-examined—Yes, sir, he did see someone on his way to Mr. Francis' land; saw two men fishing, Captain Long and Mr. Morris; asked them if they had a boat to lend. They had *not*; told him of a man down the road might lend him one. Yes, sir, he did start to go in the direction where the man lived, but he changed his mind and went back; did not like to ask favors of folks was why he changed his mind. No, sir, his business was not with Mr. Francis; declined to tell who it was he had business with.

Here the clerk laid down her pen to remark, coolly: "Why don't you tell them it was with me, Ty? I don't mind," while the prisoner reddened up to his eyelids.

"I don't guess that p'int is important, anyway," interrupted Shinault's soft drawl. "If you ain't got anything more to ask, you read it to him, Miss Willy. Then he kin sign it, if it is all correct."

"Yes, sir, I am sure it is all right," said Ascue, eagerly, feeling that he should somehow criticise Miss Willy as clerk if he were to demand a reading.

"It is the law, Mr. Ascue," said the justice, gravely, and the testimony was read.

The next witness was Mr. Morris, who deposed to Ascue's evident anxiety to secure a boat, and to his departure in one

direction for a good distance, then his turning and running in the direction of Sweet Sips.

"Did you—" evidently this was a vital question, since Mr. Armytage dropped both his legs to the floor and sawed the air with his fan—"did you see the prisoner again, yesterday afternoon?"

"Well, no, sir. I don't feel like swearing I did."

"Didn't you tell your wife you did? Recollect you are on an oath, Mr. Morris."

"I do recollect, Mr. Armytage—that's where the skin's raw. Did tell Pearl I seen Ascue, leastways I 'lowed I did, but cayn't well and truly swear to it. We was coming home, and we seen a boat on the river. There was just one man in the boat in his shirt. He ben rowing mighty soft like, only 'bout thirty licks to the minute, I would say. Says I, 'Ain't that Ascue? Long, he's so nigh-sighted, he couldn't. Fust I 'lowed it was him, and was for hollerin' on him to stop, but then looked liked to me he had on a striped shirt, and he ben a chunkier man as Ascue, so we didn't holler."

"You cayn't swear it was Tyler Ascue, but you are sure it was him?"

"Well, not plumb shore, but nearly 'bout."

Long's testimony was of the same tenor, except that he had no opinion whatever about the rower, "being so near-sighted." Both men were ready to swear to the boat, which they recognized by its red and white paint.

During the examination Miss Willy had whispered to the justice, who turned to Long, saying, "What kind of clothes did he wear?" The witness "disremembered"; had not noticed that he wore a striped shirt—might have worn a striped shirt, for he was nigh-sighted and couldn't tell. Did remember he wore a black hat.

Morris, being recalled and asked the same questions, remembered that he thought (would not swear) that the man wore a striped shirt, and it was not a stiff shirt. Was sure that he wore a black hat. Shinault turned to Armytage. "Did you notice if your man had a hat on?"

"No, sir, he sayd he lost it; it blowed off; he bought one at the store." Armytage hesitated a second, frowning, then he added doggedly, "It ben a cap he bought, a white cap."

Justice and audience with one accord looked at the white cap which Ascue was crumpling in his hands.

"Anything else you'd like for me to ask, Miss Willy?" inquired the justice. Miss Willy whispered again. In response, two of her boarders, mill hands, employed at Mr. Francis' gin, were summoned and deposed that they were sitting in the gallery at Miss Willy's, and had seen Ascue come to the gate; he said that he had walked from Sweet Sips, and it had been powerful muddy in spots.

Mr. Armytage, who had resumed the alert confidence of his demeanor, asked if the witnesses noticed whether Ascue's trowsers were wet or draggled. Answered that they were not.

Then Miss Willy whispered again, and Shinault said, "Miss Willy, will you please take the chair?"

Ascue half started from his own, and then sank back. Was she going to turn against him, too, and tell why he was so anxious to go to see her? "Miss Willy, you had the lodging of Mr. Ascue last night after he was arrested," said the justice; "did you notice anything about him wet or muddied, like he ben wading?"

"No, sir," the answer came promptly; "but he asked me for a tub to wash in, sayd he turned up his pants to wade and taken off his shoes, having his best clothes on. His pants were crumply like where he turned them up, and I ironed them out last night. There was a little mud splashed on them."

"Miss Willy, you have known the prisoner, Mr. Ascue, for a number of years; would you believe him on oath, and is his character for honesty good?"

Ascue felt the floor rising at him as Miss Willy drew her tall form up to its full height and her voice rang through the room: "Yes, sir, I have known him, boy and man, for ten years, and I never knew him to tell a lie or do a dishonest thing."

"That's all, Miss Willy. You got any more witnesses, Mr. Armytage?" Mr. Armytage had no more.

Shinault brushed his fair mustache, and whispered with Mr. Armytage and Miss Willy. The room was so still that the whispers hissed loudly. Ascue sat crouched together, fingering his cap.

Shinault rose. "Well, Mr. Ascue," said he, "I don't 'low you taken that boat. Onyhow, we ain't got the evidence to hold you. Mr. Massoner, turn him loose. Mr. Ascue, I wish you well."

There was no applause. Ascue shambled up to Shinault, more wretched and timid-looking than ever, and muttered some

inarticulate thanks; he might have thanked Armytage also, had not the latter swung himself away. Then he made an awkward bow to Miss Willy, and went his way.

"He might have as much as said 'Thank you,'" thought Miss Willy, "but he ain't got a spark of spirit in him. I did right not to take him."

Massoner, Long and Morris were discussing the matter at the door; one sentence reached Ascue as he shuffled past: "I tell you, gentlemen, hat or cap, he done it; he done it just outer meanness to pester Armytage; that was pintblank his uncle's way."

Tyler walked home. It took him two hours. This time he did not protect his best clothes, but let the mud splash them. He was used to being apart from the people of the place; he had grown up a solitary, and did not know how to mend his lonely estate, but no one dreamed how keenly he valued the reputation for honesty and prompt payments that his mother's and his own unceasing industry and self-denial had enabled him to make. His credit was of the highest at every country store; Armytage himself would not have dared to refuse him goods yesterday—yesterday! He groaned aloud. "What would maw say if she knowed they all think me a thief—for they do still!" he cried.

When he reached Sweet Sips, he reclaimed his horse and paid the stablekeeper as quickly as he could. He thought the man stared at him. "He knows I ben arrested for stealing," said Tyler.

The western sky was reddening as he rode into his own land. Only yesterday morning his eye had rested with a sensation of pride on the trig fences and the tall cotton of his fields. He had admired his fine cattle. "I don't owe no man a penny, and if she'll say the word, I'll build on this fall," he had thought. Now he felt a fresh pang at the sight of each familiar object.

The house was a four-roomed frame house, painted lead color, but relieved by honey-suckle and wild rose bushes, which wreathed the lattice in front of the gallery.

A dog—a lank Arkansas hound—came bounding out of the wood, to nearly knock the man over with his exuberant welcome.

"I ben skeered she wouldn't like me, old man," said Tyler sadly while he stroked the dog's head. "Well, I needn't of pestered myself 'bout it nohow."

He walked up the neat wooden walk, which he had made for

his mother's convenience. He opened the door (there was no bolt or lock) only to step back at the vision of a slim, well-dressed man, who was bending over the dead fire on the hearth. Beside the hearth stood a frying-pan filled with slices of salt pork and some potatoes.

"Well, *sir*!" muttered Ascue. His words were no particular address to the stranger, but merely the familiar Southwestern ejaculation of surprise. The man got to his feet, but leisurely. He put both arms akimbo, and slowly lifted his lip from his teeth, at the same time inclining his head to one side—an action that had in it an indescribable kind of dare-devil coolness.

"I expect you are Daniel Tyler Ascue," said he then.

"Yes, sir," answered Tyler mechanically.

"And I am you' uncle Dan; reckon you didn't expect to see me."

"No, sir." Tyler's voice was a little husky; he made no move to welcome his unexpected guest. Dan Ascue shrugged his shoulders and made a grimace. All this while Tyler's eyes were taking in the other's figure, his blue cutaway coat, his silk shirt, his sparkling studs, his gold watch chain. He was not experienced enough to notice the tawdry air of this finery; he thought of his father's hard earnings squandered to save this sleek ruffian's skin.

"Well, here I am, and I want you to help me," said his uncle.

"I knowed that when I seen you," said Ascue.

"Now you're talking. Well, boy, I shot a man in St. Louis and had to light out. There was a detective after me, and I jumped the train and cut across country to Sweet Sips. There I taken a boat and rowed up here and struck across to your farm, to git you to lend me a hoss to ride to the railroad. Ben meaning to hunt you up for a long spell."

"You taken that boat at Sweet Sips—off a tree that you cut?"

"Yes. How the devil did you know?"

"Because," answered Ascue grimly, "I jest come back from there and they ben trying me for stealing that boat."

The man burst into a roar of laughter. "Is that the kind of name ye got in these pyarts, hey?"

Ty flushed hotly. "I ain't got no name 'cept from being your nephew; I ben acquitted."

"Well, 'tain't no differ; where's the hoss?"

"Where'd you leave the boat?"

"Drewed it up on the bank. Say, boy, make haste and get me something to eat."

Ascue did not move; he set his teeth down on his under lip and stared at Dan.

"D—— it, how you favor your mother!" snorted Dan.

"Folks 'low I favor you."

"Much you favor me. Well, have you looked at me long enough?"

"Yes, sir," said Tyler, and turned on his heel. He went to the hearth, and as his stooping shoulders bent over the fire-dogs, Dan Ascue imagined that he heard a smothered sound like a groan. Tyler was a handy cook of the primitive type. In a marvelously short time he had some baking-powder biscuit steaming beside a pot of coffee and a plate of fried ham and eggs on the oilcloth-covered table. While he prepared the meal, Dan Ascue walked about the room, casting occasional sharp glances outside, where the summer day was darkening and the great gum-trees cast longer shadows. He peered into Tyler's pantry and grinned sardonically at the tin cans turned into cooking or storing utensils, at the tidy order of the provisions and the wire screens over the windows and doors.

"What's in that jug?" said the fugitive, as he drew his legs under the table for his meal; "fetch it out, cayn't ye?"

Silently Tyler brought the jug to the table and poured a little into the cup pushed forward, Dan remarking; "Expect it's fifty-rod poison—well, holy smoke!"

