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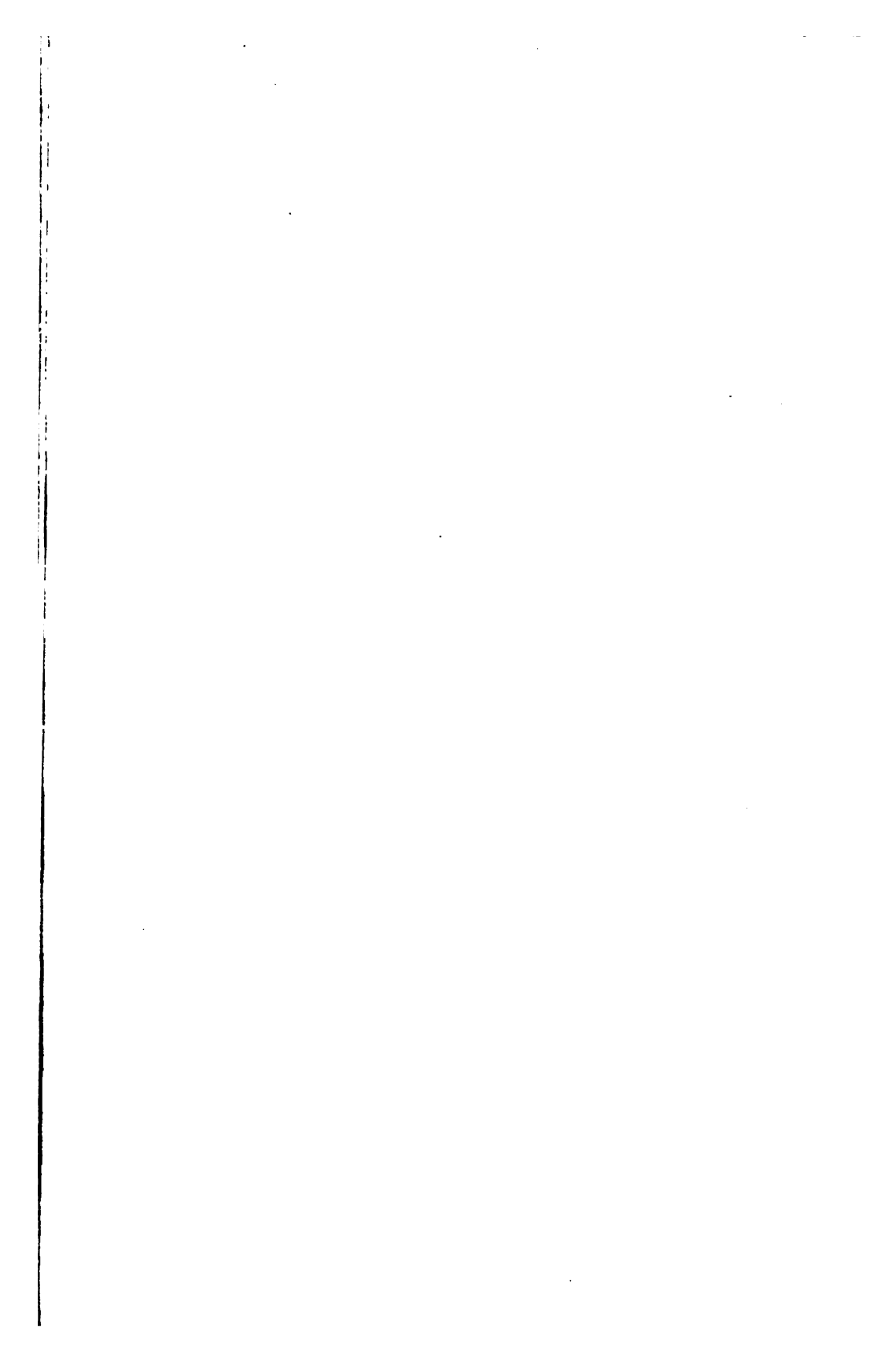
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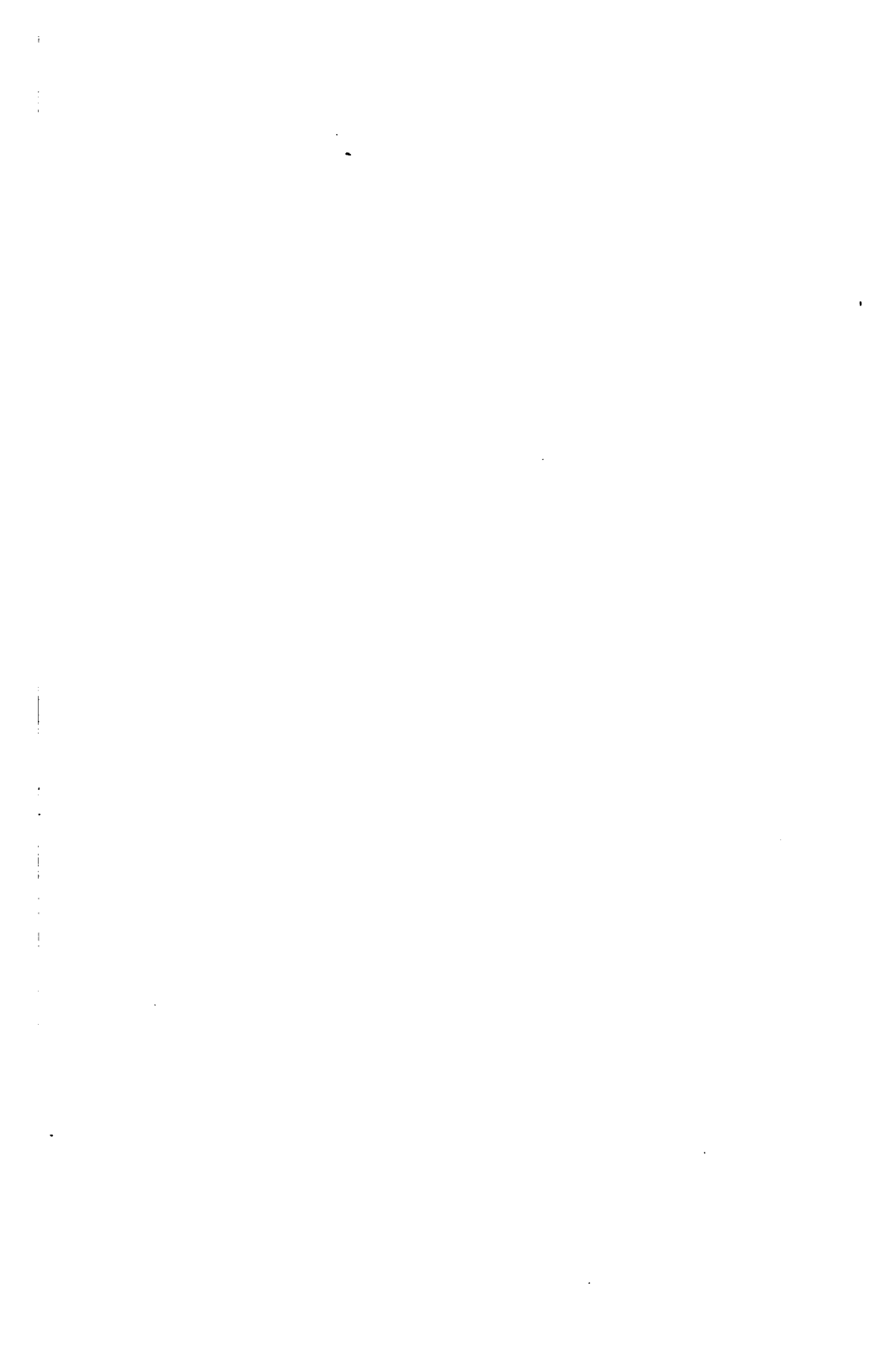
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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF SELECT FICTION

VOLUME XV.

JANUARY-APRIL, 1894

THIS MAGAZINE IS PLANNED TO COVER THE
STORY-TELLING FIELD OF THE WORLD, AND
ITS SELECTIONS WILL BE OF THE BEST PRO-
CURABLE IN ALL THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES

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Short Stories



Holiday Number

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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

Vol. XV. No. 1. *This magazine is planned to cover the story-telling field of the world. Its selections will be of the best procurable in all the languages.* JAN., 1894

PELAGIE'S CHRISTMAS*

BY ROBERTA BELL



ON the right bank of the "Father of Waters," in the year 17—, was the little French village destined to become one day the great city of St. Louis.

The place at that time consisted of a single street running along the bank, well up from the river. Back of this street was the village common, while here and there, at increasing distances apart, were log cabins, marking the road which led first to the fort and later

to the settlement of friendly Indians, several miles away.

The houses along the street fronting the river had mostly a well-kept, thrifty look, while a few were even pretentious.

One of these excelled all the others in its neatness and air of consequence. It was built of upright poles, the spaces between filled with a mixture of mud or plaster, and the whole brilliant with successive coats of whitewash.

In the open door of this cottage, one fine day in the latter part of December, stood a young girl of perhaps sixteen years of age. Her figure slight, yet full of curves, was snugly encased in the dark tightly-fitting "josey," then worn. Her short skirt of bright-hued homespun revealed a neatly-fitting stocking on the trimmest of little ankles. From her little toes, albeit shod with somewhat clumsy shoes, up to her brilliant brown eyes, she was a model of girlish beauty.

At this moment her white forehead was puckered up, and her face very serious, but when she smiles—ah! you shall see such

* The author of this tale is awarded the second prize in the Christmas-Story Competition. Written for Short Stories, and Illustrated by F. C. Gordon.—Copyrighted.

a burst of sunshine. All the boys know the dazzling effect of Pelagie's smile, but perhaps Jean Vallot knows it best of all.

The hand which shaded her eyes as she gazed long and eagerly up and down the river was white and firm, unspoiled as yet by house-work.

She has evidently looked in vain, for a little frown of disappointment clouded her face as she dropped her arm and vanished within the doorway.

The room she entered was filled with a merry group of young girls, busy as bees and noisy as humming-birds. A few young men lounged about the low-ceilinged apartment, some aiding, some hindering their fair companions. A jolly-looking, fat French woman flitted back and forth from the kitchen, superintending all, and adding her own work to the preparation for the coming festival. Christmas was only a week off, and the "*grand banquet*" was to be



at Monsieur Guion's house, and while every household made its own special provision for the day, all combined to assist at the fête at the beloved Commandant's.

A storm of lively query and comment greeted Pelagie's return to the house.

"My faith, and didst thou see him, Pelagie?" "Thou hast looked long enough!" "*Ciel!* no. I would stand a week at the door to await him were he my sweetheart," said another.

"Not a glimpse of him, Fanchette. I fear he has found a Northern bride, and I shall have to look elsewhere for a partner at the Twelfth-night dance."

"No fear of that," cried a half-dozen together.

"I hope he has, and will bring her home, that I may dance with her," said a sturdy youth who was weaving Fanchette's apron-strings in and out of the back of her chair.

A chorus of approving chuckles from the boys and disapproving groans from the young girls greeted this remark.

"Thou shouldst never dance with her were she my bride," growled a tall, blue-eyed fellow of nineteen or so, who was swathed in one of Mère Guion's ample kitchen-aprons, and engaged in chopping some sweet-scented, fruity substance in a large wooden bowl. A chorus of laughter went up at this—Jean Vallot's warlike scowl and his peaceful occupation were ludicrously at variance.



"Thou art indeed a jealous monster! but not so bad as that!"

"And how wouldst thou prevent me?" said the first youngster, tauntingly, as he tied the final knot in Fanchette's apron-strings.

"I would shoot him or knife him who dared to lay a finger on her." Jean touched his weapon as he spoke, and nodded his head several times.

One and all burst into a peal of laughter. With a face like a thunder-cloud the boy stooped to pick up an apple that had rolled from Pelagie's lap to the floor. She also stooped, their heads came together with a soft concussion, their hands touched in reaching for the fruit. Their eyes met, and for a moment her face was crimsoned, a smile dimpled her cheek and her eyes danced, and lo! as by magic, the angry look melted out of his face and an air of contentment took its place—and while this happened good Mère Guion shook her head at the others with a reproachful glance, as if she would say: Why torment this poor Jean, when every one knows his weakness?

The hum of voices, the cracking of nuts, the rattle of chopping knives, and the occasional twitter of a caged bird in the room,

drowned any sound which might have been made by a door opening.

At this very moment a tall shadow fell athwart the white floor. A bronzed figure followed on tiptoe, and with a finger warningly laid upon his lips stood in the centre of the room. Only Pelagie, whose back was to the door, and Jean, who was looking at her, failed to perceive this apparition.

Fanchette started up with a tremulous face, but being tied sat suddenly down again.

Pelagie had just peeled an apple with dainty care, ring after ring of bright red apple-skin curled around her white fingers. She smiled at Jean Vallot, who was turning red and white with jealous fear as to the outcome, and threw it over her shoulder. As she turned to see what shape the curving peel might have taken, a pair of strong, firm hands were placed gently upon her eyes.

"It is a V, a V, I tell thee that, Pelagie!" chirped one of her chums in bird-like French. "No, but no!" cried Fanchette, stretching her head and neck to look, "it's a C—*vraiment* a C—nothing else."

"But guess first, who is this?" said the owner of the strong hands.

"Paul—Paul St. Vrain," she answered, as she struggled to pull them away.

Amid the buzz of greeting which now ensued, Jean Vallot slipped quietly and all unnoticed out of the room.

The newcomer was a well-built young fellow of twenty-six,

attired in a picturesque and handsome hunting costume, his beaded leggings alone being worth the price of many oxen.



In reply to the questions and congratulations which poured upon him from all sides, St. Vrain told of the unusually prosperous voyage he had

made. "*Oui*—yes, my friends, instead of the one bateau and five canoes which I took away, I have brought back two

bateaux and nine canoes—and the store of fine skins is great. We have had wonderful luck, though we have passed through great dangers. See, a bullet from an Indian's gun took off this little piece of my ear, and as he was about to shoot again one of my friends took him off—with another bullet just a little better aimed. A dead Indian and my life saved!

“Where is Edmond Gamache, he? Oh, gone to ‘Vide Poche.’ He fears his old mother might be dead, and the other boys are gone home, too. Ten months is a long time to be away from friends, and wives and sweethearts.” He gave a long look at Pelagie as he said this. She frowned a little.

“By my faith, girls, I have brought back a famous sweetheart for one of you—if so be one is lucky enough to catch him.”

He was immediately surrounded by the bright-eyed maidens, who unceremoniously elbowed the boys aside.

Fanchette, who had only now been released by Mère Guion from her bondage, was in the very front. Paul was besieged with questions. “But, yes—one at a time,” he remonstrated. “He is English, from New York and from London. Tall? Oh, yes! A good shot, a fine oar. Yes, it was his shot that saved me from that unseen Indian. Brave—oh! and he is an artist; he can draw a picture like the life itself.



“His name, didst thou say, Fanchette? His name is Chester Hardie—and thou shalt see him to-night at the dance and shall admit he is the finest fellow in the room; and perhaps he will get the bean out of thy Twelfth-night cake and be thy *mari*.” He pinched Fanchette's cheek playfully, which little liberty caused her to color painfully and draw back. The home-coming of so many village lads and the arrival of the stranger filled these simple village girls with excitement. They made their adieux to the family of the good Commandant, and hied to their respective homes to tell the news—to hear some and perhaps to meet others of the returned travellers, ere attiring themselves in their gayest apparel for the dance which,

at one house or another, wound up the toils of nearly every day.

In honor of the new arrivals, the dance would be this night at Veuve St. Vrain's. The young fellows, of course, gathered their hats and accompanied the girls. Paul only remained with Pelagie. He had formerly been so devoted to her as to be considered her suitor, though no definite word had passed between them. His successful voyage had made him feel well able to marry, and it was in his mind to get from her at once a definite promise, and perhaps a definite date for the wedding.

But Pelagie was very coy—what a mixture of feelings is in the heart of a girl of sixteen, what a jumble of thoughts in her mind! In Paul's long absence her youthful fancy for him had somewhat faded. Other admirers had not been lacking. She enjoyed the possession of the village hero as she enjoyed her own position of village belle and beauty—yet for Paul individually she cared little, and a wedded life with him looked terribly common-place now that he was here. It would seem so with any one, she fancied. Besides, he seemed so assured and so persistent. She might perhaps marry him finally, if he would not tease her so, but some imp of contrariness made her loath to admit even that much.

"How do I know," she said with roguish demureness, "how do I know I may not meet some one I like better?"

"Oh, I will love thee so well, I will not let thee, Pelagie"—kissing her hand—"I know thou wilt marry me, but I want to hear thee say so." She shook her head obstinately. "Wilt thou say yes to-morrow? No? Next day?" She still shook her little head with a vehemence that threatened to bring down all those black braids wound so neatly about it. "Then, Christmas Day?" Her face was averted, but her head still moved from side to side energetically, and now Paul, who had been trying to look into her eyes, seized it firmly, and gently held it between his hands. "Now, thou canst not shake thy head, and if thou sayest No, I will kiss thy lips until thy breath is all—all gone."

At this dreadful threat, the eyes sparkled and the dimples came out in force, but no word was spoken. Paul gazed at her an instant, thinking he would inflict the penalty anyhow, but he evidently thought better of it, for he released her with a sigh, saying: "Then it is Yes, on Christmas Day, and *ma foi*—I think I'll marry thee the next minute. Now, Petite, I must go; Chester Hardie will think me but a poor host. To-night thou shalt see him, and thou must like him for my sake."

"I know I shall not like him," murmured Pelagie, stroking her braids and settling a vagrant hair-pin.

"And thou shalt see the fine picture he has made of me, and I will ask him to make one of thee, also. What! not one little kiss?" he grumbled, as Pelagie nimbly eluded him. "Well, I can wait until Christmas, but then, oh, I warn thee, I shall be an ogre, and eat thee up."

As Pelagie watched his figure disappearing in the distance, she felt a little strange feeling of disappointment, that he had not taken that kiss, which she had yet no mind to accord him.

When Pelagie, accompanied by her parents, reached Veuve St. Vrain's house, the guests, young and old, were already assembled, and many couples were gaily footing it over the bare white floor, to the jocund sound of Père Choiseul's fiddle. Only when the last breathless couple gave it up did the old man stop and look about him as one who has won a signal victory. All the returned voyageurs crowded about the Guion family, and many were the compliments paid the old Commandant on the beauty of his daughter. Among the last to come up was Paul, who proudly presented his friend. The stranger was deeply interested in Pelagie. His grey eyes, heavily fringed with black lashes, regarded her earnestly, while his well-cut lips framed pretty courtesies, which might have been addressed to a princess. He had already noted her and decided that he had never seen such dainty loveliness before. He took her hand for the next dance, at Paul's suggestion, and after some rounds he sat with her in a quiet corner. The quiet corner was made by their absorbed interest in each other and by the backs of a noisy, jolly set of bourgeois, who were looking at the dancing.



Pelagie had a very queer sensation when she first met Monsieur Hardie. Her heart had made a great bound, and it had not been beating regularly since. When Chester surrendered her to Paul she drew him on—easy task enough—to talk of his friend; and while the good fellow enlarged upon Chester's courage, his kindness, his honor, Pelagie listened with parted lips

and beaming eyes. Then again he told the story of how nearly he had been shot by an Indian lurking in a tree, and how it was Chester's sure bullet that had gone to the Indian's heart at the right moment to save his friend's life. Then Pelagie laughed and clapped her hands, and the old dames nudged each other and whispered, "How glad is that petite Pelagie that her sweet-heart hath returned." And all were glad with her, for Paul was a universal favorite. All save one. Jean Vallot stood about in corners and doorways, keeping Paul and Pelagie under ob-

servance. When Paul was chatting with Fanchette or one of the other girls, then Jean seemed relieved, but if he were with Pelagie, then Jean glared ferociously, and nervously fingered the revolver that was thrust in his belt. All this, too, the older people noted and laughed at, until their tears ran.

Every day the young people of the village met in their walks, or at their work, and every evening they assembled at one house to dance and chat. It was a sort of holiday season with these simple French folks, and the only work they had on hand was getting ready for Christmas. At such times friendships are easily formed, and intimacies ripen quickly. All of the villagers grew fond

of Chester Hardie, and adopted him as one of themselves. Paul had assumed that he was to receive a favorable answer from Pelagie on Christmas Day, which was fast approaching; until then he would say nothing more to her of his hopes. Much of the time when he was supposed by the neighborhood to be pushing a successful courtship, he was really listening to the reminiscences of Père Guion and his wife, while Chester Hardie talked softly to Pelagie as he transferred her exquisite features and coloring to his sketch-block. This picture was the delight



and wonder of all who saw it, and was supposed to be intended for Paul, though Chester had a different thought about the matter. In the abundance of Paul's gratitude to Hardie and love for him he had procured a costume similar to his own, and this he begged him to wear at once when he gave it to him on Christmas Eve.

To this Chester readily consented, and the two laughed heartily at the odd resemblance between them, that was brought out by the similarity of dress. On Christmas Eve of course everyone would go to midnight mass—and while all looked forward to it as a great event, they had no intention to forego their usual dance. So fiddles squeaked—there were three this time—and the steady scuffle and patter of feet was heard until a late hour.

Presents were exchanged, and good things to eat and drink were passed around. Outside, lovers, arm in arm, paced up and down in the moonlight. Jean Vallot was nowhere to be seen, but alas, poor fellow, no one missed him. Some stranger had come in hot and dusty, and after a few words to Paul St. Vrain, had mounted his panting and sweating horse and rode away. With the breaking up of the party, Paul spoke a little while with Chester and disappeared into the darkness on that side of the house that looked toward his own home.

The message brought him had been that there was a rumor that the Keokuks, an unfriendly tribe of Indians not many miles distant, were on the warpath, that they intended swooping down upon the peaceable Osages; then coming on, would wipe out a few of the villages up and down the Mississippi.

After a moment's hesitation, Paul decided to investigate the matter before alarming his friends and neighbors. And with this object he saddled his horse and set out for the Osage village.

To Chester he had briefly hinted of danger, and to him had he confided the care of Pelagie. "Listen to the mass for me. I am doing duty elsewhere."

The weather was delicious, soft and spring-like.



Groups of negroes, laughing and chatting, strolled along the moonlit streets. Other groups of silent Indians stood or squatted about waiting for the bell and for the burst of music which would announce the priest's arrival. Picturesquely-dressed youths and maidens lingered along until the moment should arrive for them to enter the church.

Pacing slowly along, talking in low, earnest tones, came Pelagie, her hand resting lightly on the fanciful sleeve of her escort's hunting-shirt. Their talk was mostly of commonplaces, but the air and manner of both conveyed a more interesting and significant story than did their lips.

As these two passed a dark spot, flung upon the path by a group of huge trees, a slouching figure detached itself from the gloom, followed them a step, while a nervous hand grasped a

freshly sharpened knife.

"*Non*," the figure muttered, with pale lips, "a curse upon Paul St. Vrain and his gorgeous hunting costume. *Non*—not yet," thrusting the knife again into his belt. "I will let him go to mass first and *après-ciel*. Yes," he smiled cruelly, "he shall go straight to heaven, and I will go to hell, only I will have Pelagie first." So the happy young couple passed on, walking on air, blissful, un-



harméd, and Jean Vallot slunk heavily down to the riverside to nurse his hot, bitter thoughts of revenge.

Then arose on the night a burst of harmony from organ and voices, and the murmur of prayers, and anon the priest re-told the old ever-new story of peace on earth and good will toward men, and a hundred hearts thrilled with holy fervor. In a distant, shadowy pew, two hands had somehow found each other and forgot to separate. Out in the deep darkness at the river brooded silent, unhappy Jean; out in the dappled darkness of the forest rode Paul, merrily humming the last waltz—he had danced it with Fanchette, somehow, and not with Pelagie, “more’s the pity.”

Paul could not be downcast, even though danger threatened the village. “It would all come right somehow.”

Amid the merry clangor of Christmas bells, the church poured out its throng, and the now really wearied people sought their homes. A slouching shadow had pursued Chester Hardie and Pelagie to the Guion’s gate, and as the two lingered for a last word, a knife, sharp and glittering, clove the air, and—but love is quicker than hate—Pelagie’s arm interposed, and the cruel knife did not quite reach Chester’s heart, but tore Pelagie’s arm instead, and then buried itself in Hardie’s side. As Pelagie’s piercing scream rang out, Chester put out an arm to shield her, and grasping each other they fell unconscious to the ground.

Jean turned upon his heel and vanished into the nearest shadow.

The girl’s cry had not only brought out her father and mother, but also arrested a host of friends, who with much gesticulation and many “*Mon Dieu*” carried the pair into the house.

Pelagie soon recovered consciousness, and applied herself feverishly to tender care for Chester, who still lay pale and speechless.

Many were the expressions of wonder that one so beloved as Chester should have been the subject of such an attack, and many were the questions asked—where, above all, was Paul St. Vrain? He was suddenly missed and no one could say where he had gone. Trembling neighbors came in to know if it was true that Paul St. Vrain had been shot by Hardie;



while as many more had heard that Paul had himself killed his friend.

In the midst of this confusion Paul entered, very pale and almost breathless. A glass of Mère Guion's good home-made wine was given him, while he listened to the story told by a dozen excited people.



He set his glass upon the dresser, and after a slight pause said—“Jean Vallot.” A babel of voices arose. Why had no one thought of it before! “Find Jean at once!” “Send for him,”—“He will have fled!”

Paul now told his story—how he had gone to see if there was danger from the Keokuks; how the Osages had denied that there was anything in the report;—how, speeding along the road, he had met Jean Vallot, and, reining in his horse, had called out to him a friendly greeting.

“He turned,” said Paul, “like a corpse; he was pale enough already, and, without a word, he plunged his knife into his own heart.

“I almost fell off my horse with horror; but there he lies, in the road stone-dead. I galloped in for assistance as fast as I could. Why—why, on earth, did he do this thing?” Chester Hardie took up Pelagie's hand and pressed it to his lips.

“Holy Mother of God!” exclaimed Veuve St. Vrain, “he thought he had slain thee and it was thy spirit that had arisen to accuse him!

“Yes, that hunting-suit—that new suit of M. Hardie—he took him for thee.”

“Just so,” said Chester, faintly; “the fellow has long thirsted for your blood, Paul, and he has gotten a little of mine by mistake.”

“And so thou hast saved my life once more! What can I ever do for thee in return?”

Chester fixed his bright burning eyes upon his friend for an instant, then again he took the hand of Pelagie within his own.

The look and action were full of significance to Paul. In his present exalted state he comprehended everything. His face fell, then with a heroic effort he mastered himself.

"Is it really so? Chester, Pelagie?" The girl hung her head, but she nodded. A clink of glasses came from the adjoining room, where the villagers had stopped preparatory to setting out after Jean Vallot's body. No one was in the room but themselves. Pelagie's eyes had found Chester's, and it was bitter to Paul to see the love-light in them. Tears rushed to his own.

"Be it so," he cried bravely. He took a hand of each. "Thou hast won the sweetest girl, Chester, and thou Pelagie the bravest boy; thou art worthy of each other. But let thy wedding be this day, Chester; it will cheer us up; we want something to make us merry. I shall go and speak to Père Billon at once." His assumed gaiety but poorly veiled his hurt. Yet, what do lovers in the first flush of happiness care for the wounds they inflict on others. They were absorbed in their first kiss, that divine first kiss, ere Paul had reached the outer room. And while the sweetness of that kiss yet lingered on their lips, the bells rang out the joyful Christmas morning.

Chubby French children crawled out of bed to see what the jolly old saint had brought them, to besiege their parents with the Christmas greeting, and to clap delighted hands at the falling snow. Merry Christmas for the children. Merry, merry Christmas for the lovers who may be married to-day! but sad, sad Christmas in the home of Jean Vallot. The usual gaieties of the season went on, however, with philosophic disregard of any unusual event. The dance was at Fanchette's house instead of being at the Commandant's, and Fanchette was the belle of the evening and monopolized Paul St. Vrain. Chester and Pelagie were missed, but not much, and at nine o'clock the dancers took a recess and trooped over to see Pelagie and



Chester married. After drinking to the bride's health they trooped back and danced more gaily than ever. And not a few, Fanchette among the number, pronounced it the very jolliest Christmas yet.



THE SHRINKING SHOE*

BY WALTER BESANT

"Oh, you poor dear!" said the two Elder Sisters in duet, "you've got to stay at home while we go to the ball. Good night, then. We *are* so sorry for you! We did hope that you were going, too!"

"Good night, Elder Sisters," said the youngest, with a tear just showing in either eye, but not rolling down her cheek. "Go and be happy. If you *should* see the Prince you may tell him that I am waiting for the Fairy and the Pumpkin and the Mice."

The Elder Sisters fastened the last button—the sixth, was it? or the tenth, perhaps—took one last critical, and reassuring, look at the glass, and departed.

When the door shut the Youngest Sister sat down by the fire; and one, two, three tears rolled down her cheeks.

Mind you, she had very good cause to cry. Many girls cry for much less. She was seventeen: she had understood that she would come out at this visit to London. Coming out, to this country girl, meant just this one dance and nothing more. But no—her sisters were invited and she was not. She was left alone in the house. And she sat down by the fire and allowed herself to be filled with gloom and sadness, and with such thoughts as, in certain antiquated histories, used to be called rebellious. In short, she was in a very bad temper indeed. Never before had she been in such a bad temper. As a rule she was sweet-tempered as the day is long. But—which is a terrible thing to remember—there are always the possibilities of bad temper in every one: even in Katharine—Katie—Kitty, who generally looked as if she could never, never, never show by any outward sign that she was vexed, or cross, or put out, or rebellious. And now, alas! she was in a bad temper. No hope, no sunshine, no future prospects; her life was blasted—her young Spring life. Disaster irretrievable had fallen upon her. She could not go to the ball. What made things worse was, that the more angry she grew the louder she heard the dance music, though the band was

* A Selection from the "Pall Mall Magazine."

distant more than a mile. Quite plainly she heard the musicians. They were playing a valse which she knew—a delicious, delirious, dreamy, swinging valse. She saw her sisters among a crowd of the most lovely girls in the world, whirling in the cadence that she loved upon a floor as smooth as ice, with cavaliers gallant and gay. The room was filled with maidens beautifully dressed, like her sisters, and with young men come to meet and greet them on their way. Oh, happy young men! Oh, happy girls! Katie had been brought up with such simplicity that she envied no other girl, whether for her riches or for her dresses; and was always ready to acknowledge the loveliness and the sweetness and the grace of any number of girls—even of her own age. As regards her own sex, indeed, this child of seventeen had but one fault: she considered twenty as already a serious age, and wondered how anybody could possibly laugh after five-and-twenty. And, as many, or most, girls believe, she thought that beauty was entirely a matter of dress; and that, except on state occasions, no one should think of beauty—*i.e.*, of fine dress.

She sat there for half an hour. She began to think that it would be best to go to bed and sleep off her chagrin, when a Rat-tat-tat at the door roused her. Who was that? Could it—could it—could it be the Fairy with the Pumpkin and the Mice?

“My dear Katie”—it was not the Fairy, but it was the Godmother—“how sorry I am! Quick—lay out the things, Ladbrooke.” Ladbrooke was a maid, and she bore a parcel. “It’s not my fault. The stupid people only brought the things just now. It was my little surprise, dear. We will dress her here, Ladbrooke. I was going to bring the things in good time, to surprise you at the last moment. Never mind: you will only be a little late. I hope and trust the things will fit. I got one of your frocks, and Ladbrooke here can, if necessary—There, Katie! What do you think of that for your first ball-dress?”

Katie was so astonished that she could say nothing, not even to thank her Godmother. Her heart beat and her hands trembled; the maid dressed her and did her hair; her Godmother gave her a necklace of pearls and a little bunch of flowers: she put on the most charming pair of white satin shoes: she found in the parcel a pair of white gloves with ever so many buttons, and a white fan with painted flowers. When she looked at the glass she could not understand it at all; for she was transformed. But never was any girl dressed so quickly.

"Oh!" she cried. "You *are* a Fairy. And you've got a Pumpkin as well?"

"The Pumpkin is at the door with the Mice. Come, dear. I shall be proud of my *débutante*."

The odd thing was that all the time she was dressing, and all the time she was in the carriage, Katie heard that valse tune ringing in her ears, and when they entered the ball-room that very same identical valse was being played and the smooth floor was covered with dancers, gallant young men and lovely maidens—all as she had seen and heard in her vision. Oh! there is something in the world more than coincidence. There must be; else, why did Katie—

"Oh, my dear," said the Elder Sisters, stopping in their dance, "you have come at last! We knew you were coming, but we couldn't tell. Shall we tell the Prince you are here?"

Then a young gentleman was presented to her. But Katie was too nervous to look up when he bowed and begged. After a little, Katie found that his step went very well with hers. She was then able to consider things a little. Her first partner in her first ball was quite a young man—she had not caught his name, Mr. Geoffrey something—a handsome young man, she thought, but rather shy. He began to talk about the usual things.

"I live in the country," she said, to explain her ignorance, "and this is my first ball. So, you see, I do not know any people or anything."

He danced with her again: she was a wonderfully light dancer; she was strangely graceful; he found her, also, sweet to look at; she had soft eyes and a curiously soft voice, which was as if all the sympathy in all the world had been collected together and deposited in that little brain. He had the good-fortune to take her in to supper; and, being a young man at that time singularly open to the charms of maidens, he lavished upon her all the attentions possible. Presently he was so far subdued by her winning manner that he committed the foolishness of Samson with his charmer. He told his secret. Just because she showed a little interest in him, and regarded him with eyes of wonder, he told her the great secret of his life—his ambition, the dream of his youth, his purpose. Next morning he felt he had been a fool. The girl would tell other girls, and they would all laugh together. He felt hot and ashamed for a moment. Then he thought of her eyes, and how they

lightened when he whispered; and of her voice, and how it sank when she murmured sympathy and hope and faith. No—with such a girl his secret was safe.

So it was. But for her, if you think of it, was promotion indeed! For a girl who a few days before had been at school, under rules and laws, hardly daring to speak—certainly not daring to have an opinion of her own—now receiving deferential homage from a young man at least four years her senior, and actually being entrusted with his secret ambitions! More; there were other young men waiting about, asking for a dance; all treating her as if—well, modern manners do not treat young ladies with the old reverential courtesy—as if she were a person of considerable importance. But she liked the first young man the best. He had such an honest face, this young man. It was a charming supper, and, with her charming companion, Katie talked quite freely and at her ease. How nice to begin with a partner with whom one could be quite at one's ease! But everything at this ball was delightful.

After the young man had told his secret, blushing profoundly, Katie told hers—how she had as nearly as possible missed her first ball; and how her sisters had gone without her and left her in the cinders, crying.

“Fairy Godmother turned up at the last moment, and when I was dressed and we went out,” she laughed merrily, “we found the Pumpkin and the Mice turned into a lovely carriage and pair.”

“It is a new version of the old story,” said the young man.

“Yes,” she replied thoughtfully, “and now all I want is to find the Prince.”

The young man raised his eyes quickly. They said, with great humility, “If I could only be the Prince!” She read those words, and she blushed and became confused, and they talked no more that night.

“It was all lovely,” she said in the carriage going home. “All but one thing—one thing that I said—oh, such a stupid thing!”

“What was it you said, Katie?”

“No: I could never tell anybody. It was *too* stupid. Oh! To think of it makes me turn red. It almost spoiled the evening. And he saw it too.”

“What was it, Katie?”

But she would not tell the Elder Sisters.

"Who was it," asked one of them, "that took Katie in to supper?"

"A young man named Armiger, I believe. Horace told me," said the other Elder. Horace was a cousin. "Horace says he is a cousin of a Sir Roland Armiger, about whom I know nothing. Horace says he is a good fellow—very young yet—an undergraduate somewhere. He is a nice-looking boy."

Then the Elder Sisters began to talk about matters really serious—namely, themselves and their own engagements—and Katie was forgotten.

Two days after the ball there arrived a parcel addressed to the three sisters collectively—"The Misses De Lisle." The three sisters opened it together, with Eve-like curiosity.

It contained a white satin shoe; a silver buckle set with pearls adorned it, and a row of pearls ran round the open part. A most dainty shoe; a most attractive shoe; a most bewildering shoe.

"This," said the Elder Sisters, solemnly, "must be tried on by all of us in succession."

The Elder Sisters began: it was too small for either, though they squeezed and made faces and an effort and a fuss, and everything that could be made except making the foot go into the shoe. Then Katie tried it on. Wonderful to relate, the foot slipped in quite easily. Yet they say that there is nothing but coincidence in the world.

Katie blushed and laughed and blushed again. Then she folded up the shoe in its silver paper and carried it away; and nobody ever heard her mention that shoe again. But everybody knew that she kept it, and the Elder Sisters marveled because the young Prince did not come to see that shoe tried on. He did not appear. Why not? Well—because he was too shy to call.

There are six thousand five hundred and sixty-three variants of this story, as has been discovered through the invaluable researches of the Folk-Lore Society, and it would be strange if they all ended in the same way.

The young man told his secret; he revealed what he had never before whispered to any living person; he told his ambition—the most sacred thing that a young man possesses or can reveal.

There are many kinds of ambition; many of them are laudable; we are mostly ambitious of those things which seem to the

lowest imagination to be within our reach—such, for instance, as the saving of money. Those who aspire to things which seem out of reach suffer the pain and the penalty of the common snub. This young man aspired to things which seemed to other people quite beyond his reach; for he had no money, and his otherwise highly respectable family had no political influence, and such a thing had never before been heard of among his people that one of themselves should aspire to greater greatness than the succession to the family title with the family property. As a part of the new Revolution, which is already upon us, there will be few things indeed which an ambitious young man will consider beyond his reach. At the present moment, if I were to declare my ambition to become, when I grow up, Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, the thing would be actually received with derision. My young life would be blasted with contempt. Wait, however, for fifty years: you shall then see to what heights I will reach out my climbing hands.

Geoffrey Armiger would have soared. He saw before him the cases of Canning, of Burke, of Disraeli, of Robert Lowe, and of many others who started without any political influence and with no money, and he said to himself, "I, too, will become a statesman."

That was the secret which he confided into Katie's ear; it was in answer to a question of hers, put quite as he could have wished, as to his future career. "I have told no one," he replied, in a low voice and with conscious flush. "I have never ventured to tell any one, because my people would not understand; they are not easily moved out of the ordinary groove. There is a family living, and I am to have it: that is the fate to which I am condemned. But——" His lips snapped; resolution flamed in his eyes.

"Oh!" cried Katie. "It is splendid! You must succeed. Oh! To be a great statesman! Oh! There is only one thing better—to be a great poet. You might be both."

Geoffrey replied modestly that, although he had written verse, he hardly expected to accomplish both greatness in poetry and greatness as a legislator. The latter, he declared, would be good enough for him.

That was the secret which this young man confided to the girl. You must own that, for such a young man to reveal such a secret to this girl, on the very first evening that he met her,

argues for the maiden the possession of sympathetic qualities quite above the common.

Five years change a boy of twenty into a mature man of twenty-five, and a *débutante* of seventeen into an old woman of twenty-two. The acknowledgment of such a fact may save the historian a vast quantity of trouble.

It was five years after the great event of the ball. The family cousin, Horace, of whom mention has been already made, was sitting in his chambers at ten or eleven in the evening. With him sat his friend, Sir Geoffrey Armiger, a young man whom you have already met. The death of his cousin had transformed him from a penniless youth into a baronet with a great estate (which might have been in Spain or Ireland for all the good it was), and with a great fortune in stocks. There was now no occasion for him to take the family living: that had gone to a deserving stranger; a clear field lay open for his wildest ambitions. This bad fortune to the cousin, who was still quite young, happened the year after the ball. Of course, therefore, the young man of vast ambition had already both feet on the ladder? You shall see.

"What are you going to do all the summer?" asked the family cousin, Horace.

"I don't know," Geoffrey replied, languidly. "Take the yacht somewhere, I suppose. Into the Baltic, perhaps. Will you come, too?"

"Can't. I've got work to do. I shall run over to Switzerland for three weeks, perhaps. Better come with me and do some climbing."

Geoffrey shook his head.

"Man!" cried the other impatiently, you want something to do. Doesn't it bore you—just going on day after day, day after day, with nothing to think of but your own amusement?"

Geoffrey yawned. "The Profession of Amusement," he said, "is, in fact, deadly dull."

"Then why follow it?"