"Is there a fly in it?" exclaimed Tyler, with his first symptoms of animation. "Them molasses drors flies like——"

"Ain't ye got nare *whiskey* 'bout the place?"

"No, sir; I don't drink."

"Ay, ye don't, hey? Well, give us a bite of 'baccy. You don't say ye don't smoke, neither?"

"No, sir; I don't smoke. There ain't no 'baccy here, but I got some gum I kin let you have."

"Oh, Lord," moaned Dan, in a world-weary way. "Is there anything like a man you *kin* do?"

"Yes, sir," answered Tyler, in the same jaded, melancholy tones; "yes, sir, there is one thing—I kin *fight*; and if you want me to git you outer this here trouble, you got to set down and clear me."

"Clear you?" Dan was grinning.

"Yes, sir, clear me. You got to write—I'll give ye the paper

and pencil—as how you stole that boat and not me, and as how Mr. Armytage kin have it by coming up to where you left it. I'll see that he gits the letter.”

“Kinder resky for me.”

“It ain't resky for you, and I don't care if 'tis; you got to do it.”

“Say, boy, let 'er up a little; what you aim to do if I won't?”

It may have been the suddenness of the onslaught, for the young man was on him like a brand flung out of a fire; all at once he was tripped and on the floor, with a hand on his throat and a knife point pricking his skin, and a voice in his ear: “I'll dig this here knife into you if you move, and I'll bind you, hand and foot, and go out and give you over to the constable, kin or no kin, by gum!”

“What you so all-fired anxious 'bout that boat? You told me you been acquitted.”

“So I be, but only 'cause there warn't 'nuff evidence to hold me, and they all 'low I done it, and hadn't it ben for Miss Willy Bartlett a-pleading of my cause and a-holping of me, the squire most like would of sent me up. Will you do like I tell ye, or——”

Instead of struggling, the man on the floor burst into a peal of laughter. “Let me up,” says he, “let me up; hang it, but I seen the biggest bluff I ever did see; why, d—— it all, Ty, I taken you for a regular chump, and you got some blood in you, after all. Let me up, and git out you' paper.”

All the while Tyler was arranging the writing material he kept chuckling to himself. “Declare to you, boy, I felt plumb cut up to see you such a mis'able, chicken-hearted critter like you seemed.” Then he added, with an approach to feeling in his voice, “Your paw was the best friend I ever did have, and——” he swore a great oath—“he ben the only friend or pardner I ever did have didn't save his own hide ruther'n help *me*. I ain't forgot, neither, the way *you* done me in that cussed jail. I'll give ye a boost with you' girl, if I kin. Old man Bartlett's daughter, I reckon?”

“Yes, sir, but—I ain't got no chance to marry her.”

“Why not?” The outlaw was scribbling with a rapidity that awakened Tyler's keen admiration.

“'Cause she told me so yistiddy.”

“And what has she got agin my nephew, I would like to know?”

"Nothin', only—only—" he turned red to his eyelids, and the tears glittered on his eyelashes, "she said she liked me, but she—there warn't nuthing of the man 'bout me, and she wanted to marry a *man* when she married."

"Jest so. You fooled her like you fooled me. Well, boy, you got to reform. You got to learn to smoke and chew——"

"No, sir, women folks don't like chewing; it messes and gums too much."

"And drink——"

"I done promised maw I never *would* get drunk; reckon we got to give that up."

"Well," the outlaw looked troubled, then his face brightened, "ain't there nobody ye could *fight*? A woman will forgive most anything to a man kin fight. Laws, I used to walk up and down in front of that rotten store of Sweet Sips when I ben full, a-hollerin' with all the power of my voice, 'I'm the best man ever did make a track in Sweet Sips!' and there warn't a feller dast take me up most days. Oh, there was no flies on me them times." He sighed pensively. "Them was pleasant times, after all, though I didn't know what champagne was, and a three-card-monte feller could have skinned me first try. Well, ain't there somebody you could fight?"

"There's Massoner; I'd like to fight him."

"Little feller? You' light-weight; better pick on one of you' class."

"No, sir, he are six feet and heavy. Used to be a convict guard."

"'Fraid you cayn't overcraw him, boy."

"I kin try; onct I had a wrestle with a wild hog, and I stuck it and killed it."

"Kin you lick him with your fists? This country is so blamed peaceable now they make it uncomfortable for a gentleman if he so much as fights with knucks."

"I kin try," said Tyler mildly. "There was a feller taken sick with the breakbone fever and I taken care of him, 'cause they was fixing to turn him out of the hotel at Sweet Sips, and he was a right kind feller and learned me how to box—that's what he called it."

"I 'lowed somebody showed ye that trick that sent me to the floor. Say, if you will lay out that convict guard and drop me a postal to Memphis, boy, I'll sent you the *dandiest* suit of clothes."

"Yes, sir," said Tyler.

That evening he drove his uncle to the nearest railway station in time for the midnight train. He felt that it was a sort of disloyalty to his mother that he should shake hands with him before they parted and wish him well in heart as well as in words; but he said to himself, "Well, I never did understand paw's being so sot on holping of him before; I do now," and he sighed.

Miss Willy Bartlett did not see him for days, and it is possible that his unobtrusive presence was missed. "I will say for him," she said to Aunt Tilly, her helper, while they stirred the muscadine jam in the great iron kettle in the front yard, "that he was an awful clean man, and made less mess about the house than ary man I ever did see."

Sometimes she wondered what he was doing, keeping himself so close. If she could have looked into his cabin and seen Tyler, with a pale face and an expression of dogged disgust, puffing away at a pipe, she would have understood him less than ever.

She was the first to hear of Mr. Armytage's recovery of the boat and of the note. The note said simply that the writer had taken the boat to borrow it and that Mr. Armytage could find it some six miles up the river, near Sweet Sips.

But it was Miss Willy who pointed out to her boarders how completely this cleared Tyler. "For how could he be sailing that boat six miles up the river when he was at this place three miles down from Sweet Sips?" argued she.

But suspicion is easier raised than laid, having a ghostly facility of walking without legs, so that, though the latter be knocked from under it, it can still get about. Cavilers remained to assure Miss Bartlett that Tyler could have concealed the boat near Mr. Francis' place and then gotten into it and rowed up the river and written the note himself. Miss Willy had plenty of opportunities to discuss the question. Perhaps it was two weeks before Tyler appeared in the store at Mr. Francis' place. He came to buy some "gears for his mules," and he was as meek, dejected, and tidy as ever. He could hear a faint buzz of low talk going on about him, but nobody paid him any attention; in fact, the only person that spoke to him (Miss Willy, passing through the store, nodded) was Squire Shinault; he held out a cordial hand, and asked if his cotton had the sore shin, and if he 'lowed to gin at Mr. Francis'. Miss Willy, at the other end of the store, could see how red Tyler grew and how his hands

shook. "Oh, ain't he a chicken-hearted man," she muttered impatiently, marching away with her head in the air. Massoner was in the store; he paid no attention to Tyler, not so much as looking at him. Tyler hung around and approached several groups with plain intent to join in the conversation, but each little cluster dissolved as soon as he joined it, leaving him alone.

"Nobody wants to have any truck with me," thought Tyler disconsolately. "I cayn't go up to a feller and hit him 'cause he won't speak to me; it ain't so easy to git a fight." He waited a little while, then he walked to the door and nailed up a placard, upon which more than one evening had been spent. Not a word but had been tested by the dictionary. The card said:

WHEREAS, There is talk in this town that I, Daniel Tyler Ascue, have stolen a boat from Mr. Armytage of Sweet Sips, and I did not do it, and I never did steal nothing on earth since I was born, therefore, I, Daniel Tyler Ascue, call you all a liar, and I am ready to fight with fists or any other weapons any body who says I stole the said boat.

DANIEL TYLER ASCUE.

"I reckon that will fetch 'em," says Tyler grimly. And it did. A little crowd of laughing and jeering men was soon gathered about the door. To this crowd strides Tyler. "Is any on you eer gentlemen aiming to take it up?" says he.

The crowd stares; Massoner bids Tyler go home and quit making a fool of himself.

"Quit you'self!" bawls Tyler, and hits Massoner in the face.

That was a fight that any renter on Mr. Francis' land can describe to this day. There was no ring, there were no seconds and no rounds, but the audience had its fill of excitement, and perhaps no man of them all was more bewildered than Massoner, when, in spite of his mad-bull rushes and his big fists, he found himself in a breathless and battered heap on the ground. "Have you got enough?" piped Ascue's mild tenor above; "air you convinced I didn't steal that boat?"

"I reckon I got conviction 'nuff for one while," muttered the prison guard, as he fell back after a fruitless attempt to sit up; "my head has about a million opinions of its own. Well, shake, pardner; I never thought ye had it in you."

"I'm real sorry I hurted you," said Tyler, all his passion dissipated by the other's good humor; "now, if ary other gentleman is waiting to argy with me——"

But no other gentleman was anxious to dispute the point, and

Tyler took out his pipe and, having filled it, went his way, past his sweetheart's house, puffing valiantly.

"It's powerful nasty," thought the smoker, "but there's so few things like a man I kin do, have to stick to them I kin."

Before Christmas week the melancholy Tyler had fought four detractors of his name, thrashing them all and going about with a black eye and a cut lip, which decorations were the more noticeable for his new Memphis clothes. He always had his boots blacked, and he wore a dazzling necktie and a watch. And never did Miss Willy meet him that there was not a pipe between his lips. She could have wept at the change.

"I tell you, Miss Willy," said Morris, "I tell you that boy's got his uncle in him, and it is coming out fast. Say, he carries a revolver, and he goes to festivals and dances. Fought Billy Foster t'other day, for nothing on earth 'cept he was licking his own steer. It is terrible young fellows will go to the devil that way, terrible!"

Christmas was now approaching apace. Purple twigs, relieved only by the red swamp berries or clumps of mistletoe, replaced all the dazzling pageantry of the woodlands. The store was gay with holiday glassware and jewelry and toys.

Miss Willy had made her Christmas mincemeat, and all her boarders knew that, besides plum pudding, her Christmas dinner would have oranges and nuts and candy and a famous bowl of egg-nogg. In fact, Miss Willy was planning to keep her boarders at home Christmas Day, and trying to outbid a certain tavern of ill-repute in the hills. By common consent, Christmas week on a Southwestern plantation is given over to riotous drinking. There was a distillery in the hills, near Old Man Hammer's. A party was made up to go out for a dance at the tavern. "We'll see if my boys like the Hammer girls' green biscuit and heavy cake better'n my cooking, or if they'd rather fill themselves with mean whiskey, and r'ar and charge and fight like mad dogs, or have a plumb good dinner and a nice dance and music," said Miss Willy to her helper.