"Because I am so rich. You fellows who've got nothing *must* work. When a man is not obliged to work, there are a thousand excuses. I don't believe that I *could* work now if I wanted to. Yet I used to have ambitions."

"You did. When it was difficult to find a way to live while you worked, you had enormous ambitions: 'If only I was not

obliged to provide for the daily bread;’ that was what you used to say. Well, now the daily bread is provided, what excuse have you?”

“I tell you, a thousand excuses present themselves the moment I think of doing any work. Besides, the ambitions are dead!”

“Dead! And at five-and-twenty! They can’t be dead.”

“They are. Dead and buried. Killed by five years’ racket. Profession of Pleasure—Pleasure, I believe they call it. No man can follow more than one profession.”

“Well, old man, if the world’s pleasures are already rather dry in the mouth, what will they be when you’ve been running after them for fifty years?”

“There are cards, I believe. Cards are always left. No,”—he got up and leaned over the mantelshelf,—“I can’t say that the fortune has brought much happiness with it. That’s the worst of being rich. You see very well that you are not half so happy as the fellows who are making their own way, and yet you can’t give up your money and start fair with the rest. I always think of that story of the young man who was told to give up all he had to the poor. He couldn’t, you see. He saw very clearly that it would be best for him; but he couldn’t. I am that young man. If I was like you, with all the world to conquer, I should be ten times as strong and a hundred times as clever. I know it—yet I cannot give up the money.”

“Nobody wants you to give it up. But surely you could go on like other fellows—as if you hadn’t got it, I mean.”

“No—you don’t understand. It’s like a millstone tied round your neck. It drags you down and keeps you down.”

“Why don’t you marry?”

“Why don’t I? Well, when I meet the girl I fancy, I will marry if she will have me. I suppose I’m constitutionally cold, because as yet—Who is this girl?” He took up a cabinet photograph which stood on the mantelshelf. “I seem to know the face. It’s a winning kind of face—what they call a beseeching face. Where have I seen it?”

“That? It is the portrait of a cousin of mine. I don’t think you can have met her anywhere, because she lives entirely in the country.”

“I have certainly seen her somewhere. Perhaps in a picture. Beatrice, perhaps. It is the face of an angel. Faces sometimes deceive, though: I know a girl in quite the smartest set who can assume the most saintly face when she pleases. She puts it on

when she converses with the curate; when she goes to church she becomes simply angelic. At other times—Your cousin does not, however, I should say, follow the Profession of Amusement."

"Not exactly. She lives in a quiet little seaside place where they've got a convalescent home, and she slaves for the patients."

"It is a beautiful face," Geoffrey repeated. "But I seem to know it." He looked at the back of the photograph. "What are these lines written at the back?"

"They are some nonsense rhymes written by herself. There is a little family tradition that Katie is waiting for her Prince—she says so herself—she has refused a good many men. I think she will never marry, because she certainly will not find the man she dreams of."

"May I read the lines?" He read them aloud—

"Oh! tell me, Willow-wren and White-throat, beating
The sluggish breeze with eager homeward wing,
Bear you no message for me—not a greeting
From him you left behind—my Prince and King?"

"You come from far—from south and east and west;
Somewhere you left him, daring some great thing,
I know not what, save that it is the best:
Somewhere you saw him—saw my Prince and King.

"You cannot choose but know him; by the crown
They place upon his head—the crown and ring:
And by the loud and many-voiced renown
After the footsteps of my Prince and King.

"He speaks, and lo! the listening world obeys;
He leads, and all men follow; and they cling,
And hang around the words and works and ways,
As of a Prophet—of my Prince and King.

"What matter if he comes not, though I wait?
Bear you no greeting for me, birds of spring?
Again—what matter, since his work is great,
And greater grows his name—my Prince and King."

"You see," said the cousin, "she has set up an ideal man."

"Yes. Why does she call him her Prince?"

The cousin laughed. "There is a story about a ball—her first ball—her last, too, poor child, because—well, there were losses, you know. Like the landlady, Katie has known better days; and friends died, and so she lives by herself in this little village, and looks after her patient convalescents."

"What about her first ball?"

"Well, she nearly missed it, because her Godmother, who meant to give her a surprise, lost a train or got late somehow. So her elder sisters went without her, and she arrived late; and they said that, to complete the story, nothing was wanted but the Prince."

Geoffrey started and changed color.

"That's all. She imagined a Prince, and goes on with her dream. She enacts a novel which never comes to an end, and has no situations, and has an invisible hero."

Geoffrey laid down the photograph. He now remembered everything, including the sending of the slipper. But the cousin had quite forgotten his own part in the story.

"I must go," he said. "I think I shall take the yacht somewhere round the coast. You say your cousin lives at——"

"Oh! Yes, she lives at Shellacomb Bay, near Torquay. Sit down again."

"No. Dull place, Shellacomb Bay; I've been there, I think." He was rather irresolute, but that was his way. "I must go. I rather think there are some men coming into my place about this time. There will be nap. All professionals, you know—Professors of Amusement. It's dull work. I say, if your cousin found her Prince, what an awful, awful disappointment it would be!"

At five in the morning Geoffrey was left alone. The night's play was over. He turned back the curtains and opened the windows, letting in the fresh morning air of April. He leaned out and took a deep breath. Then he returned to the room. The table was littered with packs of cards. There was the smell of a thousand cigarettes. It is an acrid smell, not like the honest, downright smell of pipes and cigars; the board was covered with empty soda-water and champagne bottles.

"The Professional Pursuer of Pleasure," he murmured. "It's a learned profession, I suppose. Quite a close profession. Very costly to get into. And beastly stupid and dull when you are in it. A learned profession, certainly."

He sat down, and his thoughts returned to the girl who had made for herself a Prince. "Her Prince!" he said bitterly. And then the words came back to him——

"Daring some great thing,
I know not what, save that it is the best:
Somewhere you saw him—saw my Prince and King."

"For one short night I was her Prince and King," he murmured. "And I sent her the slipper—was stone-broke a whole term after through buying that slipper. And after all I was afraid to call at the house. Her Prince and King. I wonder——" He looked about him again—looked at the empty bottles. "*What* a Prince and King!" he laughed bitterly.

Then he sprang to his feet; he opened a drawer and took from it a bundle of letters, photographs, cards of invitation which were lying there piled up in confusion. He threw these on the fire in a heap; he opened another drawer and pulled out another bundle of notes and papers. These also he threw on the fire. "There!" he said resolutely. What he meant I know not, for he did not wait to see them burned, but went into his bedroom and so to bed.

Geoffrey spoke no more than the simple truth when he said that Katie De Lisle had a saintly face—the face of an angel. It was a lovely face when he first saw it—the face of a girl passing into womanhood. Five years of tranquil life, undisturbed by strong emotions, devoted to unselfish labors and to meditation, had now made that face saintly indeed. It was true that she had created for herself a Prince, one who was at once a Galahad of romance and a leader of the present day, chivalrous knight and Paladin of parliament. What she did with her Prince I do not know. Whether she thought of him continually or only seldom, whether she believed in him or only hoped for him, no one can tell. When a man proposed to her—which happened whenever a man was presented to her—she refused him graciously, and told her sisters, who were now matrons, that another person had come representing himself to be the Prince, but that she had detected an impostor, for he was not the Prince. And it really seemed as if she never would find this impossible Prince, which was a great pity, if only because she had a very little income, and the Elder Sisters, who lived in great houses, desired her also to have a great house. Of course, every Prince who regards his own dignity must have a big house of his own.

Now, one afternoon in April, when the sun sets about a quarter-past seven and it is light until eight, Katie was sitting on one of the benches placed on the shore for the convenience of the convalescents, two or three of whom were strolling along the shore. The sun was getting low; a warmth and glow lay upon the bay like an illuminated mist. Katie had a book in her

hand, but she let it drop into her lap, and sat watching the beauty and the splendor and the color of the scene before her. Then there came, rounding the southern headland, a steam yacht, which slowly crept into the bay, and dropped anchor, and let off steam; a graceful little craft, with her slender spars and her dainty curves. The girl watched with a little interest. Not often did craft of any kind put into that bay. There were bays to the east and bays to the west, where ships, boats, fishing smacks and all kind of craft put in; but not in that bay, where there was no quay, or port, or anything but the convalescents, and Katie the volunteer nurse. So she watched, sitting on the bench, with the western sun falling upon her face.

After a little, a boat was lowered, and a man and a boy got into it. The boy took the sculls and rowed the man ashore. The man jumped out, stood irresolutely looking about him, observed Katie on the bench, looked at her rather rudely it seemed, and walked quickly towards her. What made her face turn pale? What made her cheek turn red and pale? Nothing less than the appearance of her Prince—her Prince. She knew him at once. Her Prince! It was her Prince come to her at last.

But the Prince did not hold out both hands and cry "I have come." Not at all. He gravely and politely took off his hat. "Miss De Lisle," he said. "I cannot hope that you remember me. I only met you once. But I—I heard that you were here, and I remembered your face at once."

"I seldom forget people," she replied, rising and giving him her hand. "You are Mr. Geoffrey Armiger. We danced together one night. I remember it especially, because it was my first ball."

"Which you nearly missed, and were left at home like Cinderella, till the fairy Godmother came. I—I am cruising about here. I learned that you were living here from your cousin in the Temple, and—and I thought that, if we put in here, I might, perhaps, venture to call."

"Certainly. I shall be very glad to see you, Mr. Armiger. It is seven o'clock now. Will you come to tea to-morrow afternoon?"

"With the greatest pleasure. May I walk with you—in your direction?"

The situation was delicate. What Geoffrey wanted to convey was this: "You once received the confidences of a young man

who hoped to do great things in the world. You have gone on believing that he would do great things. You have built up an ideal man, before whom all other men are small creatures. Well, that ideal must be totally disconnected with the young fellow who started it, because he has gone to the bad. He is only a Professor of Amusement, an idle killer of time, a man who wastes all his gifts and powers." A difficult thing to say, because it involved charging the girl with, or telling her he knew that she had been, actually thinking of him for five years.

That evening he got very little way. He reminded her again of the ball. He said that she had altered very little, which was true; for at twenty-two Katie preserved much the same ethereal beauty that she had at seventeen. That done, his jaws stuck, to use a classical phrase. He could say no more. He left her at the door of her cottage—she lived in a cottage in the midst of tree-fuchsias and covered with roses—and went back to his yacht, where he had a solitary dinner and passed a morose evening.

At five o'clock in the afternoon next day he called again. Miss De Lisle was at the Home, but would come back immediately. The books on the girl's table betrayed the character of her mind. Katie's books showed the level of her thoughts and the standard of her ideals. They were the books of a girl who meditates. There are such people, even in this busy and noisy age. Geoffrey took them up with a sinking heart. Professors of Amusement never read such books.

Then she came in, quiet, serene; and they sat down and the tea was brought in.

"Now, tell me," she said abruptly. "I see by your card that you have a title. What did you do to get it?"

"Nothing. I succeeded."

"Oh!" Her face fell a little. "When I saw you—the only time that I saw you—I remember that you had great ambitions. What have you done?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all. I have wasted my time. I have lived a life of what they call pleasure. I don't know that I ought to have called upon you at all."

"Is it possible? Oh! Can it be possible? Only a life of pleasure? And you—you with your noble dreams? Oh! Is it possible?"

"It is possible. It is quite true. I am the prodigal son, who has so much money that he cannot get through it. But do you

remember the silly things I said ? Why, you see, what happened was, that when the temptation came, all the noble dream vanished."

"Is it possible?" she repeated. "Oh! I am so very, very sorry!"—in fact the tears came into her eyes. "You have destroyed the one illusion that I nourished." Every one thinks that he has only one illusion and a clear eye for everything else. That is the Great, the Merciful, Illusion. "I thought that there was one true man at least in the world, fighting for the right. I had been honored as a girl with the noble ambitions of that man when he was quite young. I thought I should hear of him from time to time winning recognition, power and authority. It was a beautiful dream. It made me feel almost as if I were myself taking part in that great career, even from this obscure corner of the country. No one knows the pleasure that a woman has in watching the career of a brave and wise man. And now it is gone. I am sorry you called,"—her voice became stony and her eyes hard: even an angel or a saint has moments of righteous indignation,—“I am very sorry, Sir Geoffrey Armiger, that you took the trouble to call.”

Her visitor rose. "I am also very sorry," he said, "that I have said or done anything to pain you. Forgive me: I will go."

But he lingered. He took up a paper-knife, and considered it as if it were something rare and curious. He laid it down. Then he laughed a little short laugh, and turned to Katie with smiling lips and solemn eyes.

"Did that slipper fit?" he asked, abruptly.

She blushed. But she answered him.

"It was too small for my Elder Sisters, but it fitted me."

"Will you try it on again?"

She went out of the room and presently returned with the pretty, jeweled, little slipper. She took off her shoe, sat down, and tried it on.

"You see," she said, "it is now too small for my foot. Oh! my foot has not changed in the least. It has grown too small."

"Try again." The Prince looked on anxiously. "Perhaps, with a little effort, a little goodwill——"

"No; it is quite hopeless. The slipper has shrunk; you can see for yourself, if you remember what it was like when you bought it. See, it is ever so much smaller than it was, Sir Geoffrey." She looked up gravely. "See for yourself. And the

silver buckle is black, and even the pearls are tarnished. See!" There was a world of meaning in her words. "Think what it was, five years ago."

He took it from her hand, and turned it round and round disconsolately.

"You remember it—five years ago—when it was new?" the girl asked again.

"I remember. Oh! yes, I remember. A pretty thing it was, then, wasn't it? A world of promise in it, I remember. Hope and courage, and—and all kinds of possibilities. Pity—silver gone black, pearls tarnished, color faded, the thing itself shrunken. Yes." He gave it back to her. "I'm glad you've kept it."

"Of course I kept it."

"Yes, of course. Will you go on keeping it?"

"I think so. One likes to remember a time of promise, and of hope, courage, and, as you say, all kinds of possibilities."

He sighed.

"Slippers are so. There are untold sympathies in slippers. I call this the Oracle of the slipper. Not that I am in the least surprised. I came here, in fact, on purpose to ascertain, if I could, the amount of shrinkage. It would be interesting to return every five years or so, just to see how much it shrinks every year. Next time it would be a doll's shoe, for instance. Well, now"—again he fell back upon the paper-knife—"there was something else I had to say; something else—" He dropped his eyes, and examined the paper-knife closely. "The other day in your cousin's rooms I saw your photograph; and I remember the kind of young fellow I was when we talked about ambitions and you sympathized with me. I think I should like to take up those ambitions again, if it is not too late. I am sick and weary of the Profession of Pleasure. I have wasted five good years, but perhaps they can be retrieved. Let me, if possible, bur-nish up that silver, expand that shrinking shoe, renew those dreams."

"Do you mean it? Are you strong enough? Oh, you have fallen so low. Are you strong enough to rise?"

"I don't know. If the event should prove—if that slipper should enlarge again—if it should once more fit your foot!"

"If! Oh! how can a man say *if*, when he ought to say *shall*?"

"The slipper *shall* enlarge," he said quietly, but with as much

determination as one can expect from an Emeritus Professor of Pleasure.

"When it does, then come again. Till then, do not, if you please, seek me out in my obscurity. It would only be the final destruction of a renewed hope. Farewell, Sir Geoffrey."

"Au revoir. Not farewell."

He stooped and kissed her hand and left her.





BY VIRGINIA WOODWARD CLOUD



BECAUSE of the bluest of eyes, Joco is sorrowful.

He leaps upon the side of the throne and shakes his bells in the ears of the King and bursts into a song of mirth.

None see behind his painted smile that Joco is sorrowful.

The Court thrills with laughter. The old King holds his sides. She with the bluest of eyes sits beside him and smiles while the fool sings; smiles in the face of one who bends over her. She toys with the roses in her hands; red roses that Joco plucks daily for Her Highness.

(The morrow will bring white ones for a royal bride.)

Two little pages, half hidden by velvet hangings, press their faces against the glass door of the salon.

"I would be a Fool," says one; "'tis greater to be Fool than King! Watch when His Majesty doth speak how the wise ones nod and yawn in their beards, while let the Fool but make a jest and they laugh and clasp their sides with glee!"

And the other, his round eyes fixed on Joco, says: "Ay, 'tis a happy thing to be a Fool!"

"And mark how grand the Prince is, and how he doth gaze at Her Highness!" speaks the first one. "O but the nuptials will be wonderful, and we shall bear the royal train!"

* Written for Short Stories, with Illustrations by F. Schuyler Mathews.
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"Ay," says the little one, "and Joco will have a new spangled cap and silver bells!"

She with the bluest of eyes passes a rose across her lips. It



falls beside her as she leans to speak with the King. The Prince sees it not, he gravely listens to the King. But Joco is dancing wildly. A whirling ball of red and white he seems. Alighting with a leap he twirls something triumphantly aloft and thrusts it in his bosom. Is it his crimson cap? Never hath he been so mad with mirth, the silly Fool! The Princess bends her beautiful head; the rose is gone. How quick are the eyes of love! And she smiles up at the Prince.

The old King laughs long at the Fool's dance, and Joco, his hands across his breast, bows mockingly and laughs back in very bitterness.

Because of the bluest of eyes he is so sorrowful!

The Court retires. The Fool, leaping and jumping, shakes his bells before them and jests in the faces of the wise ones. Once he bounds forward, and with strange boldness kneels and touches with his lips the hand of her with the bluest of eyes.

"Ah, the good Fool!" she murmurs, smiling. And the little pages peer from behind her train and whisper:

"When we are older, we, too, will be Fools!"

The morrow dawns. The palace is a-flutter. Glittering forms pass up and down the marble stairways. Pages and courtiers run hither and thither, each more important than the other. Folly is forgotten. Grand beings in gold lace stand talking in subdued tones, and each is greater than the other.

The little pages, shining in satin, strut up and down a corridor, and each is vainer than the other.

They are whispering:

"When we are older we, too, will wear gold lace and take snuff."

So in a night can youth forget.
The Court assembles.

A mass of wonderful white roses is borne to Her Highness,
and, standing beside the Prince, she with
the bluest of eyes lifts the blossoms in
her hands.

Beneath them lies a crimson cap and
bells.

"Strange," she murmurs, "whence
come they? And Joco, where is he?"

But the Fool comes not.

One white rose is touched with red.

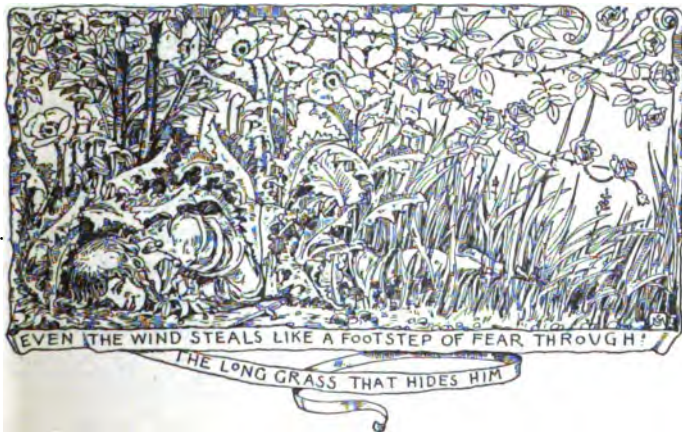
"Ah, see," she says, "it hath the color
of blood!"

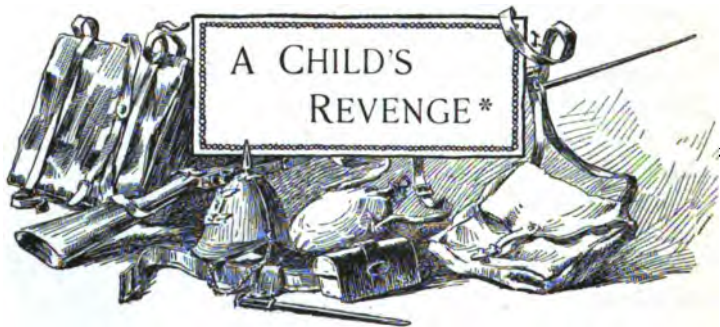
But he beside her speaks, and, lifting
the bluest of eyes to his face, she for-
gets. . .

And the Fool comes not.

Nay, as dawn unbinds the eyes of the world, he hath doffed
his cap and bells. Even the wind steals like a footstep of fear
through the long grass that hides him, and the dew lingers like a
mist of tears. . .

By and by the little pages, strolling hand in hand through the
garden, wander nigh, chatting of the royal nuptials; but they
see him not. . . and Joco is smiling, but hears them not. . .
still smiling, while only a withered red rose lies upon the place
that was his heart, and that for long days and nights hath been
—because of the bluest of eyes—so sorrowful! . . .





BY PAUL BOURGET

One of the ever-to-be-remembered events of my childhood was the arrival, in the provincial town where I lived, of some Austrian soldiers, prisoners of the campaign of 1859.

We were not spoiled by great numbers of travellers in that lonesome town of C—, in Auvergne, where there were no railroads until recently, and which was visited in the summer months only by solitary invalids on their way to Royat, which was still wild, or to Mont Dore, or le Bomboule, which were almost inaccessible. The advent, then, of these conquered enemies, with their white uniforms soiled with use, and with their foreign faces, was a great event for every one, but particularly for small boys of my age—I was seven then—who stared at the newcomers with undisguised curiosity.

Old soldiers of seventy, who patted our curly heads, had seen our eagles victorious, and the story of Napoleon's glory was so often repeated that it filled our youthful imagination with pathetic and at the same time comical chimeras. For instance, my bosom friend Emile C. and I fully believed that a French boy was twice as strong as two boys of the same age of any other nationality. Great was our astonishment when we compared the strong and vigorous Austrian soldiers with our own as they passed along the same walks and under the same trees. We were almost stupefied at finding them of about the same size and with the same development of muscle. Such was the puerile form in which our faith in race had clothed itself.

* Translated by H. Twitchell, from the French, for Short Stories.—
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Why I have so vividly remembered the visit, brief as it was, of these prisoners, is because there was connected with it another souvenir, a story, which was for a long time a mystery, and which I think of still with impassioned interest, whenever I hear any discussion about the character of children.

The person who told it to me remains pictured in my memory as one of the most original that I ever knew in that provincial town, where my eyes had early ferreted out originality in faces, and my precocious attention had been directed to peculiarities in customs and manners. He was an old family friend, a former professor in the University, now retired with the rank and pension of inspector, who responded to the fantastic name of M. Optal Viple. The man was as fantastic as his name; very large, very thin, with a pointed bald head, and glasses set upon an infinite nose. Summer and winter he wore a double-breasted coat buttoned close around his gaunt figure, and winter and summer his feet were encased in double-soled shoes, which he wore at all times in the house for fear of catching cold.

He had gratuitously taken it upon himself to teach me the elements of Latin and Greek, for the pleasure of applying a method of his own, and every day about nine o'clock I went to study in his library, before his dinner hour, which was invariably at ten that he might have appetite for his supper at half-past five. Not once since the death of his wife had the retired inspector varied from his rule of two meals a day. These were ordered by himself according to the hygienic advice of a physician, who inspired him with a horror of alcohol, tobacco and coffee. A bottle of wine, real Chautergne made by himself, lasted him for a week. But ten libraries would not have satisfied his appetite for reading.

I never knew any man who had such a mania for printed matter. Everything seemed good to him, from country newspapers to the local reviews, and from the finest classics to the worst contemporary fiction, the whole seasoned with a daily reading of Voltaire, whose works filled two enormous shelves in his library.

M. Optal Viple was—I need hardly say it after this last detail—an outrageous skeptic and Jacobin. One of his uncles had been a member of the Convention. How he was ever able to reconcile republicanism and the horror inspired by the existing régime with his extraordinary admiration of the first Napoleon was one

of the mysteries about this good man, who had the habit of talking of nature in the style of Rousseau.

He pronounced that name, Jean Jacques, with a trembling voice. When I think it over, it was not wise to entrust me to this unbeliever, though he never contradicted any of the religious teaching I had received. But, young as I was, he constantly praised to me the encyclopedists and the revolutionists. He had been professor at Langres and had known a relative of Diderot. The names of all the writers of the eighteenth century were passed in review in the interminable conversations he held with me when we were out for our walks. For, on pleasant days, he took me home and I was allowed to walk with him on the country roads, where we passed hours; I questioning him about a hundred things, trifling and serious; he replying with unwearying patience, while the vines grew thick around, bearing grapes, small and green, or large and purple, according to the season. The brooks murmured under the willows, and the birds sang sweet songs. Oh, the gladness of the long ago!

I remember as if it were but yesterday the day my friend told me the story to which I have alluded. We had started to go to the Bughes, a walk down the valley, when we came upon a group of the Austrian prisoners in their white uniforms. M. Viple brusquely turned me into a side-street to avoid passing them. He remained silent for a long time. I looked up into his wrinkled face, into which his coat collar was cutting, and said abruptly:

"M. Viple, you do not wish to get near those Austrians, do you?"

"No, my child," he said, with a look—which I had never before seen there—full of the shadows of a gloomy remembrance; "the last time I saw that uniform was too sad."

"And when was that?" I insisted.

"At the time of the Invasion, after the downfall of Napoleon I.," said he; then, as if reckoning time in his mind, "that was about forty-five years ago."

"Did the troops come as far as Issoire?" I asked, knowing that he came from that town.

"Yes, as far as Issoire. They came to Clermont first, then straight on to our city. Ah! our house just escaped being burned then. We did not expect them. We knew that the Emperor had been beaten, but we did not dream that all was over. That wonderful man had risen so many times. Then we loved him. My

father adored him. He saw him once at a military review in Paris; at the Carrousel, after the campaign of Austerlitz, and he told us of that blue eye which compelled one by a glance to shout 'Vive l'Empereur!' That Emperor was not like the present one; he was a child of the Revolution."

"But why would the Austrians have burned your house?" I questioned, with the persistence of a boy who does not want his story to escape him.

"The invaders reached our house one evening," continued the old man, who seemed to have forgotten me and to follow the visions which flooded the field of his memory. "There were not many of them, only a regiment of cavalry, commanded by a large officer with an insolent face; he was very young, and wore long light mustaches, which blew about in the wind. We had passed the day in terror. We knew they were at Clermont. Would they come? Would they not come? How should they be received. A council was held at our house, my father being mayor at the time. Truly, if he had not been sick, he was just the one to place himself at the head of determined men and barricade the streets. We had ammunition, and in that country of hunters every man had firearms hung up behind the chimney-piece. That course of action was out of the question, as the poor man was shivering with chills caught while hunting birds in the marsh; wise counsels had therefore prevailed.

"A flourish of trumpets and the enemy was upon us. Ah, little one, may you never know what it is to hear the music of a foreign march as we then did; there was such pride in the notes; so much contempt for us, and so much hatred. I remember it all. I heard it in my father's room, with my head pressed against the pane, my eyes upon the officer at the head of the column; when I turned around I saw the old man in tears."

"How much pleasure you must feel now, M. Viple, to see them the conquered ones."

"Pleasure? pleasure? I have none too much confidence in this Emperor," said the old Jacobin, "but no matter, no matter." This was his favorite expression when he wished to curb his speech on any subject.

"The Austrians had not been in the town more than a quarter of an hour, before some one rapped violently at our door. It was the handsome officer with the long mustaches, who, with two others, had come to stay at the mayor's, and I was ordered to give up my room to them. I can see myself now in my

childish fury concealing a loaded pistol in a chiffonier. I was angry at being turned out of my room, which was the prettiest one in the house; it looked out upon a terrace where I loved to play, and from which one could descend into the garden by stone steps overgrown with wild plants. Below my chamber was the billiard-room and above it was an attic to which I was to be banished while the officers were in the house.

"Soon they ordered dinner. They were tired of the mess, and every one of us had to lend a hand that the meal might be ready in time. Three officers and six comrades made nine in all, and that was enough. At last we had the repast under way, and my mother wished it to be excellent.

"'We must conciliate them,' said the poor woman, and she compelled me to go to the brook to catch trout for them; those beautiful trout which I so loved to feel quivering in my grasp. I had to go into the cellar and bring out champagne, four of the bottles which my father had stored away to celebrate the victories of the Emperor. I cannot describe to you my feelings at having to give them our things, and hearing the uproar of their noisy gaiety; this uproar grew more and more violent as the meal progressed. They proposed toasts in a language which I did not understand; for I listened to everything from my seat in the chimney-corner in the kitchen, where we were to eat. To what were they drinking? Doubtless to our defeat, or to the death of our poor Emperor. I was not more than a dozen years old, but I assure you it is not possible to feel more indignation and wrath than I felt sitting there on my little chair opposite my mother, who was bemoaning the breaking of the plates and glasses.

"'Do they want anything?' she inquired anxiously of the servant.

"'They want this and they want that,' answered the good fellow—and we gave them this and that, till at last Michel came in with a woe-begone look and said, 'They want some coffee.'"

"It was easy enough to give them that," I interrupted.

"It might seem so to you," said M. Viple; "but you, my poor child, do not know how rare coffee and sugar were then. You have heard of the Continental Embargo—the decree issued by Napoleon, forbidding all European nations to trade with England. It was a great thing, but its most perceptible result to us was the loss of a great number of articles which came from for-

eign lands. So when the servant brought this word to my mother, the poor woman stood transfixed.

“‘Coffee!’ cried she; ‘we have not a single grain in the house. Go and tell them so.’

“A moment later he returned, paler yet.

“‘They are drunk, madame; and they say they will have coffee or they will destroy everything.’

“‘Oh, my God,’ said my mother, wringing her hands, ‘and I have left my Sèvres china on the sideboard.’

“Meanwhile the din increased in the dining-room. The officers struck the floor with their sabres, and shouted till the windows rattled. Three times did Michel go in to try to make them listen to reason; three times he returned to us chased out by broadsides of abuse, and followed by the shout, ‘Coffee! Coffee!’ These simple words, pronounced with a German accent, had a harsh, cruel sound. Finally the tumult became so great that its noise reached my father’s room, and soon we saw him appear at the kitchen door, his eyes shining with fever, dressed in his night-clothes.

“‘What is the matter?’

“I still hear him asking that question with trembling lip. Was it because of his fever, or was it anger? He was told.

“‘I will go and speak to them,’ he said; and passed into the dining-room. I followed him. I shall never forget the scene; the Austrian officers, with their faces flushed with drink; the broken plates, the bottles thrown around on the floor, the soiled table-cloth, and clouds of tobacco-smoke enveloping these impudent conquerors. Yes, all my life I shall hear my father say, ‘Gentlemen, I give you my word of honor that I do not possess what you demand, and I have risen from a sick-bed to ask you to respect the fireside where I have received you as guests.’

“He had scarcely finished when the man with the long mustaches, his eyes filled with an evil look, arose, and taking the glass of champagne which stood before him, advanced toward us.

“‘Well,’ said he, with a pure accent, which bore marks of his superiority over his companions, ‘we will believe you, sir, if you will favor us by drinking to the health of our Emperor, who has saved your nation. Sir, to the health of our Emperor!’

“I looked at my father, and, knowing him so well, I saw that he was filled with an overpowering rage. He took the glass

and raising his eyes to a portrait of Napoleon, which these savages had not noticed, said in a clear voice, 'In truth, sirs, Long live the Emperor.'

"The officer followed the direction of my father's eyes. He saw the portrait, a simple engraving, shattered the frame with a blow from his sabre, then refilling the glass which my father had emptied, he said brutally: 'Now cry, Long live the Emperor of Austria! and be quick about it, too.'

"My father took the glass, raised it again and said, 'Long live the Emperor!'

"'Ah! French dog,' shouted the officer, and seizing a chair which was near him, he struck the sick man such a blow in the chest that he fell over backwards, striking his head against the sharp edge of the door-frame, while we all, my mother, the servants and myself, were trembling with terror."

"Was he dead?" I inquired.

"We thought so at first, when we saw the blood soaking through the handkerchief which was on his head. But he was not; he was very ill, though, for six months after.'

"And what did you do, M. Viple?" I queried.

"I," answered he, hesitating, "nothing, really nothing—but—my brother——"

"Did you have a brother? You never told me anything about one."

"Yes; he died young, and he was about my own age, a year more or less. When he went to bed that night in his attic—mine, too; we were both exiled to the same chamber—he thought and thought. At that time, you see, little boys all wanted to be soldiers, and they heard so much talk of warfare, of dangers, of cannon shots and gun shots, they were afraid of nothing. So this one thought over the cruel events of the day, the coming of the enemy, their entrance into the house, the preparations for dinner, of his father struck down and the Emperor insulted. He could imagine the foreign officer sleeping in his bed—his, the son of the old man so cruelly wounded—and an idea of vengeance sprang into being in his little brain. He knew the old house as you know your own. It had been built at different periods, and the small windows of the mansard opened on a gently-sloping roof, bordered by a flat edge, along which you could walk until you came to an ivy-covered wall, in which were fastened iron bars, making a sort of ladder leading to the chimney above, and below to another flat border, from

which one could step to the terrace in front of the window. There the officer was sleeping.

"My brother arose, dressed quickly, slid like a cat down the side of the sloping roof, ran along the flat edge, descended the iron ladder, jumped to the terrace and approached the window. It was a warm summer night. The officers had closed the shutters, but had left the window open. My brother discovered this by putting his little hand through a hole which had been cut in the blind. He could put his arm through without touching the glass. Near the hole was a string used to pull up the catch of the blind. He summoned up courage to pull it.

"'If I arouse any one,' thought he, 'I will say I forgot something in my room.' It would be a foolish excuse, but the boy had his own idea of the matter. The blind opened with a creak; no one stirred. The officer was sleeping deeply, stupefied, no doubt, by the liquor he had drunk. His heavy breathing sounded through the room. With the caution of a thief my brother stole across the room to the chiffonier where I had concealed the pistol. He took it out of the drawer. You may imagine how his heart beat at his every movement. He sat for a quarter of an hour crouched on the floor, grasping the weapon without knowing what he was going to do.

"The slanting rays of moonlight lit up the room just enough for accustomed eyes to see the shadowy forms of objects. The officer slept on, his monotonous breathing showing a calm and perfect rest. The image of his father rose before the child's mind. In his imagination he saw the old man raising his glass towards the portrait, then the blow, the fall, and the blood. . . . He arose and crept to the bedside. He soon could distinguish the features of the sleeper; he pulled back the hammer. How loud light sounds seem at such times. He put the weapon close to the sleeper's head above the ear, at the edge of the hair, then fired."

"And what then!" I asked, as he hesitated.

"Then," resumed the old man, "like a maniac he ran to the window, jumped to the terrace, glided along the edge to the ladder, climbed it, went along the other edge, up the roof into his room, closed his window after him, hid the pistol under his mattress, went to bed and pretended to be asleep, while a sudden tumult filled the house, showing that the noise of the shot had awakened the soldiers and they were searching for the murderer."

"Did they find him?"

"Never. All their search and all their threats availed nothing. They wanted to burn the house, arrest the servants, do this and do that. But there was an alibi for every one; fortunately, for my brother too. Besides, who would have dreamed of a child. Then, the officer was detested both by the soldiers and by his superiors."

"Ah! he was dead. That was a just murder!" I exclaimed.

"Wasn't it? Don't you think it was just?" questioned the old inspector, his eyes flashing as I had never before seen them.

"But your brother!" I insisted, "what became of him?"

"I have already told you that he died in youth," replied he.

Some years after, when passing through Issoire, I found at the house of a distant relative a lady eighty years old, who was a cousin of my old friend, the inspector. She talked about him for a long time, when I happened to ask:

"Did you know his brother?"

"What brother?" said she.

"The one who died young."

"You are mistaken," said she, "Optal was the only son."

Then I understood why M. Viple had not wished to pass by the group of Austrian prisoners. He was the child who avenged his outraged father; he, the old professor, who had probably never touched a pistol before or since that time.

What deep mysteries are sometimes hidden in the most simple and peaceful lives!



NEIGHBORS IN CYRUS *

BY LAURA E. RICHARDS

Author of Captain January, Melody, Etc

"Hi-hi!" said Miss Peace, looking out of the window. "It is really raining. Isn't that providential, now?"

"Anne Peace, you are enough to provoke a saint!" replied a peevish voice from the farthest corner of the room. "You and your providences are more than I can stand. What do you mean this time, I *should* like to know? the picnic set for to-day, and every soul in the village lottin' on goin', 'cept those who would like best to go and can't. I've ben longin' for these two years to go to a picnic, and it's never been so's I could. And now, jest when I *could* ha' gone, this affliction must needs come to me. And then to have you rejoicin' 'cause it rains."



The speaker paused for breath, and Miss Peace answered mildly, "I'm real sorry for you, Delia, you know I am, and if the' was any way of getting you to the grove—but what I was thinking of, you know I couldn't finish Jenny Miller's dress last night, do what I could; and seeing it raining now, thinks I, they'll have to put off the picnic till to-morrow or next day, and then Jenny Miller can go as nice as the rest. She does need a new dress, more than most of the girls who has them. And she's so sweet and pretty, it's a privilege to do for her. That's all I was thinking, Delia." Mrs. Delia Means sniffed audibly, then she groaned.

"Your leg hurting you?" cried Miss Peace, with ready sympathy.

"Well, I guess you'd think so," was the reply, "if you had red-hot needles run into your leg. Not that it's any matter to anybody."

"Hi-hi!" said Miss Peace, cheerily. "It's time the bandages

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was changed, Delia. You rest easy jest a minute, and I'll run and fetch the liniment, and give you a rub before I put on the new ones."



Mrs. Means remaining alone, it is proper to introduce her to the reader. She and Miss Peace were the rival seamstresses of Cyrus village; that is, they would have been rivals, if Mrs. Means had had her way, but rivalry was impossible where Anne Peace was one of the parties. She had always maintained stoutly that Delia Means needed work a sight more than she did, having a family, and her husband so weakly, and likely to go off with consumption 'most any time. Many and many a customer had Anne turned from her door, with her pleasant smile, and "I don't hardly know as I could, though I should be pleased to accommodate you; but I presume likely Mis' Means could do it for you. She does real nice work, and I don't know as she's so much drove jest now as I am."

Delia Case had been a schoolmate of Anne Peace's. She was a pretty girl, with a lively sense of her own importance, and a chronic taste for a grievance. She had married well, as everyone thought, but in these days her husband had lost his health, and Delia was obliged to put her shoulder to the wheel. She sewed well, but there was a sigh every time her needle went into the cloth, and a groan when it came out.

"A husband and four children, and have to sew for a living!" This was the burden of her song; and it had become familiar to her neighbors since David Means had begun to "fail up," as we say in Cyrus.

Anne Peace had always been the faithful friend of "Delia Dumps" (it was Uncle Asy Green who had given her the name, which stuck to her through thick and thin—Uncle Asy believed in giving people their due, and thought Anne made "a drefle fool of herself, foolin' round with that woman at all"). Anne had been her faithful friend, and never allowed any one to make fun of her if she was present.

A week before my story opens, when Mrs. Means fell down and broke her leg, just as she was passing Miss Peace's house, the latter lady declared it to be a special privilege.

"I can take care of her," she explained to the doctor, when he expressed regret at being obliged to forbid the sufferer's being moved for some weeks, "jest as well as not, and better. David isn't fit to have the care of her, and—well, Doctor, I can say to you, who know it as well as I do, that Delia mightn't be the best person for David to have round him jest now, when he needs cheering up. Then, too, I can do her sewing along with my own, as easy as think; work's slack now, and there's nothing I'm special drove with. I've been wishing right along that I could do something to help, now that David is so poorly; so take it by and large, Doctor, it does seem like a privilege, doesn't it?"

The doctor growled. He was not fond of Mrs. Means.

"If you can get her moved out of Grumble Street and into Thanksgiving Alley," he said, "it'll be a privilege for this village; but you can't do it, Anne. However, there's no use talking to you, you incorrigible optimist. You're the worst case I ever saw, Anne Peace, and I haven't the smallest hope of curing you. Put the liniment on her leg, as I told you, and I'll call in the morning. Good-day!"

"My goodness me, what was he saying to you?" Mrs. Means asked as Anne went back into the bed-room. "You've got something that you'll never get well of? Well, Anne Peace, that does seem the cap-sheaf on the hull. Heart complaint, I s'pose it is; and what would become of me, if you was to be struck down, as you might be any minute of time, and me helpless here, and a husband and four children at home, and he failin' up. You did look dretful gashly round the mouth yisterday. I noticed it at the time; but, of course, I didn't speak of it. Why, here I should lay, and might starve to death, and you cold on the floor, for all the help I should get." Mrs. Means shed tears, and Anne Peace answered, with as near an approach to asperity as her soft voice could command:

"Don't talk foolishness, Delia. I'm not cold yet, nor likely to be. Here, let me tend to your leg; it's time I was gettin' dinner on this minute."