"Do say Mist' Tyler Ascue be gwine wid dem?" said Aunt Tilly. "Miss Willy, how come dat boy git so changed up? Say, he gwine on most's bad like his uncle; and you 'member how he did uster pack up water and help wash dishes, and de stillest man on airth, 'cept when he'd be singin'. 'Member how he'd sing 'Home, Sweet Home?'"

"Tilly, the candy's boiling over," cried Miss Willy, and no

more was said about Tyler Ascue. But the next night, Squire Shinault, sitting in his comfortable "best room," with his violin in his arms and his foot busy with a cradle while he soothed the baby, was aware of a horsewoman approaching. Dismounting, she showed the tall and vigorous shape of Miss Willy Bartlett.

The Squire greeted her with the hospitality of the region. "Mrs. Shinault had gone with the boy to visit on a neighbor, and he was minding baby." Miss Willy sat down to wait, and began with various inquiries, in response to which Shinault, of course, asked the question: "What's going on your way?"

"Nothing, 'cept Tyler Ascue's had another fight. I am worried about that boy, Squire, there's such a heap of talk about him. They all say his uncle has broke out in him. I heard he was going with the boys to the dance at Hammer's."

"Shucks! They ain't no harm in the boy," said Shinault. "He don't drink; never did. I don't believe it." Shinault noticed that Miss Willy, who had been pushing at the fingers of her gloves, let her hands fall in her lap with a soft breath. "That boy, though, Miss Willy," he said, slowly, "needs somebody to take care on him. I'll tell you something I know. Some way he has met up with his uncle, for he went to Memphis to visit him. He needs somebody to care for him. His maw done it while she lived, but now——" Miss Willy reached over to rock the cradle; she thought the baby "was fixin' to cry," she said. It took a considerable time to be sure that the infant was quietly sleeping, and by that time Miss Willy seemed to have forgotten her solicitude for Tyler. She talked of the cotton crop, and the price, and the new gin at Sweet Sips, and the Christmas tree at the schoolhouse. And she went away without being able to wait for Polly Shinault, to whom she left her love. As she rode away, she heard Shinault playing "Home, Sweet Home."

"And to-morrow's Christmas," thought Miss Willy, "and me without a soul of kin nearer than Little Rock or the graveyard. And it's the same with him—except that pesky uncle. I know they will try to get him to join their wicked parties and festivals, now they have found out what good company he is, for all he is so still. There wouldn't be any harm on earth asking him up to Christmas dinner."

I should not like to say how many hours Miss Willy filched from the night to write such a simple letter as this:

Friend Tyler: We have been good friends so long that I hope you will forgive me for asking of you not to go with the boys to Hammer's. It is only to drink and fight. I heard you were going with them, and I am sure it would pain your dear mother in heaven if you did. I would be glad to see you to our house to dinner on Christmas Day, my dear friend. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Dinner is at one o'clock, and there will be games and dancing in the evening.

Your friend,

WILLY R. BARTLETT.

Many and many a time did Miss Willy repeat to herself the contents of that letter, wishing it back in her own pocket, then calculating the time it would take a man on a fast horse to ride over to the boarding-house from Sweet Sips. Half an hour before the time that she gave him, Tyler rode into the yard and stood smiling before her.

"Why, laws, Tyler Ascue!" said she, "where'd *you* drop from?"

"I come to tell you I got your letter. I come straight. Say, did you 'low I was going to Hammer's?"

"Well, you seemed so wild and changed lately——"

"Don't you like the change?"

"Of course I don't, Ty. I ben so scared up about you I couldn't sleep nights. What's got into you—laws! what's that a-sticking out of your pocket?"

"It—it's a pipe, Miss Willy. Don't you like smoking?"

"Of course I don't, and one thing I used to like about you was you never smoked."

Tyler kicked the dirt with his carefully blackened boots, and gnawed his under lip.

"I don't know what has come over you, Tyler, you ain't like the same person—a ramping, roaring, lion-like critter as you are now."

"I didn't low you cared, Miss Willy." His downcast face cleared. "Would you like for me to give up smoking, Miss Willy?"

"Of course I would, and drinking, too, and—and fighting everybody on earth!"

"You said I hadn't nothing of a man 'bout me, Miss Willy, and so I put it up you'd like me better——"

"Oh, Ty," cried Miss Willy, "I reckon I—I ben liking you all the while, only I didn't know it till I got so scared up 'bout your evil courses, and Christmas time coming on, too, when the

whole plantation gits drunk's a fool. Tyler, looks like you needed somebody to take care on you."

"Yes, Miss Willy; yes, honey, dearie, I do for sure." He said nothing more for a little while, but he kissed Miss Willy recklessly, there in the gallery, with Mrs. Toodles, who lived next door, packing up water with Jane Mary Toodles, and both more interested than words can say.

Half an hour later the simple-minded Tyler had confessed all about his uncle's advice. He was bewildered that Miss Willy should exclaim: "One thing, Tyler—I never shall let you have anything to do with your uncle. He's a terrible wicked man; I never shall forgive him for the advice he gave you! Never in this world!"

But Tyler continues to be grateful to his reprobate of a kinsman—and perhaps he has reason.





CHRISTMAS GIFTS *

BY H. ROSENTHAL-BONIN

A FEW miles from Padua lies the little hamlet of Desegno, on the broad, low-lying plain, so flat that the water can hardly make its way to the sea. It is a collection of low, little one-storied houses, grouped about a pretty church, whose tall, slender pink-and-yellow-washed tower shows its fine bronze chime of bells through the airy open belfry.

These bells, however, are Desegno's only wealth, for its three hundred inhabitants are tenants of the wealthy landowners, to whom belong all the fields as far as the eye can reach.

The poor peasants hereabout cannot call a single foot of land their own. Not a stone of their dwellings is theirs! Every man rents a few vegetable fields, owns a couple of pigs, a cow, a goat, works hard, lives poorly, and has great difficulty in paying his rent at the end of the year. Nevertheless, these people are light-hearted and merry, and sing and dance if only an occasional ray of sunshine falls into their lives.

The harvest is over, the red leaves of the grapevines, twining like festive garlands about the gnarled and twisted mulberry-trees, which stand in regular rows between the vegetable fields, have fallen and the trees are bare and colorless. A heavy fog broods over the plain, and is dispelled only at midday by the sun's mild rays. It is the middle of December and the time

* Translated by Mrs. James M. Lancaster, from the German, for Short Stories—Copyrighted. Illustrations by Abby E. Underwood

draws near for the cultivation of the rice fields. Only a few more weeks and the agent will pass through the villages to hire the grown-up children of the peasants to toil in the fever-laden marshes.

In Perluzzo's little farmyard, surrounded by a high stone wall, sat two young girls on upturned tubs busy husking corn. Before them stands a lean and hungry pig, waiting eagerly for the husks which they throw him now and then. They are laughing and chatting merrily over their work.

Christmas is near at hand, and they are wondering which of the village youths will put presents in the wooden shoes which will stand ready in the window sill on Christmas Eve.

These presents often mean a good deal.

"Ah, you lucky girl," said Calina with the red-gold hair, turning to her sister. "You wear your hairpins in a wheel about your head. Anybody can see that you want to get married and have a dowry; but poor me! I've been four years scraping together twenty lire and now father will have to take them for the rent. Ah, we are so poor! Here am I, seventeen years old, and haven't a single hairpin. How can I ever manage to buy twenty-four? They'd cost seventy-two lire! I'll never earn as much as that, and the boys won't look at me when I am old and gray. Everybody thinks that a girl who doesn't wear the pins doesn't want a lover."

"Yes, indeed, it's too bad!" answered the dark-haired and dark-eyed Teresita. "It would be just the same with me if I hadn't mother's pins. I couldn't go and station myself on the high road and call out that I have a dowry—that I have fifty pounds of feathers! But what good does it do? I've worn the pins a whole year, and they're of much finer silver than one gets nowadays, yet nobody has ever asked for me."

"The rich Cateno makes eyes at you."

"Bah! A landlord's son and a poor farmer's daughter! Nothing 'll ever come of that," said Teresita. "He has no idea of marrying me; besides, I have seen him make eyes at you, too."

"At me? How absurd! He looks at me just as a traveller looks at a milestone. He must think I'm not fourteen yet, for I have no pins. The poorest girls manage to get them," sighed Calina.

"Cateno isn't on the lookout for pins," said Teresita, scaring away the pig, who had been trying to steal an ear of corn out of

her lap. He admires us both ; you, because you are fair, and me, because I am dark. I am on my guard, and you had better be, too."

"Ah, if he would only want to marry me!" said Calina. "He is the handsomest man I've ever seen, he looks so fine in his velvet coat and his red silk neckerchief. He wears a real gold watch-chain and diamond rings, and has a voice which goes to my heart as if an angel were speaking. And then there would be an end to all this poverty and misery."

"Yes, if!—if!" said Teresita.

"Ah! I have no silver hairpins. He couldn't come courting me. Nobody looks at a girl who has no pins in her hair. I don't want to be an old maid. I'll go into the rice fields and earn money enough to buy them."

"And get the fever and lose all your hair, like Gosta! Then you'll have the pins, but nothing to stick them in, and will be sick and miserable, and nobody will have you."

"I'd rather die of the fever than be an old maid," said Calina, decidedly.

That evening, when the girls were eating their polenta in the kitchen with their parents, Calina announced that she was going to work in the rice fields, so as to earn money to buy the indispensable hairpins.

"In four months I shall have eighty lire, and by next fair time I can lay by enough for a dowry."

"You'd never be able to stand it. No blonde could stand it," said the farmer, gloomily. "You'd get the fever the second day, and when you got out of the hospital you'd be weak and sickly the rest of your life. Besides, I can't spare you; mother is getting weak."

"You have Teresita," said Calina.

"Teresita may get married any day," answered the father.

"And I'll be an old maid!" cried Calina with all the passion of her Italian nature.

"We are behindhand and our donkey is dead; your mother has been sick two years; we are very poor, and I cannot give you a dowry. I cannot even buy you the hairpins."