It continued to rain on the picnic day; no uncertain showers, to keep up a chill and fever of fear and hope among the young people, but a good, honest downpour, which everybody past twenty must recognize as being just the thing the country needed. Jenny Miller came in, smiling all over, though she professed herself real sorry for them as was disappointed.

"Tudie Peaslee sat down and cried, when she saw 'twas rainin'," she said, as she prepared to give her dress the final trying-on. "There, Miss Peace. I did try to feel for her, but I just couldn't, seem's though. Oh, ain't that handsome? that little puff is too cute for anything. I do think you've been smart, Miss Peace. Not that you ever was anything else."

"You've a real easy figure to fit, Jenny," Miss Peace replied modestly. "I guess that's half the smartness of it. It does set good, though, I'm free to think. The styles is real pretty this summer, anyhow. Don't that set good, Delia?" She turned to Mrs. Means, who was lying on the sofa (we call it a "lunge" in Cyrus), watching the trying-on with keenly critical eyes.

"Ye-es," she said. "The back sets good enough, but 'pears to me there's a wrinkle about the neck that I shouldn't like to see in any work of mine. I've always ben too particklar, though; it's time thrown away, but I can't bear to send a thing out 'cept jest as it should be."



"It *don't* wrinkle, Mis' Means!" cried Jenny, indignantly. "Not a mite! I was turnin' round to look at the back of the skirt, and that pulled it; there ain't a sign of a wrinkle, Miss Peace, so don't you think there is."

Mrs. Means sniffed, and said something about the change in you young folks' manners since she was a girl. "If I'd ha' spoke so to my elders—I won't say betters, for folks ain't thought much of when they have to sew for a livin', with a husband and four children to keer for—I guess I should ha' found it out in pretty quick time."

"Hi-hi!" said Miss Peace, soothingly. "There, Delia, Jenny didn't mean anything. Jenny, I guess I'll have to take you into the settin'-room, so's I can pull this skirt out a little further. This room doos get so cluttered, with all my things round——" she hustled Jenny, swelling like an angry partridge, into the next room, and closed the door carefully.

"You don't want to anger Mis' Means, dear," she said gently, taking the pins out of her mouth for freer speech. "She may be jest a scrap pudgicky now and again, but she's seen trouble, you know, and she does feel it hard to be laid up and

so many looking to her at home. Turn round, dear, jest a mite—there!”

“I can’t help it, Miss Peace,” said Jenny. “There’s no reason why Mis’ Means should speak up and say the skirt wrinkled, when anybody can see it sets like a duck’s foot in the mud. I don’t mind what she says to me, but I ain’t goin’ to see you put upon, nor yet other folks ain’t. I should like to know! and that wrapper she cut for Tудie Peaslee set so bad, you’d think she’d fitted it on the pump in the back yard; Mis’ Peaslee said so herself.”

“Hi-hi!” cried Anne Peace, softly, with an apprehensive glance toward the door, “don’t speak so loud, Jenny. Tудie ain’t near so easy a form to fit as you; not near. And you say she was real put about, do ye, at the picnic being put off?”

“She was so!” Jenny assented, seeing that the subject was to be changed. “She’d got her basket all packed last night, she made so sure ’twas goin’ to be fine to-day. Chicken sandwiches she had, and she baked a whole pan of sponge-drops, jest because someone—you know who—is fond of ’em.” Miss Peace nodded sagely, with her mouth full of pins, and would have smiled if she could. “And now they’ve put it off till Saturday, ’cause the minister can’t go before then, and every livin’ thing will be spoiled.”

“Dear, dear,” cried Miss Anne, her kind face clouding over, “that doos seem too bad, doosn’t it? all them nice things! and Tудie makes the best sponge-cakes I ever eat, pretty nigh.”

Jenny smiled, and stretched her hand toward a basket she had brought. “They won’t really be wasted, Miss Peace!” she said. “Tудie thought you liked ’em, and I’ve got some of ’em here for you. She says you are to eat ’em for your own supper.”

“Well, I do declare, if that isn’t thoughtful!” exclaimed Miss Peace, looking much gratified. “Tудie is a sweet girl, I must say. Delia is real fond of cake, and she’s been longing for some; but it doos seem as if I couldn’t find time to make it, these days.”

“I should think not,” cried Jenny (who was something of a pepperpot, it must be confessed), “I should think not, when you



have her to take care of, and her work and yours to do, and all. And Miss Peace—Tudie meant the sponge-drops for you, every one. She told me so.”

“Yes, dear, to be sure she did, and that’s why I feel so pleased, jest as much as if I had eaten them. But bread *is* better for me, and—why! if she hasn’t sent a whole dozen. One, two, three—yes, a dozen and one over, sure as I stand here. Now, that I call generous. And—I’ll tell you what, dearie. Don’t say a word, for I wouldn’t for worlds have Tudie feel to think I was slighting her, or didn’t appreciate her kindness; but—well, I have wanted to send some little thing round to that little girl of Josiah Pincher’s that has the measles, and I do suppose she’d be pleased to death with some of these sponge-drops. Hush! don’t say a word, Jenny! it would be a real privilege to me—now it would. And you know it isn’t that I don’t think the world of Tudie, and you too; now, don’t you?”

Jenny protested, half laughing and half crying; for Tudie Peaslee had declared herself ready to bet that Miss Peace would not eat a single one of the sponge-drops, and Jenny had vowed she should. But would she or would she not? Before ten minutes were over she had promised to leave the sponge-drops at the Pincher’s door, as she went by, for little Geneva. There was no resisting Miss Peace; Tudie was right. But suddenly a bright idea struck Jenny, just as she was putting on her hat and preparing to depart. Seizing one of the sponge-drops, she broke off a bit, and fairly popped it into Miss Peace’s mouth, as the good lady was going to speak. “It’s broken now,” she cried in high glee, “it’s broke in two, and you can’t give it to nobody. Set right down, Miss Peace, and let me feed you, same as I do my canary bird!” She pushed the little dressmaker into a chair and the bits followed each other in such quick succession that Miss Peace could make no protest beyond a smothered “Oh, don’t ye, dear! now don’t! that’s enough!—my stars, Jenny, what do you think my mouth’s made of?” (crunch) “there dear, there! it is real good—oh, dear, not so fast! I *shall* choke! Tell Tudie—no, dearie, not another morsel (crunch); well, Jenny Miller, I didn’t think you would act so; now I didn’t.”

The sponge-cake was eaten, and Jenny, with a triumphant kiss on the little, rosy, withered-apple cheek, popped her head in at the parlor door to cry “Good-day, Mis’ Means,” and flew laughing away with her victory and her cakes.

“Well, Anne Peace,” was Mrs. Means’ greeting as her hostess

came back, looking flushed and guilty, and wiping her lips on her apron, "how you can stand havin' that Miller girl round here passes me. She'd be the death of me, I know that; but it's lucky other folks ain't so feelin' as I am, I always say. Of all the forward, up-standin' tykes ever I see—but there! it ain't to be supposed anybody cares whether I'm sassed or whether I ain't."

Saturday was bright and fair, and Anne Peace stood at the window with a beaming smile, watching the girls troop by on their way to the picnic. She had moved Mrs. Means' sofa out of the corner, so that she could see, too, and there was a face at each window. Miss Peace was a little, plump, partridge-like woman, with lovely waving brown hair and twinkling brown eyes. She had never been a beauty, but people always liked to look at her, and the young people declared she grew prettier every year. Mrs. Means was tall and weedy, with a figure that used to be called willowy, and was now admitted to be lank. Her once fair complexion had faded into sallowness, and her light hair had been frizzed till there was little left of it. Her eyebrows had gone up, and the corners of her mouth had gone down, so that her general effect was depressing in the extreme.

"There go Tudie and Jenny," cried Miss Peace in delight. "If they ain't a pretty pair, then I never saw one, that's all. Jenny's dress does set pretty, if I do say it; and after all, it is the figger in it makes it look so well. There's the minister! Now I am proper glad that my roses have come out so since the rain. He does love roses, Mr. Goodnow does. And the honeysuckle is really a sight. Why, this is the first time you have really seen the garden, Delia, since you came. Isn't it looking pretty?"

"I never did see how you could have your garden right close't onto the street that way, Anne!" was the reply. "Everybody 't comes by stoppin' and starin', and pokin' their noses through the fence. Look at them boys, now! why, if they ain't smellin' at the roses, the bold-faced brats! Knock at the winder, Anne, and tell 'em to git out. Shoo! be off with you!" She shook her fist at the window, but fortunately could not reach it.

"Hi-hi!" said Anne Peace. "You don't mean that, Delia. What's roses for but to smell? I do count it a privilege to have folks take pleasure in my garden." She threw up the window and nodded pleasantly to the children. "Take a rose, sonny, if you like 'em," she said. "Take two or three!

there's enough for all. Whose little boys are you?" she added, as the children in wondering delight timidly broke off a blossom or two. "Mis' Green's, over to the Corners? now I want to know! You've grown so't I didn't know you! And how's your mother? Jest wait half a minute and I'll send her a little posy. There's some other things beside roses perhaps she'd like to have a few of."

She darted out and filled the boys' hands with pinks and mignonette, pansies and geranium.

It was not a large garden, this of Anne Peace's, but every inch of space was made the most of. The little square and oblong beds lay close to the fence, and from tulip time to the coming of frost, they were ablaze with flowers. Nothing was allowed to straggle, or to take up more than its share of room. The roses were tied firmly to their neat green stakes; the crown-imperials nodded over a spot of ground barely large enough to hold their magnificence; while the phlox and Sweet William actually had to fight for their standing-room. It was a pleasant sight, at all odd times of the day, to see Miss Peace bending over her flowers, snipping off dead leaves, trimming, pruning and tending all with loving care. Many flower-lovers are shy of plucking their favorites, and I recall one rose-fancier whose gifts, like those of the Greeks, were dreaded by his neighbors, as the petals were sure to be ready to drop before he could make up his mind to tie a nosegay to give away: but this was not the case with Anne Peace. Dozens of shallow baskets hung in her neat back entry, and they were filled and sent, filled and sent, all summer long, till one would have thought they might almost find their way about alone. It is a positive fact that her baskets were always brought back, "a thing imagination boggles at;" but perhaps this was because the neighbors liked them better full than empty.

"Makin' flowers so cheap," Mrs. Means would say, "seems to take the wuth of 'em away, to my mind; but I'm too feelin', I know that well enough. Anne, she's kind o' callous, and she don't think of things that make me squinch, seems though."

. . . Weeks passed on; the broken leg was healed, and Mrs. Means departed to her own house. "I s'pose you'll miss me, Anne," she said at parting. "I shall you, and you have ben good to me, if 't *has* ben kind o' dull here, so few comin' and goin'." Miss Peace's was generally the favorite resort of all the young people of the village, and half the old ones, but the "neighboring" had dropped off since Mrs. Means had been

there. "Good-bye, Anne, and thank you for what you've done. I feel to be glad I've ben company for you, livin' alone as you do, with no husband nor nothin' belongin' to you."

"Good-bye, Delia," replied Anne Peace cheerfully. "Don't you fret about me. I'm used to being alone, you know; and it's been a privilege, I'm sure, to do what I could for you, so long as we've been acquainted. My love to David, and don't forget to give him the syrup I put in the bottom of your trunk for him."

"'Twon't do him any good!" called out Delia, turning her head as the wagon drove away, to shout back at her hostess. "He's bound to die, David is. He'll never see another spring. I tell him, and then I shall be left a widder, with four children, and—"

"Oh, gerlang! gerlang *up!*" shouted Calvin Parks, the stage-driver, whose stock of patience was small. The horse started, and Mrs. Means' wails died away in the distance.

In this instance the prediction of the doleful lady seemed likely to be verified; for David Means continued to "fail up." Always a slight man, he was now mere skin and bone, and his cheerful smile grew pathetic to see. He was a distant cousin of Anne Peace's, and had something of her placid disposition; a mild, serene man, bearing his troubles with silent courage, finding his happiness in the children, whom he loved almost passionately. He had married Delia Case because she was pretty, and because she wanted to marry him; had never known, and would never know, that he might have had a very different kind of wife. Perhaps Anne Peace hardly knew herself that David had been the romance of her life, so quickly had the thought been put away, so earnestly had she hoped for his happiness; but she admitted frankly that she "set by him," and she was devoted to his children.



"Can nothing be done?" she asked the good doctor one day, as they came away together from David's house, leaving Delia shaking her head from the doorstep. "Can nothing be done, Doctor? It does seem as if I couldn't bear to see David fade away so, and not try anything to stop it."

Dr. Brown shook his head thoughtfully. "I doubt if there's

much chance for him, Anne," he said kindly. "David is a good fellow, and if I saw any way—it might be possible, if he could be got off to Florida before cold weather comes on—there is a chance—but how could it be done? He has no means, poor fellow, save what he carries in his name."

"Florida!" said Anne Peace, thoughtfully; and then she straightway forgot the doctor's existence, and hurried off along the street, with head bent and eyes which saw nothing they rested on.

Reaching her home, where all the flowers smiled a bright welcome which for once she did not notice, her first action was to take out of a drawer a little blue book, full of figures, which she studied with ardor. Then she took a clean sheet of paper and wrote certain words at the top of it; then she got out her best bonnet.

Something very serious was on hand when Miss Peace put on her best bonnet. She had only had it four years, and regarded it still as a sacred object, to be taken out on Sundays and reverently looked at, then put back in its box, and thought about while she tied the strings of the ten-year-old velvet structure, which was quite as good as new. Two weddings had seen the best bonnet in its grandeur, and three funerals; but no bells, either solemn or joyous, summoned her to-day, as she gravely placed the precious bonnet on her head, and surveyed her image with awe-struck approval in the small mirror over the mantel-piece.

"It's *dreadful* handsome!" said Miss Peace, softly. "It's too handsome for me, a great sight, but I want to look my best now, if ever I did."



It was at Judge Ransom's door that she rang first, a timid, apologetic ring, as if she knew in advance how busy the judge would be, and how wrong it was for her to intrude on his precious time. But the judge himself opened the door, and was not at all busy, but delighted to have a chance to chat with his old friend, whom he had not seen for a month of Sundays. He made her come in, and put her in the biggest arm-chair (which swallowed her up so that hardly more than the bonnet was visible), and drew a footstool before her little feet, which dangled helplessly above it; then he took his seat opposite, in another

big chair, and said it was a fine day, and then waited, seeing that she had something of importance to say.

Miss Peace's breath came short and quick, and she fingered her reticule nervously. She had not thought it would be quite so dreadful as this. "Judge," she said—and paused, frightened at the sound of her voice, which seemed to echo in a ghostly manner through the big room.

"Well, Miss Peace," said the judge, kindly. "Well, Anne, what is it? How can I serve you? Speak up, like a good girl. Make believe we are back in the little red school-house again, and you are prompting me in my arithmetic lesson."

Anne Peace laughed and colored. "You're real kind, Judge," she said. "I wanted—'twas only a little matter——" she stopped to clear her throat, blushing painfully: then she thought of David, and straightway she found courage, and lifted her eyes and spoke out bravely. "David Means, you know, Judge; he is failing right along, and it does seem as if he couldn't last the winter. But Dr. Brown thinks that if he should go to Florida, it might be so't he could be spared. So—David hasn't means himself, of course, what with his poor health and his large family, and some thought that if we could raise a subscription right here, among the folks that has always known David, it might be so't he could go. What do you think, Judge?"

The judge nodded his head thoughtfully.

"I don't see why it couldn't be done, Miss Peace," he said, kindly. "David is a good fellow, and has friends wherever he is known. I should think it might very well be done, if the right person takes it up.

"I—I've had no great experience," faltered Anne Peace, looking down, "but I'm kin to David, you know, and as he has no one nearer living, I took it upon myself to carry round a paper, and see what I could raise. I came to you first, Judge, as you've always been a good friend to David. I've got twenty-five dollars already."

"I thought you said you came to me first," said the judge, holding out his hand for the paper. "What's this? A friend, twenty-five dollars?"

"Yes," said Anne Peace, breathlessly. "They—they didn't wish their name mentioned."

"Oh, they didn't, didn't they?" muttered the judge, looking at her over his spectacles. Such a helpless look met his—the

look of hopeless innocence trying to deceive, and knowing that it was not succeeding—that a sudden dimness came into his own eyes, and he was fain to take off his spectacles and wipe them, just as if he had been looking through them. And through the mist he seemed to see—not Miss Anne Peace, in her best bonnet and her cashmere shawl, but another Anne Peace, a little brown-eyed slender maiden, sitting on a brown bench, looking on with rapture while David Means ate her luncheon.

It was the judge's turn to clear his throat.

"Well, Anne," he said, keeping his eyes on the paper, "this—this unknown friend has set a good example, and I don't see that I can do less than follow it. You may put my name down for twenty-five, too."

"Oh, Judge," cried Miss Peace, with shining eyes. "You are too good! I didn't expect, I'm sure—well, you *are* kind!"

"Not at all, not at all," said the judge, gruffly; and, indeed, twenty-five dollars was not so much to him as it was to "them" who had made the first contribution.

"You know I owe David Means something, for licking him when he——"

"Oh, don't, Dan'el—Judge, I should say!" cried Anne Peace in confusion. "Don't you be raking up old times. I'm sure I thank you a thousand times, and so will Delia, when she——"

"No, she won't," said the judge. "Tell truth, Anne Peace! Delia will say I might have given fifty and never missed it. There! I won't distress you, my dear. Good-day, and all good luck to you," and so ended Miss Peace's first call.

With such a beginning, there was no doubt of the success of the subscription. Generally, in Cyrus, people waited to see what Judge Ransom and Lawer Peters gave to any charity, before making their own contribution. "Jedge Ransom has put down five dollars, has he? well he's wuth so much and I'm wuth so much. Guess fifty cents will be about the right figger for me!" This is the course of reasoning in Cyrus. But with an unknown friend starting off with twenty-five dollars, and Judge Ransom following suit, it became apparent to everyone that David Means must go to Florida, whatever happened; and the dollars and five dollars poured in rapidly, till one happy day, Anne Peace sat in her little room and counted the full amount into her lap, and then sat (it was not her habit to go down on

her knees, and she would have thought it too familiar, if not actually popish) and thanked God, as she had never found it necessary to thank him for any of the good things of her own life.

So David Means went to Florida, and his wife and two children went with him. This had been no part of the original plan, but at the bare idea of his going without her, Mrs. Means had raised a shrill cry of protest. "What? David go down there and she and the children stay perishing at home? she guessed not. If Florida was good for David, it was good for her, too, and she been laid up ever sence spring, as she might say, with no more outing than a woodchuck in winter. Besides, who was to take care of David, she'd like to know? Mis' Porter's folks, who had a place there? She'd like to know if she was to be beholden to Jane Porter's folks to take care of her lawful husband, and like enough laying him out, for she wasn't one to blind herself, nor yet to set herself against the will of Providence." Dr. Brown stormed and fumed, but Anne Peace begged him to be quiet, and presumed likely she could raise enough to cover the expenses for Delia and the two older children. "'Twas right and proper, of course, that his wife should go with him; and David wouldn't have any pleasure in the trip if he hadn't little Janey and Willy along. He did set so by those children, it was a privilege to see them together; he was always one to make much of children, David was."



She did raise the extra money, this sweet saint; but she ate no meat for a month, finding it better for her health. Joey and Georgie Means, however, never wanted for their bit of steak at noon, and grew fat and rosy under Miss Peace's kindly roof.

It was a pathetic sight, when the sick man took leave of the little group of friends and neighbors who gathered on the platform at the station to bid him farewell. He had lost courage, poor David; perhaps he had not had very much to start with, and things had gone hard with him for a long time. He knew he should never see these faces again, this homely, friendly place. He gazed about with wistful eyes, noting every spot in the bare little station. He had known it all by heart, ever since

he was a little child, for his father had been station-master. He could have built the whole thing over with his eyes shut, he thought; and now he should never see it again. Yet he was glad to go, in a way; glad to think at least that he should die warm, as his wife expressed it, and that his tired eyes were going to look on green and lovely things, instead of the cold white beauty which meant winter to him.

He had scarcely ever left Cyrus for more than a day or two; he had a vague idea that it was not creditable to go to the other world and be able to give so little account of this one. Now, at least, he should be able to look his sea-faring grandfather and his roving uncle in the face, if so be he should happen to meet them "over yender."

He stood on the platform, with his youngest child clasped close in his arms. This was the hardest part of all, to leave the children. His wife and the two older children had already taken their places in the car, and the good-natured conductor stood with his watch in his hand, willing to give David every second he conscientiously could. He came from East Cyrus himself, and was a family man.

Anne Peace stood close by, holding fast the hand of little Joey. Strange sounds were in her ears, which she did not recognize as the beating of her own heart; she kept looking over her shoulder, to see what was coming. Her eyes never left David's face, but they were hopeful, even cheerful eyes. She thought he would come back much better, perhaps quite well. Doctor had said there was a chance, and she did hear great things of Florida.

And now the conductor put up his watch, and hardened his heart. "Come, David, better step inside now. All aboard!"

"Good-bye, David!" cried Dr. Brown, waving a friendly hand.

"Good-bye, David!" cried Anne Peace, lifting little Joey in her arms, though he was far too heavy for her.

"Look at Father, Joey, dear; throw a kiss to Father; good-bye! Good-bye, David!" The train moved out of the station; but David Means, his eyes fixed on the faces of his children, had forgotten to look at Anne Peace.

Winter came, and a bitter winter it was. No one in Cyrus could remember such steady cold, since the great winter of sixty years ago, when the doctor's grandfather was frozen to death, driving across the plains to visit a poor woman. His horse

went straight to the place, his head being turned that way, and his understanding being good ; but when the farmer came out with his lantern, there sat the old doctor stiff and dead in his sleigh. Those were the days when people, even doctors, had not learned how to wrap up, and would drive about all winter with high, stiff hats, and one buffalo robe, not tucked in, as we have them nowadays, but dropping down at their feet. There was small chance of our Dr. Brown's freezing to death, in his well-lined sleigh, with his fur cap pulled down over his nose, and his fur coat buttoned up to his chin, and the great robes tucked round him in a scientific manner. Still, for all that, it was a bitter cold winter, and a good many people in Cyrus and elsewhere, who had no fur coats, went cold by day and lay cold by night, as one good lady pathetically expressed it. There was little snow, and what there was fell in wonderful crystals, fairy studies in geometry, which delighted the eyes of Joey and Georgie Means as they trotted to school, with Miss Peace's "nuby" over one little head, and her shawl over the other. Every morning the sun rose in a clear sky, shining like steel ; every evening the same sky glowed with wonderful tints of amethyst and tender rose, fading gradually, till all was blue once more, and the stars had it all their own way, throbbing with fierce, cold light.



It was a great winter for Joey and Georgie. They never thought of its being too cold, for every morning their toes were toasted over the fire before school-time, as if they had been muffins, and they were sent off hot and hot, with a baked potato in each pocket, in case their hands should be cold through the two pairs of thick mittens which Aunt Peace had provided.

Then, when they came home, dinner was waiting, such a dinner as they were not in the habit of having ; a little mutton pie, or a smoking Irish stew, with all the dumplings and gravy they wanted (and they wanted a great deal), and then pancakes tossed before their very eyes, with a spoonful of jam in the middle of each, or blanchmange made in the shape of a cow, which tasted quite different from any other blanchmange that ever was. Also, they had the freedom of the corn-popper, and

might roast apples every evening till bed-time. Dr. Brown shook his head occasionally, and told Anne Peace she would unfit those children for anything else in life than eating good things; but it was very likely that he was jealous, he added, for certainly his medicines had never given the children these rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes.

And when bed-time came, and the two little brown heads were nestled down in the pillows of the big four-poster in the warm room, Anne Peace would humbly give thanks that they had been well and happy through another day, and then creep off to the cold little room which she had chosen this winter, "because it was more handy." Often, when awakened in the middle of the night by the sharp cracking frost-noises, which tell of intensest cold, she would creep in to feel of the children, and make sure that they were as warm as two little dormice, which they always were. I do not know how many times she took a blanket or comforter off her own bed to add to their store; but I do know that she would not let Jenny Miller go into her room to see. She almost rejoiced in the excessive cold, saying to herself with exultation, "Fifteen below! well, there! and I s'pose it's like summer in Florida this minute of time!" And then she fancied David sitting under an orange tree, fanning himself, and smiled, and went meekly to work to break the ice in her water-butt.

Every week or two came letters from David Means to his children, telling them of the beauty all around him, and wishing they were there. He said little of his health, but always assured them that Janey and Willy were real smart, and sent his love to Anne Peace, and his remembrances to all friends at home.

The letters were short, and each time they grew a little shorter, till by and by it was only a postal card, written in a faint and trembling hand, but saying that the weather was fine, and father was so glad to get their little letters, and he would write more next time, but was very busy just now. When she read one of these, Anne Peace would go away into her little cold room for a while, and then would come back smiling, and say that now they must write a real *good* letter to father, and tell him how well they were doing at school.

At last came a week when there was no postal card: another week, and there came a letter edged with black, and written in Mrs. Means's hand. The children were at school when it came, and Jenny Miller, coming in by chance to bring a pot of

head-cheese of her mother's making, found Miss Peace crouching in the corner of the sofa, weeping quietly, with the letter lying on her lap.

"Why, Miss Peace!" cried Jenny, frightened at the sight of tears in those steadfast eyes, "what is the matter? Do tell me, dear! there! why, you're real cold in here. I do believe the fire has gone out. You've had bad news, Miss Peace, have you? Do tell me, that's a dear soul, and don't cry."

"Yes," said Anne Peace. "The fire is out, Jenny, and David is dead!"

She held out the letter, saying something about "privilege—think—rest—" but Jenny Miller was already on her knees, putting kindlings into the stove at a reckless rate. Then, when the fire was crackling merrily, she ran to fetch a shawl, and wrapped it round the poor trembling shoulders, and chafed the cold hands in her own warm, young fingers. But soon Miss Peace grew uneasy: she was not used to being "done for," having only the habit of doing for others. She pointed eagerly to the letter. "Read it, Jenny," she said, anxiously. "I—I am all right, dear. It's come rather sudden, that's all, and those poor little children—but read the letter!"

The words died away; and Jenny, sitting down beside her, took the letter and began to read.

It began, "Friend Anne," and went on to say that the writer's poor husband died yesterday, and she was left, as she always knew she should be, a widow with four children. It did seem to her as if he might have been let die to home, instead of being carted all the way down there and then have to send the remains back. She had to promise him she would send them back, though it did seem a pity, with the beautiful "semetary" they had there, and full of Northern folks as it would hold, and the undertaker a perfect gentlemen, if she ever saw one. But the writer hoped she knew her duty, and she would not wish to be thought wanting in anything.

Now, she supposed, they would want to know how David passed away, though she had no stren'th to write, not having had her clothes off for days, or you might say weeks, nor "slep' one consektive hour the last ten nights." Well, he had seemed to gain a little when they first came, but it wasn't no real gain, for he lost it all again, and more, too. The pounds just fell away from that man—it seemed as if you could see them go. The last month he fairly pined away, and she thought right to

let the folks at home know that he was called to depart, but he wouldn't hear to it. "He said, 'Delia,' he said, 'if you want me to die easy,' he said, 'don't let on to no one at home but what I'm doing all right.'" So the writer set by and held her peace, though it went against her conscience. Last Monday, he couldn't leave his bed, and she said, David, she said, you never will leave it till you're carried, and he said, P'raps tha's so, but yet he wouldn't allow it, for fear of scaring the children. So that night he sat up in bed and his arms went out, and he said "Home!" just that word two or three times over, and dropped back, and was gone. There the writer was, a widow with four small children, and what she should do she didn't know; away there in a strange land, as you might say, if it was all one country. It did seem as if them as sent them might have thought of that, and let them stay at home among their own folks. Not but what there was elegant folks there. Everybody had been as kind as could be; one lady who was in "morning" herself had lent the writer her bonnet to wear to the funeral (for she wasn't one to send the remains off without anything being said over them); it was a real handsome bonnet, and she had taken a paper pattern of it, to have one made for herself. The lady was from New York way, and real stylish.

The writer intended to stay on a spell, as the money was not all gone, and her stren'th needed setting up, after all she had been through. Mr. Tombs, the undertaker, said he never saw anyone bear affliction so; she told him she was used to it. He was a perfect gentleman, and a widower himself, so he could feel for her. Miss Peace might be thankful that she was never called on to bear affliction, with no one but herself to look out for; not but what 'twas lonesome for her, and the writer supposed she'd be glad enough to keep Georgie and Joey on a spell longer for company. Tell them they are poor orphans now, with no father to earn their bread. The writer wished her husband's remains to be buried in his father's lot, as she had no money to buy one. Miss Peace might see if anyone felt to put up a monument for him; he hadn't an enemy in the world, and he never begredged a dollar when he had it to give, for anything there was going. If he had thought about her a little more, and less about everybody's cat and dog, she



might have something now to put bread in her children's mouths, let alone her own. Not that she had any appetite—a flea wouldn't fatten on what she ate. Lawyer Peters was his mother's third cousin, if she was living; he spent more on those girls of his than would clothe the writer and her children for a year. The remains went by the same boat with this letter, so Miss Peace would know when to expect them. The writer looked to her to see that David had a decent funeral; a handsome one she couldn't expect. Folks in Cyrus were close enough about all that didn't go on their own backs, though she shouldn't wish it said.

So now there was no more from Miss Peace's unfortunate friend, "the Widow Means."

After reading this precious epistle, Jenny Miller found herself, perhaps for the first time in her life, with nothing to say. She could only sit and press her friend's hand, and thrill, as a girl will, at the touch of a sorrow, which she only now began dimly to guess. It was Miss Peace who broke the silence, speaking in her usual quiet tone.

"Thank you, Jenny dear! I'm sure it was a privilege, having you come in just now. David Means was kin to me, you know, and I always set by him a great deal; and then, the poor little children!" she faltered again for an instant, but steadied her voice again and went on. "You'd better go home now, dear, for the fire is going beautiful and I don't need anything. I—I shall have to see to things for the funeral, you know. And don't forget to thank your mother for the cheese. It looks real good, and Georgie does like it the best of anything for breakfast. I guess I'll get on my bonnet, and go to see Abel Mound, the sexton."

But here Jenny found her voice, and protested. Miss Peace should not have anything at all to do with all that. 'Twasn't fitting she should, as the nearest kin poor Mr. Means had in Cyrus. Her father would see to it all, Jenny knew he would, and Dr. Brown would help him. She would go herself and speak to the doctor this minute. Miss Peace would have to be here to tell the children when they came from school, poor little things! and that was all she should do about it.

Anne Peace hesitated; and then Jenny had an inspiration, or, as she put it in telling Tудie Peaslee afterwards, "a voice spoke to her."

"Miss Peace," she said, timidly; "I—I don't suppose you

would feel to send those flowers you meant to give the folks over to Tupham for the Sunday-school festival? I know they kind o' lot on the flowers you send, 'cause they're always so fresh, and you do them up so pretty. But if you don't feel to do it, I can send them word, or ask some one else——"

"The idea!" cried Anne Peace, brightening up. "I forgot the flowers, Jenny, I did so! I should be pleased to pick them, and I'll do it this minute. There—there isn't anything I should like so well. And I do thank you, dear, and if you really think your father wouldn't mind seeing—I am sure it is a privilege to have such neighbors, I always say. There couldn't anybody be more blessed in neighbors than I have always been."

In ten minutes Miss Peace was at work in her garden, cutting, trimming, tying up posies, and finding balm for her inward wound in the touch of the rose-leaves, and in the smell of mignonette, which had always been David's favorite flower. No one in Cyrus had such mignonette as Miss Peace, and people thought she had some special receipt for making it grow and blossom luxuriantly; but she always said no, it was only because she set by it. Folks could most always grow the things they set most store by, she thought.

So the Sunday-school festival at Tupham Corner was a perfect blaze of flowers, and the minister in his speech made allusion to generous friends in other parishes, who sent of their wealth to swell our rejoicings, and of their garden produce to gladden our eyes; but while the eyes of Tupham were being gladdened, Anne Peace was brushing Joey's and Georgie's hair, and tying black ribbons under their little chins, smiling at them through her tears, and bidding them be brave for dear father's sake, who was gone to the best home now, and would never be sick any more, or tired, or—or sad.

It was a quiet funeral; almost a cheerful one, the neighbors said, as they saw the little room filled with the brightest flowers (only they all seemed to smell of mignonette, there was so much of it hidden among the roses), and the serene face of the chief mourner, who stood at the head of the coffin, with a child in either hand. It was an unusual thing, people felt. Generally, at Cyrus funerals, the mourners stayed upstairs, leaving the neighbors to gather round the coffin in the flower-scented room below; but it did not seem strange in Anne Peace, somehow, and after the first glance, no one could fancy anyone else standing there. The old minister, who had christened both

David and Anne on the same day, said a few quiet, cheering words, and the choir sang "Lead, kindly Light," then the procession went its quiet way to the church-yard, and all was over.

Jenny Miller and the doctor followed Miss Peace home from the church-yard, but made no attempt to speak to her. She seemed unconscious of anyone save the children, to whom she was talking in low, cheerful tones. The doctor caught the words "rest"—"home"—"blessedness:" and as she passed into the house he heard her say distinctly, "My children, now, my own! my own!"

"So they are," said Dr. Brown, taking off his glasses to clear them. "So they are, and so they will remain. I don't imagine Delia will ever come back, do you, Jenny?"

"No," said Jenny. "I don't. She'll marry the undertaker within the year."

And she did.





GRETCHEN *

BY ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN

It was nearly ten o'clock in the evening, when the habitues of the Cygne Brewery started for home and bed. Theodore followed the crowd and silently wended his way down the village street. The windows were being closed and the gossips could be heard crying out to each other in the stillness of the night, as they drew the shutters to: "Good-night, Orchel! Good-night, Gredel! Sleep well!"

Then everything was quiet and Theodore remained alone in the dark street, countless stars overhead and rustling trees around him, standing all alone on the road—gazing, listening and dreaming.

What stealthy things the night reveals to us! Listen to this indistinct murmur—this fleeing cat—this warbling bird, warbling so softly, so softly, that the ever-watchful cat can hardly hear it.

Theodore loved the night; he took a few steps—stopped—returned and listened. The words of Conrad the Weaver came to him as he gazed at the heavens:

"Preserve my soul! Preserve my soul!"

But when he brought his thoughts back to earth, when he inhaled the sweet earthly smell of the freshly-cut hay, the bitter-sweet odor of the autumn-tinted leaves, then he thought of Gretchen, pretty Gretchen, who was so sweet, with her rosy humid lips, her large, blue eyes so gay and limpid, her frank and hearty

* Translated by Belle M. Sherman, from the French, for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

laugh! How beautiful she seemed to him then, and how his heart thumped. He seemed to see her going from one table to the other, pouring the beer into the shining glasses, her raised arm as white as ivory, her figure so slender and supple, her two blonde plaits hanging down her back almost to the bottom of her poppy-colored petticoats, her teeth like enamel.

Gretchen laughed with every one, except Mr. Theodore; as soon as she saw him entering she became grave, but at the same time her big blue eyes became so tender that the poor fellow's heart overflowed with love. He seemed to lose his breath and stammer unintelligible words.

Theodore dreamed of these things; he could see old Reebstock, Gretchen's father, with his huge gray wig, his candid face full of good fellowship—the smoky, low-beamed tavern—the clock with the china dial—the lamps hanging from the ceiling, gilding the brown faces of the beer-drinkers and wine-growers, with their hats drawn down over their eyes and tin cups in their stiff and cramped hands.

“Life is on the earth,” he said to himself, “this bright life, this life of love, sentiment and well-being. Wine, delicious fruits, perfumes and Gretchen—all this is the earthly life!”

He shivered in thinking of this young girl; he saw her before him so plainly that he could count each thread of her dress, each separate bead in her necklace, and every change of the smile which called forth her rosy dimples.

He looked at the stars and saw Gretchen! He listened to the breeze and heard Gretchen's voice! He dreamt of the world and Gretchen was there, always there—listening to his thoughts, answering him—“O! Love! Love! What art thou? From whence dost thou come?”

And Theodore, wandering thus through the luminous night, along the bushes, through the lanes bordered by hedges, found himself in a freshly-mown field, gazing at the little houses with their odd and irregular architecture, their outside stairs, their worm-eaten balustrades, their backyards and their overhanging roofs, all softly toned in the dark, mysterious shadows.

After a long ramble he found himself again in the neighborhood of Reebstock's dwelling. He halted behind the stable, under Gretchen's window, and said to himself, as he gazed at the little round hole in the upper part of the shutter which gave light to the interior:

“She is there!”

The moonlight blanched his face, hollowed the rings under his eyes, silvered his little pointed beard and flickered along his artist's costume; a trifle neglected, a little careless it is true, but full of free and picturesque elegance; he held his large gray felt hat, its long cock's plume sweeping the ground, in his left hand, and with his right he sent his heart to Gretchen in a kiss! After a quarter of an hour of this silent contemplation, he jumped over the garden fence and entered the courtyard. To the right of him was the Brewery; the round tub, its huge belly encircled by iron bands, was dimly seen in the moonlight; the hatchet with its crooked handle, threw out a blue light in the darkness; the plane, the pincers and all the implements of a cooper, lay scattered around; further off was the big thumb-screw obliquely lighted by the rays of the moon; he advanced slowly, breathing the slightly bitter odor of the fermenting hops and the cooling wine.

Otherwise not a sound was heard, not a breath stirred the stillness of the night. He seated himself on a barrel, murmuring:

"Ah! how good it is here!"

He gazed at the trellis-work around which a festoon of ivy clung, at the little basins in the courtyard from which the chickens ate, at the laundry door to the left; and all this, because Gretchen often walked there, assumed in his eyes a strange significance and an indescribable charm.

"Oh!" he sighed, "if Gretchen would but come out for one moment. If I could see her now, I know I would have the courage to say: 'Gretchen, I love thee!' Yes, I would have the courage!"

He had been dreaming thus for more than an hour, not being inclined to go home, when a peculiar noise was heard. Theodore lifted his head and listened, the noise resembled a drinker smacking his lips on tasting the very best Johannesberg in the world.

What is that, he wondered, as he softly glided farther into the courtyard. There the same noise was repeated two or three times. Theodore turned round and round, not being able to make head or tail of it. Suddenly an idea struck him, he parted the branches of a bush covered with red tufts, and saw at the foot of the outer wall, Kasper Noss, the fool, who was seated on the grass, his legs spread out, the skirt of his blouse covering his shoulders, his old trousers of thin cloth drawn to

one side by the strap, and his torn three-cornered hat between his knees filled with excellent grapes, which he had without doubt just stolen from some neighboring vineyard. The merry fellow seemed as happy as a thrush, his prominent forehead, high cheek bones and little shining nose all plainly visible in the moonlight. He it was who was smacking his tongue. He lifted the bunch of grapes whole and hung them over his open mouth. His folded throat swelled out with ease: "He! He!" he cried cooingly. Great nettles bent towards him in the shadow of the wall, and a few dry thistles stood like sentinels at his feet.

"Ah! scamp!" said Theodore, "is this how you spend your nights?"

The fool nonchalantly turned his head towards him, his eyes wrinkled mockingly and, without lowering the grapes from his mouth, he said:

"Oh, is it you, Theodore? Come and taste my grapes."

"From whom have you stolen them?"

Kasper, pointing with his thumb, said:

"Below there—there are plenty——"

"Come, how is that? Did you steal them from Reebstock's vineyard?"

"Yes, Theodore," the other answered simply.

"And if I should denounce you?"

"No, you will not do that."

"And why?"

"Because, you would then have to tell at what hour you had seen me."

"He is right, the fool—but he is right!"

As he uttered these words, Kasper Noss' little eyes squinted in a peculiar fashion; he laughed, and the artist turned hurriedly to re-climb the paling, murmuring:

"I am the fool, not he."

But as he turned to run, Noss seized him by the coat-tails, crying:

"Halt, robber! I have caught you; you came to steal Gretchen's heart."

Theodore turned pale.

"Loose me!" he cried.