"That is the reason I'm going, father; I'm going with Sismonda and Linda. The Catenos are looking for workers in their rice fields at Cosagno, and that is only six miles from here. I'll speak to the manager to-morrow, then I'll save paying the agent, who takes advantage of us poor folks."

The next day was clear and the bright sunlight shone from a cloudless sky over the brown and withered fields around the landlord's dwelling. The great square building, with its many tall windows and the little clock tower on the roof, betokened wealth, and the two galleries, one on either side, gave the house quite a palatial air. A high wall surrounded the house and the garden with its tall hedges and great old fig-trees.

A straight avenue of poplars led up to the entrance of the farmyard, whose portal, ornamented with vases, showed a coat-of-arms all mildewed with age.

In the big house lived Catenò, the rich young landlord, and his mother, who managed the property with great skill and economy. Catenò stood talking with the manager at the door of his little cottage, when Calina, who had not delayed carrying out her resolution, entered the gateway. The girl had not expected to see the young master, so she was much embarrassed, and, instead of speaking, stood with downcast eyes playing with the strings of her blue Sunday apron.



"Well, Calina, what do you want?" said young Catenò, looking at the newcomer.

"I want—I—I want to enter my name as a worker in the rice fields," stammered Calina, still fingering her apron.

"As a worker in the rice fields?" asked Catenò, in surprise. "I'm sure it is not necessary for your father to send you there. He can certainly afford to keep you. Things can't be as bad as that."

"My father did not send me. He does not want me to go; but I will go," said Calina.

"You will go!" repeated the young man, shoving his cap back on his curly head.

"What for? Have you been quarrelling?"

"No—oh, no! We are at peace."

"Well, then, why do you want to work in the rice fields?"

"I am seventeen, and have no silver pins for my hair. We are too poor to buy them, so I am going to earn them."

"Seventeen, already!" said the young master, thoughtfully. "To buy hairpins! Do you know what you have to do in the rice fields! Stand up to your knees in cold water and mud for ten hours a day, with the hot sun pouring down on your head."

Thirty out of fifty have the fever, and you don't look over strong. So young, too!" added he, pityingly.

"I am stronger than you think. I never had so much as a finger-ache in my life. I can stand it. I must have the pins. I am no longer a child."

"Do you want the pins so very much?" asked Cateno, gazing earnestly at the blooming face of the girl with its beautiful white forehead, and the heavy, red-gold braids hanging down on either side.

"I want them more than anything in the world," answered Calina, lowering her eyelids.

"What do they cost?" asked Cateno.

"Three lire apiece. There are twenty-four of them, and that makes seventy-two lire," answered Calina, promptly.

"That is a good bit of money," said the young proprietor. "Where did your sister get hers?"

"They are mother's, and Sita has a dowry, too. I'm going to earn one, next year, in the rice fields."

"H'm!" said Cateno. "So you are determined to get married?"

"Of course," answered Calina, smiling. "Nobody wants to be an old maid. Every girl wants a husband and home of her own. We girls don't get handsomer nor better by waiting."

"What does your sister say about it?" asked Cateno.

"Oh, she thinks I'll get the fever and lose my hair."

"That's very likely," said the young man, running his eye over the sturdy, well-knit form of the young girl. "It would be a pity," added he, sympathetically.

"It can't be helped, Signor. I must go now. Will you enter my name?" persisted Calina.

The young man said something in a low tone to the manager, who entered the girl's name in a book.

"It shall be as you wish," said Cateno to the girl.

"Thank you, kindly," said Calina, with a courtesy, and her great blue eyes beamed gratefully on the young man. Then she turned and left the cottage.

Cateno also soon left the manager's office and walked slowly and thoughtfully up and down the garden walks under the thick evergreens.

"The poor little thing!" said he to himself. "To risk health and life for a miserable seventy lire! To work ten hours a day, for four months, at the dreadful fever-producing labor,

which consumes the very marrow in one's bones! How pretty she has grown! I never noticed it before. To be sure, her sister, whose eyes glow like firebrands and whose crimson lips light up her dusky face, is far more beautiful. Marry her?" said he aloud, and looked around quite startled. "My mother would make a fine fuss if I should bring her home a farmer's lass like that for a daughter-in-law. She'd put us both out of doors," thought he, smiling. "But then," he continued, "I am of age. I'm my own master and heir to the property. She is beautiful. I'd have a merry life with that pretty, plump little witch. Landlords have married farmer's daughters before now, and we shall have plenty of money. How does it happen that Perluzzo is so unlucky? He is the poorest of our tenants. How is it that his daughters are the prettiest girls anywhere about?" Cateno could find no answer to this question, so he walked thoughtfully into his stable and had his horse saddled for a ride over his fields.

Calina, meanwhile, had gone home, and had given an account of her success at the landlord's house.

"They've engaged me!" said she. "Cateno was very much surprised and tried to persuade me not to do it—looked at me as a priest would look at a penitent, and then asked me what you had to say on the subject, Teresita."

"Did he ask that?" said Teresita, eagerly. "Did he mention me by name?"

"No, he spoke of you as my sister."

"Did he know your name?"

"Yes, he called me Calina at once."

"Look out for him," said Teresita, with glowing eyes. "He is the owner of all the land about, and he means you no good."

"Cateno is not wicked," answered Calina, defending him indignantly. Teresita gave her sister a sharp, searching look as she left the room.

"And yet I know he loves me!" murmured she outside the door. "He is always following me about and trying to speak to me. But I avoid him, for I know what to expect. Ah, if he were only my equal!" sighed she.

Three days passed, bringing alternate fog and sunshine—the winter weather of the plains of Lombardy. One night there was frost and snow flakes, so that landlords and tenants sat shivering in their bare, cold rooms and complained of the hard winter.

Teresita and Calina were cold, too, and wore reddish-yellow

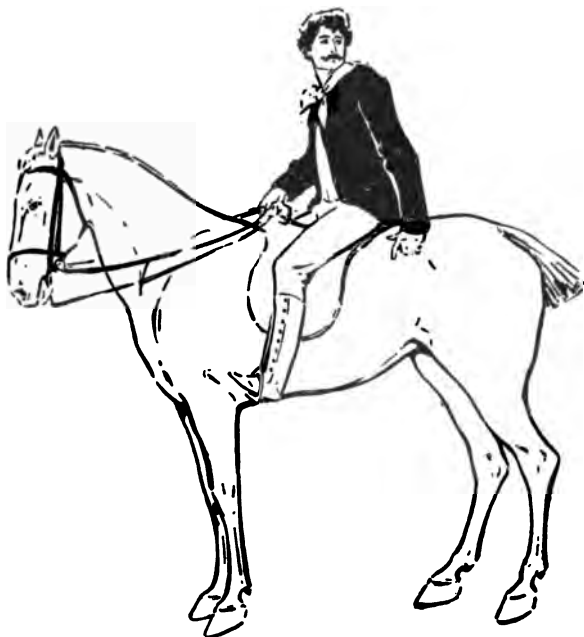
cotton handkerchiefs wound about their heads like turbans. They had had little to say to each other since Calina's visit to the big house. Something—they knew not what—had sprung up between them.

Teresita was vexed that Calina had talked so long to young Cateno. She felt that her sister had cut her out; but Calina seemed indifferent and took no notice of her.

The two girls got out their best wooden shoes—those they wore on Sundays and feast days—and each oiled and polished one of them that it might do her no discredit as it stood on the window sill. Calina was full of a presentiment that something quite unheard of was about to happen; something which would change her whole life.

Teresita was anxious and troubled and rubbed away at her shoe, never looking up from her task.

On the 22d of December the young landlord rode to the railway station, and took the train for Padua. He did this every



year at Christmas time, for he had many purchases to make. Christmas Eve came. The day had been mild, the sky was overcast, and through the clouds the moon glimmered faintly down upon the withered plains.

The church was lighted up, for mass would begin in an hour, and after that the mysterious giving of presents to the marriageable girls by the young fellows of the village.

Teresita and Calina had gone devoutly to church, and each had prayed that the coming year might bring her a good, well-to-do husband, and had promised two fine thick tapers to the Blessed Mother of God if she would grant their fervent prayer. Then they went in silence to their little room, opened the window, put the shoes on the sill, then hid themselves far back in the darkness, and gazed out breathless and eager into the dim night. When they had stood fully half an hour leaning open-eyed against the wall, they heard a stealthy step outside. A tall, shadowy form drew near the window, and after carefully examining the shoes, laid a package in Calina's pink slipper, and something white in Teresita's blue one.

The girls recognized, with fluttering hearts, their landlord, Cateno. He slipped away as silently as he had come, and the girls were about to spring forward to see what he had brought them, when another shadow appeared in the farmyard and sent them back to their post of observation.

A man's figure glided along to the window, looked at the shoes, and threw a parcel into the blue one—Teresita's. Then he tiptoed noiselessly away, but the sisters had recognized the prosperous young blacksmith and wheelwright of the next village.

The girls waited a while longer, and as everything was quiet and no one else came, they drew in their shoes, shut the window, lighted the little oil lamp, and took out the packages.

Calina opened her's with trembling fingers. A bundle of beautiful silver hairpins fell out upon the table.

The girl sprang joyfully about the room, clapping her hands and laughing and crying, and was quite beside herself with delight.

Teresita, too, had hastily broken the cords about the first package and torn off the paper. A beautiful gold cross and chain slipped into her hand. That was equivalent to an offer of marriage, and the present came from Cateno! She opened the second parcel, and, lo! out fell another gold cross hanging from a string of amber beads. This was the blacksmith's gift. Teresita sat down, quite breathless with excitement, and gazed at the two presents.

What unheard of good fortune! What a magnificent present! Could it really be all true? The son and heir of the rich Cateno

had given her a gold cross and chain, and thereby announced that he wished in all honor to make her his wife! And the smith, the handsome, merry, hard-working young fellow at whom a hundred girls were making eyes; the smith wanted her, too! Teresita felt as if the greatest of miracles had happened. She threw herself on her knees and prayed, then rose hastily and looked again at the crosses. There they lay before her; the rich young landlord's and the smith's. The smith was in her eyes the handsomer man of the two and she liked him best; but what a fabulous piece of good fortune it would be to marry the rich Cateno, to be a proprietor's wife, the grandest lady in all the country around.

She could not believe it in spite of the cross. He must be trying to fool her. It was almost impossible. He could not marry her, however much he might wish to do so. His proud, rich mother would never consent—and Teresita's head drooped.

Calina had at last sufficiently recovered from her tumult of joy to wind her golden braids into a coil, and had stuck the silver pins around it, after the national custom, so that the row of great shining balls gleamed like the outspread tail of a peacock about her round little head. So adorned, she stationed herself in front of her sister and noticed for the first time that Teresita looked far from happy.

She glanced at the crosses and started back in surprise.

"Two?" said she. "Two crosses?"

"That one is from Cateno, this one from Roberto," said Teresita, pointing to them. "But I have no faith in Cateno's," added she, hastily.

"Nobody can lie on Christmas Eve," said Calina, her face pale with emotion. "But you have two! One quite secure, and the smith is a fine-looking man who owns his house and farm, and all the girls are crazy about him. So be satisfied! I certainly should be if it had happened to me. Come, don't be silly! we must show them to our parents, who think we are still sitting sulking in our room because nobody has put a farthing's worth of anything in our shoes."

And Calina took her sister's arm and drew her into the kitchen, where the old people sat silently eating their Christmas Eve supper of chestnuts fried in fat and sugar.

When they saw the girls' finery and heard who were the givers they were greatly pleased, especially with the gift from the young landlord.

"The pins are very handsome and very costly," said the mother; "Sita's cross is solid gold and must have cost a hundred lire; but of what use are the pins to you, Calina, when you have no dowry, and a rich landlord like Cateno will never dream of marrying a poor farmer's daughter, Sita. So be on your guard, and don't let yourself be deceived by fine words."

"Oh, but Sita has that fine cross and another one, too, and a real true lover in the smith, and I will wear my pins anyway, and as the Madonna has given me one thing, maybe she will look out for the rest. We'll eat our chestnuts to-night with joy and gladness, for we've never had such a fine Christmas."

The old people saw that the merry, sensible Calina was right, and enjoyed the dainty dish with light hearts and good appetites.

No such merry mood reigned in the Cateno household. Donna Elena, the rich, young landlord's mother, had a cloudy brow and an anxious heart. Her son, it is true, had not failed to show his respect and regard for his mother by giving her a present.

When she sat down to supper after mass, she found under her napkin what struck her as far too expensive a pair of ruby earrings, set in small pearls. Under other circumstances the gift would have pleased her greatly, but just now its costliness made her suspicious. It seemed as if her son were trying to coax her into a good humor as a preparation for something which would, he knew, meet with violent opposition on her part. Donna Elena had seen Calina go into the manager's cottage. She had heard that the girl was going to work in the rice fields to earn the silver hairpins; then, from her window, she had seen her son pacing thoughtfully up and down the garden paths; and last but not least, she had happened to see Luigi wrap a bundle of silver hairpins in paper on his return from Padua, but she knew nothing about the cross.

This was the chain of evidence which was causing her so much anxiety. Her son had a good many queer ideas. He read books which said that high-born and lowly, rich and poor, were all equal. And who could trust a man in love? His mother was really afraid that her son had lost his heart to the blonde peasant girl, and that he might cherish the monstrous idea of making her his wife. It must be prevented! If the handsome, buxom girl wore the hairpins—so reasoned Donna Elena—she would soon find wooers enough, who would take it for granted that the headdress stood for a dowry, as usual, whereas Donna

Elena well knew that the girl's father was the poorest peasant on the estate.

But if she really had a dowry the girl would soon have more lovers than fingers on her hands. Donna Elena knew all her tenants, had seen their children grow up, and was a keen judge of human nature.

She knew Calina well enough to be sure that she would choose a husband as soon as possible, and would not wait for so uncertain a miracle as that the young landlord should want to marry her, if, indeed, the girl had been silly enough even to think of such a thing, which was hardly to be believed, and the widow Cateno resolved to get Calina married at once before the affair should go any further.

The next day after mass it was noised about town that the widow Cateno had gone straight from church to farmer Perluzzo's house.

This visit startled the farmer's family not a little. They feared some unpleasant results from the son's presents.

What an agreeable surprise, then, when the widow, after a glance at the pins in Calina's hair, said, with exceeding friendliness,

"I came in fulfillment of a vow. I have promised this holy Christmas-tide to give some poor girl a dowry, and as I know that things have not been going very well with you, and that Calina has no dowry, and no near prospect of getting one, I give her two hundred lire that she may get a suitable husband."

After Donna Elena had so spoken in her clear, abrupt way, she laid four beautiful new pink bank notes on the chest of drawers, before the little statue of St. Joseph, and rustled out in her stiff silk gown, before the farmer's family had had time to recover from their amazement at the words and deeds of their landlady, who was usually so stingy.

Sighing deeply—for the loss of the two hundred lire hung very heavy on her heart—Donna Elena went slowly home. On the way she reflected that perhaps *one* hundred lire would have been enough, and she grew quite red in the face with the thought; still she would be willing to sacrifice far more than that to save her son from the folly of marrying a girl like that, and the widow entered her house quite satisfied with her mission. She met her son at breakfast, and he seemed gayer and more free from care than she had expected under the circumstances.

Luigi Catenò was, indeed, quite free from anxiety. He had given Calina the pins out of pity. She was a pretty, fresh young girl, and he hated to see her ruin health, beauty and cheerfulness for the silver hairpins; for even the strongest girls came back from the rice fields broken down in health, haggard,

and prematurely old. What an insignificant sum was seventy-two lire to him, and, if he could save a young girl from sickness and sorrow, why should he not do it, especially the pretty little Calina whom he liked so much? The affair of the cross, however, was much more serious. That meant "I want to marry you."



Well, Luigi would willingly have married the fiery Teresita with her glowing red lips and her dusky velvety eyes. She had bewitched him, and he felt a passionate admiration for her, and, had he been poor and her equal, he would long ago have been living with her in one of the tiny cottages about. As landlord, however, it was not so easily managed, and he had given her the cross only with a vague idea of winning her favor and of raising her hopes, so that she would not take the first

man that came along, as the other girls did.

Luigi did not fear his mother's interference, for he was of age and could do as he pleased, but he loved peace and a quiet life, and he knew that she was very fond of money and had a will of her own. So a marriage with Teresita required a good deal of reflection, and no decisive steps could be taken for some time to come.

Mother and son breakfasted cheerfully together, and Donna Elena came to the conclusion that her son could not be very deeply in love. Once more she regretted the second hundred lire, but comforted herself with the thought that the sum was well invested, no matter how things might turn out.

The sun shone bright, the roads were dry, and the lovely noonday warmth invited Luigi Catenò to walk down to the

village. He wanted, besides, to see the girls in their new ornaments. From afar he heard laughing and joking, and when he came nearer he saw the village belles marching up and down the street, six abreast, like a column of soldiers. Behind each file of girls walked a similar file of the young village beaux, and many a merry love-jest was exchanged. Calina seemed to be unusually attractive, for now and then, when the groups divided and the girls talked apart with the men, Teresita amused herself with the blacksmith, while Calina, on the other hand, was surrounded by a throng of youngsters, all evidently eager to win her favor. The little blonde peasant girl was the heroine of the day. She wore her halo of pins and the news had run like wild-fire through the village that Donna Elena had given the girl a dowry of two hundred lire in fulfillment of a vow. A handsome sum in the estimation of those poor people.



Strange to say—and Luigi acknowledged it to himself—he was vexed to see Calina's lovers, and this annoyance quite cast into the shade the fact that Teresita was amusing herself so long and so well with the smith. His sharp eyes had also noticed that the brunette had laid aside his chain and cross and wore another about her neck, hanging from an amber necklace.

So the girl had received two crosses. The other, of course, from the smith, whom Teresita evidently favored. Neither had she, so far, vouchsafed him a glance. He wondered that all this troubled him so little, but he was more and more vexed to see the young men crowding about Calina. Finally, he got so angry that he would willingly have knocked them all down. He regretted giving her the pins which served as a magnet to draw the youngsters about her. They must, of course, believe that the pins were worn in token of a dowry, and Luigi was glad to know that they were deceived.

Calina had never looked so pretty to him as she did to-day and all at once he discovered that she was prettier than her sister.

Her hair shone like gold, her blue eyes sparkled, and her face had the freshness and color of a spring rose, and then its shape was such a pure, delicate oval. It gave her just the highbred look of the old nobility of Lombardy. Then she seemed to have grown taller, fuller and more vigorous. He glanced at Teresita and wondered where his eyes had been. Calina continued her flirtations and returned his greeting with a short friendly nod. She was now hanging on the arm of a tall young fellow in a russet velvet coat, a great favorite with the girls for his dashing ways and his social accomplishments.

Cateno felt envious of the coarse country lout—he, the rich, educated Cateno. He was disgusted at Calina's behavior, though she was quite free to walk and talk with whom she would.

His vexation increased so that he turned away and went off toward home. On the way a village acquaintance joined Luigi, who was walking along under the poplars in a very bad humor.

"So your mother has been playing the fairy-godmother," said he to Luigi.

"What do you mean?" asked Luigi, rather interested.

"Is it possible you haven't heard? The daws are singing it on every house-top," said the other. "When your mother came out of church she went straight to Perluzzo's and gave that pretty little creature, Calina, a dowry of two hundred lire. Some unknown admirer had already given her the hairpins. That's a good deal for your mother to do," concluded the young man, with a mocking smile.

Luigi felt himself turning pale. He saw through his mother's plans. She must have seen him wrapping up the pins yesterday, and have come to the conclusion that he wished to curry favor with the girl. His mother was a determined woman and acted quickly in an emergency, and she had made her calculations very cleverly. But this gossip should not see what an impression this piece of news had made upon him.

"Indeed!" said he, carelessly. "My mother said nothing about it. She has some queer ideas, and often does things that surprise people."

"But two hundred lire! I would never have believed it of her."

"Yes, it is a good bit of money," said Luigi. "But the people may need it. They've had bad luck this year."

"Well, their Christmas will be so much the merrier," said the other with a farewell nod, and turned off into a bypath leading to the next estate.

Now that Luigi was alone, the air seemed to him so sultry that he took off his hat and wiped his brow. His mother was a clever woman, that he must allow, and she probably judged the girl correctly.

Calina would at once choose a husband. The dowry was so liberal, according to village notions, that only the most eligible young fellows would present themselves as suitors for the hand of the pretty peasant girl.