"No, seat yourself."

"Noss, I beg of you!"

"Eat some of my grapes, then."

"Listen, I will cry out—I will call——"

"Lend me a pipe of tobacco, Theodore, and I will make Gretchen come out to you," said Noss in the strange voice of a fool; rambling and yet convincing. "She loves you—she thinks of you. Listen!" he said, lifting his finger, "she is dreaming in her little room—she says: 'Theodore—my Theodore; oh, how I love you!'"

The fool had loosed his hold of Theodore's coat, but the latter no longer thought of fleeing; he listened to Noss' assurances with infinite joy.

"Oh, my good Kasper! Are you quite certain that this is what she says?" he asked in a voice trembling with emotion.

"And why should she not?" said Noss, "are you not the nicest looking young fellow in the village—and the best also? Do you not give me tobacco when I ask it of you, and all your old pipes? Yes, yes, she dreams of you all night long. Come, now, sit down and I will make her come out to you."

Theodore, as if fascinated, sat down—then the fool made him take a bunch of grapes.

"Eat that," he said, "you have often given me bread, why should I not make you a present?"

Theodore took the grapes to be agreeable, and found them delicious. They were real Marko-Brunner.

Noss laughed, then joining his hands before his mouth, he let forth a guttural sound, the cry of the awakening quail. It was so true that, far away in the field, a quail was fooled, imagining it was daylight in the middle of the night, it answered three times.

"What have you done?" asked the young man.

"Advanced the hour," Noss joyously replied; "it is now four o'clock around the Brewery."

"Leave me alone, let me do it," he said, as Theodore tried to stop him—"Gretchen will come out—old Reebstock is a sound sleeper; he will not awaken!"

And leaning against the fence, Noss imitated the first crow of the cock, hoarse from the fog, lisping, slow and grave; you could almost see the cock shaking his feathers and fluttering on his perch. Five or six hens hopped down the ladder of the hen-house, anxiously looking at the moon through a hole in the roof.

"You rogue," whispered Theodore, where did you learn all these tricks?"

But Kasper Noss laughingly whispered back:

"Do not ask me; don't you know that I am a fool?"

The hens, finding out their mistake, started to hop up the ladder again; but the village fool, full of malice, chased them and started them clucking. Then suddenly he commenced to imitate the lark's morning song. He put so much love in his rendering, that Theodore, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed:

"Oh, Gretchen!—come—come—Gretchen, my love—my joy—my life! Gretchen, my heart yearns for thee; it is I who calls thee!"

He had re-entered the courtyard, and with his back against the wall and his head bowed on his breast, he dreamt of Gretchen, while Noss unrolled his quivering gamuts.

Gretchen, a good deal surprised, had heard the quail in the bewilderment of sleep. She had not believed it possible. Then the cock was heard from, and still she could not believe. Then the hens commenced; and then her eyes opened. Still no light shone through the shutter. So she turned over and continued to dream of Theodore. But when she heard the lark—when the soft and tender notes floated around her, she rose quickly, saying to herself:

"Why, it must be day!"

She put on her little skirt and started to open the shutter. Theodore had heard her rising; he trembled; he wanted to run away; but the moment the shutter was thrown open, his timidity disappeared; he leaned in on the window, and notwithstanding a little cry from the young girl, he seized her hand.

"Oh, Gretchen! Gretchen!" he cried, "I love thee!"

These words were hardly out of his mouth, when the terror at what he had done caused his limbs to bend under him. Gretchen, agitated like a turtle-dove surprised in her nest, her cheeks burning, murmured:

"Theodore!—dear Theodore!"

She could say no more, for old Reebstock's shutter was thrown violently open, and in the stillness of the night a terrible oath was heard—a true German oath—followed by these words:

"What do I see there?"

Everybody was stunned. Theodore and Gretchen fell into each other's arms and then separated, frightened at what they had just done. Noss, his arms in the air, flew as fast as his legs would carry him, imitating the cries of a duck chased through the reeds by a poodle. His sniffing voice echoed far. He had plenty to laugh at, but Reebstock did not laugh; neither did the artist, who, pressing his hat on his head, jumped the palisade and

started to run for dear life through the fields, whilst Gretchen, trembling violently, hastened to close the shutter.

"Robber!" cried Reebstock, shaking his fist at him, "you will pay up dearly for this."

And the neighbor's dog, awakened by all the commotion, commenced to bark, rattling his chain in his anxiety to get loose. Theodore ran until daylight, first to the right, then to the left, repeating, as one in a dream:

"Gretchen! Gretchen, I love thee!"

Then he would add:

"Theodore! Theodore!—dear Theodore!"

He thought himself the happiest of mortals. It was almost five o'clock when he reached his home; but when the thought came to him as he lay in his little bed, that perhaps Reebstock had recognized him, he became very sad.

The next day his sadness was greater still.

"Is it possible to be more unhappy than I am?" he cried. "Old Reebstock will be revenged upon me; I will never see Gretchen again—if I could only see her once more—but I will never dare go down the main street!"

Reflecting on these sad happenings, he descended the stairs and started out haphazard, gazing from afar at the Brewery, the weather-cock and the sign-board.

Nothing seemed changed, everything looked just the same as usual. The herdsman was coming down the street, playing on the bagpipe and followed by a long line of goats and swine—the girls were going to the fountain, their pails hanging on their arms, and Kasper Noss, stretched on a bench outside the inn, slept tranquilly, his back to the sun.

Eager to obtain a glimpse of Gretchen, Theodore walked on, his portfolio under his arm; he passed by the Brewery, not daring to turn his head; but several knocks on the window startled him, and he stopped short, affrighted.

"Can it be me whom they are calling?" he asked himself. The windows of the common room were opened, and already a goodly company were seated at the tables, the Burgomaster Weinland, with his large red face, his gray felt hat on the nape of his neck, and his great vine-stock cane planted between his knees; Zimmer, the tailor, in a gray jacket, his nose daubed with tobacco, and his green toque pulled over his ears; the little barber, Spitz, his tin plate on the table alongside of the bottle, his smiling face, his peremptory voice and his toupet in pyra-

mids, following an ancient French fashion; and many others besides.

Old Berbel was ranging the pails of curdled milk behind the cast-iron stove, and great streaks of sunlight, teeming with sparkling atoms, stretched along the table and under the benches.

Theodore entered, feeling very uneasy.

Father Reebstock, dressed in his brown coat trimmed with steel buttons, was seated against the box of the clock, facing the door; Gretchen, standing near the window, lowered her eyes as Theodore came in.

They were all talking, nobody seemed to be thinking of anything in particular, but the moment the painter appeared on the threshold, Reebstock, pointing his finger at him, cried out:

“Do you love my daughter Gretchen?”

Everybody was amazed. Each with his glass in his hand remained in the same attitude, looking first at Theodore, then at Gretchen and then at the Brewer. At last Theodore, in a voice stifled by emotion, said:

“Oh, my God! To ask me if I love her!”

He cast on Gretchen so supplicating a look, that the young girl ran towards him and, throwing herself into his arms, burst into tears. Then the old Brewer commenced to laugh heartily.

“Ha! Ha! Ha! I knew well enough that they loved one another. They could not fool old Reebstock!”

And all the company, seeing him laugh, laughed too, saying:

“Ha! Ha! Ha! How smart he is, old Reebstock—he knows everything.”

“Well,” continued the old Brewer, “as you love her so much, take her for your wife! Take her, but remain here with me—in my house!”

Then he added, in a grave voice:

“It is settled—you will be married in fifteen days.”

Then the company cried out gaily:

“In fifteen days we will have a wedding.”

And so it happened.

And by and by old Reebstock had grandsons and granddaughters, whom he dandled for a long time on his knees. Later, having become altogether too old for work, he gave up his brewery to his son-in-law and his daughter.

“My children, remember one thing,” he said to them, “if we are happy, it is Heaven who has sent us this happiness and to

whom we must give thanks. I heard the cock crow before day-break, and looking out of my window I saw Gretchen open the shutter. Then I had a great mind to get angry, but Providence enlightened me: 'Marry them quickly,' it said to me, 'for fear they marry themselves.' "

Theodore and Gretchen admired the wise foresight of the old man, and thanked the Lord God, who governs all things here below as to Him seems best.



THE DEVIL'S MOTHER-IN-LAW *

BY FERNAN CABALLERO.



WELL sir! Once upon a time there lived in a place called Villagañanes a woman who was uglier than the Sergeant of Utrera, who was so ugly that his face cracked in two; more dried up than a bundle of hay, and yellower than the plague itself. She had, besides, such a bad temper that Job himself could not have endured her. She was nicknamed "Aunt Holofernes," and the moment she put her head out of the door, all the boys ran away. Aunt Holofernes was as neat as a pin and as industrious as an ant, but her daughter Pamfila was so lazy that an earthquake could not have roused her. So Aunt Holofernes scolded her from morning till night.

"It takes a yoke of oxen to get you out of bed. You are as afraid of work as you are of the pest, fonder of gaping out of the window than a she-monkey, and more love-sick than Cupid himself."



Pamfila got up, yawned, stretched herself, slipped behind her mother's back and went to the street door.

Aunt Holofernes began to sweep with her usual activity, accompanying the sound of her broom with some such monologue as this:

"In my time, girls had to work like mules;" swish, swish, swish went the broom. "They were kept as close as nuns;" swish, swish. "Nowadays they are a pack of fools;" swish, swish. "They think of nothing but beaux;" swish, swish.

Just then she caught sight of her daughter making signs to a lad outside, and the broom-dance ended in a good drubbing over Pamfila's shoulders, which had the miraculous effect of making her run. Then Aunt Holofernes went, broom in hand, to the door, but hardly had she shown herself when her face had its usual effect, and the lover vanished as quickly as if he had had wings on his feet.

* Translated by Mrs. James M. Lancaster, from the Spanish, for Short Stories, with Illustrations by Charles Lederer.—Copyrighted.

"You worthless, love-sick girl!" cried the mother; "I'd like to break every bone in your body."

"What for? Who do you think would marry me then?"

"Marry you! you fool! Nobody shall marry you as long as I live!"

"But didn't you get married, Señora, and my grandmother and my great-grandmother?"

"More's the pity! But let me tell you that I don't intend that you shall marry, nor my granddaughter, nor my great-granddaughter. Do you hear that?"

In such sweet communion of spirit did the mother and daughter spend their lives, with this result, that the mother scolded harder from day to day, and the daughter grew more and more sentimental.

One day, when Aunt Holofernes was making lye out of wood-ashes, she called Pamfila to help her lift the heavy caldron from the fire. The daughter heard her with one ear, but with the other was listening to a well-known voice, singing in the street:

"I'd like to make love to you,
But your mother won't let me;
The old devil, confound her,
Must meddle in everything."

Finding the view out of the window more attractive than the lye-kettle, Pamfila leaned on the sill. By-and-bye, seeing that her daughter was not coming, and that time was flying, Aunt Holofernes lifted the caldron alone, to pour the lye over the clothes, and as the old woman was little, and not over strong, she let it spill over on her foot. Hearing her mother's cries, Pamfila ran to her assistance.



"You wicked, good-for-nothing, love-sick girl," cried Aunt Holofernes, in a towering rage; "thinking of nothing but getting married. I wish to God you'd marry the devil!"

Some time after this a most unexceptionable lover presented himself. He was young, good-looking, well-behaved, and with well-filled pockets. Even Aunt Holofernes could find nothing to object to in him. Pamfila was half wild with delight, so preparations were made for the wedding. Everything was going on smoothly, when, all at once, people began to talk against the stranger, though he was very polite, well-bred and clever. He

talked well and sang better, and pressed affectionately the horny palms of the peasant farmers between his soft, white, jeweled hands. But all his politeness did not overcome their prejudices; they had too much common sense, and their heads were as hard as their hands.

"Caramba," said Uncle Blas, "his ugly-faced lordship takes it upon himself to call me *Señor Blas*, as if he were doing me a great honor. What do you think of that?"

"Well, look at me!" said Uncle Gil; "didn't he give me his hand as if we had been brought up like brothers. Doesn't he pretend to think me a city-bred man, when I have never been outside our parish, and never want to go."



As for Aunt Holofernes, the more she looked at her son-in-law the more she distrusted him. It seemed to her that she could detect certain suspicious protuberances under that innocent-looking red hair, and she recollected with uneasiness the curse which she had pronounced upon her daughter the memorable day when she demonstrated, conclusively, how much it hurts to scald oneself with boiling lye.



At last the wedding-day arrived. Aunt Holofernes had made tarts and reflections, the first sweet, the latter bitter, a great dish of *olla podrida* for the wedding-dinner, and a deep-laid scheme for supper; had prepared a barrel of generous wine, and a plan of conduct not quite so much so.

When the bridal pair were about to retire to their apartment, Aunt Holofernes called her daughter and said to her, "When you go into your room shut all the doors and windows, and stop up every hole and crack except the keyhole. Then take a branch of blessed olive, and begin to beat your husband. Keep on till I call to you to stop. This ceremony is never omitted at weddings; and signifies that the woman is to rule in her own apartment, and serves to sanction and establish her rule."



Pamfila, obedient to her mother for once in her life, did just as the wily old woman told her to do.

As soon as the bridegroom caught sight of the blessed olive branch in his wife's hands, he turned to run away. But finding the doors and windows all shut, and every crack stopped up, and seeing no other way of escape but the keyhole, he slipped into it as if it had been a *porte-cochère*, for, as you must already have guessed, what Aunt Holofernes had expected turned out to be the case. This spruce-looking youth, so red and white, and so soft-spoken, was no less a person than the devil himself, who, taking advantage of the power Aunt Holofernes had given him by her curse, wanted to treat himself to all the pleasures of a wedding-feast.



But this gentleman, though he is said to be no fool, had met a mother-in-law who was his match, and Aunt Holofernes is not the only one of her kind. So hardly had his lordship entered the keyhole when he found himself in a little bottle, which his mother-in-law was holding ready to receive him as he came through. He was no sooner in than the old woman sealed the bottle up. Her son-in-law begged her humbly to give him his liberty. But the devil could not impose on Aunt Holofernes. Off she started with the bottle and its contents, and when she came to a mountain, she climbed and climbed till she reached the very top, and then she put down the bottle and hurried off, shaking her fist at her son-in-law by way of farewell.



And there his highness stayed for ten years. And such a ten years, gentlemen! The world was like a great pool of oil. Every man minded his own business and did not meddle with what did not concern him. Nobody coveted his neighbor's wife nor anything that was his. Robbery became a word without meaning. Weapons lay idle, and were consumed with rust; gunpowder was used only in fireworks. The prisons were emptied, and in fact in this golden decade there was only one deplorable event—the lawyers all died of starvation.

But alas! such happiness could not last forever, and this is how it came to an end.

A soldier named Briones had leave to spend a few days in his native village, Villagañanes. He took the road which led by the mountain on whose summit reposed Aunt Holofernes' son-in-law, cursing all mothers-in-law, past, present and future, vowing that

when he got out he would put an end to the whole nest of vipers by simply abolishing marriage.

When he reached the foot of the mountain, Briones did not choose to follow the road which turned off to one side, but kept straight ahead, telling the muleteers who were with him that if the mountain would not get out of his way, he should walk right over it, if it were so high that it touched the floor of the heavens.

When he reached the top he was surprised to find the bottle, which stood there like a wart on the nose of the mountain. He picked it up, held it to the light, and seeing the devil, whom time, imprisonment, fasting and the heat of the sun had withered away till he looked like a dried plum, he cried out:



“What little mis-begotten imp is this?”

“I am a very worthy and respectable devil,” answered the the prisoner hastily, with the utmost humility and politeness. “The wicked plot of a treacherous mother-in-law (just let me get my hands on her once) has kept me imprisoned here for ten years. Let me out, gallant warrior, and I will grant you any favor you may ask of me.”

“I want my discharge,” answered Briones, without a moment's hesitation.

“You shall have it; but take out the stopper quick, for it is a horrible shame in these rebellious times to keep the chief of rebels shut up in prison.”

Briones loosened the cork, and there rushed out of the bottle such a smell of brimstone that it choked him. He sneezed and hastened to drive in the cork again. He gave it such a violent blow with his open hand, that it hit the prisoner, who howled with rage and pain.



“What are you doing, you wretch?” cried he; “you are more wicked and treacherous than my mother-in-law.”

“I'm going to add another condition to our bargain. It seems to me that the service I am going to render you is worth it.”

“And what is the condition,” asked the devil.

“I want four dollars a day as long as I live; you won't get out unless you agree to these terms.”

"By Satan, by Beelzebub, by Lucifer," cried the devil, "I have no money to give you, you avaricious wretch!"

"Oh," answered Briones, "that is a pretty answer for a gentleman like you to make. If you don't keep your part of the bargain, I shall not keep mine."

"Since you don't believe me, let me out and I will help you to get some money, as I have helped many a one before. That is all I can do for you; hurry up and let me out."

"Wait a bit!" answered the soldier, "there is no great hurry the world is getting along very well without you. I'll hold you by the tail till you keep your promise to me."

"Don't you trust me, you insolent dog?" cried the devil.

"No," answered Briones.

"What you require of me is beneath my dignity," answered the devil, with as much arrogance as a dried plum can assume.

"Allright!" said the soldier, "then I'll go away and leave you."

"Good-bye!" said the devil, but seeing that Briones was going away, the prisoner began to jump about in the bottle, calling to the soldier.

"Come back, come back, my dear friend; come, you good kind fellow, let me out, and hold me by the tail or by the nose, just as you please, oh valiant warrior," and muttered to himself: "I'll be revenged on you yet. If I can't manage to give you Aunt Holofernes for a mother-in-law, I'll make you burn your face at the same fire, if I have any power left."



When Briones heard the devil begging so hard, he came back and uncorked the bottle. Aunt Holofernes' son-in-law crept out like a chicken out of the shell, first his head, then his body, and last of all his tail, which Briones seized, in spite of the devil's efforts to get away.

The ex-prisoner, who felt quite cramped and benumbed, stretched his arms and legs, and then they started off for the Royal Palace, the devil running along in front, and the soldier following, holding the tail fast in his hand.



When they reached the palace, the devil was about to skip away, but Briones held on to his tail and said, "Now that I come to think it over, Señor, four dollars a day is a miserable



pittance, unworthy of you, of me, and of the service I have done you. You must be a little more generous. Do something which will be a credit to you in this world, where (excuse my plain speaking) you do not enjoy a very savory reputation."

The devil agreed to his terms, as needs must, and said, "I am going to slip down the throat of the Princess, whom the King, her father, loves to distraction, and I shall cause her such pain that no doctor can cure her. Then you must present yourself, offering to effect a cure for a pension of as many dollars a day as you may want, and I will come out. So our accounts will be settled."

Everything occurred as he had planned it. The Princess took to her bed, convulsed with pain, and the King was in agonies of anxiety about her. Briones presented himself with all the effrontery of a man who knows that the devil is helping him. The King accepted his services on one condition, which was, that if he did not cure the Princess in three days, as he positively promised to do, the presumptuous doctor should be hanged.

Briones, certain of success, agreed to these terms, but unfortunately the devil heard the agreement and jumped with joy when he saw a chance to revenge himself on the soldier.

The devil's jump gave the Princess so much pain that she screamed for the doctor.

The next day the same scene occurred, and Briones saw that the devil intended to let him hang. But the soldier kept his wits about him, and the third day when the pretended physician arrived, they were busy erecting a gallows in front of the palace door.

When he entered the Princess's apartment, her sufferings were redoubled, and she cried out to her attendants to take away the imposter.

"My resources are not exhausted yet," said Briones gravely. "I beg Your Royal Highness to have patience a moment." Then he went out and gave orders, in the Princess's name, that all the bells in the city should be rung.

When he returned to the royal chamber, the devil, who had a mortal hatred of bells, and who is, besides, very inquisitive, asked Briones, "What saint are they ringing the bells for?"



"I sent for your mother-in-law," answered Briones; "they are ringing in honor of her arrival."



The devil no sooner heard that his mother-in-law had come, than he slipped out and ran away so fast that a ray of sunlight could not overtake him, and



left Briones, proud as a turkey-cock, and rejoicing in his good fortune.



WILLIAM BACON'S MAN *

BY HAMLIN GARLAND

The yellow March sun lay powerfully on the bare Iowa prairie, where the plowed fields were already turning warm and brown, and only here and there in a corner or on the north side of the fence did the sullen drifts remain, and they were so dark and low that they hardly appeared to break the mellow brown of the fields.

There passed also an occasional flock of geese, cheerful harbingers of spring, and the prairie-chickens had set up their morning symphony; wide-swelling, wonderful with its prophecy of the new birth of grass and grain and the springing life of all breathing things. The crow passed now and then, uttering his resonant croak, but the crane had not yet sent forth his bugle-note.

Lyman Gilman rested on his ax-helve at the wood-pile of Farmer Bacon to listen to the music around him. In a vague way he was powerfully moved by it. He heard the hens singing their weird, raucous, monotonous song, and saw them burrowing in the dry chip-dust near him. He saw the young colts and cattle frisking in the sunny space around the straw-stacks, absorbed through his bare arms and uncovered head the heat of the sun, and felt the soft wooing of the air so deeply that he broke into an unwonted exclamation:

"Glory! we'll be seeding by Friday, sure."

This short and disappointing soliloquy was, after all, an expression of deep emotion. To the Western farmer the very word "seeding" is a poem. And these few words, coming from Lyman Gilman, meant more and expressed more than many a large and ambitious spring-time song.

But the glory of all the slumbrous landscape, the stately beauty of the sky with its masses of fleecy vapor, were swept away by the sound of a girl's voice humming, "Come to the Saviour," while she bustled about the kitchen near by. The windows were open. Ah! what suggestion to these dwellers in

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a rigorous climate was in the first unsealing of the windows! How sweet it was to the pale and weary women after their long imprisonment!

As Lyman sat down on his maple log to hear better, a plump face appeared at the window, and a clear girl-voice said:

"Smell anything, Lime?"

He snuffed the air. "Cookies, by the great horn spoons!" he yelled, leaping up. "Bring me some, an' see me eat; it'll do ye good."

"Come an' get 'm," laughed the face at the window.

"Oh, it's nicer out here, Merry ETTY. What's the rush? Bring me out some, an' set down on this log."

With a nod Marietta disappeared, and soon came out with a plate of cookies in one hand and a cup of milk in the other.

"Poor little man, he's all tired out, ain't he?"

Lime, taking the cue, collapsed in a heap, and said feebly, "Bread, bread!"

"Won't milk an' cookies do as well?"

He brushed off the log and motioned her to sit down beside him, but she hesitated a little and colored a little.

"O Lime, s'pose somebody should see us?"

"Let 'em. What in thunder do we care? Sit down an' gimme a holt o' them cakes. I'm just about done up. I couldn't 'a' stood it another minute."

She sat down beside him with a laugh and a pretty blush. She was in her apron, and the sleeves of her dress were rolled to her elbows, displaying the strong, round arms. Wholesome and sweet she looked and smelled, the scent of the cooking round her. Lyman munched a couple of the cookies and gulped a pint of milk before he spoke.

"Whadda we care who sees us sittin' side b' side? Ain't we goin' t' be married soon?"

"Oh, them cookies in the oven!" she shrieked, leaping up and running to the house. She looked back as she reached the kitchen door, however, and smiled with a flushed face. Lime slapped his knee and roared with laughter at his bold stroke.

"Ho! ho!" he laughed. "Didn't I do it slick? Ain't nothin' green in *my* eye, I guess." In an intense and pleasurable abstraction he finished the cookies and the milk. Then he yelled:

"Hey! Merry—Merry ETTY!"

"Whadda ye want?" sang the girl from the window, her face still rosy with confusion.

"Come out here and git these things."

The girl shook her head, with a laugh.

"Come out an' git 'm, 'r, by jingo, I'll throw 'em at ye! Come on, now!"

The girl looked at the huge, handsome fellow, the sun falling on his golden hair and beard, and came slowly out to him—came creeping along with her hand outstretched for the plate which Lime, with a laugh in his sunny blue eyes, extended at the full length of his bare arm. The girl made a snatch at it, but his left hand caught her by the wrist, and away went cup and plate as he drew her to him and kissed her in spite of her struggles.

"My! ain't you strong!" she said, half-ruefully and half-admiringly, as she shrugged her shoulders. "If you'd use a little more o' *that* choppin' wood, Dad wouldn't 'a' lost s' much money by yeh."

Lime grew grave.

"There's the hog in the fence, Merry; what's yer dad goin' t' say——"

"About what?"

"About our gitt'n' married this spring."

"I guess you'd better find out what *I'm* a-goin' t' say, Lime Gilman, 'fore you pitch into Dad."

"I *know* what you're a-goin' t' say."

"No, y' don't."

"Yes, but I *do*, though."

"Well, ask me, and see, if you think you're so smart. Jest as like's not, you'll slip up."

"All right; here goes. Marietty Bacon, ain't you an' Lime Gilman goin' t' be married?"

"No, sir, we ain't," laughed the girl, snatching up the plate and darting away to the house, where she struck up "Weevily Wheat," and went busily on about her cooking. Lime threw a kiss at her, and fell to work on his log with startling energy.

Lyman looked forward to his interview with the old man with as much trepidation as he had ever known, though commonly he had little fear of anything—but a girl.

Marietta was not only the old man's only child, but his house-keeper, his wife having at last succumbed to the ferocious toil of the farm. It was reasonable to suppose, therefore, that he would surrender his claim on the girl reluctantly. Rough as he

was, he loved Marietta strongly, and would find it exceedingly hard to get along without her.

Lyman mused on these things as he drove the gleaming axe into the huge maple logs. He was something more than the usual hired man, being a lumberman from the Wisconsin pineries, where he had sold out his interest in a camp not three weeks before the day he began work for Bacon. He had a nice "little wad o' money" when he left the camp and started for La Crosse, but he had been robbed in his hotel the first night in the city, and was left nearly penniless. It was a great blow to him, for, as he said, every cent of that money "stood fer hard knocks an' poor feed. When I smelt of it I could jest see the cold, frosty mornin's and the late nights. I could feel the hot sun on my back, like it was when I worked in the harvest field. By jingo! It kind o' made my toes curl up."

But he went resolutely out to work again, and here he was chopping wood in old man Bacon's yard, thinking busily on the talk which had just passed between him and Marietta.

"By jingo!" he said all at once, stopping short, with the axe on his shoulder. "If I hadn't 'a' been robbed I wouldn't 'a' come here—I never'd met Merry. Thunder and jimson root! Wasn't that a narrow escape?"

And then he laughed so heartily that the girl looked out of the window again to see what in the world he was doing. He had his hat in his hand and was whacking his thigh with it.

"Lyman Gilman, what in the world ails you to-day? It's perfectly ridiculous the way you yell and talk t' y'rself out there on the chips. You beat the hens, I declare if you don't."

Lime put on his hat and walked up to the window, and, resting his great bare arms on the sill, and his chin on his arms, said:

"Merry, I'm goin' to tackle 'Dad' this afternoon. He'll be settin' up the new seeder, and I'm goin' t' climb right on the back of his neck. He's jest *got t'* give me a chance."

Marietta looked sober in sympathy.

"Well! P'raps it's best to have it over with, Lime, but someway I feel kind o' scary about it."

Lime stood for a long time looking in at the window, watching the light-footed girl as she set the table in the middle of the sun-lighted kitchen floor. The kettle hissed, the meat sizzled, sending up a delicious odor; a hen stood in the open door and sang a sort of cheery half-human song, while to and fro moved

the sweet-faced, lithe and powerful girl, followed by the smiling eyes at the window.

"Merry, you look purty as a picture. You look just like the wife I've be'n a-huntin' for all these years, sure's shootin'."

Marietta colored with pleasure.

"Does Dad pay you to stand an' look at me an' say pretty things t' the cook?"

"No, he don't. But I'm willin' t' do it without pay. I could jest stand here till kingdom come an' look at you. Hello! I hear a wagon. I guess I'd better hump into that wood-pile."

"I think so, too. Dinner's most ready, and Dad 'll be here soon."

Lime was driving away furiously at a tough elm log when Farmer Bacon drove into the yard with a new seeder in his wagon. Lime whacked away busily while Bacon stabled the team, and in a short time Marietta called, in a long-drawn, musical fashion:

"Dinner-r-r!"

After sozzling their faces at the well, the two men went in and sat down at the table. Bacon was not much of a talker at any time, and at meal-time, in seeding, eating was the main business in hand; therefore the meal was a silent one, Marietta and Lime not caring to talk on general topics. The hour was an anxious one for her, and an important one for him.

"Wal, now, Lime, seedun' 's the nex' thing," said Bacon, as he shoved back his chair and glared around from under his bushy eyebrows. "We can't do too much this afternoon. That seeder's got t' be set up an' a lot o' seed-wheat cleaned up. You unload the machine while I feed the pigs."

Lime sat still till the old man was heard outside calling "Oo-ee, poo-ee" to the pigs in the yard; then he smiled at Marietta, but she said:

"He's got on one of his fits, Lime; I don't b'lieve you'd better tackle him t'-day."

"Don't you worry; I'll fix him. Come, now, give me a kiss."

"Why, you great thing! You—took——"

"I know, but I want you to *give* 'em to me. Just walk right up to me an' give me a smack t' bind the bargain."

"I ain't made any bargain," laughed the girl. Then, feeling the force of his tender tone, she added: "Will you behave, and go right off to your work?"

"Jest like a little man—hope t' die!"

"*Lime!*" roared the old man from the barn.

"Hello!" replied Lime, grinning joyously and winking at the girl, as much as to say: "This would paralyze the old man if he saw it."

He went out to the shed where Bacon was at work, as serene as if he had not a fearful task on hand. He was apprehensive that the father might "gig back" unless rightly approached, and so he awaited a good opportunity.

The right moment seemed to present itself along about the middle of the afternoon. Bacon was down on the ground under the machine, tightening some burrs. This was a good chance for two reasons. In the first place the keen, almost savage eyes of Bacon were no longer where they could glare on him, and in spite of his cool exterior Lime had just as soon not have the old man looking at him.

Besides, the old farmer had been telling about his "river eighty," which was without a tenant; the man who had taken it, having lost his wife, had grown disheartened and had given it up.

"It's an almighty good chance for a man with a small family. Good house an' barn, good land. A likely young feller with a team an' a woman could do tip-top on that eighty. If he wanted more, I'd let him have an eighty j'inun——"

"I'd like t' try that m'self," said Lime, as a feeler. The old fellow said nothing in reply for a moment.

"Ef you had a team, an' tools, an' a woman, I'd jest as lief you'd have it as anybody."

"Sell me your blacks, and I'll pay half down—the balance in the fall. I can pick up some tools, and as for a woman, Merry ETTY an' me have talked that over to-day. She's ready to—ready to marry me whenever you say go."

There was an ominous silence under the seeder, as if the father could not believe his ears.

"What's—what's that?" he stuttered. "Who'd you say? What about Merry ETTY?"

"She's agreed to marry me."

"The hell you say!" roared Bacon, as the truth burst upon him. "So that's what you do when I go off to town and leave you to chop wood. So you're goun' to get married, hey?"

He was now where Lime could see him, glaring up into his smiling blue eyes. Lime stood his ground.

"Yes, sir. That's the calculation."

"Well, I guess I'll have somethin' t' say about that," nodding his head violently.

"I rather expected y' would. Blaze away. Your privilege—my bad luck. Sail in, ol' man. What's y'r objection to me fer a son-in-law?"

"Don't you worry, young feller. I'll come at it soon enough," went on Bacon, as he turned up another burr in a very awkward corner. In his nervous excitement the wrench slipped, banging his knuckle.

"Ouch! Thunder—m-m-m!" howled and snarled the wounded man.

"What's the matter? Bark y'r knuckle?" queried Lime, feeling a mighty impulse to laugh. But when he saw the old savage straighten up and glare at him he sobered. Bacon was now in a frightful temper. The veins in his great, bare, weather-beaten neck swelled dangerously.

"Jest let me say right here that I've had enough o' you. You can't live on the same acre with my girl another day."

"What makes ye think I can't?" It was now the young man's turn to draw himself up, and as he faced the old man, his arms folded and each vast hand grasping an elbow, he looked like a statue of red granite, and the hands resembled the paws of a crouching lion; but his eyes smiled.

"I don't *think*, I know ye won't."

"What's the objection to me?"

"Objection? Hell! What's the inducement? My hired man, an' not three shirts to yer back!"

"That's another; I've got four. Say, old man, did you ever work out for a living?"

"That's none o' your business," growled Bacon, a little taken down. "I've worked, an' scraped, an' got t'gether a little prop'ty here, an' they ain't no sucker like you goun' to come 'long here, an' live off me, an' spend my prop'ty after I'm dead. You can jest bet high on that."

"Who's goin' t' live on ye?"

"You're aimun' to."

"I ain't, neither."

"Yes, y'are. You've loafed on me ever since I hired ye."

"That's a——" Lime checked himself for Marietta's sake, and the enraged father went on:

"I hired ye t' cut wood, an' you've gone an' fooled my

daughter away from me. Now you jest figger up what I owe ye, an' git out o' here. You can't go too soon t' suit *me*."

Bacon was renowned as the hardest man in Cedar County to handle, and though he was getting old, he was still a terror to his neighbors when roused. He was honest, temperate, and a good neighbor until something carried him off his balance; then he became as cruel as a panther and as savage as a grizzly. All this Lime knew, but it did not keep his anger down so much as did the thought of Marietta. His silence infuriated Bacon, who yelled hoarsely:

"Git out o' this!"

"Don't be in a rush, ol' man——"

Bacon hurled himself upon Lime, who threw out one hand and stopped him, while he said in a low voice:

"Stay right where you are, ol' man. I'm dangerous. It's for Merry's sake——"

The infuriated old man struck at him. Lime warded off the blow, and with a sudden wrench and twist threw him to the ground with frightful force. Before Bacon could rise, Marietta, who had witnessed the scene, came flying from the house.

"Lime! Father! What are you doing?"

"I—couldn't help it, Merry. It was him 'r me," said Lime, almost sadly,

"Dad, ain't you got no sense? What 're you thinking of? You jest stop right now. I won't have it."

He rose while she clung to him; he seemed a little dazed. It was the first time he had ever been thrown, and he could not but feel a certain respect for his opponent, but he could not give way.

"Pack up yer duds," he snarled, "an' git off'n my land. I'll have the money fer ye when ye come back. I'll give ye jest five minutes to git clear o' here. Merry, you stay here."

The young man saw it was useless to remain, as it would only excite the old man; and so, with a look of apology, not without humor, at Marietta, he went to the house to get his valise. The girl wept silently while the father raged up and down. His mood frightened her.

"I thought you had more sense than t' take up with such a dirty houn'."

"He ain't a houn'," she blazed forth, "and he's just as good and clean as you are."

"Shut up! Don't let me hear another word out o' your head. I'm boss here yet, I reckon."

Lime came out with his valise in his hand.

"Good-bye, Merry," he said cheerily. She started to go to him, but her father's rough grasp held her.

"Set *down*, an' stay there."

Lime was going out of the gate.

"Here! Come and get y'r money," yelled the old man, extending some bills. "Here's twenty——"

"Go to thunder with your money," retorted Lime. "I've had my pay for my month's work." As he said that, he thought of the sunny kitchen and the merry girl, and his throat choked. Good-bye to the sweet girl whose smile was so much to him, and to the happy noons and nights her eyes had made for him. He waved his hat at her as he stood in the open gate, and the sun lighted his handsome head into a sort of glory in her eyes. Then he turned and walked rapidly off down the road, not looking back.

The girl, when she could no longer see him, dashed away, and, sobbing violently, entered the house.

There was just a suspicion of light in the east, a mere hint of a glow, when Lyman walked cautiously around the corner of the house and tapped at Marietta's window. She was sleeping soundly and did not hear, for she had been restless during the first part of the night. He tapped again, and the girl woke without knowing what woke her.

Lyman put the blade of his pocket-knife under the window and raised it a little, and then placed his lips to the crack, and spoke in a sepulchral tone, half groan, half whisper:

"Merry! Merry Etty!"

The dazed girl sat up in bed and listened, while her heart almost stood still.

"Merry, it's me—Lime. Come to the winder." The girl hesitated, and Lyman spoke again.

"Come, I hain't got much time. This is your last chance 't see me. It's now 'r never."

The girl slipped out of bed and, wrapping herself in a shawl, crept to the window.

"Boost on that winder," commanded Lyman. She raised it enough to admit his head, which came just above the sill; then she knelt on the floor by the window.

Her eyes stared wide and dark.

"Lime, what in the world do you mean——"

"I mean business," he replied. "I ain't no last year's chicken; I know when the old man sleeps the soundest." He chuckled pleasantly.

"How 'd y' fool old Rove?"

"Never mind about that now; they's something more important on hand. You've got t' go with me."

She drew back. "Oh, Lime, I can't."

He thrust a great arm in and caught her by the wrist.

"Yes, y' can. This is y'r last chance. If I go off without ye t'-night, I never come back. What makes ye gig back? Are ye 'fraid o' me?"

"N-no; but—but ——"

"But what, Merry Etty?"

"It ain't right to go an' leave Dad all alone. Where y' goin' t' take me, anyhow?"

"Milt Jennings let me have his horse an' buggy; they're down the road a piece, an' we'll go right down to Rock River and be married by sun-up."

The girl still hesitated, her firm, boyish will unwontedly befogged. Resolute as she was, she could not at once accede to his demand.

"Come, make up your mind soon. The old man 'll fill me with buck-shot if he catches sight o' me." He drew her arm out of the window and laid his bearded cheek to it. "Come, little one, we're made for each other; God knows it. Come! It's him 'r me."

The girl's head dropped, consented.

"That's right! Now a kiss to bind the bargain. There! What, cryin'? No more o' that, little one. Now I'll give you just five minutes to git on your Sunday-go-t'-meetin' clo'es. Quick, there goes a rooster. It's gittin' white in the east."

The man turned his back to the window and gazed at the western sky with a wealth of unuttered and unutterable exultation in his heart. Far off a rooster gave a long, clear blast—would it be answered in the barn? Yes; some wakeful ear had caught it, and now came the answer, but faint, muffled and drowsy. The dog at his feet whined uneasily as if suspecting something wrong. The wind from the south was full of the wonderful odor of springing grass, warm, brown earth, and oozing sap. Overhead, to the west, the stars were shining in the

cloudless sky, dimmed a little in brightness by the faint silvery veil of moisture in the air. The man's soul grew very tender as he stood waiting for his bride. He was rough, illiterate, yet there was something fine about him after all, a kind of simplicity and a gigantic, leonine tenderness.

He heard his sweetheart moving about inside, and thought: "The old man won't hold out when he finds we're married. He can't get along without her. If he does, why, I'll rent a farm here, and we'll go to work housekeepin'. I can get the money. She sha'n't always be poor," he ended, with a vow.

The window was raised again, and the girl's voice was heard low and tremulous:

"Lime, I'm ready, but I wish we didn't——"

He put his arm around her waist and helped her out, and did not put her down till they reached the road. She was completely dressed, even to her hat and shoes, but she mourned:

"My hair is every-which-way; Lime, how can I be married so?"

They were nearing the horse and buggy now, and Lime laughed. "Oh, we'll stop at Jennings's and fix up. Milt knows what's up, and has told his mother by this time. So just laugh as jolly as you can."

Soon they were in the buggy, the impatient horse swung into the road at a rattling pace, and as Marietta leaned back in the seat, thinking of what she had done, she cried lamentably, in spite of all the caresses and pleadings of her lover.

But the sun burst up from the plain, the prairie-chickens took up their mighty chorus on the hills, robins met them on the way, flocks of wild geese, honking cheerily, drove far overhead toward the north, and, with these sounds of a golden spring day in her ears, the bride grew cheerful, and laughed.

At about the time the sun was rising, Farmer Bacon, roused from his sleep by the crowing of the chickens on the dry knolls in the fields as well as by those in the barnyard, rolled out of bed wearily, wondering why he should feel so drowsy. Then he remembered the row with Lime and his subsequent inability to sleep with thinking over it. There was a dull pain in his breast, which made him uncomfortable.

As was his usual custom, he went out into the kitchen and built the fire for Marietta, filled the tea-kettle with water, and filled the water-bucket in the sink. Then he went to her bed-

room door and knocked with his knuckles as he had done for years in precisely the same fashion.

Rap—rap—rap. "Hello, Merry! Time t' git up. Broad daylight, an' birds a-singun'."