But what business was it of his? Was he in love with the pretty blonde? Her sister had so taken his fancy that he would have been willing to make a fool of himself for her sake. Yes, his fancy—but his feeling for Calina was altogether different. Her youth, her gayety, her pretty ways—so different from the pertness of the other village girls—appealed to his heart. How little he had cared for Teresita to-day after he had caught sight of Calina, fresh and sparkling as a spring morning! And how angry he felt when he saw the girl surrounded by her rustic admirers! What a queer feeling it gave him to see her on such friendly terms with them! "That must be jealousy," said he to himself.

It was love for Calina which had suddenly sprung up in his heart. True love; not like that he had felt for Teresita. He was quite certain now that he never would have wanted to marry Teresita, but nobody else should have Calina. It would break his heart, drive him mad, kill him, should he hear that she belonged to another. And yet she might this very day have betrothed herself to someone. He knew the village custom. The hairpins meant, "I am on the lookout for a husband;" and his mother's money would soon bring things to a crisis. Perhaps he had already lost her. He must speak to the girl at once.

He turned and hastened back to the village.

He met Calina just entering her father's house. Fortunately for his purpose, she was alone.

"Calina!" cried he. "Wait a moment. I've something to say to you."

"About my sister?" asked she, raising her blue eyes with a queer expression. "You are too late, Signor. She is engaged to the smith."

"No, about you," stammered Luigi. "I suppose, however, you'll follow your sister's example."

"Of course, Signor. Girls are like chestnuts; they don't improve with age."

"And have you already made your choice?" asked Luigi.

"Oh, I've half a dozen to choose from," said Calina, and her gaze sank deep into Luigi's dark eyes.

"And you are going to choose?" said Luigi, imperatively.

"Of course. I don't want to stay with my parents any longer. I want to have a husband and a house and children of my own, like everybody else. Why should I wait till I'm old?"

Luigi was alarmed. His head swam. He imagined Calina choosing a husband. His mother's angry face hovered a moment before him and then vanished in the fear that he might lose the beautiful girl who had so bewitched him.

"Would you take me?" stammered he.

"You are joking, Signor," answered the girl. "First you ran after my sister, and now you drop her and come after me. I don't trust you, Signor. My sister did not love you, I know. She loves the smith. I love you, but we poor girls cannot marry for love. We must be satisfied if we get a suitable husband who can give us a home of our own. You cannot and ought not to marry me, Signor. Think of your fortune! Think of your mother! So now let me go. You'll soon console yourself."

"No, I'll not let you go, and I will not soon console myself," cried Luigi, passionately. "I did not love your sister. I found it out to-day. I love you, and will fight a thousand devils if they try to get you away from me. I don't ask anything more of you to-day. I don't want an answer now, only you must promise me one thing, not to engage yourself to anybody else until you have had another talk with me. Wait a week. Give me that much time to overcome the obstacles. You may be sure I shall succeed."

Calina gave the young man a long, searching look, and then with a far-off, dreamy expression in her eyes, "I love you," said she, in uncertain tones, "and I will wait. But I will not wait a week, Signor; I will wait a year if you wish it."

Then she turned and went into the house, and Luigi started off toward home.

That very evening he went to his mother, and said, quietly and firmly: "I have betrothed myself to Calina, and am going to marry her."

There followed a dreadful scene. His mother seized two costly marble vases and shattered them. Then she boxed her son's ears. Luigi submitted quietly.

Then he said, "I will not give her up unless you kill me. That is the only way to carry out your wish."

Then Donna Elena threw herself on the floor and wept and cried till they heard her all over the farmyard. She tore her clothes, she pulled out her hair by handfuls, she hammered with her fists and her feet, she called for the priest.

The priest appealed to Luigi in his mother's behalf. Luigi paid no heed to his mother's anger, and listened quietly to the priest. His only answer was, "I shall marry her!" and so he did.

To the great astonishment of the neighborhood for ten miles round, he showed himself everywhere with Calina as his betrothed. He announced his coming marriage to the priest and to the magistrate, and set the wedding-day. He was cheerful and calm and happy, and his little bride was in the seventh heaven. The friend, who had told him of his mother's fine Christmas present, said to him in congratulation: "Well, your mother will have one comfort—the two hundred lire will stay in the family."





UDDENLY over the dim city of flat roofs and gigantic palms the bells rang out far and near, silver and brazen, chiming solemnly, joyfully.

The pale light of earliest dawn began to melt through the white mists. A chill wind woke and stirred these into faint curling wreaths which at first floated close to earth, rising at last and dissolving away in the upper air like a prayer mounting into ecstasy.

Dim and silent as shadows, the devout gathered in all directions toward the church on the green *plaza*, whose chime of silver bells rang out its chord above the low rumbling of the organ, heralding the early Christmas mass.

The cold light gleamed on the trappings of many horses, reflected here from the gold mountings of head-stall and reins, there from the silver lining of a red saddle whose snowy *anquera* descended half way to the ground. It brought out spots and dashes of brilliant color—a scarlet cloak, a green cloth flung over a bright bay horse, the canopy of a *carreta*, a great silken spread of blue, embroidered in purple flowers and edged with a deep gold fringe.

The townspeople, even the wealthiest families, came unosten-

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tatiously on foot. And the women, doffing the silks and laces in which they had danced the night away, appeared clad religiously in black. They walked slowly, with quiet, composed faces, framed nun-like in the severe folds of black *rebosos*. Their downcast eyes, under whose black-fringed lids, heavy with sleep, a languid light lingered, were fixed on the silver rosaries which hung in their fingers. Their lips, curved for soft caresses, moved in soundless devotions. Demurely they passed on into the dark church.

The bells chimed out for the last time, calling those belated.

Into the sky, which had lightened from gray to pale violet, shot up broad streamers of pink, whose radiance transfigured magically everything on which it fell. The chorus of birds in the orange orchards, in the magnolia trees, in the branches of the swaying eucalypti, became louder and more joyous; the horses lifted their heads and moved restlessly; the air grew softer, more divinely clear.

Inside the church, full of incense and the faint musky odor of women's perfumes, where the light penetrated dimly through colored windows, the priest's chanting voice rose and fell mystically; then came the murmured response and the dying notes of the organ.

In a burst of golden light the sun rode up majestically into the palpitant sky. A thousand colors, sights, scents, sounds, were born again with him. And a solitary cripple outside the door of the church, moved by some vague impulse, raised his arms in the old, the eternal gesture of adoration.



THE MUMMY'S FOOT *

BY THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

Famous Story Series



FOR want of something better to do, I stepped into the shop of one of those dealers in curiosities, or dealers in bric-a-brac, as they are called in Parisian slang—so perfectly unintelligible to the rest of France.

No doubt you have peeped through the windows of some of these shops, since it has become the fashion to buy old furniture, and the smallest stockbroker thinks he must have his room in the style of the Middle Ages.

It is somewhat like the shop of a dealer in old iron, an upholsterer's store, an alchemist's laboratory, and a painter's studio, all in one. In these mysterious dens, where a prudent twilight filters through the shutters, what is most notoriously ancient is the dust. The cobwebs there are more authentic than the guipures, and the old pear wood there is younger than the mahogany that arrived only yesterday from America.

My bric-a-brac dealer's shop was a real Capernaum. All the centuries and all the countries seemed to have made an appointment to meet there. A red Etruscan lamp stood upon a Boule cabinet with ebony panels severely set off by filaments of copper; a sofa of the time of Louis XV. carelessly stretched out its slender legs under a solid table of the reign of Louis XIII., with heavy convolutions of oak, with carved foliage and mythological monsters intermingled.

The ribboned cuirass of a suit of damasked Milan armor glittered in a corner; cupids and nymphs in biscuit, grotesque Chinese images, Dresden and old Sèvres cups encumbered the stands and what-nots.

On the serrated shelves of dressing-tables beamed some immense Japanese dishes, in red and blue patterns heightened by

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hatchings of gold, side by side with some of Bernard Palissy's enamels, representing snakes, frogs and lizards in relief.

From the overflowing cabinets escaped cascades of Chinese silk with its silvery sheen, waves of brocatel riddled with luminous specks by an oblique sunbeam; portraits of all ages smiled through their yellow varnish in more or less tarnished frames.

The proprietor was careful to follow me along the tortuous passage between the piles of furniture, restraining with his hands the dangerous sweep of my coat tails and watching over my elbows with the restless attention of the antiquary and the usurer.

A singular figure was that of the proprietor; his immense head as smooth as a knee, and fringed by a scanty aureola of white hair, which was set off more sharply by the light salmon color of his skin, gave him a false air of patriarchal good-nature, corrected, however, by the glittering of his two little yellow eyes, that quivered in their orbits like two louis-d'or upon quicksilver. The curve of his nose had an aquiline outline that recalled the Jewish or Oriental type. His hands—lean, thin, veined, full of sinews sticking out like the strings of a violin, with nails that resemble the claws that terminate the membranous wings of bats—moved with a sort of senile oscillation uncomfortable to look at; but these nervously twitching hands became as firm as steel pincers or lobster's claws as soon as they took up any precious object—an onyx cup, a Venetian glass, or a Bohemian crystal plate. This old fellow had such a profoundly rabbinical and cabalistic air that he would have been burned three centuries ago for his looks.

“Won't you buy something of me to-day, sir? Here is a Malay creese with its blade undulating like a flame; look at these grooves for draining off the blood, these teeth pointing backward for tearing out the entrails when the dagger is drawn out; it is a ferocious weapon, a fine specimen, and it would show well in your collection; this two-handed sword is very handsome; it is one of Joseph de la Hera's, and what superb work there is on it.”

“No, I have enough arms and instruments of carnage; I should like a little figure, some sort of thing that would do me for a paperweight, for I can't endure all these manufactured bronzes that the stationers sell, and that are invariably found on every desk.”

The old gnome, rummaging through his ancient lumber, spread out before me antique bronzes, or what he called such, bits of malachite, little Hindoo or Chinese idols, a kind of Oriental

plaything of jade, the incarnation of Brahma or Vishnu, wonderfully suited for anything but this divine employment of holding newspapers and letters in place.

I was hesitating between a porcelain dragon quite constellated with warts, with its throat garnished with fangs and bristles, and a very abominable little Mexican fetich, representing the naked god Huitzilopotchli, when I chanced to notice a charming foot that I took at first for the fragment of some antique Venus.

It had those beautiful and tawny reddish hues which give to Florentine bronze its warm and lively look, so preferable to the verdigris color of the common bronzes, that might well be taken for statues in a state of decomposition; a satiny gloss there was over its contours, polished by the loving kisses of twenty centuries; for it must be a Corinthian brass, a work of the best period, perhaps a cast of Lysippus.