Without waiting for an answer he went out to the barn and worked away at his chores. He took such delight in the glorious morning and the turbulent life of the farmyard that his heart grew light and he hummed a tune which sounded like the merry growl of a lion. "Poo-ee, poo-ee," he called to the pigs as they swarmed across the yard.

"Ahrr! you big, fat rascals, them hams o' yourn is clear money. One of ye shall go t' buy Merry a new dress," he said as he glanced at the house and saw the smoke pouring out the stove-pipe. "Merry 's a good girl; she's stood by her old pap when other girls 'ud 'a' gone back on 'im."

While currying the horses he went all over the ground of the quarrel yesterday, and he began to see it in a different light. He began to see that Lyman was a good man and an able man, and that his own course was a foolish one.

"When I git mad," he confessed to himself, "I don't know anythin'. But I won't give her up. She ain't old 'nough t' marry yet—and, besides, I need her."

After finishing his chores, as usual, he went to the well and washed his face and hands, then entered the kitchen—to find the tea-kettle boiling over, and no signs of breakfast anywhere, and no sign of the girl.

"Well, I guess she felt sleepy this mornin'. Poor gal! Mebbe she cried half the night."

"Merry!" he called, gently, at the door. "Merry, m' gal! Pap needs his breakfast."

There was no reply, and the old man's face stiffened into a wild surprise. He knocked heavily again and got no reply, and, with a white face and shaking hand, he flung the door open and gazed at the empty bed. His hand dropped to his side; his head turned slowly from the bed to the open window; he rushed forward and looked out on the ground, where he saw the tracks of a man.

He fell heavily into the chair by the bed, while a deep groan broke from his stiff and twitching lips.

"She's left me! She's left me!"

For a long half-hour the iron-muscle old man sat there motionless, hearing not the songs of the hens or the birds far out

in the brilliant sunshine. He had lost sight of his farm, his day's work, and felt no hunger for food. He did not doubt that her going was final. He felt that she was gone from him forever. If she ever came back it would not be as his daughter, but as the wife of Gilman. She had deserted him, fled in the night like a thief; his heart began to harden again, and he rose stiffly. His native stubbornness began to assert itself, the first great shock over, and he went out to the kitchen, and prepared, as best he could, a breakfast, and sat down to it. In some way his appetite failed him, and he fell to thinking over his past life, of the death of his wife, and the early death of his only boy. He was still trying to think what his life would be in the future without his girl, when two carriages drove into the yard. It was about the middle of the forenoon, and the prairie-chickens had ceased to boom and squawk; in fact, that was why he knew that he had been sitting two hours at the table. Before he could rise he heard swift feet and a merry voice. Then Marietta burst through the door.

"Hello, Pap! How you makin' out with break——" She saw a look on his face that went to her heart like a knife. She saw a lonely and deserted old man sitting at his cold and cheerless breakfast, and with a remorseful cry she ran across the floor and took him in her arms, kissing him again and again, while Mr. John Jennings and his wife stood in the door.

"Poor ol' Pap! Merry couldn't leave you. She's come back to stay as long as he lives."

The old man remained cold and stern. His deep voice had a raucous note in it as he pushed her away from him, noticing no one else.

"But how do you come back t' me?"

The girl grew rosy, but she stood proudly up.

"I come back a wife of a *man*, Pap; a wife like my mother, an' this t' hang beside hers;" and she laid down a rolled piece of parchment.

"Take it an' go," growled he; "take yer lazy lubber an' git out o' my sight. I raised ye, took keer o' ye when ye was little, sent ye t' school, bought ye dresses,—done everythin' fer ye I could, 'lowin' t' have ye stand by me when I got old,—but no, ye must go back on yer ol' pap, an' go off in the night with a good-fr-nothin' houn' that nobuddy knows anything about—a feller that never done a thing fer ye in the world——"

"What did you do for mother that she left *her* father and

mother and went with you? How much did you have when you took her away from her good home an' brought her away out here among the wolves an' Indians? I've heard you an' her say a hundred times that you didn't have a chair in the house. Now, why do you talk so t' me when I want t' git—when Lime comes and asks for me?"

The old man was staggered. He looked at the smiling face of John Jennings and the tearful face of Mrs. Jennings, who had returned with Lyman. But his face hardened again as he caught sight of Lime looking in at him. His absurd pride would not let him relent. Lime saw it, and stepped forward.

"Ol' man, I want t' take a little inning now. I'm a fair, square man. I asked ye fer Merry as a man should. I told you I'd had hard luck, when I first came here. I had five thousand dollars in clean cash stole from me. I hain't got a thing now except credit, but that's good fer enough t' stock a little farm with. Now, I wan' to be fair and square in this thing. You wan' to rent a farm; I need one. Let me have the river eighty, or I'll take the whole business on a share of a third, an' Merry Etty and I to stay here with you jest as if nothin' 'd happened. Come, now, what d' y' say?"

There was something winning in the whole bearing of the man as he stood before the father, who remained silent and grim.

"That's a fair offer," said Mr. Jennings in the pause which followed. "You'd better do it, neighbor Bacon. Nobuddy need know how things stood; they were married in my house—I thought that 'u'd be best. You can't live without your girl," he went on, "any more 'n I could without my boy. You'd better——"

The figure at the table straightened up. Under his tufted eyebrows his keen gray eyes flashed from one to the other. His hands knotted, his chest heaved; then he burst forth:

"Gal, yank them gloves off, an' git me something to eat—breakfus 'r dinner, I don't care which. Lime, you infernal idiot, git out there and gear up them horses. What in thunder you foolun' around about hyere in seed'n'? Come, hustle, all o' ye!"

And then they shouted in laughter, while the cause of it all strode unsteadily but resolutely out toward the barn, followed by the bridegroom, who was laughing—silently.

A LUCKY NUMBER *

BY S. B. HALE

“Á donde ira, veloz y fatigada,
La golondrina, qué de aquí se va?”

A cool breeze, wandering from the Gulf across the prairie, fluttered through the narrow streets, between the low white houses, into the heart of town. Windows opened along the way to admit the fresh evening air, and children came out on the sidewalk to play.

Passing under the over-arching avenue of dark China-trees with their umbrella-like foliage and black shadows, two men came out into the bright glow of the sunset on the open plaza.

One turned his brown, scarred face towards the light he could not see. Over his shoulder was slung a Mexican harp. Though an elderly, he was still a sturdy, thick-set man, with a square, large face, terribly disfigured by smallpox, and melancholy in its expression.

His companion, a small, dark young man, in clothing of white, wore a red sash round his waist, new tight shoes on his small feet, and a gray pointed hat, wrapped with broad silver and silken bands.

The children raised a shout at sight of the instrument, and crowding about the harper, begged him to stop and play. Some one in one of the porches handed out a chair, and the blind man sat down while the other unwrapped his harp and set it before him.

Benito took off his broad hat, stuck his half-smoked cigarette behind his ear, drew the harp toward him, and swept his hand over the strings, while Vicente sat on the curb-stone, smoking, and superciliously surveyed the American crowd.

The chatter and laughing of the different groups ceased, as the soft, longing strains of the “Golondrina” rose on the air, Benito’s seamed face uplifted in the red light, reflecting the sadness of the exile’s lament to the “pilgrim swallow.”

Without waiting to be asked, he changed it to the wild, fitful

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melody of the "Paloma," its sweet, haunting air broken by deep, low chords, like the moaning of doves.

There was a general clapping of hands as he finished this favorite, and the children poured quite a harvest of small coins into his sombrero.

"But give us another!" they cried. "One more for pylon! The National Hymn!"

Benito bent to his harp again, and played the martial, inspiring national air, which still is not without the usual melancholy of Mexican music. His great head moved in unison with the notes, his thick lips parted, and his sightless eyes rolled upward in a sort of ecstasy.

The strangers around him were forgotten. Once more he saw the gay capital of his native land, the ranks of soldiers parading to the same strains, the procession and the populace pouring toward the cathedral, and all a patriot's devotion thrilled in the throbbing music, delighting the ears of those who most probably regarded the musician as "only one of those low-down old Mexicans, who would knife you in the dark as soon as not."

When he ceased and rose, his rugged face was as forbidding as before.

He resumed his unfinished cigarette, shouldered his harp, and continued his way with his companion down a narrow side-street towards the Mexican quarter of the town.

"Have you made much to-day?" asked Vicente, who had only joined him a few minutes before.

"As usual," answered the blind man. "Enough for my lodging, a trifle over for my tickets."

"Ah, yes. Dios! That is slow work—waiting!"

"I take my chance like another," Benito returned, in resigned patience. "Esteban drew ten dollars only the other day, and he has waited for a lucky number these twelve years. My time will come at last, thanks to our Lady of Guadalupe!"

He spoke in simple and unshaken confidence.

"You will have need of more than ten dollars," said Vicente, cynically. "It is a long way from here to your home."

"Long, yes!" said the blind man, laying a hand on the boy's shoulder. "But I tell thee, Vicente, blind as I am, I could make my way on foot, alone, starving, to my home, if that were all. But I am proud, see you? I will not be a burden on my kinsfolk. I left them long ago to make a fortune, and I cannot return with empty hands."

"It was unlucky," said Vicente, carelessly, "that the smallpox went so hard with you before you had time to make your fortune."

"It was," said the other, turning his face to him, with a curious expression.

"And that was long ago, before I was born? Have you waited all these years for a lucky number?"

"Vicente," asked Benito, in a faltering voice, "did you never hear before, did your father never tell you how it was that I took the smallpox and lost my eyes?"

"Not that I remember," answered Vicente, indifferently, taking out a thin corn-husk, and rolling himself another cigarette.

Benito's heavy face darkened, his head sunk on his breast and they walked on in silence, till, crossing a small bridge, they came upon a low white adobe house, where a tall cactus grew on the flat roof, and several brown children played before the door in the thick fine dust.

"It is long since you have been near me," said Benito, as they stopped here.

"I have been busy," returned Vicente, impatiently. "You know I always come when I have the time. Have I not missed my supper to bring you home this evening? But I will come again, soon."

With an "adios," and a friendly tap on the blind man's arm, he walked off, followed by the admiring gaze of the children, who did not notice the shrug of distaste he gave on being freed from the other's importunity and the contact of his greasy garments.

Benito sat down on the bench by the door, and stretched his limbs wearily.

"No, Lupe, I cannot play. Do not ask me!" he said to the dark little maiden, who came sidling up with her request.

He rested his chin in his hands, and knitted his brows moodily. Lupe pouted, as she picked up the fat, black-eyed baby she had laid down in the dust, and who now came crawling and gurgling to her feet.

"Take care of the child!" said Benito, lifting his head at the sound. "You are a careless nurse, Lupe! Suppose he fell in the river, what would Teresita say?"

Lupe looked down at the river, which ran, deep and narrow, beside her, and moved closer to the blind man.

"Tell me, Benito," said she, coaxingly, "the story of the baby that fell in the river!"

"Will you promise to take better care of Jesusito, then?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed," she answered, and lugged the heavy child to the bench, where she sat down at Benito's feet. The baby was sucking a joint of sugar-cane too contentedly to resist.

"Long ago," began the blind man, turning his face toward the river below him, as if he, too, could see its deep, green treacherous current, its dipping willows, clumps of bananas, and the drooping acacia's fern-like foliage, starred with yellow clusters that the wavelets kissed, as they hurried by, into cool gardens, under bridges and through dusty streets,—“I sat here one evening—yes, at sunset, too. I was feeling weary and sad, for my last chance of earning money had gone with my sight, and my friend whom I trusted had been false to me. All at once a great noise roused me. Women were screaming, and boys shouting. The sound of a crowd running along the river bank came closer.

"What is it?" I asked of Teresita, your mother, who was standing near me, watching the crowd.

"A child in the river," she answered, wringing her hands; "Pobrecito, will not they save it?"

The cries drew nearer. "Where is a boat?"—"Can no one swim?"—"It is Ramon Garcia's child, and the father away from home!"

Then I heard the mother weeping. She, too, was running along the bank, trying to keep up with the current, that was bringing the child towards me. Guadalupe, when I heard her voice, I hesitated no longer. Ramon and myself, we both knew well how to swim.

"Do you see the little one!" I called to Teresita, but just then came a great shout from the banks on either side, and I knew the child must be near. Blind as I was, I plunged at a venture into the river. Almost at the same moment, the little body was thrown by the swift waves into my very arms. The stream is not wide, as you see, and a dozen hands were now ready to drag us out, and to carry the baby to its mother. It was not dead, though its little hands felt cold as ice, and when I heard its feeble cry, then I gave thanks to Heaven, Lupe, that I had saved Ramon's child.

"Was the mother glad?" asked Guadalupe.

"She kissed my hands," said Benito, with a proud smile. "She begged my pardon for herself and Ramon, and when he came and threw his arms around me, my old friend and brother, then I forgave them both, though they had been cruel and cold to me in my blindness. From that day we were friends again. They asked me to be Vicente's godfather."

"Then the baby was called Vicente. You never told us that before," observed Lupe, shrewdly. "Was it Vicente Garcia?"

Benito nodded. He was lost in thought.

"Does Vicente know you saved him from drowning?"

"Perhaps—I am not sure," said he abstractedly.

"I would tell him—me!" remarked Lupe.

"Child," said Benito, waking from his reverie, "that is a thing we cannot tell to another—what he owes us. Go now and get my supper. I will watch Jesusito for you."

Lupe brought him out a bowl of soup and some brown frijoles in a red plate, and he ate his supper, while his small friend, picking up the baby, indulged in the pleasing pastime of stargazing along the river bank with him, her eyes shut, trying to see how near she could get to the edge in this way without falling in.

Teresita interrupted this dangerous performance, and sent her within doors, weeping, while she sat on the flat doorstep, and talked to Benito.

"So Vicente it was that brought you home? He is soon to be married, I hear."

The old Mexican turned his face away from her.

"Yes," he said, in an indifferent tone, but his large hands trembled as he set his bowl in the empty plate.

"I suppose he told you," continued Teresita, combing out one of her long black braids. "It has been for some time spoken of, but Vicente, you know, is idle, and has been out of work, and Maria's father would not hear of a wedding before, so I suppose he is now doing better."

"Surely," assented Benito.

The mosquitoes began whirling around them, and Lupe and the baby were heard within, wailing in unison.

Teresita rose and went in, leaving the blind man to his thoughts. They were for some time embittered with the mortification of Vicente's neglect in not mentioning his marriage, but soon he consoled himself. Doubtless he was ashamed to speak of it, while still uncertain.

He uncovered his harp, regardless of the damp air, and began to play some of his plaintive songs and slow "danzas," ending with the wistful "Golondrina" and its yearning cry for home. Among the rushes on the river banks the fireflies threaded their twinkling mazes, rising and falling in cadence, and the children in the narrow streets and weedy alleys beyond waltzed solemnly about to the strains, vague flitting forms amid the shadows; but soon the deep silence around warned him that everyone else was asleep.

He climbed the ladder-like flight of steps outside the house which led to his low room, built on the roof, on whose flat top he often slept in preference. The night was hot, so he put his harp inside, drew out a thin quilt and blanket, which he laid on the roof, and so lay down to sleep, his face turned up to the stars.

Benito liked to dream, for in his dreams he saw.

That night he found himself ascending the mountain where rises the chapel of "Our Lady of Guadalupe" (after whom Lupe and many other children were named).

The path led him to a wide grassy plain, covered with brilliant flowers. Over all shone a splendor, such as his eyes had never beheld on earth. Looking up, he perceived in the centre of the light the vision of Guadalupe, as he had so often seen her in the wonderful picture in the cathedral.

In his dream Benito thought he knelt and besought her to reveal to him the lucky number in the next drawing of the lottery, but the vision smiled, and shook her head.

Then he asked her to restore his sight, and the lady put forth a cool, soft hand, and lightly touched his eyes.

When he again opened them she was gone, and the light had vanished with her. The plain was bare of flowers, the grass withered, and a creeping flame played here and there across it. As Benito watched, the crooked lines of sparks ran into signs and numbers. Over all the blackened grass they crept—14,333—14,333, until his eyeballs ached with looking, and groaning, he awoke to find himself on the flat roof, still in darkness, though the sun had risen.

It had rained in the night, and his limbs were stiff and sore, his forehead burning with fever, but as he dragged himself down the steep steps, Benito still saw the flashing of the lucky number, and never doubted but that his prayers were answered.

Scarcely tasting the foaming chocolate Teresita had prepared

for him, he made his way to the little cigar-shop at the corner where he usually bought his tickets, and was fortunate enough to find the number he wanted among those in stock. He bought the whole ticket.

Before night, however, he was forced to climb back to his room, where he lay tossing with fever for days.

In the course of the week Vicente came to see him. He had had an odd sort of feeling for the old harper, which moved him by fits and starts—a remembrance of his father's death-bed, and a whispered message, half forgotten, either to consider Benito his charge, or himself Benito's, he knew not exactly which.

Benito was lying still when the young man came up the stair. A cool, green plaitain-leaf was bound upon his brow, and Lupe, sitting by his pillow, fanned away the mosquitoes. He took the fan softly from her, and she stole out, glad to be relieved.

Benito stirred, nevertheless. He was not asleep.

"Vicente," he said in a faint voice, "It is good of you to come. I shall not trouble you long."

Vicente, thinking he spoke of his approaching death, fanned on solemnly, and said nothing.

But Benito was far from such despondent thoughts.

"I shall soon be able to go home," he whispered, joyously. "I have dreamed of a lucky number."

"And bought it?" asked Vicente, who had also a firm belief in lucky numbers, and in favoring dreams.

The old man felt under his pillow, and drew out a very flat leather purse, empty now of all his savings, except a few small coins, and a new crisp piece of paper. This he handed with a fond smile to Vicente.

"Read, my son, if the number there is right."

"14,333," read Vicente.

Benito nodded. His face was illuminated with a peaceful joy. At last he felt assured fortune had favored him. This profound faith also impressed Vicente. He handled the ticket reverently. In his pocket at the moment were several similar slips of paper, which he treasured yet, though they were out of date, and had drawn nothing.

"You are soon to be married," murmured Benito, drowsily, "about the time of the drawing—I shall give you part of my prize, and then I can depart in peace to my own people. You did not tell me of your wedding—but I have heard——"

He dozed off.

The rustle of the fan was heard for a few moments, then it stopped moving, and Vicente sat still, with his large dark eyes fixed upon the ticket. Half of it was to be his—and if Benito died?—Suppose it were to fall into other hands!

Vicente's gambling had emptied his pockets of late, and Maria's father was ridiculously severe.

A moment passed. Something else rustled—not the fan—for a mosquito, lighting on Benito's forehead, woke him at the same instant, and he started.

"Vicente!" he exclaimed, "My ticket!" moving his head impatiently on the low pillow.

"Here it is," said Vicente, soothingly, handing him the ticket, and again taking up the fan. Benito replaced it lovingly in the purse beneath the mattress.

"Tell no one of it," he said earnestly. "It brings ill-luck to speak of your number. Only to you have I mentioned it."

Vicente assented languidly.

"I will tell you of my dream," Benito rambled on.

Each word he uttered confirmed Vicente's belief that this ticket was beyond all others blessed.

But the sick man wandered, and the watcher soon laid down his fan.

"Well—I must go," he said in his soft voice. "Adios, Benito."

On his way down he considerably summoned Lupe, who was seated cross-legged in the doorway, stitching at some indescribable needlework, which bore a faint resemblance to that masterpiece of art, her mother's linen coverlet, with its lions of triangular face and one eye, its curly-tailed monkeys, birds of paradise and dancing girls; each figure darned into the open-work of drawn threads, the whole inclosed in a mixed border of small dogs and roses.

She laid it down to bring Benito a cup of hot orange-leaf tea. The blind man had no doctor, and Teresita prescribed for him. Despite her original remedies, however, and Lupe's as skilful nursing, he grew steadily worse.

Vicente had not found time to revisit him, but sent a small boy up several times with fruit and ice (his prospective father-in-law being a fruit-seller).

The day following the drawing, for which Benito, even in the midst of his fever, had so anxiously looked, dawned at last.

It was also Vicente's wedding-day.

The cigar-seller, Lopez, at the corner, early in the morning, as was his custom, displayed a blackboard at his door, on which the lucky numbers of the drawing were chalked in conspicuous figures.

Just then a young man passed by. In the band of his pearl gray sombrero a bright red rose was stuck, in company with a bundle of double-tipped wax matches and a silver pencil-case.

At sight of the principal number, he stopped suddenly, drew out a ticket from the folds of his green sash, glanced from it to the board, and then rushed joyously into the shop.

In a few moments, however, he emerged with a crest-fallen, disconsolate look, followed by the proprietor, explaining and gesticulating vehemently with both hands towards the blackboard.

Vicente slunk down the street, and the cigar-seller rubbed out the number, took up a piece of chalk, and went over it again, but without materially improving its appearance.

He shrugged his shoulders, shook the chalk from his fingers, and went in.

In the afternoon, Benito, who was sleeping, awoke to the sound of gay music in the distance.

"What is it?" he asked of Lupe, who was leaning from the window, gazing with all her eyes.

"Vicente's wedding procession," she answered. "The fandango will begin early."

"Vicente's wedding!" he said, roused, and sitting up.

"Then it is the day after the drawing. By this time we should know the prizes. Look out, Lupe, and tell me if you can see Lopez' shop at the corner."

"Yes," answered Lupe, craning her neck, and nearly falling out of the window.

"Has he shown the numbers as usual?"

"There is a blackboard at the door, with white marks on it."

"Can you tell any of them from here?"

"Ah," said Lupe, frowning as she concentrated her vision, "I can see the first,—it is larger and whiter than the others."

"The number! the number!" cried Benito, twisting his lean, brown fingers eagerly.

"14,3—stop—yes! 14,333!" answered Lupe's shrill little voice, as she hung with her head very far out indeed.

Benito's heart almost stopped beating. But had he not been certain of it? He took out his purse, then a slip of paper.

"Read me this number, Lupe," he said with a triumphant smile, pointing a bony finger to its place.

Lupe had been to school on several occasions. She, therefore, started off glibly:

"67,365——"

"You mistake," interrupted Benito, calmly. "That is not the number there."

"There is only that one, excepting the little one at the top."

"And none of them is 14,333?" exclaimed the old man, more harshly than he had ever spoken to her.

"No!" said Lupe, beginning to cry. His manner alarmed her.

He sat still for some time, as if staring at the white wall before him, then he said in a low voice to himself:

"But Vicente read it out? It was right—then!——"

A lightning change flashed over the dark heavy face. His jaw dropped.

"Vicente!"

A loud noise broke upon the silence of the hot afternoon. The wedding party had turned the corner, and were approaching the house.

Benito rose to his feet, swaying unsteadily against the wall. Lupe, frightened, slid out down the steps.

The blind man felt his way across the room to the window, where he sunk down in his weakness, holding to the sill.

Those in the street below saw a great heavy face, with sightless eyes and moving lips, appear at the window.

"Vicente! My ticket!" he called out.

Vicente, looking up, caught a glimpse of the melancholy face, and heard the cry as he passed.

"Wait, Benito!" he shouted back, "I am coming!" But the laughing crowd swept him on with it, and Benito sank down on the floor.

Hot slow tears, wrung as it seemed from his very heart, fell slowly, as he crawled back to his bare hard pallet, and lay down once more.

The hope of a lifetime died in that moment, with the trust that was betrayed.

The fandango was at its gayest before Vicente found a chance to escape. He took great credit to himself for this sacrifice, though he admitted the old fellow had some claim to his consideration.

As he stole out into the summer-night darkness, he caught the sound of his own name.

"Holy Saints!" cried Teresita's shrill voice from among a knot of women who were looking in at the windows, their rebozas drawn over their heads, "Benito Valdez should be here to see the wedding—he who nursed Vicente's father through the smallpox, and lost by it his own eyes, and the girl he was going to marry!"

Vicente waited to hear no more, but sped on to the house of the speaker.

Once more he climbed the steep stairs, and looked in at the little room on the roof. It was quite dark, except for the moonlight escaping from a bank of clouds, but he could see the sick man lying upon his bed in the corner.

"Benito," he cried, breathless, "it was a mistake! The number that drew the prize was 14,533, and not yours. I would have told you before, but I feared to disappoint you."

"Do you hear me, Benito?" he continued after a pause. "You can ask Lopez, who always makes his threes and fives too much alike. Even I was deceived. But your number drew nothing."

He took out a ticket, and glanced nervously at the bed. Something in its appearance struck a chill to his heart.

Fear descended on Vicente.

"Never will I buy a ticket in the lottery again!" he exclaimed, tearing the ticket angrily into shreds and casting them on the floor.

But there came no sound from the silent lips.

"Benito! Benito!" he cried, sinking on his knees by the dead man, and bursting into tears, "I will never take what is not mine again—forgive me, Benito, do you hear?"

A struggling moonbeam quivered in the semblance of a smile across the dark face of the blind man. Perhaps at that moment his weary spirit was again ascending the hill of Guadalupe, and his closed eyes were now forever unsealed.

Vicente still knelt. He saw that he could never explain the mistake, as he called it, to Benito, or comfort the heart he had, like his father before him, so deeply wounded.

What thoughts, what resolves for the future, passed through his darkened mind, will never be known. He rose, crossed Benito's hands on his breast, and drew the coverlet carefully over him.

As he turned to go, he stumbled over the harp in the corner; its vibrating strings quivered in a mournful sound, as he hastened rapidly down the steps.

The fireflies were still weaving their luminous interlacing circles above the reeds by the water, and Lupe, very sleepy, waiting for her mother's return, under the light of a flickering lamp, was relating to a select audience, composed of Jesusito, the baby, and a dark-blue, hairless Mexican dog, the story of the child in the river.

"So Benito never told him," she concluded, and Vicente, with a scowl, passed onward.

It was remarked that the funeral of Benito Valdez, next day, was a very fine one indeed; but then Vicente had taken charge of it, and when you think of it, he certainly owed much to the man who had saved his own and his father's life.



THE TWELVE MONTHS.

BY BOZENA NIEMCOVA



WIDOW lived with her two daughters, Marouchka (Molly) and Helen. The former was her step-daughter, by her late husband, but Helen was her child by a first marriage. Of Helen she was very fond, but poor Marouchka she did not like at all, and the more that she was much prettier than her sister. As the girl was not vain, she could never understand why her mother flew in a rage every time she looked at her, and why she had to do all the work and drudgery of the household.

She had to cook, and clean the house, do all the ironing, washing, sewing, spinning, make the hay, and take care of the cow, without anyone's helping her at all, while her sister Helen dressed herself, and went from one amusement and entertainment to the other. To all this unkind treatment from her mother and sister Marouchka submitted, without reproach, smiling and with the patience of a lamb.

But her angelic resignation did not soften their hearts; every day they became more harsh and exacting, and, as the years went by, more unkind to



* Translated from the original Bohemian (Chekh language) by F. P. Kopta, for Short Stories, and Illustrated by F. C. Gordon.—Copyrighted.

her, for Marouchka was growing more and more beautiful, while Helen was older and uglier. At last her stepmother thought, "I must chase her out of the house, this pretty orphan, or I will never marry my own daughter, as all the youths will prefer Marouchka, and my girl will remain an old maid." So both the mother and sister determined to make her father's house unupportable for the poor girl. But hunger and privations of all kinds, blows and harsh words, only made her more gentle, and, to their eyes, more beautiful. The most malignant man in the world could not have found out more ingenious ways of torturing and worrying the poor girl than they did. One day in mid-winter Helen insisted upon having violets from the forest.

"Hola!" she said. "Marouchka, you will go to the forest, in the mountain, and gather violets. I wish to have a bunch for my bodice; they must be very fresh and odorous; do you hear?" she cried in a harsh voice.

"My God! good sister," cried Marouchka, "you do not think of what you are saying; who ever saw violets growing under the snow?" said the poor orphan, sighing.

"Wretched girl! Do you dare to disobey me?" cried Helen. "Not a word more—be off! Remember, that if you do not bring me the violets, I will kill you." Here her stepmother added a few cruel words, and with a vigorous blow, pushed her out of the house and barred the door behind her.



The poor orphan, weeping bitterly, advanced towards the mountain. The snow lay deep, and there was not the slightest trace of human footsteps. Long, long she wandered upon the mountain, trembling with cold, and praying to God to let her die.

At last, in the distance she saw a brilliant light, and climbing ever onward till she had reached one of the highest peaks, she came to a bright open fire, round which were twelve large stones. On these stones were seated twelve men; four of them were old, with white hair, four less old, and four were young men and

very handsome. They sat perfectly silent on their stone seats, and were all gazing into the fire.

These men were the twelve months of the year, and great January, who was seated higher than the rest, had a long, white beard and snowy hair; in his hand he held a wand.

Marouchka at first was paralyzed with fear, but after a few moments of stupor and silence, she regained her courage, and approaching them, said: "Men of God, allow me to warm myself by your fire; I am trembling with cold."

Old January raised his head, and said: "Why are you here, my maiden? What do you seek?"

"I am seeking violets," answered Marouchka.

"It is not the season of violets," said January. "Do you not see snow lying everywhere?"

"I know it is not, but my stepmother and sister have sent me to the mountain to gather them, and if I cannot find any they will kill me. I entreat you, fathers, tell me where I can find some?"

Slowly old January rose from his seat, and approached one of the younger men. Putting his wand in his hand, he said: "Brother March, seat yourself in my place."

March went and seated himself on the high stone and waved the wand over the fire. At once the flames rose to the sky, the snow melted, the trees began to bud, while beneath them the grass grew green, and the ground was covered with primroses and cowslips. It was spring and the ground was quite blue with violets, that grew under the brushwood.

"Haste and pluck them, Marouchka," cried March. "Quick!"

The beautiful orphan, filled with joy, hastened to pluck the flowers, and soon had a large bunch. Thanking the Months politely, she ran home, happy and gay.

Great was the astonishment of her stepmother and Helen, when they saw the bunch of fresh violets.

They quickly opened the door, and soon the house was filled with the perfume of the flowers.

"Well! And where did you find them?" asked Helen.

"Far up, on the peak of the mountain," replied her sister.

Helen at once seized the flowers; she inhaled their perfume



with rapture, and let her mother smell them, but not giving a single violet to Marouchka, or even thanking her for her trouble.

The next day, as Helen stood warming herself by the stove, she had a sudden fancy to eat strawberries, and called her sister.

"Marouchka," she said, "hasten to the mountain, and gather me strawberries. They must be very sweet and ripe."



"My God! Who ever heard that strawberries ripened under the snow!" cried the orphan.

"Will you hold your tongue—not a word more. If you do not bring me the strawberries soon, we will kill you. Remember, you are warned."

After this threat her stepmother seized her violently and thrust her out in the courtyard, barring the door.

The wretched orphan, her eyes filled with tears, began to climb the mountain covered with forest. The snow lay deep, not a living thing was to be seen, but she already knew the way, and without hesitation climbed up the peak, where the Twelve Months sat round the fire—old January, as before, on the highest seat.

"Men of God," she said, "let me warm myself by your fire. I am trembling with cold."

Old January lifted his head and asked:

"Why have you come here, and what do you seek?"

"I have come to gather strawberries," said Marouchka.

"It is now mid-winter and strawberries do not grow under the snow," answered January.

"I know it," said Marouchka, sadly, "but my stepmother and sister have ordered me to bring them ripe strawberries. Tell me where I can gather them."

Old January rose slowly from his seat, approached the Month that sat opposite to him, and giving him his wand said, "Brother June, seat yourself on the highest stone."

The month of June went and seated himself on the stone that marked the highest place. He waved his wand over the fire, and the flames rose to the sky. In a moment the snow was melted, the ground covered with grass, while the birds sang and the earth bloomed with flowers in the forest.

Under the brushwood one saw innumerable little white flowers, thick as though one had sowed them, and as one looked

the flowers changed to ripe fruit; and all this in a few moments of time, so that Marouchka could hardly cross herself before the ground was red with strawberries, like a sea of blood.

"Quick, quick, Marouchka, pick them," said the month of June.

Filled with joy, she began to gather them, and soon had a nice amount in her apron, when, thanking the Months, she started joyfully homeward.

Helen and her mother were surprised to see her come home with the strawberries, and hastily opened the door, and soon the whole house was filled with the perfume of the berries.

"But where did you find them?" asked Helen, sourly.

"Up on the peak of the mountain; they are not hard to find under the brushwood."

Helen took possession of all the berries. A part she gave to her mother, and devoured the rest, without giving the poor orphan even one to taste.

The third day Helen, satiated with the strawberries, longed for fresh-picked red apples.

"Marouchka," she called, "be quick and nimble; go to the mountain and seek for red apples."

"My God! sister, you know that during the winter the trees are without leaves or fruit."

"Ugly lazy-bones! go! climb quickly up the mountain and bring me back apples—or, remember, we will kill you."

As usual, her stepmother caught her rudely, thrust her out of the house and barred the door behind her.

The poor orphan, weeping bitterly, passed through the forest that led to the mountain. The snow lay deep, and there was not a human footstep to be seen; still she did not lose her way, but climbed up to the peak of the mountain, where the Twelve Months sat by the flaming fire. They all sat motion-



less on their stone seats, and old January, as usual, on the highest.

"Men of God, let me warm myself by your fire; the winter wind freezes me," she said.

Old January lifted his head and began to question her: "Why have you come here, and what do you seek?"

"I seek red apples," said Marouchka.

"It is mid-winter now," said old January, "and not the time for red apples."

"I know it," said the poor girl; "but my sister Helen and my

mother have ordered me to bring them red apples from the mountain, or they will kill me."

Hearing this, old January rose from his seat and went to one of the older men, and gave him his wand.

"Brother September, seat yourself in the place of honor."

The month of September seated himself on the highest stone, and waved his wand over the fire. The flames sprang toward the sky, taking a red tinge, while the snow melted rapidly. The leaves of the trees fell, one by one,—blown here and there by a cold breeze,—and the sun shone yellow. The orphan saw but very few flowers, and those only autumn ones. In the dells, meadow-saffron and high ferns were growing between



the autumn brushwood and brambles.

Marouchka looked in vain for the red apples; till, all at once,

she noticed a tolerably tall apple-tree, and up on the top branches she saw a few red apples.

"Hasten to gather them," cried September.

The young girl joyfully shook the tree, and one apple fell; she shook it again, and a second rolled to her feet.

"You have enough" said the Month, "hurry home again."

The orphan picked up the apples, and, thanking the Months, hurried home.

Helen and her stepmother were astonished to see her return with the apples, and ran to open the door.

"Bah! How did you manage to pick them?" asked Helen.

"A few still hung on the apple-tree, on the top of the mountain," said Marouchka.

"Why did you not bring more?" cried Helen, angrily. "You ate them up on the way, you ugly minx!"

"No, good sister, I did not taste one," said Marouchka. "The first time I shook the tree, one apple fell; the second time, another, that is all. I was not permitted to shake the tree a third time, but ordered to go home."

"Perun* take you!" cried Helen, lifting her hand to strike her sister.

Marouchka had only tears with which to defend herself, and, calling to God to take her, rather than let her die under the blows of her sister and stepmother, she fled to the kitchen.

Helen, who loved fine fruit, left off persecuting her sister for the time, and bit into the apple; she found it delicious, the sweetest she had ever eaten, and her mother agreed with her; but both, after having eaten one, were dissatisfied—they wished for more.



"I'll tell you what, mamma," said Helen, "give me a cloak and I will go to the mountain myself. That horrid girl would finish by devouring all the apples on her way home. I will be sure to find the mountain and the apple-tree, and once there, the fathers

* A Slavonian God.

may scold as they like, I will not leave them till I have shaken down all the apples."

Heedless of her mother's disapproval, Helen put on the cloak and a warm hood, and started for the mountain. Her mother stood by the door and gazed after her till she was lost to sight.



The ground was covered with snow, not a human footstep was to be seen, but after wandering here, now there, Helen saw the flame of the fire, far above her, and began climbing. After a short time she reached the peak of the mountain and saw the fire, round which the Twelve Months were sitting. At first she hesitated and was frightened, but soon recovering herself, she

went boldly to the fire, and stretching out her hands, warmed herself without asking permission, or even noticing the Twelve Months.

"What brings you here, and what seek you?" asked old January, sternly.

"You have no right to question me, old gray-beard! Why do you wish to know what I seek?" answered Helen haughtily, and turning her head and back to the fire she went towards the forest.

Old January frowned, and waved his wand over his head.

In the twinkling of an eye the sky was filled with heavy clouds, the fire burned low, and large snow-flakes began to fall, while an icy wind howled through the mountain. In the midst of this dreadful storm, Helen began to curse her sister and call on the good God, as she knew the cloak could not keep her body from stiffening and freezing.

Her mother waited impatiently for her daughter. Every little while she went to the window, then to the door, to look for her, but the hours passed and she did not return. "Have the apples bewitched her, so that she cannot find her way home?" thought her mother. "I must go and seek her."

Hastily wrapping herself in a cloak and hood, she set out. The falling snow had obliterated her daughter's footsteps, and

not a human trace was to be seen, while no voice answered to her loud call. Long she wandered at hazard in the snow, while it fell in avalanches, and an icy wind blew from the mountain.

Marouchka in the meanwhile had cooked the dinner and milked the cow, but neither Helen nor her mother were to be found.



Her daily work was now ended, the day had gone, and night was coming on.

What can have happened?

“O my God!” said the excellent girl, and opened the window to look out.

The storm had ceased, the sky was brilliant with stars, while the snow glimmered like diamonds by their light—not a trace of a human being was to be seen. Marouchka sadly shut the window. She made the sign of the cross, and prayed for her sister and stepmother. In vain she waited for them at breakfast and dinner—they never came.

Both Helen and her mother were frozen in the mountain, and Marouchka inherited the little cottage, the cow, and a small field. It was not long before she married an honest farmer, and they both lived in peace and happiness ever after.





BY HENRI GRÉVILLE

The straight, green avenue stretches far, far away to a white point in the shining plain, where the sunshine falls upon the waving golden grain-fields.

They walked slowly side by side down the green alley, hedged on either hand by underbrush and shrubs; she leaning upon her long handled umbrella; he, still erect and brisk in his movements, his hands behind his back. She with a lace scarf upon her head, beneath which clustered her little silvery curls; he with a broad-brimmed straw hat, such as the negroes wear working among the sugar-cane, in the old pictures on barley-sugar boxes, or in the old editions of Paul and Virginia. They had evidently had a little falling-out, for they walked along saying nothing, and now and then casting a reproachful glance at each other. When they were half-way down the avenue, however, they drew nearer together, and felt constrained to speak.

"So it is decided, then," said she, in a sweet voice, in which, however, lingered a tone of vexation. "You are determined to ruin those poor children's happiness?"

"On the contrary, I wish to prevent my granddaughter from reproaching me for causing her unhappiness by my imprudence."

She shrugged her shoulders, but very slightly, like the well-bred old lady that she was.

"Because the man she loves is not so rich as she, forsooth! They are sure to have bread——"

"But not butter!" said the grandfather.

"When people love each other, they eat kisses on their bread," answered she, with a half smile.

* Translated by Mrs. James M. Lancaster, from the French, for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

As he said nothing, she walked on a few steps, looking about her to right and left, then stopped before a filbert-tree.

"Look, dear," said she, "I think I see some filberts."

With all his chivalrous courtesy, grandpapa approached, looked at the tree, and answered: "They are filberts, to be sure."

"Will you gather some for me, dear?"

Grandpapa looked at grandmama with some surprise. It was many years since either of them had taken any pleasure in eating filberts. However, he hooked his cane in a branch, which he pulled down to his wife. She daintily gathered a little bunch of half-ripe nuts and fastened them to her corsage with a pin.

"Do you not remember?" said she.

A sunbeam through the foliage lighted up grandpapa's face, or was it a reminiscence? Grandmama's gray eyes looked steadily into his. He remembered very well, but what had the filberts to do with so serious a matter as the marriage of their only granddaughter? Grandpapa feigned to be busy with his pruning knife, but she held him by the buttonhole.

"That is the tree—for it is an old one—which was so loaded with filberts the year that——"

"I know," said he, trying to get away, but she held him fast.

"I was standing here, you remember, and I had stripped the lower branches, when you came up. You finished gathering them, my friend, and as the nuts fell into my apron, your eyes grew more and more eloquent. It was the last bunch which you fastened where I have just placed this."

"My dear wife," murmured grandpapa.

"And then you said, 'Madelinette, if your parents refuse their consent to our marriage, I will blow my brains out.'"

"And we were married, and have lived happily together thirty-seven years!" said grandpapa.

"And we were not rich; but we became rich, and the children will do likewise. Do you remember?"

They said no more, for they were now walking arm-in-arm toward the opening in the wood, where the white point looked like a great rose-window full of light.

"We must retrench a little," said grandpapa at last, "and make the dowry larger."

"Very well," said grandmama, "that is easily done."

"And so, the poor children can have butter with their bread."

"And they are still young enough," said grandmama, smiling, "to eat filberts!"



ADVENTURES

OF A

NEW YEAR'S EVE

BY

HEINRICH ZSCHOKKE

Famous Story Series



OTHER Kate, the watchman's wife, at nine o'clock on New Year's eve, opened her little window, and put out her head into the night air. The snow was reddened by the light from the window as it fell in silent heavy flakes, upon the street.

She observed the crowds of happy people, hurrying to and fro from the brilliantly lighted shops with presents, or pouring out of the various inns and coffee-houses, and going to the dances and other entertainments with which the New Year is married to the Old in joy and pleasure. But when a few cold flakes had lighted on her nose she drew back her head, closed the window, and said to her husband: "Gottlieb, stay at home, and let Philip watch for thee to-night; for the snow comes as fast as it can from Heaven, and thou knowest the cold does thy old bones no good. The streets will be gay to-night. There seems dancing and feasting in every house, masqueraders are going about, and Philip will enjoy the sport."

Old Gottlieb nodded his assent. "I am willing, Kate," he said. "My barometer, the old wound above my knee, has given me warning the last two days of a change of weather. It is only right that my son should aid me in a service to which he will be my successor."

* Translated by P. G., from the German, for Wiley & Putnam's "Library of Choice Reading," and now illustrated by L. de Bernebruck for Short Stories.

We must give the reader to understand that old Gottlieb had been a sergeant of cavalry in one of the king's regiments until he was made a cripple for life by a musket-ball, as he was the first mounting the walls of a hostile fort in a battle for his fatherland. The officer who commanded the attack received the cross of honor on the battlefield for his heroism and was advanced in the service; while Gottlieb was fain to creep homewards on a pair of crutches. From pity they made him a schoolmaster, for he was intelligent, liked to read, and wrote a good hand. But when the school increased they took it away from him to provide for a young man, who could do none of these as well as he, merely because he was a godson of one of the trustees. However, they promoted Gottlieb to the post of watchman, with the reversion of it to his son Philip, who had in the meantime bound himself to a gardener. It was only the good housewifery of Mistress Katharine, and the extreme moderation of old Gottlieb, that enabled them to live happily on the little they possessed. Philip gave his services to the gardener for his board and lodging, but he occasionally received very fine presents when he carried home flowers to the rich people of the town. He was a fresh, handsome young fellow, of six-and-twenty. Noble ladies often gave him sundry extra dollars for his fine looks, a thing they would never have thought of doing for an ugly face. Mrs. Kate had already put on her cloak to go to the gardener's house to fetch her son, when he entered the apartment.



"Father," said Philip, giving a hand to both father and mother, "it's snowing, and the snow won't do you much good. I'll take the watch to-night, and you can get to bed."

"You're a good boy," said old Gottlieb.

"And then I've been thinking," continued Philip, "that as to-morrow is New Year's day, I may come and dine with you

and make myself happy. Mother, perhaps, has no joint in the kitchen, and—”

“No,” interrupted the mother, “we’ve no joint, but then we have a pound and a half of venison; with potatoes for a relish and a little rice with laurel leaves for a soup, and two flasks of beer to drink. Only come, Philip, for we shall live finely to-morrow! Next week we may do better, for the New Year’s gifts will be coming in, and Gottlieb’s share will be something! Oh! we shall live grandly.”

“Well, so much the better, dear mother,” said Philip; “but have you paid the rent of the cottage yet?”

Old Gottlieb shrugged his shoulders.

Philip laid a purse upon the table.

“There are two-and-twenty dollars that I have saved. I can do very well without them; take them for a New Year’s gift, and then we can all three enter on the new year without a debt or a care. God grant that we may end it in health and happiness! Heaven in its goodness will provide for both you and me.”

Tears came into Mother Katharine’s eyes as she kissed her son; old Gottlieb said: “Philip, you are the prop and stay of our old age. Continue to be honest and good, and to love your parents, so will a blessing rest on you. I can give you nothing for a New Year’s gift, but a prayer that you may keep your heart pure and true—this is in your power—you will be rich enough—for a clear conscience is a Heaven in itself.”

So said old Gottlieb, and then he wrote down in an account-book, the sum of two-and-twenty dollars that his son had given him.

“All that you have cost me in childhood is now nearly paid up. Your savings amount to three hundred and seventeen dollars, which I have received.”

“Three hundred and seventeen dollars!” cried Mistress Katharine in the greatest amazement—and then turning to Philip with a voice full of tenderness, “Ah, Philip,” she said, “you grieve me. Child of my heart! Yes, indeed, you do. Had you saved that money for yourself you might have bought some land with it, and started as gardener on your own account, and married Rose. *Now* that is impossible. But take comfort, Philip. We are old, and you will not have to support us long.”

“Mother,” exclaimed Philip, and he frowned a little; “what

are you thinking of? Rose is dear to me as my life, but I would give up a hundred Roses rather than desert you and my father. I should never find any other parents in this world but you, but there are plenty of Roses, although I would have none but Mrs. Bittner's Rose, were there even ten thousand others."

"You are right, Philip," said Gottlieb; "loving and marrying are not in the commandments—but to honor your father and mother is a duty and commandment. To give up strong passions and inclinations for the happiness of your parents is the truest gratitude of a son. It will gain you the blessing from above—it will make you rich in your own heart."

"If it were only not too long for Rose to wait," said Mrs. Katharine, "or if you could give up the engagement altogether! For Rose is a pretty girl, that can't be denied; and though she is poor, there will be no want of wooers. She is virtuous and understands housekeeping."

"Never fear, mother," replied Philip; "Rose has solemnly sworn to marry no man but me; and that is sufficient. Her mother has nothing to object to me. And if I was in business and had money enough to keep a wife with, Rose would be my wife to-morrow. The only annoyance we have is, that her mother will not let us meet so often as we wish. She says frequent meetings do no good; but I differ from her, and so does Rose—for we think meeting often does us both a great deal of good. And we have agreed to meet to-night at twelve o'clock, at the great door of St. Gregory's Church, for Rose is bringing in the year at a friend's house; and I am to take her home."

In the midst of such conversation the clock of the neighboring tower struck three-quarters, and Philip took his father's great-coat from the warm stove where Katharine had carefully laid it, wrapped himself in it, and taking the lanthorn and staff, and wishing his parents good-night, proceeded to his post.

Philip stalked majestically through the snow-covered streets of the capital, where as many people were still visible as in the middle of the day. Carriages were rattling in all directions, the houses were all brilliantly lighted. Our watchman enjoyed the scene, he sang his verses at ten o'clock, and blew his horn lustily in the neighborhood of St. Gregory's Church, with many a thought on Rose, who was then with her friend. "Now she hears me," he said to himself; "now she thinks on me, and forgets the scene around her. I hope she won't fail me at

twelve o'clock at the church door." And when he had gone his round, he always returned to the dear house and looked up at the lighted window. Sometimes he saw female figures, and his heart beat quick at the sight; sometimes he fancied he saw Rose herself; and sometimes he studied the long shadows thrown on the wall or the ceiling to discover which of them was Rose's and to fancy what she was doing. It was certainly not a very pleasant employment to stand in frost and snow and look up at a window; but what care lovers for frost and snow? And watchmen are as fiery and romantic lovers as ever were the knights of ancient ballads.

He only felt the effects of the frost when, at eleven o'clock, he had set out upon his round. His teeth chattered with cold; he could scarcely call the hour or sound his horn. He would willingly have gone into a beer-house to warm himself at the fire. As he was pacing through a lonely by-street, he met a man with a black half-mask on his face, enveloped in a fire-colored silken mantle, and wearing on his head a magnificent hat turned up at one side, and fantastically ornamented with a number of high and waving plumes.

Philip endeavored to escape the mask, but in vain. The stranger blocked up his path and said: "Ha! thou art a fine fellow; I like thy phiz amazingly. Where art thou going, eh? I say, where art thou going?"

"To Mary Street," replied Philip. "I am going to call the hour there."

"Enchanting!" answered the mask. "I'll hear thee: I'll go with thee. Come along, thou foolish fellow, and let me hear thee, and mind thou singest well, for I am a good judge. Canst thou sing me a jovial song?"

Philip saw that his companion was of high rank and a little tipsy, and answered: "I sing better over a glass of wine in a warm room, than when up to my waist in snow."

They had now reached Mary street, and Philip sang and blew his horn.

"Ha! that's but a poor performance," exclaimed the mask, who had accompanied him thither. "Give me the horn! I shall blow so well that you'll half die with delight."

Philip yielded to the mask's wishes, and let him sing the verses and blow. For four or five times all was done as if the stranger had been a watchman all his life. He dilated most eloquently on the joys of such an occupation, and was so inex-

haustible in his own praises that he made Philip laugh at his extravagance. His spirits evidently owed no small share of their elevation to an extra glass of wine.

"I'll tell you what, my treasure, I've a great fancy to be a watchman myself for an hour or two. If I don't do it now, I shall never arrive at that honor in the course of my life. Give me your great-coat and wide-brimmed hat, and take my domino. Go into a beer-house and take a bottle at my expense; and when you have finished it, come again and give me back my masking-gear. You shall have a couple of dollars for your trouble. What do you think, my treasure?"

But Philip did not like this arrangement. At last, however, at the solicitations of the mask, he capitulated as they entered a dark lane. Philip was half-frozen; a warm drink would do him good, and so would a warm fire. He agreed for one half-hour to give up his watchmanship, which would be till twelve o'clock. Exactly at that time the stranger was to come to the great door of St. Gregory's and give back the great-coat, horn and staff, taking back his own silk mantle, hat and domino. Philip also told him the four streets in which he was to call the hour. The mask was in raptures: "Treasure of my heart, I could kiss thee if thou wert not a dirty, miserable fellow! But thou shalt have naught to regret, if thou art at the church at twelve, for I will give thee money for a supper then. Joy! I am a watchman!" The mask looked a watchman to the life, while Philip was completely disguised with the half-mask tied over his face, the bonnet ornamented with a buckle of brilliants on his head, and the red silk mantle thrown around him. When he saw his companion commence his walk he began to fear that the young gentleman might compromise the dignity of the watchman. He therefore addressed him once more, and said:

"I hope you will not abuse my good nature and do any mischief or misbehave in any way, as it may cost me the situation."

"Hallo!" answered the stranger. "What are you talking about? Do you think I don't know my duty? Off with you this moment, or I'll let you feel the weight of my staff. But come to St. Gregory's church and give me back my clothes at twelve o'clock. Good bye. This is glorious fun!"

The new guardian of the streets walked onward with all the dignity becoming his office, while Philip hurried to a neighboring tavern.

As he was passing the door of the royal palace, he was laid hold of by a person in a mask who had alighted from a carriage. Philip turned round, and in a low whispering voice asked what the stranger wanted.

"My gracious lord," answered the mask, "in your reverry you have passed the door. Will your Royal Highness ——"

"What? Royal Highness?" said Philip, laughing. "I am no highness. What put that in your head?"

The mask bowed respectfully, and pointed to the brilliant buckle in Philip's hat. "I ask your pardon if I have betrayed your disguise. But, in whatever character you assume, your noble bearing will betray you. Will you condescend to lead the way? Does your Highness intend to dance?"

"I? To dance?" replied Philip. "No; you see I have boots on."

"To play, then?" inquired the mask.

"Still less. I have brought no money with me," said the assistant watchman.

"Good heaven!" exclaimed the mask. "Command my purse—all that I possess is at your service!" Saying this, he forced a full purse into Philip's hand.

"But do you know who I am?" inquired Philip, and rejected the purse.

The mask whispered with a bow of profound obeisance: "His Royal Highness, Prince Julian."

At this moment Philip heard his deputy in an adjoining street calling the hour very distinctly, and he now became aware of his metamorphosis. Prince Julian, who was well known in the capital as an amiable, wild and good-hearted young man, had been the person with whom he had changed his clothes. "Now, then," thought Philip, "as he enacts the watchman so well, I



will not shame his rank ; I'll see if, for one half-hour, I can't be the prince. If I make any mistake, he has himself to blame for it." He wrapped the red silken mantle closer round him, took the offered purse, put it in his pocket, and said : " Who are you, mask ? I will return your gold to-morrow."

" I am the Chamberlain Pilzou."

" Good—lead the way—I'll follow." The Chamberlain obeyed, and tripped up the marble stairs, Philip coming close behind him. They entered an immense hall lighted by a thousand tapers and clazling chandeliers, which were reflected by brilliant mirrors. A confused crowd of maskers jostled each other, sultans, Tyrolese, harlequins, knights in armor, nuns, goddesses, satyrs, monks, Jews, Medes and Persians. Philip for a while was abashed and blinded. Such splendor he had never dreamt of. In the middle of the hall the dance was carried on by hundreds of people to the music of a full band. Philip, whom the heat of the apartment revived from his frozen state, was so bewildered with the scene that he could scarcely nod his head as different masks addressed him—some confidentially, others deferentially.

" Will you go to the hazard table ?" whispered the Chamberlain, who stood beside him, and who Philip now saw dressed as a Brahmin.

" Let me get unthawed first," answered Philip. " I am an icicle at present."

" A glass of warm punch ?" inquired the Brahmin, and led him into the refreshment room. The pseudo-prince did not wait for a second invitation, but emptied one glass after the other in short time. The punch was good, and it spread its genial warmth through Philip's veins.

" How is it you don't dance to-night, Brahmin ?" he asked of his companion, when they returned into the hall. The Brahmin sighed and shrugged his shoulders.

" I have no pleasure now in the dance. Gayety is distasteful to me. The only person I care to dance with—the Countess Bonau—I thought she loved me ; our families offered no objection—but all at once she broke with me." His voice trembled as he spoke.

" How," said Philip. " I never heard of such a thing."

" You never heard of it ?" repeated the other ; " the whole city rings with it. The quarrel happened a fortnight ago, and she will not allow me to justify myself, but has sent back three letters I wrote to her, unopened. She is a declared enemy of

the Baroness Reizenthal, and had made me promise to drop her acquaintance. But, think how unfortunate I was! When the Queen-mother made the hunting party to Freudenwald, she appointed me cavalier to the Baroness. What could I do? It was impossible to refuse. On the very birthday of the adorable Bonau I was obliged to set out. . . . She heard of it. . . . She put no trust in my heart!"

"Well, then, Brahmin, take advantage of the present moment. The New Year makes up all quarrels. Is the Countess here?"

"Do you not see her over there—the Carmelite on the left of the third pillar beside the two black dominos. She has laid aside her mask. Ah, Prince! your intercession would——"

Philip thought: "Now I can do a good work!" and, as the punch had inspired him, he walked directly to the Carmelite. The Countess Bonau looked at him for some time seriously, and with flushed cheeks, as he sat down beside her. She was a beautiful girl; yet Philip remained persuaded that Rose was a thousand times more beautiful.

"Countess," he said,—and became embarrassed when he met her clear bright eye fixed upon him.

"Prince," said the Countess, "an hour ago you were somewhat too bold."

"Fair Countess, I am therefore at this present moment the more quiet."

"So much the better. I shall not, then, be obliged to keep out of your way."

"Fair lady, allow me to ask one question. Have you not put on a nun's gown to do penance for your sins?"

"I have nothing to do penance for."

"But you have, Countess!—your cruelties—your injustice to the poor Brahmin yonder, who seems neglected by his God and all the world."

The beautiful Carmelite cast down her eyes, and appeared uneasy.

"And do you know, fair Countess, that in the Freudenwald affair the Chamberlain is as innocent as I am?"



"As you, Prince?" said the Countess, frowning—"what did you tell me an hour ago?"

"You are right, dear Countess, I was too bold. You said so yourself. But now I declare to you the Chamberlain was obliged to go to Freudenwald by command of the Queen-mother—against his will was obliged to be cavalier to the hated Reizenthal——"

"Hated by him?" —interrupted the Countess with a bitter and sneering laugh.

"Yes—he hates,—he despises the Baroness. Believe me, he scarcely treated her with civility, and incurred the Royal displeasure by so doing. I know it; and it was for your sake. You are the only person he loves—to you he offers his hand, his heart—and you! —you reject him!"

"How comes it, Prince, that you intercede so warmly for Pilzou? You did not do so formerly."

"That was because I did not know him, and still less the sad state into which you have thrown him by your behavior. I swear to you he is innocent—you have nothing to forgive in him—he has much to forgive in you."

"Hush!" whispered the Carmelite, "we are watched here; away from this." She replaced her mask, stood up, and placing her arm within that of the supposed prince, they crossed the hall and entered a side-room. The Countess uttered many bitter complaints against the Chamberlain, but they were the complaints of jealous love. The Countess was in tears, when the tender Brahmin soon after came timidly into the apartment. There was a deep silence among the three, Philip, not knowing how to conclude his intercession better, led the Brahmin to the Carmelite, and joined their hands together, without saying a word, and left them to fate. He himself returned into the hall.

Here he was hastily addressed by a Mameluke: "I'm glad I have met you, Domino. Is the Rose-girl in the side room?" The Mameluke rushed into it, but returned in a moment, evidently disappointed. "One word alone with you, Domino," he said, and led Philip into a window recess in a retired part of the hall.

"What do you want?" asked Philip.

"I beseech you," replied the Mameluke, in a subdued yet terrible voice, "where is the Rose-girl?"

"What is the Rose-girl to me?"

"But to me she is everything!" answered the Mameluke,

whose suppressed voice and agitated demeanor showed that a fearful struggle was going on within. "To me she is everything.



She is my wife. You make me wretched, Prince! I conjure you drive me not to madness. Think of my wife no more!"

"With all my heart," answered Philip dryly; "what have I to do with your wife?"

"O Prince, Prince!" exclaimed the Mameluke, "I have made a resolve which I shall execute if it cost me my life. Do not seek to deceive me a moment longer. I have discovered everything. Here! Look at this! 'Tis a note my false wife slipped into your

hand, and which you dropped in the crowd without having read."

Philip took the note. 'Twas written in pencil, in a fine, delicate hand: "Change your mask. Everybody knows you. My husband watches you. He does not know me. If you obey me I will reward you."

"Hem!" muttered Philip. "As I live, this was not written to me. I don't trouble my head about your wife."

"Death and fury, Prince! Do not drive me mad! Do you know who it is that speaks to you? I am the Marshal Blankenswerd. Your advances to my wife are not unknown to me, ever since the last rout at the palace."

"My Lord Marshal," answered Philip, "excuse me for saying that jealousy has blinded you. If you knew me well you would not think of accusing me of such folly. I give you my word of honor I will never trouble your wife."

"Are you in earnest, Prince?"

"Entirely."

"Give me proof of this."

"Whatever you require."

"I know you have hindered her until now from going with me to visit her relations in Poland. Will you persuade her to do so now?"

"With all my heart, if you desire it."

"Yes, yes! and your Royal Highness will prevent inconceivable and unavoidable misery."

The Mameluke continued for some time, sometimes begging and praying, and sometimes threatening so furiously that Philip feared he might make a scene before the whole assembly that would not have suited him precisely. He therefore quitted him as soon as possible. Scarcely had he lost himself in the crowd, when a female, closely wrapped in deep mourning, tapped him familiarly on the arm and whispered:

"Butterfly, whither away? Have you no pity for the disconsolate Widow?"

Philip answered very politely: "Beautiful widows find no lack of comforters. May I venture to include myself amongst them?"

"Why are you so disobedient? and why have you not changed your mask?" said the Widow, while she led him aside that they might speak more freely. "Do you really fancy, Prince, that every one here does not know who you are?"

"They are very much mistaken in me, I assure you," replied Philip.

"No, indeed," answered the Widow, "they know you very well, and if you do not immediately change your apparel, I shall not speak to you again the whole evening. I have no desire to give my husband an opportunity of making a scene."

By this Philip discovered whom he was talking with. "You were the beautiful rose-girl; are your roses withered so soon?"

"What is there that does not wither? not the constancy of man? I saw you when you slipped off with the Carmelite. Acknowledge your inconstancy—you can deny it no longer."

"Hem,"—answered Philip dryly, "accuse me if you will, I can return the accusation."

"How,—pretty butterfly?"

"Why, for instance, there is not a more constant man alive than the Marshal."

"There is not, indeed!—and I am wrong, very wrong to have listened to you so long. I reproach myself enough, but he has, unfortunately, discovered our flirtation."

"Since the last rout at Court, fair Widow——"



"Where you were so unguarded and particular—pretty butterfly!"

"Let us repair the mischief. Let us part. I honor the Marshal, and, for my part, do not like to give him pain."

The widow looked at him for some time in speechless amazement.

"If you have indeed any regard for me," continued Philip, "you will go with the Marshal to Poland, to visit your relations. 'Tis better that we should not meet so often. A beautiful woman is beautiful—but a pure and virtuous woman is more beautiful still."

"Prince!" cried the astonished widow, "are you really in earnest? Have you ever loved me, or have you all along deceived?"

"Look you," answered Philip, "I am a tempter of a peculiar kind. I search constantly among women to find truth and virtue, and 'tis but seldom that I encounter them. Only the true and virtuous can keep me constant—therefore I am true to none; but no! I will not lie—there is one that keeps me in her chains—I am sorry, fair Widow, that that one—is not you!"

"You are in a strange mood to-night, Prince," answered the Widow, and the trembling of her voice and heaving of her bosom showed the working of her mind.

"No," answered Philip, "I am in as rational a mood to-night as I ever was in my life. I wish only to repair an injury; I have promised to your husband to do so."

"How!" exclaimed the Widow, in a voice of terror, "you have discovered all to the Marshal."

"Not everything," answered Philip, "only what I knew."

The Widow wrung her hands in the extremity of agitation, and at last said, "Where is my husband?"

Philip pointed to the Mameluke, who at this moment approached them with slow steps.

"Prince," said the Widow, in a tone of inexpressible rage,— "Prince, you may be forgiven this, but not from me! I never dreamt that the heart of man could be so deceitful,—but you are unworthy of a thought. You are an impostor! My husband in the dress of a barbarian is a prince; you in the dress of a prince are a barbarian. In this world you see me no more!"

With these words she turned proudly away from him, and going up to the Mameluke, they left the hall in deep and ear-

nest conversation. Philip laughed quietly, and said to himself: "My substitute, the watchman, must look to it, for I do not play my part badly; I only hope when he returns he will proceed as I have begun."

He went up to the dancers, and was delighted to see the beautiful Carmelite standing up in a set with the overjoyed Brahmin. No sooner did the latter perceive him, than he kissed his hand to him, and in dumb show gave him to understand in what a blessed state he was. Philip thought: "'Tis a pity I am not to be prince all my lifetime. The people would be satisfied then: to be a prince is the easiest thing in the world. He can do more with a single word than a lawyer with a four-hours' speech. Yes! if I were a prince, my beautiful Rose would be—lost to me forever. No! I would not be a prince." He now looked at the clock, and saw 'twas half-past eleven. The Mameluke hurried up to him and gave him a paper. "Prince," he exclaimed, "I could fall at your feet and thank you in the very dust. I am reconciled to my wife. You have broken her heart; but it is better that it should be so. We leave for Poland this very night, and there we shall fix our home. Farewell! I shall be ready whenever your Royal Highness requires me, to pour out my last drop of blood in your service. My gratitude is eternal. Farewell!"

"Stay!" said Philip to the Marshal, who was hurrying away, "what am I to do with this paper?"

"Oh, that,—'tis the amount of my loss to your Highness last week at hazard. I had nearly forgotten it; but before my departure, I must clear my debts. I have endorsed it on the back." With these words the Marshal disappeared.

Philip opened the paper, and read in it an order for five thousand dollars. He put it in his pocket, and thought: "Well, it's a pity that I'm not a prince." Some one whispered in his ear:

"Your Royal Highness, we are both discovered; I shall blow my brains out."

Philip turned round in amazement, and saw a negro at his side.

"What do you want, mask?" he asked, in an unconcerned tone.

"I am Colonel Kalt," whispered the negro. "The Marshal's wife has been chattering to Duke Herrman, and he has been breathing fire and fury against us both."

"He is quite welcome," answered Philip.

"But the King will hear it all," sighed the negro. "This very night I may be arrested and carried to a dungeon; I'll sooner hang myself."

"No need of that," said Philip.

"What! am I to be made infamous for my whole life? I am lost, I tell you. The Duke will demand entire satisfaction. His back is black and blue yet with the marks of the cudgeling I gave him. I am lost, and the baker's daughter too. I'll jump from the bridge and drown myself at once!"

"God forbid!" answered Philip; what have you and the baker's daughter to do with it?"

"Your Royal Highness banters me, and I am in despair! I humbly beseech you to give me two minutes' private conversation."

Philip followed the negro into a small boudoir dimly lighted up with a few candles. The negro threw himself on a sofa, quite overcome, and groaned aloud. Philip found some sandwiches and wine on the table, and helped himself with great relish.

"I wonder your Royal Highness can be so cool on hearing this cursed story. If that rascally Salmoni was here who acted the conjurer, he might save us by some contrivance, for the fellow was a bunch of tricks. As it is, he has slipped out of the scrape."

"So much the better," interrupted Philip, replenishing his glass; "since he has got out of the way, we can throw all the blame on his shoulders."

"How can we do that? The Duke, I tell you, knows that you, and I, and the Marshal's wife, and the baker's daughter, were all in the plot together, to take advantage of his superstition. He knows that it was you that engaged Salmoni to play the conjurer; that it was I that instructed the baker's daughter (with whom he is in love) how to inveigle him into the snare; that it was I that enacted the ghost, that knocked him down, and cudgelled him till he roared again. If I had only not carried the joke too far, but I wished to cool his love a little for my sweetheart. 'Twas a devilish business. I'll take poison."

"Rather swallow a glass of wine—'tis delicious," said Philip, taking another tart at the same time. "For to tell you the truth, my friend, I think you are rather a white-livered sort of

rogue for a colonel, to think of hanging, drowning, shooting and poisoning yourself about such a ridiculous story as that. One of these modes would be too much, but as to all the four—nonsense. I tell you that at this moment I don't know what to make out of your tale."

"Your Royal Highness, have pity on me, my brain is turned. The Duke's page, an old friend of mine, has told me this very moment that the Marshal's wife, inspired by the devil, went up to the Duke and told him that the trick played on him at the baker's house, was planned by Prince Julian, who opposed his marriage with his sister; that the spirit he saw was myself, sent by the Princess to be a witness of his superstition; that your Highness was a witness of his descent into the pit after hidden gold, and of his promise to make the baker's daughter his mistress, and also to make her one of the nobility immediately after his marriage with the Princess. 'Do not hope to gain the Princess. It is useless for you to try,' were the last words of the Marshal's wife to the Duke."

"And a pretty story it is," muttered Philip; "why, behavior like that would be a disgrace to the meanest of the people. I declare there is no end to these deviltries."

"Yes, indeed. 'Tis impossible to behave more meanly than the Marshal's lady. The woman must be a fury. My gracious lord, save me from destruction."

"Where is the Duke?" asked Philip.

"The page told me he started up on hearing the story, and said, 'I will go to the King.' And if he tells the story to the King in his own way——"

"Is the King here, then?"

"Oh, yes, he is at the play in the next room, with the Archbishop and the Minister of Police."

Philip walked with long steps through the boudoir. The case required consideration.

"Your Royal Highness," said the negro, "protect me. Your own honor is at stake. You can easily make all straight; otherwise, I am ready at the first intimation of danger to fly across the border. I will pack up, and to-morrow I shall expect your last commands as to my future behavior."

With these words the negro took his leave.

"It is high time I were a watchman again," thought Philip. "I am getting both myself and my substitute into scrapes he will find it hard to get out of—and this makes the difference

between a peasant and a prince. One is no better off than the other. Good heavens! what stupid things these court lords are doing which we do not dream of with our lanthorns and staff in hand, or when at the spade. We think they lead the lives of angels, without sin or care. Pretty piece of business! Within a quarter of an hour I have heard of more rascally tricks than I ever played in my whole life. And—" but his reverie was interrupted by a whisper.

"So lonely, Prince! I consider myself happy in having a minute's conversation with your Royal Highness."

Philip looked at the speaker; and he was a miner, covered over with gold and jewels.

"But one instant," said the mask. "The business is pressing, and deeply concerns you."

"Who are you?" inquired Philip.

"Count Bodenlos, the Minister of Finance, at your Highness' service," answered the miner, and showed his face, which looked as if it were a second mask, with its little eyes and copper-colored nose.

"Well, then my lord, what are your commands?"

"May I speak openly? I waited on your Royal Highness thrice, and was never admitted to the honor of an audience; and yet—Heaven is my witness—no man in

all this court has a deeper interest in your Royal Highness than I have."

"I am greatly obliged to you," replied Philip; "what is your business just now? But be quick."

"May I venture to speak of the house of Abraham Levi?"

"As much as you like."

"They have applied to me about the fifty thousand dollars which you owe them, and threaten to apply to the King. And you remember your promise to his Majesty, when last he paid your debts."

"Can't the people wait?" asked Philip.

"No more than the brothers Goldschmidt, who demand their seventy-five thousand dollars."

"It is all one to me. If the people won't wait for their money, I must——"



"No hasty resolution, my gracious lord! I have it in my power to make everything comfortable, if——"

"Well, if what?"

"If you will honor me by listening to me one moment. I hope to have no difficulty in redeeming all your debts. The house of Abraham Levi has bought up immense quantities of corn, so that the price is very much raised. A decree against importation will raise it three or four per cent. higher. By giving Abraham Levi the monopoly, the business will be arranged. The house erases your debt, and pays off your seventy-five thousand dollars to the Goldschmidts and I give you over the receipts. But everything depends on my continuing for another year at the head of the Finance. If Baron Griefensack succeeds in ejecting me from the Ministry, I shall be unable to serve your Royal Highness as I could wish. If your Highness will leave the party of Griefensack, our point is gained. For me, it is a matter of perfect indifference whether I remain in office or not. I sigh for repose. But for your Royal Highness, it is a matter of great moment. If I have not the mixing of the pack I lose the game."

Philip for some time did not know what answer to make. At last, while the Finance Minister, in expectation of his reply, took a pinch out of his snuff-box set with jewels, Philip said:

"If I rightly understand you, Sir Count, you would starve the country a little to pay my debts. Consider, sir, what misery you will cause. And will the King consent to it?"

"If I remain in office, I will answer for that, my gracious lord! When the price of corn rises, the King will, of course, think of permitting importation, and prevent exportation by levying heavy imposts. The permission to do so is given to the house of Abraham Levi, and they export as much as they choose. But, as I said before, if Griefensack gets the helm, nothing can be done. For the first year he would be obliged to attend strictly to his duty, in order to be able afterwards to feather his nest, at the expense of the country. He must first make sure of his ground. He is dreadfully grasping!"

"A pretty project," answered Philip; "and how long do you think a finance minister must be in office before he can lay his shears on the flock to get wool enough for himself and me?"

"Oh, if he has his wits about him, he may manage it in a year."

"Then the King ought to be counselled to change his finance

minister every twelve months, if he wishes to be faithfully and honorably served."

"I hope, your Royal Highness, that since I have had the Exchequer, the King and Court have been faithfully served?"

"I believe you, Count, and the poor people believe you still more. Already they scarcely know how to pay their rates and taxes. You should treat us with a little more consideration, Count."

"Us! Don't I do everything for the Court?"

"No! I mean the people. You should have a little more consideration for them."

"I appreciate what your Royal Highness says, but I serve the King and Court, and the people are not to be considered. The country is his private property, and the people are only useful to him as increasing the value of the land. But this is no time to discuss the old story about the interests of the people. I beg your Royal Highness's answer to my proposition. Shall I have the honor to discharge your debts on the above specified conditions?"

"Answer—no, never, never! at the expense of hundreds and thousands of starving families."

"But, your Royal Highness, if in addition to the clearance of your debts, I make the house of Abraham Levi present you with fifty thousand dollars in hard cash? I think it may afford you that sum. The house will gain so much by the operation, that——"

"Perhaps it may be able to give *you* also a mark of its regard."

"Your Highness is pleased to jest with me. I gain nothing by the affair. My whole object is to obtain the protection of your Royal Highness."

"You are very polite!"

"I may hope, then, Prince? My duty is to be of service to you. To-morrow I shall send for Abraham and conclude the arrangement with him. I shall have the honor to present your Royal Highness with the receipt for all your debts, besides the gift of fifty thousand dollars."

"Go; I want to hear no more of it."

"And your Royal Highness will honor me with your favor? For unless I am in the Ministry, it is impossible for me to deal with Abraham Levi so as——"

"I wish to Heaven you and your Ministry and Abraham

Levi were all three on the Blocksberg! I tell you what, unless you lower the price of corn, and take away the monopoly from that infernal Jew, I'll go this moment and reveal your villainy to the King, and get you and Abraham Levi banished from the country. See to it—I'll keep my word." Philip turned away in a rage, and proceeded into the dancing-room, leaving the Minister of Finance petrified with amazement.

"When does your Royal Highness require the carriage?" whispered a stout little Dutch merchant in a bobbed wig.

"Not at all," answered Philip.

"'Tis after half-past eleven, and the beautiful singer expects you. She will tire of waiting."

"Let her sing something to cheer her."

"How, Prince? Have you changed your mind? Would you leave the captivating Rollina in the lurch, and throw away the golden opportunity you have been sighing for for two months? The letter you sent to-day, inclosing the diamond watch, did wonders. The proud but fragile beauty surrenders. This morning you were in raptures, but now you are as cold as ice! What is the cause of the change?"

"That is my business, not yours," said Philip.

"I had your orders to join you at half-past eleven. Perhaps you have other engagements?"

"Perhaps."

"A *petit souper* with the Countess Born? She is not present here; at least, among all the masks I can't trace her out. I should know her among a thousand by that graceful walk and her peculiar way of carrying her little head—eh, Prince?"

"Well, but if it were so, there would be no necessity for making you my confidant, would there?"

"I will take the hint, and be silent. But won't you at any rate send to the Signora Rollina to let her know you are not coming?"

"If I have sighed for her for two months, she had better sigh a month or two for me. I sha'n't go near her."

"So that beautiful necklace which you sent her for a New Year's present was all for nothing?"

"As far as I am concerned."

"Will you break with her entirely?"

"There is nothing between us to break, that I know of."

"Well, then, since you speak so plainly, I may tell you some-

thing which you perhaps know already. Your love for the Signora had hitherto kept me silent; but now that you have altered your mind about her, I can no longer keep the secret from you. You are deceived."

"By whom?"

"By the artful singer. She would smile alternately on your Royal Highness and a Jew."

"A Jew?"

"Yes! the son of Abraham Levi."

"Is that rascal everywhere?"

"So your Highness did not know it? but I am telling you the exact truth; if it were not for your Royal Highness, she would accept his attentions. I am only sorry you gave her that watch."

"I don't regret it at all."

"The jade deserves to be whipped."

"Few people meet their deserts," answered Philip.

"Too true, too true, your Royal Highness. For instance, I have discovered a girl—O Prince, there is not such another in this city or in the whole world! Few have seen this angel. Pooh! Rollina is nothing to her. Listen—a girl tall and slender as a palm-tree, with a complexion like the red glow of evening upon snow, eyes like sunbeams, rich golden tresses; in short, the most beautiful creature I ever beheld, a Venus, a goddess in rustic attire. Your Highness, we must give her chase."

"A peasant girl?"

"A mere rustic; but then you must see her yourself, and you will love her. But my descriptions are nothing. Imagine the embodiment of all that you can conceive most charming, add to that, artlessness, grace and innocence. But the difficulty is to catch sight of her. She seldom leaves her mother. I know her seat in church and have watched her for many Sundays past, as she walked with her mother to the Elm-Gate. I have ascertained that a handsome young fellow, a gardener, is making court to her. He can't marry her, for he is a poor devil, and she has nothing. The mother is the widow of a poor weaver."

"And the mother's name is?"

"Widow Bittner, in Milk street; and the daughter, fairest of flowers, is in fact called Rose."

Philip's blood boiled at the sound of the beloved name. His first inclination was to knock the communicative Dutchman down. He restrained himself, however, and only asked:

"Are you the devil himself?"

"'Tis good news, is it not? I have taken some steps in the matter already, but you must see her first. But, perhaps such a pearl has not altogether escaped your keen observation? Do you know her?"

"Intimately?"

"So much the better. Have I been too lavish of my praises? You confess their truth? She sha'n't escape us. We must go together to the widow; you must play the philanthropist. You have heard of the widow's poverty, and must insist on relieving it. You take an interest in the good woman; enter into her misfortunes; leave a small present at each visit, and by this means become acquainted with Rose. The rest follows, of course. The gardener can be easily got out of the way, or perhaps a dozen or two dollars slipped quietly into his hand may——"

Philip's rage broke forth.

"I'll throttle you——"

"If the gardener makes a fuss?" interposed the Dutchman. "Leave me to settle this matter. I'll get him kidnapped, and sent to the army to fight for his country. In the meantime you get possession of the field; for the girl has a peasant's attachment for the fellow, and it will not be easy to get the nonsense out of her head, which she has been taught by the *canaille*. But I will give her some lessons, and then——"

"I'll break your neck."

"Your Highness is too good. But if your Highness would use your influence with the King to procure me the Chamberlain's key——"

"I wish I could procure you——"

"Oh, don't flatter me, your Highness. Had I only known you thought so much of her beauty, she would have been yours long ago."

"Not a word more," cried the enraged Philip, in a smothered voice; for he dared not speak aloud, he was so surrounded by maskers, who were listening, dancing, talking, as they passed him, and he might have betrayed himself; "not a word more!"

"No, there will be more than words. Deeds shall show my sincerity. You may advance. You are wont to conquer. The outposts will be easily taken. The gardener I will manage, and the mother will range herself under your gilded banners. Then the fortress will be won!"

"Sir, if you venture," said Philip, who now could hardly contain himself. It was with great difficulty he refrained from open violence, and he clutched the arm of the Dutchman with the force of a vice.

"Your Highness, for heaven's sake, moderate your joy. I shall scream—you are mashing my arm!"

"If you venture to go near that innocent girl I will demolish every bone in your body."

"Good, good," screamed the Dutchman, in intense pain; "only let go my arm."

"If I find you anywhere near Milk Street, I'll dash your miserable brains out. So look to it."

The Dutchman seemed almost stupefied; trembling, he said:

"May it please your Highness, I could not imagine you really loved the girl as it seems you do."

"I love her! I will own it before the whole world!"

"And are you loved in return?"

"That's none of your business. Never mention her name to me again. Do not even think of her; it would be a stain upon her purity. Now you know what I think. Be off!"

Philip twirled the unfortunate Dutchman round as he let go his arm, and that worthy gentleman slunk out of the hall.

In the meantime Philip's substitute supported his character of watchman on the snow-covered streets. It is scarcely necessary to say that this was none other than Prince Julian, who had taken a notion to join the watch—his head being crazed by the fire of the sweet wine. He attended to the directions left by Philip, and went his rounds, and called the hour with great decorum, except that, instead of the usual watchman's verses, he favored the public with rhymes of his own. He was cogitating a new stanza, when the door of a house beside him opened, and a well-wrapped-up girl beckoned to him, and ran into the shadow of the house.

The prince left his stanza half finished, and followed the apparition. A soft hand grasped his in the darkness, and a voice whispered:

"Good evening, dear Philip. Speak low, that nobody may hear us. I have only got away from the company for one moment, to speak to you as you passed. Are you happy to see me?"

"Blest as a god, my angel;—who could be otherwise than happy by thy side?"

"I've some good news for you, Philip. You must sup at our house to-morrow evening. My mother has allowed me to ask you. You'll come?"

"For the whole evening, and as many more as you wish. Would we might be together till the end of the world! 'Twould be a life fit for gods!"

"Listen, Philip; in half an hour I shall be at St. Gregory's. I shall expect you there. You won't fail me? Don't keep me waiting long—we shall have a walk together. Go now—we may be discovered." She tried to go, but Julian held her back and threw his arms round her.

"What, wilt thou leave me so coldly?" he said, and tried to press a kiss upon her lips.