"This foot will just do for me," said I to the shopkeeper, who looked rather ironically and slyly at me, as he handed me the desired object so that I might examine it more at my ease.

I was surprised at its lightness. It was not a metallic foot, but a foot of real flesh—an embalmed foot, a mummy's foot. By looking at it closely, the grain of the skin could be distinguished and the almost imperceptible figuring imprinted by the woof of the bandages. The toes were small, delicate, with nails as perfect, fine, transparent as agates. The great toe went off slightly from the others, in the antique fashion, and gave it an easy look—the lightness of a bird's foot. The sole, hardly streaked by a few invisible hatchings, showed that it had never touched the ground, and had only come in contact with the finest mats of Nile reeds and the softest of panther-skin rugs.

"Ha, ha! so you want the Princess Hermonthis' foot," said the shopkeeper, with a strange sneer, fixing his owlish eyes upon me; "ha, ha, ha! for a paperweight. An original idea, the idea of an artist. Anybody telling old Pharaoh that his beloved daughter's foot was to be used for a paperweight would certainly have astonished him, when he was having a mountain of granite dug out to put in it the triple coffin painted and gilded and all covered with hieroglyphics and beautiful pictures of the judgment of souls," added the queer little man, in a low tone, and as if talking to himself.

"How much will you sell me this fragment of a mummy for?"

"Ah, as dear as I possibly can, for it is a splendid piece. If I had its mate, you wouldn't get it for less than five hundred

francs. There is nothing more rare than the daughter of a Pharaoh."

"Of course, it is not common; but, how much do you want for it? First, I warn you, though, that all the treasure I possess amounts to just five louis. I will buy anything that costs five louis, but nothing for more than that. If you should search all my pockets and my most secret drawers, you wouldn't find another single bit of money."

"Five louis for the Princess Hermonthis' foot is very little, very little indeed, for an authentic foot," said the dealer, tossing his head and rolling up his eyes. "Well, take it, and I will give you its wrapper into the bargain," he continued, winding it within an old scrap of damask; "very fine, real damask, Indian damask, that has never been dyed over; very strong and soft it is," murmured he, as he passed his fingers over the frayed fabric, a remnant of commercial habit that caused him to praise up an object that he himself thought only worth giving away.

He slipped the gold coins into a sort of mediæval alms-bag hanging at his belt, and repeated: "The Princess Hermonthis' foot to be used for a paperweight." Then, fastening his phosphoric eyes on me, he said to me in a voice as strident as the miauling of a cat that has just swallowed a fish bone: "The old Pharaoh will not be pleased; the dear man loved his daughter."

"You speak of him as if you were his contemporary. Old as you are, you do not go quite back to the pyramids of Egypt," I answered him laughingly, from the threshold of his shop.

I went back home well content with my acquisition. To avail myself of it at once, I placed the foot of the divine Princess Hermonthis upon a pile of papers—the rough draft of some verses—an indecipherable mosaic of erasures; articles begun; forgotten letters mailed in the drawers, a mistake often happening to absent minded people. The effect was charming, odd and romantic.

Quite satisfied with this adornment, I went out into the streets and walked about with the gravity and pride befitting a man who has the ineffable advantage over all the people he elbows, of possessing a piece of the Princess Hermonthis, Pharaoh's daughter.

I considered everybody supremely ridiculous who did not own, like myself, a genuinely Egyptian paperweight, and it

seemed to me a sensible man's true business should be to have a mummy's foot on his desk.

Fortunately, the meeting with a few friends made me think of something else besides my infatuation with my recent acquisition. I went off to dine with them, for it would have been difficult for me to dine by myself.

When I came home in the evening, my brains being somewhat stimulated, a gentle whiff of Oriental perfume delicately tickled my olfactory apparatus—the heat of the room had slightly warmed up the natron, the bitumen and the myrrh, in which the embalmers had bathed the Princess' body. It was a faint perfume, though very penetrating, a perfume that four thousand years had been unable to evaporate.

The dream of Egypt was eternity. Its odors have the solidity of granite, and last as long.

Soon I was drinking full draughts from the black cup of sleep. For an hour or two everything remained opaque—oblivion and vacancy overwhelmed me with their dark waves.

However, my intellectual obscurity cleared up, and dreams began to touch me in their silent flight. The eyes of my soul were opened, and I saw my chamber just as it was in fact. I might have thought myself awake, but a vague feeling told me that I was sleeping, and that something strange was about to happen.

The odor of myrrh had increased in intensity, and I felt a slight headache, which I very reasonably attributed to a few glasses of champagne that we had drunk to the unknown gods and our future success.

I looked at my room with a feeling of expectation not in the least justifiable. The furniture was quite in its place, the lamp was lighted upon the table, subdued by the milky whiteness of its glass globe; the water-colors shone under their Bohemian glass, the curtains hung languidly, everything looked asleep and still.

But, after some moments, this so quiet apartment seemed to be disturbed. The woodwork creaked furtively, the log buried under the ashes suddenly spurted a jet of bluish gas, and the disks of the pateras appeared like metallic eyes, intent, as I was, upon the things that were going to happen.

My eyes turned, by chance, toward the table where I had placed the Princess Hermonthis' foot. Instead of being motionless, as becomes an embalmed foot four thousand years old,

it moved, quivered, and hopped over the papers like a frightened frog—one would have thought it in contact with a voltaic pile. I heard very distinctly the hard rap made by its little heel, as hard as a gazelle's hoof.

I was rather displeased with my acquisition, preferring sedentary paperweights, and not considering it very natural for feet to walk about without legs, and I began to feel something that was much akin to fear.

Suddenly I saw the folds of one of my curtains move, and I heard a noise of somebody hopping on one foot. I must confess that I was hot and cold alternately; that I felt an unknown chill run down my back, and that my hair, standing on end, made my nightcap rise up in the air.

The curtains were half opened, and I saw coming towards me the strangest figure that can be imagined. It was a young girl, very dark café-au-lait colored, like the bayadere Amani, of perfect beauty and of purest Egyptian type. She had almond-shaped eyes with corners drawn up, and eyebrows so black they looked blue; her nose was of delicate cut, almost Greek in its fineness, and she might have been taken for a bronze statue of Corinth, if the prominence of her cheekbones and the slightly African expansion of her mouth had not indicated, beyond all doubt, the hieroglyphic race of the banks of the Nile.

Her slender and spindle-turned arms, like those of very young girls, were circled with some sort of metallic and glass rings. Her hair was all in plaits, and upon her breast hung an idol in green clay, whose whip with its seven lashes indicated Isis, the conductor of souls. A gold plate glittered on her forehead, and some tracery of paint peeped through her coppery cheeks.

As for her costume, it was very strange. Imagine a dress of wrappings, covered with black and red hieroglyphics, stiffened with bitumen, and apparently belonging to a freshly unswaddled mummy.

By one of those leaps in thought so frequent in dreams, I heard the cracked and hoarse voice of the bric-à-brac dealer, who was repeating like a monotonous refrain the sentence he had pronounced in his shop with so enigmatic an intonation: "The old Pharaoh will not be pleased; the dear man loved his daughter."

There was one strange circumstance that did not much reassure me: the apparition had only one foot; the other leg was broken off at the ankle. She directed her course toward the table,

where the mummy's foot was moving and jumping about with increased activity. Reaching there, she leaned upon the edge, and I saw a tear come into her eyes.

Although she did not speak, I clearly discerned her meaning. She looked at her foot—for it was certainly hers—with an expression of coquettish sadness infinitely graceful; but the foot leaped and ran to and fro, as if impelled by springs of steel. Two or three times she stretched out her hands to seize it, but did not succeed in doing so.

Then there took place, between the Princess Hermonthis and her foot, which appeared to be endowed with a separate life, a very odd dialogue, in a very ancient Coptic, such as might have been spoken some thirty centuries ago among the tombs of the country of Serapis. Fortunately for this evening, I knew Coptic to perfection.

The Princess Hermonthis said, in a tone of voice as sweet and vibrating as a crystal bell: "Well, my dear little foot, you keep running away from me, yet I took good care of you. I bathed you with scented water in an alabaster basin; I rubbed your heel with pumice stone dipped in palm-oil; your nails were cut with gold pincers and polished with a hippopotamus' tooth. I was careful to choose for you painted and embroidered shoes with the points turned up, which made you the envy of all the young girls of Egypt. You had, on your great toe, rings representing the sacred scarabæus; and you carried the lightest body a lazy foot could wish for."

The foot answered in a sulky and grieved tone: "You know very well that I no longer belong to myself. I have been bought and paid for. The old shopkeeper knew what he was about. He is still angry with you for having refused to marry him. It is a trick that he has played you. The Arab who broke open your coffin in the subterranean pit in the necropolis of Thebes, was sent by him. He wanted to prevent your going to the meeting of the people of the dark in the lower cities. Have you five gold pieces to redeem me?"

"Alas! no. My gems, my rings, my purses of gold and silver, all have been stolen from me," replied the Princess Hermonthis with a sigh.

"Princess," then exclaimed I, "never have I unjustly retained anybody's foot! Although you have not the five louis which it cost me, I give it back gladly. I should be in despair at making a cripple of so amiable a person as the Princess Hermonthis."

I said off this speech in a sort of troubadour tone, that must have surprised the beautiful Egyptian. She cast on me a glance of gratitude, and her eyes lighted up with a bluish glitter. She grasped her foot, which this time submitted, like a woman about to put on her shoe, and adjusted it on her leg with much skill. This operation finished, she walked two or three steps in the room, as if to assure herself that she was really no longer a cripple.

"Ah, how pleased my father will be, he who was so disconsolate at my mutilation, and who, from the day of my birth, set a whole people to dig me out so deep a tomb that it might preserve me intact until that supreme day when souls must be weighed in the scales of Amenti! Come with me to my father; he will receive you well; you have restored me my foot."

I thought this proposition a matter of course. I put on a dressing gown with great figures, which gave me a very Pharaonic air. In haste, I incased my feet in Turkish slippers, and I told the Princess Hermonthis that I was ready to follow her.

Before starting off, Hermonthis took from her neck the little green clay figure and laid it upon the scattered papers that covered my table.

"It is only right," said she, smilingly, "that I should replace your paperweight."