Rose did not know what to think of this boldness, for Philip had always been modest, and never dared more than kiss her hand, except once, when her mother had forbidden their meeting again. They had then exchanged their first kiss in great sorrow and in great love, but never since then. She struggled to free herself, but Julian held her firm, till at last she had to buy her liberty by submitting to the kiss, and begging him to go. But Julian seemed not at all inclined to move.

"What! go? I'm not such a fool as that comes to! You think I love my horn better than you? No, indeed!"

"But then it isn't right, Philip."

"Not right? why not, my beauty? There is nothing against kissing in the ten commandments."

"Why, if we could marry, perhaps you might—but you know very well we can't marry, and——"



"Not marry! why not? You can marry me any day you like."

"Philip!—why will you talk such folly? You know we must not think of such a thing."

"But *I* think very seriously about it—if you would consent."

"You are unkind to speak thus. Ah, Philip, I had a dream last night."

"A dream—what was it?"

"You had won a prize in the lottery; we were both so happy! you had bought a beautiful garden, handsomer than any in the city: It was a little paradise of flowers—and there were large beds of vegetables, and the trees were laden with fruit. And when I awoke, Philip, I felt so wretched—I wished I had not dreamed such a happy dream. You've nothing in the lottery, Philip, have you? Have you really won anything? The drawing took place to-day."

"How much must I have gained to win you too?"

"Ah, Philip, if you had only gained a thousand dollars, you might buy such a pretty garden!"

"A thousand dollars! And what if, it were more?"

"Ah, Philip—what? is it true? is it really? Don't deceive me! 'twill be worse than the dream. You had a ticket! and you've won!—own it! own it!"

"All you can wish for."

Rose flung her arms around his neck in the extremity of her joy, and kissed him.

"More than the thousand dollars? and will they pay you the whole?"

Her kiss made the Prince forget to answer. It was so strange to hold a pretty form in his arms, receive its caresses, and to know they were not meant for him.

"Answer me, answer me!" cried Rose, impatiently. "Will they give you all that money?"

"They've done it already—and if it will add to your happiness I will hand it to you this moment."

"What! have you got it with you?"

The Prince took out his purse, which he had filled with money in expectation of some play.

"Take it and weigh it, my girl," he said, placing it in her hand, and kissing her again. "This, then, makes you mine!"

"Oh, not *this*—nor all the gold in the world, if you were not my own dear Philip!"

"And how if I had given you twice as much as all this money, and yet were not your own dear Philip!"

"I would fling the purse at your feet, and make you a very polite curtesy," said Rose.

A door now opened; the light streamed down the steps, and the laughing voices of girls were heard. Rose whispered:

"In half an hour, at St. Gregory's," and ran up the steps, leaving the Prince in the darkness. Disconcerted by the suddenness of the parting, and his curiosity excited by his ignorance of the name of his new acquaintance, and not even having had a full view of her face, he consoled himself with the rendezvous at St. Gregory's Church door. This he resolved to keep, though it was evident that all the tenderness which had been bestowed on him, was intended for his friend the watchman.

The interview with Rose, or the coldness of the night, increased the effect of the wine to such an extent that the mischievous propensities of the young Prince got the upper hand of him. Standing amidst a crowd of people, in the middle of the street, he blew so lustily on his horn that the women screamed and the men gasped with fear. He called the hour, and then shouted, at the top of his lungs:

"The business of our lovely state
Is stricken by the hand of fate—
Even our maids, both light and brown,
Can find no sale in all the town;
They deck themselves with all their arts,
But no one buys their worn-out hearts."

"Shame! shame!" cried several female voices from the window at the end of this complimentary effusion, which, however, was crowned with a loud laugh from the men. "Bravo, watchman!" cried some; "Encore! encore!" shouted others. "How dare you, fellow, insult ladies in the open street?" growled a young lieutenant, who had a very pretty girl on his arm.

"Mr. Lieutenant," answered a miller, "unfortunately watchmen tell the truth, and the lady on your arm is a proof of it. Ha! young jade, do you know me? do you know who I am? Is it right for a betrothed bride to be gadding at night about the streets with other men? To-morrow your mother shall hear of this. I'll have nothing more to do with you!"

The girl hid her face, and nudged the young officer to lead

her away. But the lieutenant, like a brave soldier, scorned to retreat from the miller, and determined to keep the field. He therefore made use of a full round of oaths, which were returned with interest, and a sabre was finally resorted to, with some flourishes; but two Spanish cudgels were threateningly held over the head of the lieutenant by a couple of stout townsmen, while one of them, who was a broad-shouldered beer-brewer, cried, "Don't make any more fuss about the piece of goods beside you—she ain't worth it. The miller's a good fellow, and what he says is true, and the watchman's right, too. A plain tradesman can hardly venture to marry now. All the women wish to marry above their station. Instead of darning stockings, they read romances; instead of working in the kitchen, they run after comedies and concerts. Their houses are dirty, and they are walking out, dressed like princesses; all they bring a husband as a dowry are handsome dresses, lace ribbons, intrigues, romances and idleness! Sir, I speak from experience; I should have married long since, if girls were not spoilt."

The spectators laughed heartily, and the lieutenant slowly put back his sword, saying, peevishly: "It's a little too much to be obliged to hear a sermon from the *canaille*."

"What? *Canaille!*" cried a smith, who held the second cudgel. "Do you call those *canaille* who feed you noble idlers by duties and taxes? Your licentiousness is the cause of our domestic discords, and noble ladies would not have so much cause to mourn if you had learned both to pray and to work."

Several young officers had gathered together already, and so had some mechanics; and the boys, in the meantime, threw snowballs among both parties, that their share in the fun might not be lost. The first ball hit the noble lieutenant on the nose, and thinking it an attack from the *canaille*, he raised his sabre. The fight began.

The Prince, who had laughed amazingly at the first commencement of the uproar, had betaken himself to another region, and felt quite unconcerned as to the result. In the course of his wanderings, he came to the palace of Count Bodenlos, the Minister of Finance, with whom, as Philip had discovered at the masquerade, the Prince was not on the best of terms. The Countess had a large party. Julian saw the lighted windows, and still feeling poetically disposed, he planted himself opposite

the balcony, and blew a peal on his horn. Several ladies and gentlemen opened the shutters, because they had nothing better to do, and listened to what he should say.

"Watchman," cried one of them, "sing us a New Year's greeting."

The invitation brought a fresh accession of the Countess' party to the windows. Julian called the hour in the usual manner, and sang, loud enough to be distinctly heard inside :

"Ye who groan with heavy debts,
And swift approaching failure frets,
Pray the Lord that he this hour
May raise you to some place of power ;
And while the nation wants and suffers,
Fill your own from the people's coffers."

"Outrageous!" screamed the lady of the minister; "who is the insolent wretch that dares such an insult?"

"Pleashe your exshellenshy," answered Julian, imitating the Jewish dialect in voice and manner, "I vash only intendsh to shing you a pretty shong. I am de Shew Abraham Levi, well known at dish court. Your ladyship knowsh me ver' well."

"How dare you tell such a lie, you villain?" exclaimed a voice trembling with rage, at one of the windows; "how dare you say you are Abraham Levi? I am Abraham Levi! You are a cheat!"

"Call the police!" cried the Countess. "Have that man arrested!"



At these words the party confusedly withdrew from the windows. Nor did the Prince remain where he was, but quickly effected his escape through a cross-street. A crowd of servants rushed out of the palace, led by the secretaries of the Finance Minister, and commenced a search for the offender. "We have him," cried some, as the rest eagerly approached. It was, in fact, the real guardian of the night, who was carefully perambulating his beat, in innocent unconsciousness of any offence. In spite of all he could say, he was disarmed and carried off to the watch-house, and charged with causing a disturbance by singing libelous songs. The officer of the police shook his head at the unaccountable event, and said: "We have already one watchman in custody, whose verses about some girl caused a very serious affray between the townspeople and the garrison."

The prisoner would confess to nothing, but swore prodigiously at the tipsy young people who had disturbed him in the fulfilment of his duty. One of the secretaries of the Finance Minister repeated the whole verse to him. The soldiers standing about laughed aloud, but the ancient watchman swore with tears in his eyes that he had never thought of such a thing. While the examination was going on, and one of the secretaries of the Finance Minister began to be doubtful whether the poor watchman was really in fault or not, an uproar was heard outside, and loud cries of, "Watch, watch!"

The guard rushed out, and in a few minutes the Field Marshal entered the office, accompanied by the Captain of the Guards on duty. "Have that scoundrel locked up tight," said the Marshal, pointing behind him, and two soldiers brought in a watchman, whom they held close prisoner, and whom they had disarmed of his staff and horn.

"Are the watchmen all gone mad to-night?" exclaimed the Chief of Police.

"I'll have the rascal punished for his infamous verses, said the Field Marshal angrily.

"Your excellency," exclaimed the trembling watchman, "as true as I live, I never made a verse in my born days."

"Silence, knave!" roared the Marshal. "I'll have you hanged for them! And if you contradict me again, I'll cut you in two on the spot."

The police officer respectfully observed to the Field Marshal that there must be some poetical epidemic among the watchmen,

for three had been brought before him within the last quarter of an hour, accused of the same offence.

"Gentlemen," said the Marshal to the officers who had accompanied him, "since the scoundrel refuses to confess, it will be necessary to take down from your remembrance the words of his atrocious libel. Let them be written down while you still recollect them. Come, who can say them?"

The officer of police wrote to the dictation of the gentlemen who remembered the whole verses between them :

" On empty head a flaunting feather,
A long queue tied with tape and leather;
Padded breast and waist so little,
Make the soldier to a tittle;
By cards and dance, and dissipation,
He's sure to win a Marshal's station."

"Do you deny, you rascal," cried the Field Marshal to the terrified watchman; "do you deny that you sang these infamous lines as I was coming out of my house?"

"They may sing it who like, it was not me," said the watchman.

"Why did you run away, then, when you saw me?"

"I did not run away."

"What!" said the two officers who had accompanied the Marshal—"not run away? Were you not out of breath when at last we laid hold of you there by the market?"

"Yes, but it was with fright at being so ferociously attacked. I am trembling yet in every limb."

"Lock the obstinate dog up till the morning," said the Marshal; "he will come to his senses by that time!" With these words the wrathful dignitary went away. These incidents had set the whole police force of the city on the *qui vive*. In the next ten minutes two more watchmen were brought to the office on similar charges with the others. One was accused of singing a libel under the window of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which it was insinuated that there was no affairs to which he was more foreign than those of his own department. The other had sung some verses before the door of the Bishop's palace, informing him that the "lights of the church" were by no means deficient in tallow, but gave a great deal more smoke than illumination. The Prince, who had wrought the poor watchmen all this woe, was always lucky enough to escape, and grew bolder and bolder with every new attempt. The affair

was talked of everywhere. The Minister of Police, who was at cards with the King, was informed of the insurrection among the hitherto peaceful watchmen, and, as a proof of it, some of the verses were given to him in writing. The King laughed very heartily at the doggerel verses about the miserable police, who were always putting their noses into other people's family affairs, but could never smell anything amiss in their own, and were therefore lawful game, and ordered the next poetical watchman who should be taken to be brought before him. He broke up the card-table, for he saw that the Minister of Police had lost his good-humor.

In the dancing-hall next to the card-room, Philip had looked at his watch, and discovered that the time of his appointment with Rose at St. Gregory's had nearly come. He was by no means sorry at the prospect of giving back his silk mantle and plumed bonnet to his substitute, for he began to find high life not quite to his taste. As he was going to the door, the negro once more came up to him, and whispered: "Your Highness, Duke Herrman is seeking for you everywhere." Philip shook his head impatiently and hurried out, followed by the negro. When they got to the ante-chamber, the negro cried out, "By Heaven, here comes the Duke!" and slipped back into the hall.



A tall black mask walked fiercely up to Philip, and said: "Stay a moment, sir; I've a word or two to say to you; I've been seeking for you long."

"Quick, then," said Philip, "for I have no time to lose."

"I would not waste a moment, sir; I have sought you long enough; you owe me satisfaction; you have injured me infamously."

"Not that I am aware of."

"You don't know me, perhaps," said the Duke, lifting up his mask; "now that you see me, your own conscience will save me any more words. I demand satisfaction. You and the cursed Salmoni have deceived me!"

"I know nothing about it," said Philip.

"You got up that shameful scene in the cellar of the baker's

daughter. It was at your instigation that Colonel Kalt made an assault upon me with a cudgel."

"There's not a word of truth in what you say."

"What!—you deny it? Marshal Blankenswerd's wife was an eye-witness of it all, and she has told me every circumstance."

"She has told your grace a fairy tale—I have had nothing to do with it; if you made an ass of yourself in the baker's cellar, that was your own fault."

"I ask, once more, will you give me satisfaction? If not, I will expose you. Follow me instantly to the King. You shall either fight with me, or—go to his Majesty."

Philip was nonplussed. "Your grace," he said, "I have no wish either to fight with you or to go to the King."

This was, indeed, the truth, for he was afraid he should be obliged to unmask, and would be punished, of course, for the part he had played. He therefore tried to get off by every means, and watched the door to seize a favorable moment for effecting his escape. The Duke, on the other hand, observed the uneasiness of the Prince (as he thought him), and waxed more valorous every minute. At last he seized poor Philip by the arm, and was dragging him into the hall.

"What do you want with me?" said Philip, sorely frightened, and shook off the Duke.

"To the King. He shall hear how shamefully you insult a guest at his court."

"Very good," replied Philip, who saw no hope of escape, except by continuing the character of the Prince. "Very good. Come, then, I am ready. By good luck I happen to have the agreement with me between you and the baker's daughter, in which you promise——"

"Nonsense! stuff!" answered the Duke, "that was only a piece of fun, which may be allowed surely with a baker's daughter. Show it if you like, I will explain all that."

But it appeared that the Duke was not quite so sure of the explanation, for he no longer urged Philip to go before the King. He, however, insisted more earnestly than ever on getting into his carriage, and going that moment—Heaven knows where—to decide the matter with sword and pistol, an arrangement which did not suit our watchman at all. Philip pointed out the danger and consequences of such a proceeding, but the Duke overruled all objections. He had made every pre-

paration, and when it was over he would leave the city that same night.

"If you are not the greatest coward in Europe, you will follow me to the carriage—Prince!"

"I—am—no—prince," at last stuttered Philip, now driven to extremities.

"You are! Everybody recognized you at the ball. I know you by your hat. You sha'n't escape me."

Phillip lifted up his mask, and showed the Duke his face.

"Now, then, am I a prince?"

Duke Herrman, when he saw the countenance of a man he had never seen before, started back, and stood gazing as if he had been petrified. He had revealed his secrets to a perfect stranger! 'Twas horrible beyond conception! But before he had recovered from his surprise, Philip had opened the door and effected his escape.

The moment he found himself at liberty he took off his hat and feathers, and wrapping them in his silk mantle, rushed through the streets towards St. Gregory's, carrying them under his arm. There stood Rose already, in a corner of the high church door, expecting his arrival,

"Ah, Philip, dear Philip," she said, pressing his hand; "how happy you have made me! how lucky we are! I was very uneasy to get away from my friend's house, and I have been waiting here this quarter of an hour, but never cared for the frost and snow—my happiness was so great: I am so glad you're come back."

"And I, too, dear Rose, thank God that I have got back to you. May the eagles fly away with these trinkum-trankums of great people. But I'll tell you some other time of the scenes I've had. Tell me now, my darling, how you are, and whether you love me still!"

"Ah, Philip, you've become a great man now, and it would be better to ask if you care anything for me."

"Thunder! How came you to know so soon that I've been a great man?"

"Why, you told me yourself. Ah! Philip, Philip, I only hope you won't be proud, now that you've grown so rich. I am but a poor girl, and not good enough for you now—and I have been thinking, Philip, if you forsake me, I would rather have had you continue a poor gardener. I should fret myself to death if you forsook me."

"What are you talking about, Rose? 'Tis true that for one half-hour I have been a prince; 'twas but a joke, and I want no more of such jokes in my life. Now I am a watchman again, and as poor as ever. To be sure, I have five thousand dollars in my pocket that I got from a Mameluke; that would make us rich, but unfortunately they don't belong to me!"

"You're speaking nonsense, Philip," said Rose, giving him the purse of gold that the prince had given her. "Here, take back your money, 'tis too heavy for my bag."

"What should I do with all this gold? Where did you get it, Rose?"

"You won it in the lottery, Philip."

"What! have I won? And they told me at the office my number was not yet out. I had hoped and wished that it might come to give me a setting-up in the world; but gardener Redman said to me as I went a second time towards the office: 'Poor Philip—a blank.' Huzzah! I have won! Now I will buy a large garden and marry you. How much is it?"

"Are you crazy, Philip, or have you drunk too much? You must know better than I can tell you how much it is. I only looked at it quietly under the table at my friend's, and was frightened to see so many glittering coins, all of gold, Philip. Ah! then I thought, no wonder Philip was so impertinent—for, you know, you were very impertinent, Philip—but I can't blame you for it. Oh, I could throw my arms round your neck and cry for joy."

"Rose, if you will do it I shall make no objections. But there's some misunderstanding here. Who was it that gave you this money, and told you it was my prize in the lottery? I have my ticket safe in my drawer at home, and nobody has asked me for it."

"Ah! Philip, don't play your jokes on me! You yourself told me it half an hour ago, and gave me the purse with your own hand."

"Rose, try to recollect yourself. This morning I saw you at Mass, and we agreed to meet here to-night, but since that time I have not seen you for an instant."

"No, except half an hour ago, when I saw you at Steinman's door. But what is that bundle under your arm? Why are you without a hat this cold night? Philip! Philip! Be careful. All that gold may turn your brain. You've been in some tavern, Philip, and have drank more than you should. But tell me,

what is in the bundle? Why—here's a woman's silk gown! Philip, Philip, where have you been?"

"Certainly not with you, half an hour ago. You want to play tricks on me, I fancy. Where have you got that money, I should like to know?"

"Answer me first, Philip, where you got that woman's gown. Where have you been, sir?"

They were both impatient for explanations; both a little jealous—and finally began to quarrel.

But as this was a lovers' quarrel, it ended as lovers' quarrels invariably do. When Rose took out her white pocket-handkerchief, put it to her beautiful eyes, and turned away her head as the sighs burst forth from her breast, this sole argument proved instantly that she was in the right, and Philip decidedly in the wrong. He confessed he was to blame for everything, and told her that he had been at a masked ball, and that his bundle was not a silk gown, but a man's mantle and a hat and feathers. And now he had to undergo a rigid examination. Every maiden knows that a masked ball is a dangerous maze for unprotected hearts. It is like plunging into a whelming sea of dangers, and you will be drowned if you are not a good swimmer. Rose did not consider Philip the best swimmer in the world—it is difficult to say why. He denied having danced, but when she asked him, he could not deny having talked with some feminine masks. He related the whole story to her, yet would constantly add: "The ladies were of high rank, and they took me for another." Rose doubted him a little, but she suppressed her resentment until he said they took him for Prince Julian. Then she shook her little head, and still more when she heard that Prince Julian was transformed into a watchman while Philip was at the ball. But he smothered her doubts by saying that in a few minutes the Prince would appear at St. Gregory's Church and exchange his watch-coat for the mask.



Rose, in return, related all her adventure; but when she came to the incident of the kiss—

"Hold, there!" cried Philip; "I didn't kiss you, nor, I am sure, did you kiss me in return."

"I am sure 'twas *intended* for you, then," replied Rose, whilst her lover rubbed his hair down, for fear it should stand on end.

"If 'twas not you," continued Rose, anxiously, "I will believe all that you have been telling me."

But as she went on in her story a light seemed to break in on her, and she exclaimed: "And after all, I do believe it was Prince Julian in your coat!"

Philip was certain it was, and cried: "The rascal! He stole my kisses; now I understand! That's the reason why he wanted to take my place and gave me his mask!" And now the stories he had heard at the masquerade came into Philip's head. He asked if anybody had called at her mother's to offer her money; if any gentleman was much about Milk street; if she saw any one watching her at church; but to all his questions her answers were so satisfactory, that it was impossible to doubt of her total ignorance of all the machinations of the rascally courtiers. He warned her against all the advances of philanthropical and compassionate princes—and Rose warned him against the dangers of a masked ball and adventures with ladies of rank, by which many young men have been made unhappy—and as everything was now forgiven, in consideration of the kiss not having been wilfully bestowed, he was on the point of claiming for himself the one of which he had been cheated, when his designs were interrupted by an unexpected incident. A man, out of breath with his rapid flight, rushed against them. By the great-coat, staff and horn, Philip recognized his deputy. He, on the other hand, snatched at the silk cloak and hat. "Ah! sir," said Philip, "here are your things. I would not change places with you again in this world! I should be no gainer by the operation."

"Quick! quick!" cried the Prince, and threw the watchman's apparel on the snow and fastened on his mask, hat, and cloak: Philip returned to his beaver and coat, and took up the lanthorn and staff. Rose had shrunk back into the door.

"I promised thee a dole, comrade—but its a positive fact—I have not got my purse."

"I've got it here," said Philip, and held it out to him. "You gave it to my intended there; but, please your Highness, I must forbid all presents in that quarter."

"Comrade, keep what you've got, and be off as quick as you can. You are not safe here."

The Prince was flying off as he spoke, but Philip held him by the mantle.

"One thing, my lord, we have to settle——"

"Run! Watchman! I tell you. They're in search of you."

"I have nothing to run for. But your purse, here——"

"Keep it, I tell you. Fly! if you can run."

"And a billet of Marshal Blankenswerd's for five thousand dollars——"

"Ha! what the plague do you know about Marshal Blankenswerd?"

"He said it was a gambling debt he owed you. He and his lady start to-night for their estates in Poland."

"Are you mad? How do you know that? Who gave you the message for me?"

"And your Highness, the Minister of Finance, will pay all your debts to Abraham Levi and others if you will use your influence with the King to keep him in office."

"Watchman! you've been tampering with Old Nick."

"But I rejected the offer."

"*You* rejected the offer of the Minister?"

"Yes, your Highness. And, moreover, I have entirely reconciled the Baroness Bonau with the Chamberlain Pilzou."

"Which of us two is a fool?"

"Another thing, your Highness. Signora Rollina is a bad woman. I have heard of some love affairs of hers. You are deceived—I therefore thought her not worthy of your attentions, and put off the meeting to-night at her house."

"Signora Rollina! How did you come to hear of her?"

"Another thing. Duke Herrman is terribly enraged about that business in the cellar. He is going to complain of you to the King."

"The Duke! Who told you about that?"

"Himself. You are not secure yet—but I don't think he'll go to the King, for I threatened him with his agreement with the baker's daughter. But he wants to fight you; be on your guard."

"Once for all—do you know how the Duke was informed of all this?"

"Through the Marshal's wife. She told all, and confessed she had acted the witch in the ghost-raising."

The Prince took Philip by the arm. "My good fellow," he said, "you are no watchman." He turned his face towards a lamp, and started when he saw the face of this strange man.

"Are you possessed by Satan, or—Who are you?" said Julian, who had now become quite sober.

"I am Philip Stark, the gardener, son of old Gottlieb Stark, the watchman," said Philip quietly.

"Lay hold of him! That's the man!" cried many voices, and Philip, Rose and Julian saw themselves surrounded by six lusty servants of the police. Rose screamed, Philip took her hand, and told her not to be alarmed. The Prince clapped his hand on Philip's shoulder.

"'Tis a stupid business," he said, "and you should have escaped when I told you. But don't be frightened; there shall no harm befall you."

"That's to be seen," said one of the captors. "In the meantime he must come along with us."

"Where to?" inquired Philip; "I am doing my duty. I am watchman of this beat."

"That's the reason we take you. Come."

The Prince stepped forward. "Let the man go," good people," he said, and searched in all his pockets for his purse. As he found it nowhere, he was going to whisper to Philip to give it him, but the police tore them apart, and one of them shouted: "On! We can't stop to talk here."

"The masked fellow must go with us, too; he is suspicious looking."

"Not so," exclaimed Philip; "you are in search of the watchman. Here I am, if you choose to answer for taking me from my duty. But let this gentleman go."

"We don't want any lessons from you in our duty," replied the sergeant; "march! all of them!"

"The damsel, too?" asked Philip; "you don't want her, surely!"

"No, she may go; but we must see her face, and take down her name and residence; it may be of use."

"She is the daughter of widow Bittner," said Philip; and was not a little enraged when the whole party took Rose to a lamp and gazed on her tearful face.

"Go home, Rose, and don't be alarmed on my account," said Philip, trying to comfort her; "my conscience is clear."

But Rose sobbed so as to move even the policemen to pity her. The Prince, availing himself of the opportunity, attempted to spring out of his captors' hands, but one of the men was a better jumper than he, and put an obstacle in his way.

"Hallo!" cried the sergeant, "this fellow's conscience is not quite so clear; hold him firm; march!"

"Whither?" said the Prince.

"Directly to the Minister of Police."

"Listen," said the Prince, seriously, but affably, for he did not like the turn affairs were taking, as he was anxious to keep his watchman frolic concealed. "I have nothing to do with this business. I belong to the court. If you venture to force me to go with you, you will be sorry for it when you are feasting on bread and water to-morrow in prison."

"For Heaven's sake let the gentleman go," cried Philip; "I give you my word he is a great lord, and will make you repent your conduct. He is——"

"Hush; be silent," interrupted Julian; "tell no human being who I am. Whatever happens keep my name a secret. Do you hear? An entire secret from every one!"

"We do our duty," said the sergeant, "and nobody can punish us for that; you may go to a prison yourself; we have often had fellows speak as high, and threaten as fiercely; forward!"

"Men! take advice; he is a distinguished man at court."

"If it were a king himself he should go with us. He is a suspicious character, and we must do our duty."



While the contest about the Prince went on, a carriage, with eight horses and outriders, bearing flambeaux, drove past the church.

"Stop!" said a voice from the carriage, as it was passing the crowd of policemen who had the Prince in custody.

The carriage stopped. The door flew open, and a gentleman, with a brilliant star on the breast of his surtout, leaped out. He pushed through the party, and examined the Prince from head to foot.

"I thought," he said, "I knew the bird by his feathers. Mask, who are you?"

Julian was taken by surprise, for in the inquirer he recognized Duke Herrman.

"Answer me," roared Herrman in a voice of thunder.

Julian shook his head, and made signs to the Duke to desist. but he pressed the question home upon him, being determined to know who it was he had accosted at the masquerade. He asked the policemen. They stood with heads uncovered, and told him they had orders to bring the watchman instantly before the Minister of Police, for he had been singing wicked verses; they had heard some of them; that the mask had given himself out as some great lord of the court, but that they believed that to be a false pretence, and therefore considered it their duty to take him into custody.

"The man is not of the court," answered the Duke; take my word for that. He insinuated himself clandestinely into the ball, and passed himself off for Prince Julian. I forced him to unmask, and detected the impostor, but he escaped me. I have informed the Lord Chamberlain; off with him to the palace! You have made a fine prize!"

With these words the Duke strode back to his carriage, and once more urging them not to let the villains escape, gave orders to drive on.

The Prince saw no chance left. To reveal himself now would be to make his night's adventures the talk of the whole city. He thought it better to disclose his incognito to the Chamberlain or the Minister of Police. "Since it must be so, come on then," he said; and the party marched forward, keeping a firm hand on the two prisoners.

Philip was not sure whether he was bewitched, or whether the whole business was not a dream, for it was a night such as he had never passed before in his life. He had nothing to blame himself for except that he had changed clothes with the Prince, and then, whether he would or no, been forced to support his character. He felt pretty safe, for it was the princely watchman who had been at fault, and he saw no occasion for his being

committed. His heart beat, however, when they came to the palace. His coat, horn and staff were taken from him. Julian spoke a few words to a young nobleman, and immediately the policemen were sent away. The Prince ascended the stairs, and Philip had to follow.

"Fear nothing," said Julian, and left him. Philip was taken to a little ante-room, where he had to wait a good while. At last one of the royal grooms came to him, and said: "Come this way; the King will see you."

Philip was distracted with fear. His knees



shook so that he could hardly walk. He was led into a splendid chamber. The old King was sitting at a table, and laughing long and loud; near him stood Prince Julian without a

mask. Besides these, there was nobody in the room.

The King looked at Philip with a good-humored expression. "Tell me all—without missing a syllable—that you have done to-night."

Philip took courage from the condescension of the old King, and told the whole story from beginning to end. He had the good sense, however, to conceal all he had heard among the courtiers that could turn to the prejudice of the Prince. The King laughed again and again, and at last took two gold pieces from his pocket and gave them to Philip. "Here, my son, take these, but say not a word of your night's adventures. Await your trial; no harm shall come of it to you. Now go, my friend, and remember what I have told you."

Philip knelt down at the King's feet and kissed his hand as he stammered some words of thanks. When he arose, and was leaving the room, Prince Julian said: "I beseech your Majesty to allow the young man to wait a few minutes outside. I have some compensation to make to him for the inconvenience he has suffered."

The King, smiling, nodded his assent, and Philip left the apartment.

"Prince!" said the King, holding up his forefinger in a threatening manner to his son, "'tis well for you that you told me nothing but the truth. For this time I must pardon your wild scrape, but if such a thing happens again you will offend me. There will be no excuse for you! I must take Duke Herrman in hand myself. I shall not be sorry if we can get quit of him. As to the Ministers of Finance and Police, I must have further proofs of what you say. Go now, and give some present to the gardener. He has shown more discretion in your character than you have in his."

The Prince took leave of the King, and having changed his dress in an ante-room, sent for Philip to go to his palace with him; there he made him go over—word for word—everything that had occurred. When Philip had finished his narrative, the Prince clapped him on the shoulder and said: "Philip, listen!

You're a sensible fellow. I can confide in you, and I am satisfied with you. What you have done in my name with the Chamberlain Pizou, the Countess Bonau, the Marshal and his wife, Colonel Kalt, and the Minister of Finance—I will maintain—as if I had done it myself. But, on the other hand, *you* must take all the blame of my doings with the horn and staff. As a penalty for your verses, you shall lose your office of watchman. You shall be my head-gardener from this date, and have charge of my two gardens at Heimleben and Quellenthal. The money I gave your bride she shall keep as her marriage portion, —and I give you the order of Marshal Blankenswerd for five thousand dollars, as a mark of my regard. Go, now; be faithful and true!"



Who could be happier than Philip! He almost flew to Rose's house. She had not yet gone to bed, but sat with her

mother beside a table, and was weeping. He threw the purse on the table and said: "Rose, there is thy dowry! and here are five thousand dollars, which are mine! As a watchman I have transgressed, and shall therefore lose my father's situation; but the day after to-morrow I shall go, as head-gardener of Prince Julian, to Heimleben. And you, mother and Rose, must go with me. My father and mother also. I can support you all. Huzza! God send all good people such a happy new year!"

Mother Bittner hardly knew whether to believe Philip or not, notwithstanding she saw the gold.

But when he told her how it had all happened—though with some reservations—she wept with joy, embraced him, laid her daughter on his breast, and then danced about the room in a perfect ecstasy. "Do thy father and mother know this, Philip?" she said. And when he answered no, she cried: "Rose, kindle the fire, put over the water, and make some coffee for all of us." She then wrapped herself in her little woollen shawl and left the house.

But Rose lay on Philip's breast, and forgot all about the wood and water. And there she lay when Mother Bittner returned with old Gottlieb and Mother Katharine.

They surrounded their children and blessed them. Mother Bittner saw if she wanted coffee, she would be obliged to cook it herself.

Philip lost his situation as watchman. Rose became his wife in two weeks; their parents went with them to—; but this does not belong to the adventures of a New Year's Eve, a night more ruinous to the Minister of Finance than any one else; neither have we heard of any more pranks by the wild Prince Julian.



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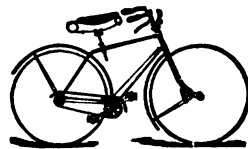
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THE fact that the speaking-tube leading from the prompter's desk to the conductor's chair in the Folly Theatre, at —shire, England, had refused to fulfil its duties led to two discoveries; one in support of a physical law, the other semi-scientific. The physical discovery, so to speak, was that a small mouse can effectually prevent the passage of a large human voice. How the rodent came to make the speaking-tube a hiding-place, matters not. It had forced its way some ten feet into the tube and, as Lord Dunderbary would say: "The conversation ended." The second discovery was an accidental resultant of the useless condition of the speaking-tube.

Forbes Henley, the stage manager of the Folly; Corbett Kenyon, the musical director; and Kelley the gas-man and electrician, were laughing over the mishap to the tube, and Henley remarked:

"I don't see, Kenyon, how you caught the signals, if you didn't use the tube." "That's the oddest thing of all," said Kenyon, taking hold of the electric light which hung over the conductor's music rack. "This lamp did it. When I didn't get the signal for the overture I happened to lean over by this light, and I heard a small edition of your voice say: 'What the deuce is the matter with the band—why don't they begin?' I didn't wait to ask questions of myself, and as I couldn't ask any of any-

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one else through the tube, I began the music. Well! I found out that by listening at the electric light, I could hear everything said on the stage at the prompt entrance. I can't account for it. But it's so."

"Ah!" said Mr. Kelley, breaking into the conversation. "I understand it all. The electric wires leading from my electric and gas-table to your light, form an accidental telephone. It often happens. Why! I've seen an ordinary gas-pipe which would let you hear conversations held two or three floors away. Something like those whispering galleries I've read about."

"Well, Kelley, I don't think we'll trust to the accidental telephone. You'll patch up the tube before night, won't you?" said Henley.

"All right, sir."

"And see that the opening to the tube is kept shut hereafter, please."

"All right, sir," again replied Kelley.

This conversation had been held after one of the rehearsals of the new opera which the Folly management was about to produce. The members of the company had departed some time ago, and the stage had been "cleared." Up stage, however, during the progress of these discoveries, and the talk relating thereto, a young woman had been modestly waiting. Kenyon was the first to notice her, and remarked in an undertone to Mr. Henley:

"Forbes, I think there's someone wishes to speak to you."

Henley turned and spoke up quickly, after recognizing the young lady:

"Did you wish to see me, Miss Marriott?"

"If you please, sir," replied the young lady, coming down stage hesitatingly.

"Have you been waiting ever since rehearsal? Why didn't you speak before? I'm sorry to have kept you waiting, my dear," using the meaningless term of address in universal use upon the stage.

"I didn't like to interrupt you," she answered.

"What can I do for you?" asked Henley, looking quite earnestly at her; and he could have looked upon few prettier, more lady-like or more modest-appearing damsels in the entire dramatic profession.

With evident embarrassment, Miss Marriott answered her manager: "Could you and Mr. Kenyon do me a great favor—

a favor to my mother as well as myself? Mother, as perhaps you know, sir, was once well-known as a singer. She's an invalid now, and all the pleasure left her in this world is music. I've told her about the new opera, and she wishes she could see the score for only one day. Then, too, although I'm only in the chorus, I like to 'run through' all the operas we sing. Mother helps me, and I somehow feel I can understand my own work better when I know the whole opera."

"Do you mean to say you study the whole of the operas we sing?" asked Kenyon, here joining the conversation.



"Yes, sir," replied Miss Marriott, turning to Kenyon. "I've studied all we've played, so far."

There was a short silence before Henley spoke, saying: "I'm

sure I don't know what to reply to your request. It's against the rules, and——"

"Oh, bother the rules!" interrupted Kenyon. "The opera's ours, isn't it? By Jove, such interest in her work by one of the chorus deserves some recognition. Let Miss Marriott have the extra score. I'll trust her."

"Well!" said Henley, with a brightened face, "I'm glad to do so, if you're willing." He went away and soon returning, handed the young lady a thick volume of manuscript. "There, my dear, that's the piano score. You'll be careful of it. I rely on you're not letting anyone but your mother and yourself see it. You can keep it till after Sunday. We sha'n't need it."

"Oh! thank you so much. I'll keep it sacredly. I'll promise no one shall see or hear a note of it but mother and myself." And with an uncommon look of thankfulness—and something more—divided one-third to Kenyon, two-thirds to Henley, she hastened away. Henley and Kenyon soon followed.

Of all the provincial theatres in Great Britain, the Folly, of ——shire, was perhaps the most successful. All the London productions had found a quick reproduction here, and unvarying prosperity had attended every venture. The company had become localized, so to speak, and was a united, diligent and admirably constructed corps. Continued success had made the management bold, and now a distinctly daring attempt was on the boards—namely, an entirely new and original opera. "The Wayside Inn" was in rehearsal for early production. Furthermore, the author of the book of the opera was Forbes Henley; the composer of the music was Corbett Kenyon, stage manager and musical director of the Folly respectively. Therefore, these two gentlemen, both young and energetic, were doubly interested in the coming event. Everything thus far had tended towards a thoroughly good production. The entire company—principals, chorus, band—all acted as if they had, each member, a personal interest in the welfare of the new work. All—with the inevitable one exception. That exception was the prima-donna of the Folly Company, Rose Blanville. Now, it must be confessed that Miss Blanville was a good singer, a clever actress, and, moreover, a great favorite with the patrons of the Folly. But—Oh! how those three letters do interfere with the even current of life's affairs! But—she was not a true artist at heart. She was tricky; as flighty as a woodcock, as unreliable as a tailor's promises, and of late she had tried to show her independence by slighting her

work, by breaking the established rules of the theatre in a score of petty ways. In all England there was no fairer or more just stage manager than Henley ; but he did expect the rules to be obeyed. Only the " fakirs," or " shirkers " ever found fault with his discipline. But in the case of Miss Blanville it was " grin and bear " her impertinences, her small misdemeanors, for Rose knew there was not a leading soprano disengaged in all Great Britain. Kenyon knew this—Henley knew it, so they hoped she would grow better-natured and, from pride's sake, if nothing more, do her best in the new opera.

The rehearsal of to-day was the second full one—that is, of the entire opera and by all engaged in it. Excepting one or two small kicks of Miss Blanville, everything had passed off most promisingly, and the hopes of the author and composer were on a high key and at concert pitch.

Several days passed and rehearsals continued. Improvement was shown at each successive trial, and even the prima-donna behaved quite decently. Changes naturally suggested themselves to the author and composer, and a short scene with a few solo lines was introduced into Act II. of " The Wayside Inn." It seemed to strike both Kenyon and Henley, at once and alike, that Constance Marriott would do this little " bit part " nicely. Therefore that young lady was made happy and proud by being chosen to play this small part, and also by the knowledge that her name would no longer be submerged and hidden in the line : " Villagers, peasants, etc., etc., by the ladies and gentlemen of the chorus." No ; although it would be the last on the list, there it would read :

" *Stella* (A Dairy-Maid) . . . MISS CONSTANCE MARRIOTT."

It was quite pleasant, too, to find that the choice had been a good one, for Miss Marriott sang and acted the little scene charmingly. True, both Henley and Kenyon gave her an unusual amount of time and attention in the early rehearsals. Soon, however, she needed no further instructions.

Thus it went on till the Friday night before the Monday night on which " The Wayside Inn " was to be first produced. The local papers had been full of glorious " advance notices " of the event, and every seat salable had been secured for the opening night. Indeed, the London journals had taken up the story, and the musical critics of the " Times," the " Standard," the " Telegraph," and a half-dozen more of the leading dailies in the metropolis and elsewhere, had

requested "seats to be set aside" for them for the first night.

Henley was happy; Kenyon was confident. As the former said, "everything is coming our way." Had he foreseen Friday night's happenings and their consequences, he might have added: "And the devil came also."

There is a very strict rule regarding smoking in the dressing-rooms of a theatre. Actors (yes, and actresses, so far as cigarettes go) often break the rule; but, if caught, it means a sure fine, unless, for some special reason, there is a winking at the offense. Now, Henley could forgive anything, almost, but the ladies smoking cigarettes in their dressing-rooms. Too much lace and flimsy stuffs hang around, or lie scattered



about on the chairs, not to make it very dangerous if a lighted cigarette should be dropped carelessly about. It might result in a dire and dread panic, a conflagration—the loss of many lives.