She held out to me her hand, which was as soft and cold as an adder's skin, and we departed. For some time we shot with the rapidity of an arrow through a fluid and grayish medium, in which outlines scarcely visible passed on the right and on the left. For a moment, we saw only water and the sky. A few minutes later, obelisks began to loom up, and massive buildings and steps, bordered by sphinxes, became visible on the horizon.

We had arrived. The Princess led me before a mountain of rose granite, in which was an opening so narrow and low that it would have been difficult to distinguish from the fissures of the stone, if two stelæ decorated with sculpture had not made it evident. Hermonthis lighted a torch and started off, walking ahead of me.

There were corridors hewn out of the living rock. The walls, covered with panels of hieroglyphics and allegorical processions, must have busied thousands of arms during thousands of years. These corridors, interminable in length, led into square chambers, in the middle of which were made shafts, which we descended by means of steps or winding stairs. These shafts brought

us to other chambers, whence diverged other corridors, variegated, likewise, with hawks, coiled serpents, the tau, the crook, mystic boats, prodigious labor that no living eye was to look upon, interminable legends in granite that the dead alone had time to read in eternity.

At last, we came into a hall so spacious, so enormous, so measureless, that the end of it could not be perceived. As far as the eye could reach extended rows of monstrous columns—between which quivered livid stars of yellowish light—these shining points revealing incalculable depths.

The Princess Hermonthis still kept hold of my hand and graciously saluted the mummies of her acquaintance. My eyes grew accustomed to this dusky twilight and began to discern objects.

I saw, seated upon their thrones, the kings of the subterranean races, tall, dried-up old men, wrinkled, of parchment hue, black with naphtha and bitumen, adorned with golden headdresses, barbed with breastplates and gorgets, studded with precious stones, with eyes fixed like those of a sphinx, and with long beards whitened by the snows of the centuries. Behind them their embalmed people stood, in the stiff and constrained postures of Egyptian art, preserving eternally the attitude prescribed by the hieratic codex. Behind the people their contemporary cats, ibises, and crocodiles mewed, flapped their wings and sneered, made more monstrous still by their swaddling bands.

All the Pharaohs were there, Cheops, Kephren, Psammaticus, Sesostris, Amenophis—all the dark lords over the pyramids and tombs. Upon a more elevated platform sat King Chronos, and Xisuthrus, who lived at the time of the flood, and Tubal Cain, who preceded him.

The beard of King Xisuthrus had grown so that it had already wound seven times around the granite table on which he leaned, musing and somnolent.

Farther away, in a dusty vapor, through the mist of eternities, I could vaguely distinguish the seventy-two preadamite kings with their seventy-two nations, now forever banished.

Having allowed me to enjoy this dizzy spectacle for several minutes, the Princess Hermonthis presented me to Pharaoh, her father, who nodded to me very majestically.

“I have found my foot again! I have found my foot again!” cried the Princess, clapping her little hands with all the marks of frantic joy. “This is the gentleman who gave it back to me.”

The Keme races, the Nashi races, all the black, bronzed, copper-colored races repeated in chorus: "The Princess Hermonthis has found her foot again!"

Xisuthrus himself was moved. He raised his heavy eyelids, passed his fingers through his mustache, and cast upon me a glance burdened with the weight of centuries.

"By Oms, the dog of hell, and by Tmei, the daughter of the sun and of truth, this is a brave and worthy boy," said Pharaoh, pointing toward me with his lotus-tipped sceptre. "What do you want for your reward?"

Emboldened by that audacity belonging to dreams, in which nothing appears impossible, I asked for the hand of Hermonthis. The hand for the foot seemed to me an antithetical reward in very good taste.

Pharaoh opened his glassy eyes wide in surprise at my jest and request.

"What country do you belong to, and how old are you?"

"I'm a Frenchman, and I'm twenty-seven years old, venerable Pharaoh."

"Twenty-seven years old, and he wants to marry the Princess Hermonthis who is thirty centuries old," cried at once all the thrones and all the circles of nations.

Hermonthis alone did not appear to find anything unreasonable in my demands.

"If you were only two thousand years old," replied the aged King, "I would very willingly give you the Princess; but the disproportion is too great; and then our daughters must have husbands that last. You don't know any longer how to preserve yourselves. The last ones brought here, hardly fifteen centuries ago, are now nothing more than a pinch of ashes. Look; my flesh is as hard as basalt, my bones are bars of steel. I shall be at the last day of the world with the same body and face I had when I was alive. My daughter, Hermonthis, will last longer than a bronze statue. Then the wind will have dispersed the last speck of your dust, and Isis, herself, who succeeded in finding the fragments of Osiris, would be troubled to bring your body together once more. See how vigorous I am still and what a grip I have," said he, shaking my hand in the English fashion and making my rings cut into my fingers.

He gave me such a squeeze that I woke up, and I saw my friend Alfred, who was tugging at my arm and shaking me to rouse me out of my sleep.

"Well, you sound sleeper, must I carry you out into the street and let off some fireworks in your ears? It is past noon. Don't you remember you promised to come and take me to see M. Aguado's Spanish pictures?"

"Dear me, I had forgotten all about it," said I, while dressing. "We will go there at once. I have the tickets here on my table."

I stepped over to get it; but imagine my astonishment, when, instead of the mummy's foot I had bought the day before, I saw the little green image put in its place by the Princess Hermonthis.



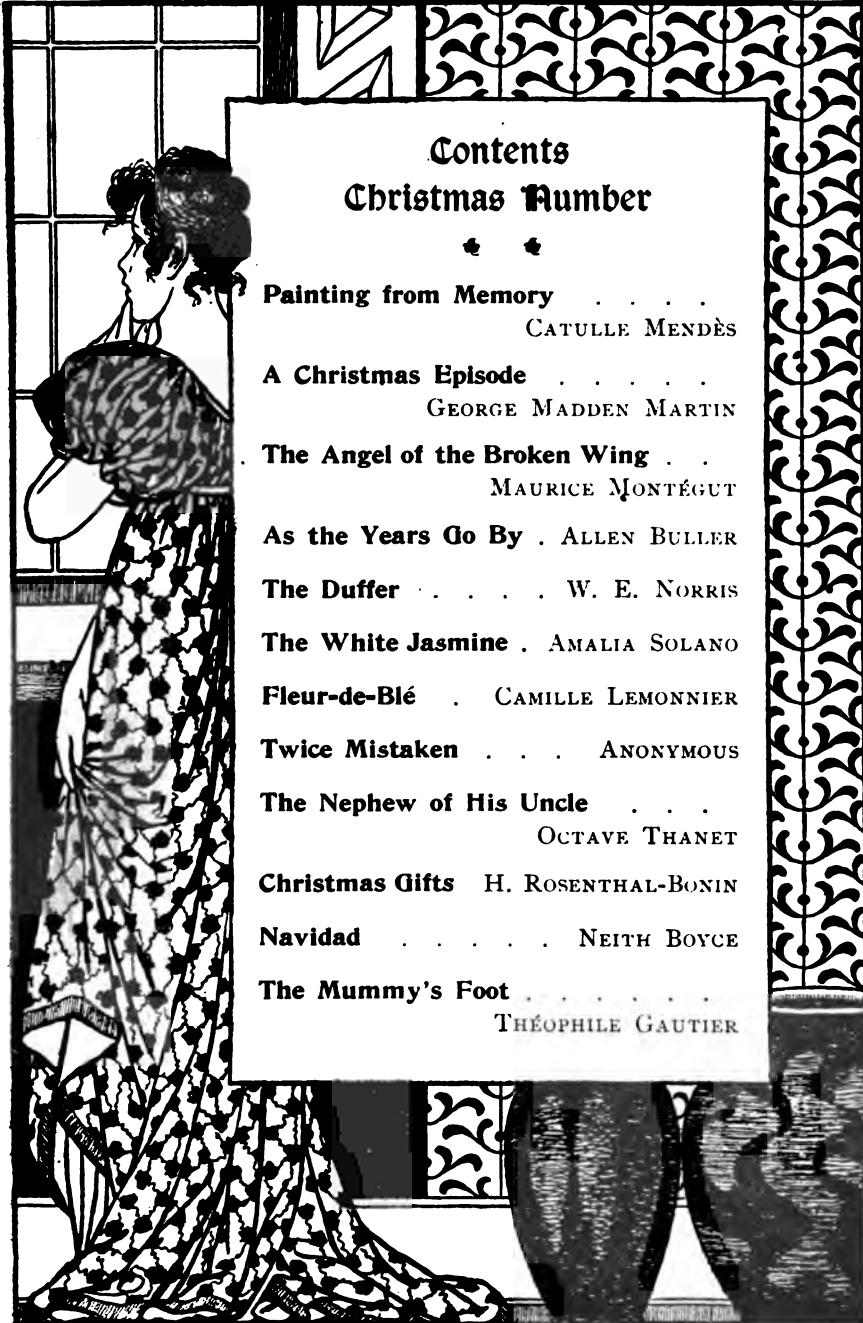
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DEC., 1895



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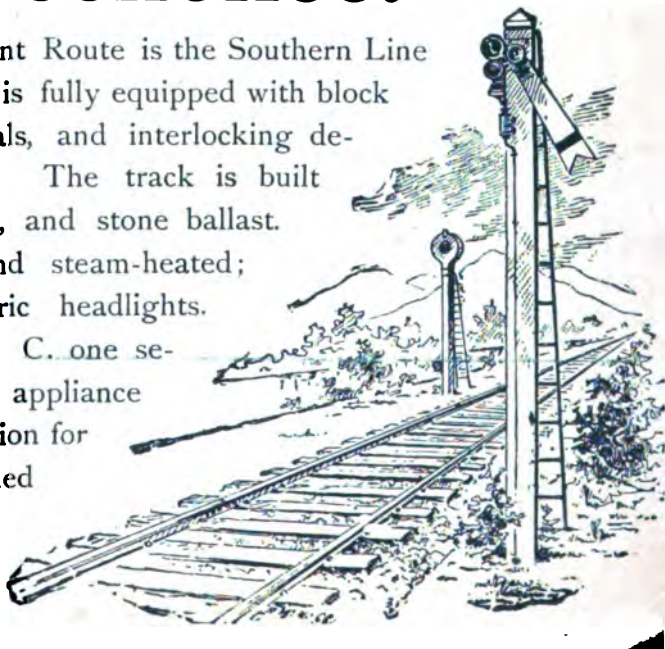
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