On the third floor in that part of the theatre devoted to the dressing-rooms, in a large room where some half-dozen of the chorus ladies were wont to attire themselves for the stage, between the acts, Constance Marriott sat alone on this Friday night. There was no change of dress for the beginning of the next act of the opera being played, and the fair chorus-girl had sought seclusion from the chatter of her companions in the dressing-room. Perhaps she was "blue." At any rate she seemed to be thinking deeply of something or somebody, and with closed eyes she leaned her pretty head against the wall, her chair carelessly tipped back. She was aroused from her reverie by the sound of voices. Not near-by. No, they seemed, although every word could be distinctly heard, to be far away. Comparing sight and sound, she heard as one sees through opera-glasses reversed. Miss Marriott was mortal, a woman, and—well! she listened. She even blushed at the sound of the voices, for she recognized the speakers.

"Miss Blanville! I've asked you a score of times not to smoke

cigarettes in your dressing-room. It's against the rules." "You don't like it, eh?" The sound of a woman's voice came up to the listener. "No!" was the quick reply, a little louder. "But that's not the reason of the rule nor of my request. Smoking in the theatre invalidates our insurance. If I——"

"*Our* insurance! ahem! *Our* insurance!" was the sarcastic interruption.

"I beg your pardon. *The* insurance!" (Here came a pause.) "Will you be so kind as to throw that cigarette away?"



"Yes! When I've smoked all I wish to of it, and not before," was the answer.

"Then, Miss Blanville, I shall fine you five pounds."

"You will—will you? and I'll not pay it," said the feminine voice.

"I think you will," was the subdued but firm rejoinder, in male tones.

"And I know blamed well, I'll not," answered the woman.

Just as the conversation ended at this point, another of the chorus-girls came into the dressing-room where Constance Marriott had been listening.

"Oh! Millie!" cried Constance, at the sight of her companion, "when you go downstairs, will you tell Mr. Henley I'm ill. Ask

him to excuse me the next act, will you? There's a dear! I don't want to be fined."

"Why, Connie, are you sick!"

"Yes, dear, I am—truly—my head aches fearfully."

"Of course I'll tell him. I'll come back in a minute if I can help you any;" said Millie, running out and then returning to say: "Connie, dear, in the pocket of my sacque—the gray one—there's a bit of sherry, in a flask. Take a drop of it, dear. It'll do you good."



Constance didn't wait for the drink or for Millie's return. For only a moment she pressed her ear against the wall and listened. She heard Rose Blanville utter a man's oath, and evidently talking to her waiting-maid, heard the prima-donna say:

"The confounded upstart! Fine me, will he! I fancy he'll not. I'll pay him out. Wait till Monday night! He'll find his leading lady out of town. Where'll his blooming opera be then!"

"You can't do that, Miss, can you?" asked the maid.

"I can't, can't I? You see if I can't. My old man's been begging me to give up here. He'll take me to America, he says. He'll buy me a doctor's certificate. I'll play 'Walker' with Mister Henley, the duffer! It'll be 'Tommy Dodd' with his old opera."

That was enough for Constance. Poor girl; she was in a quandary. All the Blanville's talk might be mere boast. What was Constance to do? She couldn't be a tell-tale and warn Henley. It would look too like currying favor, and how could she tell him the source of her information? Of course she knew as well as if she had shared in the scene, all that had taken place in the star dressing-room on the first floor—knew who the speakers were as well as if she had seen their lips moving.

She hastened from the theatre. Saturday morning, a kind

note came from Henley, advising her, if she were a bit ill, not to come to the theatre, either to the matinee or evening performance. "I want you to be bright and strong for the last rehearsal, Monday," ran the note. It made the tears start to Constance's bright eyes when she read the words the "last rehearsal." Now, when a stage manager writes a note of this sort to a chorus girl, it means a good deal. You may not know stage etiquette, and, as the boys say, "I'll give you that for a tipper." But you and I do know that Constance was not ill at all. Nevertheless, she remained at home Saturday, and did not go out on that or the following day. Both Henley and Kenyon called at the door of her lodging between matinee and night performances; but she simply sent a message in reply to their queries, saying that she was much better, and would certainly be all right Monday morning.

The eventful day arrived. Eventful days are always acting that way; in fact, all days are eventful to someone or another, and they continue to turn up as regularly as tax bills.

Contrary to the usual plan, there had been no Sunday rehearsal. Everyone was "dead-letter perfect," and the interested parties had decided that a good day's rest, before the final rehearsal, was worth more than one more going over the opera.

Ten A. M. Monday found everybody who should be, present on the stage of the Folly Theatre. The customary "twenty minutes' grace" was uncalled for. Everyone felt so deep an interest in the new production and had so much pride in doing the best for their fellow manager's and director's opera that, as the low-comedy man said, "They'd sat up all night to be on time, and would have come on crutches, except that that might suggest a lame performance."

"The Wayside Inn" was bound to be "a great go," so everybody said.

The orchestra got a good grasp upon the note A. That is to say, every member of the band put his instrument in tune.

The scene for Act I. of "The Wayside Inn" was set, and Henley said, in a low voice, standing in front of Kenyon's desk: "I think we're all ready, Corbett." Kenyon rapped his men to attention, and held his baton aloft. A lad came to Henley's side and touched his arm, and the baton slowly descended. "Well! what is it, Williams?" sharply asked Henley.

"I don't think Miss Blanville is here, sir," replied the call-boy.

Henley said, afterwards, that, as far as temperature was con-

cerned, the call-boy's words prepared him for Arctic exploration, in just two seconds. He was outwardly calm, however, and seemed careless in his remark :

"All right! we'll have to wait a few minutes then. She's got five minutes more of grace, anyhow," looking at his watch. He did not need even the five minutes, for a messenger boy appeared, and handed him a letter. He tore the envelope open, and read as follows :

Monday Morning.

TO FORBES HENLEY, ESQ., STAGE MANAGER, FOLLY THEATRE.

Dear Sir:—I beg to enclose the herewith dr's certificate, wich will show you I can't sing to-night. Maybee I sha'n't smoke no more cigarettes, anyway in *your* theatre. yours truly,

ROSE BLANVILLE.

Miss Blanville was a better singer than a speller.

The enclosure was as follows :

This is to certify that, being professionally called in yesterday (Sunday), by Miss Rose Blanville, I find her suffering with acute bronchitis. It would probably cause the loss of her voice should she attempt to sing for several weeks to come, and, in my professional capacity I have forbidden her to use her voice until I give her permission so to do.

FRANCIS A. CLARRIDGE, M. D.

"It's a lie!" said Henley, hoarsely. He paused only a moment and then turned to the assembled company, each man, woman and child of which had seen something was "gone wrong," and said, in a steady, but very precise manner of speech:

"Ladies and gentlemen: I regret to say that I have a doctor's certificate here, announcing the sudden illness of Miss Blanville. The rehearsal is postponed for one hour, if you please, while the management—Mr. Kenyon and myself—consult as to what will be done in the emergency. Please do me the favor not to speak of the matter about town, yet awhile. Everything may come out all right. I rely upon your co-operation."

There was a murmur which seemed a groundswell of pity and commiseration for their stage manager, and the men were ugly in their remarks about that "so and so" Blanville, and the women said, "what a shame, etc., etc.," for no one believed a particle in Miss Blanville's illness. The people were slowly departing, when Constance Marriott came down stage, and stood before Henley. She said, in a quiet, confident way:

"Mr. Henley, I wish you would call the people back."

"Miss Marriott, this is no time for pleasantry. I hardly expected it of you," rejoined the stage manager, with an emphasis on the "you."

"Pardon me, Mr. Henley! If you will only try me, I know I can sing every note of Miss Blanville's part. I *think* I can act it, with a little help, for I've watched the business carefully——"

"Wait a minute!" cried Henley, his face ablaze with hope. He called at the top of his voice: "Please don't go, ladies and gentlemen. Remain where you are, just a moment!" Everybody took a position as if for a tableau, and all looked at Constance Marriott and Forbes Henley.

"Now go on!" said he to the quondam chorus-girl.

"Only this," continued Miss Marriott. "I feared Miss Blanville would disappoint you, and with my mother's help I've learned the music of the part she was to play. You can try me. It will do no harm; and, if I succeed, you need not postpone the opening."

Before Henley could reply, Kenyon, who was never heard before or after to utter a profane word, shouted out to the stage-manager:

"Forbes! I've heard every word she's said and by —— I think she can do it. She shall have a try, anyhow," and he rapped his men to attention again.

Henley said: "We'll begin the rehearsal, please; attention everyone! Places! Act I.—Off you go, Corbett!"

The overture went with a snap and dash and needed not a word of correction. The opening chorus, too, seemed to be sung better than ever before and everything went swimmingly till the entrance of "Grace Damal,"—the rôle of the prima-donna. Then Constance entered, came down stage for her opening number a beautiful, quiet, rather pathetic song. Kenyon stood up at his desk and whispered to her:—"Take your own time—Sing confidently! Trust to me! I'll help you out."

She didn't need a bit of help. Not a bit. True, at first her voice trembled just a trifle; but Henley whispered: "Don't be afraid—you're all right," and her tones came out clear as a bell. *That* girl had been taught the right way to produce a note. In Heaven's name, what had such a voice been doing in a chorus?

Kenyon smiled, sat down and, albeit watching Constance closely, showed he had no fear or hesitation.

The solo ended—the rehearsal stopped. It was no use. It

could not go on. The entire company burst into a shout of applause and, as for Henley and Kenyon—the latter had jumped upon the stage right over the footlights and held Constance's



both hands in his, shaking them up and down as if they were rattles and he a big baby. Henley—well, Henley kissed her. He did. And then looking like a fool, said: "I fine myself

twenty pounds, but it's worth it." It was quite a while before the assemblage got back to its united senses.

Why! Miss Marriott's voice was infinitely purer and better than the absent Blanville's. She *felt* the music and made you feel it, too. Sing! She sang the proverbial lark out of its whole gamut. Finally the rehearsal was resumed, and allowing for a little crudeness here and there, but no awkwardness (and even the crudeness disappeared as Miss Marriott gained confidence), the rôle was acted with remarkable finish.

"Save your voice, dear," said Henley, "you're all right," smiling on his pretty savior from disaster.

"Just hum through the principal numbers once more, to get the action," said Kenyon, and by this means parts of the opera were gone over twice or thrice, long before three o'clock.

When night came, to the crowded house Henley made a splendid speech of explanation regarding the change of cast in the principal rôle. The audience was a trifle cold and hesitating until after Constance's first solo and then, as Kenyon said, when he held his stick on high for

the tumultuous encore which followed: "She's got 'em." And in fact she did "have them."

The performance was a complete triumph: but whether "The Wayside Inn" or the new prima-donna had won the greater suc-



cess, it was difficult to say. The London critics telegraphed over a column each to their several journals, and, in one night, Constance Marriott sprang from a simple chorus-girl to the foremost rank among comic-opera singers. Henley whispered to Kenyon as they stood at the stage-door after the performance.

"All right, old boy. I envy you. Wish you luck," said Kenyon, and he started on ahead of his partner in success.

Henley walked home with Constance Marriott. He must beg her pardon for giving her that kiss. He did so, quite eloquently, and she gave it back to him when they got inside the door of her dwelling. What a welcome came from the sweet, invalid mother!

Well! well! well! What a happy hour it was, while Constance told how, after the first rehearsal we have spoken of, she had overheard the description of the accidental telephone from the prompt side to the leader's desk—how she, too, had discovered the same sort of a line of communication, leading from the star dressing-room to the chorus-room—how she had listened that Friday night—how she had deliberately bribed the librarian of the theatre to let her have the score, telling him that she had been made "under-study" and needed to look over the prima-donna's part—how she and her mother had worked at the rôle all Saturday and Sunday, and——

You know or can imagine the rest. Forbes kissed her again. This time right before her own mother, who laughed a very knowing laugh. Then Forbes actually kissed the mother.

"The Wayside Inn" ran to crowded houses for over five months and was then taken off. Miss Marriott was unable to appear for two weeks, and the public would have no one else in her rôle. She took this fortnight's vacation because Mr. and Mrs. Forbes Henley went on their wedding-tour.



“BONJOUR, MONSIEUR”*

BY JEAN RICHEPIN

“Modernity, the essence of inquietude!”—*Adrien Juwigny*

FERDINAND OCTAVE BRUAT awoke one morning with an idea. Ferdinand Octave Bruat was what one commonly calls a man of letters. He had written verses that no one would publish, novels that all the publishers had returned unread, theatrical effusions that even the director of the Funambules had refused. However, he had, in default of talent, a theory, an ideal. He thought himself called to be a leader, and firmly believed that he had invented a modern school. He meant by that, all that constitutes our daily life, so bizarre on this side, so practical on that, so foolish on others. He maintained that the time had come to attack boldly all imitations, classic as well as romantic, and that he should ransack contemporaneous society to derive therefrom ideas, forms, a language absolutely new and original. He said that as each epoch had had its own expression so ours should have its own also.

He was not wrong. Unfortunately he had not the strength to carry to battle the standard he had raised, and all his valiance merely ended in debating much and haranguing in the cafés. He overthrew more fools than bigots and made more debts than masterpieces. But one morning, on rising, he found the masterpiece which he had sought. When I say he had found it, I am mistaken. *He had given birth to a title!*

What to do with it? As yet he did not know. But the title seemed to him eloquent, sonorous, easy to remember, rich in variations, full of modernity, epitomizing the whole century in a manner at once simple and complex. The title was the more wonderful that it was so common. It was a phrase of two words, spoken thousands of times each morning; a phrase without affectation, without pretense, without pendants, neither classic nor romantic. It was simply, “*Bonjour, Monsieur!*”

Under this title he wrote first a sonnet. This sonnet was read to his friends, naturally accompanied by prefaces and commen-

* Translated by Mason Carnes, from the French, for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

aries philological as well as philosophical, destined not only to make them the better enjoy its essence, but also to make them thoroughly comprehend its import. With one voice it was pronounced admirable.

"It must be published at once," cried the most enthusiastic; "it will give the keynote to the poetry of the future."

One crabbed old fellow, who did not dare to give his opinion frankly, but who was irritated by this success, turned his criticism into a compliment.

"As for me," he said, "I believe the subject demands greater développement. Certainly the sonnet is beautiful; but does it not strike you that it is not sufficient for a subject of such importance. Think of it! A thing so profound, so varied, so complicated cannot be confined in fourteen lines. A thought so powerful breaks its mold. Were I Bruat, I would turn my sonnet into a drama."

The assemblage adopted his opinion, enchanted at heart to see the famous sonnet thus criticised. Bruat did not perceive the irony of the grumbler. "You are right," said he with an air of superiority. "I have compressed my idea into this narrow mold. Thanks for your criticism, which proves how much you esteem me. Truly my idea deserves more than fourteen lines. I will write a drama in five acts, and nine tableaux." And, in spite of the hypocritical protestations of his friends, he tore into pieces his masterpiece of a sonnet.

He lived for five years on the memory of his sonnet. He was always promising the astonishing drama—"Bonjour, Monsieur." He was becoming almost celebrated by this piece in embryo. They knew that he had but a few scenes to finish; they said that the work was advancing. The simple-minded and the prejudiced who had never seen the author were convinced of his genius and spread his renown. To believe them, there was a great future, a marvelous hope; one must wait for the thunderclap. No doubt he was taking his time; but do not aloe take a hundred years to flower?

At last the drama was finished. This was a great event for the daily papers. What theatre would be the battlefield of the new school? Without doubt the directors would dispute for the honor of presenting to the public the principal work of the nineteenth century? Would there be artists capable of interpreting it?

First of all, Bruat assembled his little court, wishing to give

them the first-fruits of his victory. The drama did not meet with the success of the sonnet. Perhaps the wits had conceived in advance too high an idea of it? Perhaps Bruat had not been as brilliant as they had expected? Perhaps there was a little envy mingled with their judgment? Perhaps, also, the auditors were less young and therefore less enthusiastic? In short, the reading was a failure. The grumbler alone protested against the general coldness, and made a parade of an unlimited admiration.

"Well and good," said he; "here is something that expresses the idea in quest, here is movement, life, research, keenness. Away with the sonnet! My friend, you have found the new drama, the modern drama, the drama of the future."

But Bruat was disheartened. At least he mistrusted the grumbler, who had counseled him to substitute the drama for the sonnet. He owed him a grudge because the drama had produced no effect in comparison with the sonnet. "Well," said he to the others, "where am I at fault?"

"Oh, in nothing, nothing at all," replied the chorus of friends.

"However, my drama does not meet with your approval; I see it clearly."

"Do you wish me to tell you the truth?" interrupted one, emboldened by Bruat's failure.

"Say it, my friend, for you know it is my principle to seek truth everywhere."

"Well, I think that modern life is too complicated for the drama. There are casualties, phenomena of the heart, complications of sentiment, descriptions material and spiritual, inquiries physiological and psychological, which cannot be expressed in action. You have striven against the difficulty. Sometimes you have avoided it, which has caused a lack of unity. Sometimes you have been overwhelmed by it, which has caused a lack of polish. In spite of all your talents you have not been able to control this monster. Your plot is obscure, your characters badly drawn, your conclusion unnatural. But, on the other hand, what observation! what brilliant analysis! what force of penetration! what language! Oh! to be inspired in spite of the obstacles, you must be a man of genius. What would you? The impossible cannot be achieved. In your case I would re-cast everything; I would expand, I would clarify, I would develop, I would take my time, I would enlarge my frame to the size of my idea. I would turn my drama into a novel."

"He is right," said the chorus, "he is right. That is the point. You must make a novel of 'Bonjour, Monsieur!'"

The opinion was unanimous. Bruat was too sincere not to be guided by it. Heroically he burned his drama, and set to work on his novel. In this work he spent ten years. To him it was the time of apotheosis. He had more prophets than God. Some exalted him from real admiration; others, because they thought he would accomplish nothing, and that therefore he would not be a dangerous adversary, spread his praises. Critics used his name to crush budding authors. Journalists filled up spaces with notices of his novel, with anecdotes of the labor in the thousand and one alterations in his work. The ignorant, the foolish, the gossips chattered about him without knowing why. He became as famous as the obelisk.

Nevertheless, they finished by waiting. The echo of his glory became fainter as it passed from one generation to another. At sixty he was about forgotten. He was only spoken of from time to time, and then merely as an eccentric, almost a lunatic. They remembered vaguely that he was working at a great novel, but they doubted whether he would ever finish it, or, rather, they were sure that he would never reach the end. They never spoke but with a smile of his gigantic undertaking, of the twenty volumes which would epitomize the nineteenth century, of this creation which would be the Babel and pandemonium of modern life.

They would have laughed much more could they have known on what Bruat was engaged in his old age.

The unhappy man had finished his formidable novel. He had written twenty-seven volumes under the wonderful title, "Bonjour, Monsieur!" But at the end of his labor, frightened at having spoken at such length, he did not dare the trial of the reading. Then he set to work to abridge, to cut, to condense. By this means he had, little by little, reduced the book first to ten volumes, then to two, then to one. Finally, he had epitomized everything into a story of one hundred pages.

Ferdinand Octave Bruat was then eighty years old. One friend alone remained to him, the confidant of his undying ambition.

"Publish your story," said his friend: "I assure you it will make a sensation in the world. It is the paragon of modernity."

"No, no," cried Bruat, "I have not yet condensed it sufficiently. You see, I know myself; I know the public. To hold

it, to leave something to posterity, to create a lasting work, one must be intense. To be intense—that is everything. A hundred pages! That is too prolix. In my first inspiration I found the true form for my thought—a form short, precise, chiseled, straight, fitting the idea like a cuirass; I mean the sonnet. Oh! if I could recall the marvelous sonnet of my youth! But it has been abandoned too long. To-day I will do better. I will put into it my experience, my life. Could I but live ten years longer men would see what fourteen lines could express, and posterity would know our modern life, so vast, in this poem so small, as one inhales a subtle essence prisoned in a diamond."

He lived those ten years, and the story was abandoned like the novel and the drama; and slowly, letter by letter, word by word, line by line, was written the colossal sonnet which was to contain everything.

At ninety-two Ferdinand Octave Bruat lay on his death-bed.

His faithful friend was at his side, weeping, sobbing, in despair at seeing so high an intelligence laid so low.

"Weep not, my friend," said Bruat, "weep not. I die, but my idea dies not with me. I have destroyed my first sonnet, I have burnt my drama, I have burnt, one by one, the twenty-seven volumes of my novel: the ten, then the five, then the two, then the one and only, then the story. But, at last, I have created my masterpiece."

"The sonnet! the immortal sonnet! Give it me! You have not read it to me, but I know that it is a masterpiece. Give it me; I will publish it. If necessary, I will ruin myself that it may be written on gold in letters of diamonds. It merits it, it will dazzle the world. Give it me!"

"The sonnet! What sonnet?" stammered Bruat, gasping for breath.

"Your great sonnet!" sighed the friend, who saw the delirium of death approaching.

"Ah! yes, yes, the sonnet, the great sonnet. Too great, my friend, too long! It must be made more intense."

"What! have you burnt your last sonnet also?"

"I have found something better. I have found everything. Modern life, modernity, I hold it, I have it, I express it. It is not in a sonnet, nor in a quatrain, nor even in a line, it is——"

His voice grew weaker, became hoarse, wheezy, lost.

His friend, with bloodshot eyes, gaping mouth, leaned over the

bed to drink in his last word, the word that would give the key to the mystery, the Open Sesame to art in the future.

"Speak, speak!" he cried.

"Everything in one phrase, everything in one phrase!" murmured Bruat.

And the old man raised himself up in a paroxysm of agony. His look was ecstatic. One felt that over the threshold of death he saw his ideal. He made a terrible effort to express it, and the wondrous phrase fell from his lips with his last sigh.

It was, "Bonjour, Monsieur!"



STATEMENT OF GABRIEL FOOT

By A. T. QUILLER-COUCH

THE jury re-entered the court after half an hour's consultation.

It all comes back to me as vividly as though I stood in the dock at this very moment. The dense fog that hung over the well of the court; the barrister's wigs that bobbed up through it, and were drowned again in that seething cauldron; the rays of the guttering candles (for the murder trial had lasted far into the evening) that loomed through it and wore a sickly halo; the red robes and red faces of my lord judge opposite that stared through it and outshone the candles; the black crowd around, seen mistily; the voice of the usher calling "Silence!" the shuffling of the jurymen's feet; the pallor on their faces as I leant forward and tried to read the verdict on them; the very smell of the place, compounded of fog, gaol-fever, the close air, and the dinners eaten earlier in the day by the crowd—all this strikes home upon me as sharply as it then did, after the numb apathy of waiting.

As the jury huddled into their places I stole a look at my counsel. He paused for a moment from his task of trimming a quill, shot a quick glance at the foreman's face, and then went on cutting as coolly as ever.

"Gentlemen of the jury"—it was the judge's voice—"are you agreed upon your verdict?"

"We are."

"Do you find the prisoner guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty."

It must have been full a minute, as I leant back clutching the rail in front of me, before I saw anything but the bleared eyes of the candles, or heard anything but a hoarse murmur from the crowd. But as soon as the court ceased to heave, and I could stare about me, I looked towards my counsel again.

He was still shaping his pen. He made no motion to come forward and shake hands over my acquittal, for which he had worked untiringly all day. He did not even offer to speak. He just looked up, nodded carelessly, and turned to his junior beside

him; but in that glance I had read something which turned my heart cold, then sick, within me, and from that moment my hatred of the man was as deep as hell.

In the fog outside I got clear of the gaping crowd, but the chill of the night after that heated court pierced my very bones. I had on the clothes I had been taken in. It was June then, and now it was late in October. I remember that on the day when they caught me I wore my coat open for coolness. Four months and a half had gone out of my life. Well, I had money enough in my pocket to get a greatcoat; but I must put something warm inside me first, to get out the chill that cursed lawyer had laid on my heart.

I had purposely chosen the by-lanes of the town, but I remembered a certain tavern—the “Lamb and Flag”—which lay down a side alley. Presently the light from its windows struck across the street, ahead. I pushed open the door and entered.

The small bar was full of people newly come from the court, and discussing the trial in all its bearings. In the babel I heard a dozen different opinions given in as many seconds, and learnt enough, too, to make me content with the jury I had had. But the warmth of the place was pleasant, and I elbowed my way forward to the counter.

There was a woman standing by the door as I entered, who looked curiously at me for a moment, then turned to nudge a man at her side, and whisper. The whisper grew as I pressed forward, and before I could reach the counter a hand was laid on my shoulder from behind. I turned.

“Well?” said I.

It was a heavy-looking drover that had touched me.

“Are you the chap that was tried to-day for murder of Jeweler Todd?” he asked.

“Well?” said I again, but I could see the crowd falling back, as if I was a leper, at his question.

“Well? ’T ain’t well then, as I reckon, to be making so free with respectable folk.”

There was a murmur of assent from the mouths turned towards me. The landlord came forward from behind the bar.

“I was acquitted,” I urged defiantly.

“Ac-quitted!” said he, with big scorn in the syllables. “Hear ’im now—‘ac-quitted!’ Landlord, is this a respectable house?”

The landlord gave his verdict.

"H'out yer goes, and damn yer impudence!"

I looked round, but their faces were all dead against me.

"H'out yer goes!" repeated the landlord. "And think yerself lucky it ain't worse," added the drover.

With no further defense I slunk out into the night once more.

A small crowd of children (Heaven knows whence or how they gathered) followed me up the court and out into the street. Their numbers swelled as I went on, and some began to hoot and pelt me; but when I gained the top of the hill, and a lonelier district, I turned and struck among them with my stick. It did my heart good to hear their screams.

After that I was let alone, and tramped forward past the scattered houses, towards the open country and the moors. Up here there was scarcely any fog, but I could see it, by the rising moon, hanging like a shroud over the town below. The next town was near upon twelve miles off, but I do not remember that I thought of getting so far. I could not have thought at all, in fact, or I should hardly have taken the high-road upon which the jeweler had been stopped and murdered.

There was a shrewd wind blowing, and I shivered all over; but the cold at my heart was worse, and my hate of the man who had set it there grew with every step. I thought of the four months and more which parted the two lives of Gabriel Foot, and what I should make of the new one. I had my chance again—a chance gained for me beyond hope by that counsel but for whom I should be sleeping to-night in the condemned cell; a chance, and a good chance, but for that same cursed lawyer. Ugh! how cold it was, and how I hated *him* for it!

There was a little whitewashed cottage on the edge of the moorland just after the hedge-rows ceased—the last house before the barren heath began, standing a full three hundred yards from any other dwelling. Its front faced the road, and at the back an outhouse and a wretched garden jutted out on the waste land. There was a light in each of its windows to-night, and as I passed down the road I heard the dismal music of a flute.

Perhaps it was this that jogged my thoughts and woke them up to my present pass. At any rate, I had not gone more than twenty yards before I turned and made for the door. The people might give me a night's lodging in the outhouse; at any rate, they would not refuse a crust to stay the fast which I had

not broken since the morning. I tapped gently with my knuckles on the door, and listened.

I waited five minutes, and no one answered. The flute still continued its melancholy tune; it was evidently in the hands of a learner, for the air (a dispiriting one enough at the best) kept breaking off suddenly and repeating itself. But the performer had patience, and the sound never ceased for more than two seconds at a time. Besides this, nothing could be heard. The blinds were drawn in all the windows. The glow of the candles through them was cheerful enough, but nothing could be seen of the house inside. I knocked a second time, and a third, with the same result. Finally, tired of this, I pushed open the low gate which led into the garden behind, and stole round to the back of the cottage.

Here, too, the window on the ground floor was lit up behind its blinds, but that of the room above was shuttered. There was a hole in the shutter, however, where a knot of the wood had fallen out, and a thin shaft of light stretched across the blackness and buried itself in a ragged yew-tree at the end of the garden. From the loudness of the sounds I judged this to be the room where the flute-playing was going on. The crackling of my footsteps on the thin soil did not disturb the performer, so I gathered a handful of earth and pitched it up against the pane. The flute stopped for a minute or so, but just as I was expecting to see the shutter open, went on again: this time the air was "Pretty Polly Oliver."

I crept back again, and began to hammer more loudly at the door. "Come," said I, "whoever this may be inside, I'll see for myself at any rate," and with that I lifted the latch and gave the door a heavy kick. It flew open quite easily (it had not even been locked), and I found myself in a low kitchen. The room was empty; but the relics of supper lay on the deal table, and the remains of what must have been a noble fire were still smouldering on the hearthstone. A crazy, rusty blunderbuss hung over the fireplace. This, with a couple of rough chairs, a broken bacon-rack and a small side-table completed the furniture of the place. No; for, as I sat down to make a meal off the remnants of supper, something lying on the lime-ash floor beneath this side-table caught my eye. I stepped forward and picked it up.

It was a barrister's wig.

"This is a queer business," thought I; and I laid it on the

table opposite me as I went on with my supper. It was a "gossan" wig, as we call it in our parts; a wig grown yellow and rusty with age and wear. It looked so sly and wicked as it lay there, and brought back the events of the day so sharply that a queer dread took me of being discovered with it. I pulled out my pistol, loaded it (they had given me back both the powder and pistol found on me when I was taken) and laid it beside my plate. This done, I went on with my supper—it was an excellent cold capon—and all the time the flute upstairs kept toot-tootling without stopping, except to change the tune. It gave me "Hearts of Oak," "Why, Soldiers, why?" "Like Hermit Poor" and "Come, Lasses and Lads" before I had fairly cleared the dish.

"And now," thought I, "I have had a good supper; but there are still three things to be done. In the first place, I want drink; in the second, I want a bed; and in the third, I want to thank this kind person, whoever he is, for his hospitality. I'm not going to begin life No. 2 with housebreaking."

I rose, slipped the pistol into my tail-pocket, and followed the sound up the ramshackle stairs. My footsteps made such a racket on their old timbers as fairly to frighten me, but it never disturbed the flute-player. He had harked back again to "Like Hermit Poor" by this time, and the dolefulness of it was fit to make the dead cry out, but he went whining on until I reached the head of the stairs and struck a rousing knock on the door.

The playing stopped. "Come in," said a cheery voice; but it gave me no cheerfulness. Instead of that, it sent all the comfort of my supper clean out of me, as I opened the door and saw *him* sitting there.

There he was, the man who had saved my neck that day, and whom most I hated in the world, sitting before a snug fire, with his flute on his knee, a glass of port wine at his elbow, and looking so comfortable, with that knowing light in his grey eyes, that I could have killed him where he sat.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said, just the very least bit surprised and no more. "Come in."

I stood in the doorway hesitating.

"Don't stay, letting in that monstrous draught, man; but sit down. You'll find the bottle on the table and a glass on the shelf."

I poured out a glassful and drank it off. The stuff was rare (I can remember its trick on the tongue to this day), but some-

how it did not drive the cold out of my heart. I took another glass, and sat sipping it and staring from the fire to my companion.

He had taken up the flute again and was blowing a few deep notes out of it, thoughtfully enough. He was a small, squarely-built man, with a sharp ruddy face like a frozen pippin, heavy grey eyebrows, and a mouth like a trap when it was not pursed up for that everlasting flute. As he sat there with his wig off, the crown of his bald head was fringed with an obstinate-looking patch of hair, the color of a badger's. My amazement at finding him here at this hour, and alone, was lost in my hatred of the man as I saw the depths of complacent knowledge in his face. I felt that I must kill him sooner or later, and the sooner the better.

Presently he laid down his flute again and spoke :

" I scarcely expected you."

I grunted something in answer.

" But I might have known something was up, if I'd only paid attention to my flute. It and I are not in harmony to-night. It doesn't like the secrets I've been blowing into it ; it has heard a lot of queer things in its time, but it's an innocent-minded flute for all that, and I'm afraid that what I've told it to-night is a point beyond what it's prepared to go."

" I take it, it knows a damned deal too much," growled I.

He looked at me sharply for an instant, rose, whistled a bar or two of " Like Hermit Poor," reached down a couple of clay pipes from the shelf, filled one for himself, and gravely handed the other with the tobacco to me.

" Beyond what it is prepared to go," he echoed quietly, sinking back in his chair and puffing at the pipe. " It's a nice point that we have been discussing together, my flute and I, and I won't say but that I've got the worst of it. By the way, what do you mean to do now that you have a fresh start ?"

Now I had not tasted tobacco for over four months, and its effect upon my wits was surprising. It seemed to oil my thoughts till they worked without a hitch, and I saw my plan of action marked out quite plainly before me.

" Do you want to know the first step of all ?" I asked.

" To be sure ; the first step at any rate determines the direction."

" Well, then," said I, very steadily and staring into his face, " the first step of all is that I am going to kill you."

"H'm," said he after a bit, and I declare that not so much as an eyelash of the man shook, "I thought as much. I guessed that when you came into the room. And what next?"

"Time enough then to think of 'what next,'" I answered; for though I was set upon blowing his brains out, I longed for him to blaze out into a passion and warm up my blood for the job.

"Pardon me," he said, as coolly as might be, "that would be the very worst time to think of it. For, just consider: in the first place you will already be committed to your way of life, and secondly, if I know anything about you, you would be far too much flurried for any thought worth the name."

There was a twinkle of frosty humor in his eye as he said this, and in the silence which followed I could hear him chuckling to himself, and tasting the words over again as though they were good wine. I sat fingering my pistol and waiting for him to speak again. When he did so, it was with another dry chuckle and a long puff of tobacco smoke.

"As you say, I know a deal too much. Shall I tell you how much?"

"Yes, you may if you'll be quick about it."

"Very well, then, I will. Do you mind passing the bottle? Thank you. I probably know not only too much, but a deal more than you guess. First, let us take the case for the Crown. The jeweler is traveling by coach at night over the moors. He has one postillion only, Roger Tallis by name, and by character shady. The jeweler has money (he was a niggardly fool to take only one postillion), and carries a diamond of great, or rather of an enormous and notable value (he was a bigger fool to take this). In the dark morning two horses come galloping back, frightened and streaming with sweat. A search party goes out, finds the coach upset by the Four-Holed Cross, the jeweler lying beside it with a couple of pistol bullets in him, and the money, the diamond and Roger Tallis—nowhere. So much for the murdered man. Two or three days after, you, Gabriel Foot, by character also shady, and known to be a friend of Roger Tallis, are whispered to have a suspicious amount of money about you, also blood-stains on your coat. It further leaks out that you were traveling on the moors afoot on the night in question, and that your pistols are soiled with powder. Case for the Crown closes. Have I stated it correctly?"

I nodded; he took a sip or two at his wine, laid down his

pipe as if the tobacco spoiled the taste of it, took another sip, and continued :

“Case for the defense. That Roger Tallis has decamped, that no diamond has been found on you (or anywhere), and lastly that the bullets in the jeweler's body do not fit your pistols, but came from a larger pair. Not very much of a case, perhaps, but this last is a strong point.”

“Well?” I asked, as he paused.

“Now then for the facts of the case. Would you oblige me by casting a look over there in the corner?”

“I see nothing but a pick-axe and shovel.”

“Ha! very good; ‘nothing but a pick-axe and shovel.’ Well, to resume: facts of the case—Roger Tallis murders the jeweler, and you murder Roger Tallis; after that, as you say, ‘nothing but a pick-axe and shovel.’”

And with this, as I am a living sinner, the rosy-faced old boy took up his flute and blew a stave or two of “Come, Lasses and Lads.”

“Did you dig him up?” I muttered hoarsely; and although deathly cold I could feel a drop of sweat trickling down my forehead and into my eye.

“What, before the trial? My good sir, you have a fair, a very fair, aptitude for crime, but, believe me, you have much to learn both of legal etiquette and of a lawyer's conscience.” And for the first time since I came in I saw something like indignation on his ruddy face.

“Now,” he continued, “I either know too much or not enough. Obviously I know enough for you to wish, and perhaps wisely, to kill me. The question is, whether I know enough to make it worth your while to spare me. I think I do; but that is for you to decide. If I put you to-night, and in half an hour's time, in possession of property worth ten thousand pounds, will that content you?”

“Come, come,” I said, “you need not try to fool me, nor think I am going to let you out of my sight.”

“You misunderstand, I desire neither; I only wish a bargain. I am ready to pledge you my word to make no attempt to escape before you are in possession of that property, and to offer no resistance to your shooting me in case you fail to obtain it; provided on the other hand you pledge your word to spare my life should you succeed within half an hour. And, my dear sir, considering the relative value of your word and

mine, I think it must be confessed you have the better of the bargain."

I thought for a moment. "Very well then," said I, "so be it; but if you fail——"

"I know what happens," replied he.

With that he blew a note or two on his flute, took it to pieces, and carefully bestowed it in the tails of his coat. I put away my pistol in mine.

"Do you mind shouldering that spade and pick-axe, and following me?" he asked. I took them up in silence. He drained his glass and put on his hat.

"Now I think we are ready. Stop a moment."

He reached across for the glass which I had emptied, took it up gingerly between thumb and forefinger, and tossed it with a crash on to the hearthstone. He then did the same to my pipe, after first snapping the stem into halves. This done, he blew out one candle, and with great gravity led the way down the staircase. I shouldered the tools and followed, while my heart hated him with a fiercer spite than ever.

We passed down the crazy stairs and through the kitchen. The candles were still burning there. As my companion glanced at the supper-table, "H'm," he said, "not a bad beginning of a new leaf. My friend, I will allow you exactly twelve months in which to get hanged."

I made no answer, and we stepped out into the night. The moon was now up, and the high-road stretched like a white ribbon into the gloom. The cold wind bore up a few heavy clouds from the northwest, but for the most part we could see easily enough. We trudged side by side along the road in silence, except that I could hear my companion every now and then whistling softly to himself.

As we drew near to the Four-Holed Cross and the scene of the murder I confess to an uneasy feeling and a desire to get past the place with all speed. But the lawyer stopped by the very spot where the coach was overturned, and held up a finger as if to call attention. It was a favorite trick of his with the jury.

"This was where the jeweler lay. Some fifteen yards off there was another pool of blood. Now the jeweler must have dropped instantly, for he was shot through the heart. Yet no one doubted but that the other pool of blood was his. Fools!"

With this he turned off the road at right angles, and began to stride rapidly across the moor. At first I thought he was trying

to escape me, but he allowed me to catch him up readily enough, and then I knew the point for which he was making. I followed doggedly. Clouds began to gather over the moon's face, and every now and then I stumbled heavily on the uneven ground; but he moved along nimbly enough, and even cried "Shoo!" in a sprightly voice when a startled plover flew up before his feet. Presently, after we had gone about five hundred yards on the heath, the ground broke away into a little hollow, where a rough track led down to the Lime Kilns and the thinly wooded stream that washed the valley below. We followed this track for ten minutes or so, and presently the masonry of the disused kilns peered out, white in the moonlight, from between the trees.

There were three of these kilns standing close together beside the path; but my companion without hesitation pulled up almost beneath the very arch of the first, peered about, examined the ground narrowly, and then motioned to me.

"Dig here."

"If we both know well enough what is underneath, what is the use of digging?"

"I very much doubt if we do," said he. "You had better dig."

I can feel the chill creeping down my back as I write of it; but at the time, though I well knew the grisly sight which I was to discover, I dug away steadily enough. The man who had surprised my secret set himself down on a dark bank of ferns at about ten paces distance, and began to whistle softly, though I could see his fingers fumbling with his coat-tails as though they itched to be at the flute again.

The moon's rays shone fitfully upon the white face of the kiln, and lit up my work. The little stream rushed noisily below. And so, with this hateful man watching, I laid bare the lime-burnt remains of the comrade whom, almost five months before, I had murdered and buried there. How I had then cursed my luck because forced to hide his corpse away before I could return and search for the diamond I had failed to find on his body! But as I tossed the earth and lime aside, and discovered my handiwork, the moon's rays were suddenly caught and reflected from within the pit, and I fell forward with a short gasp of delight.

For there, kindled into quick shafts and points of color—violet, green, yellow, and fieriest red—lay the missing diamond among

Roger's bones. As I clutched the gem a black shadow fell between the moon and me. I looked up. My companion was standing over me, with the twinkle still in his eye and the flute in his hand.

"You were a fool not to guess that he had swallowed it. I hope you are satisfied with the bargain. As we are not, I trust, likely to meet again in this world, I will here bid you *Adieu*, though possibly that is scarcely the word to use. But there is one thing I wish to tell you. I owe you a debt to-night for having prevented me from committing a crime. You saw that I had the spade and pick-axe ready in the cottage. Well, I confess I lusted for that gem. I was arguing out the case with my flute when you came in."

"If," said I, "you wish a share——"

"Another word," he interrupted very gravely, "and I shall be forced to think that you insult me. As it is, I am grateful to you for supporting my flute's advice at an opportune moment. I will now leave you. Two hours ago I was in a fair way of becoming a criminal. I owe it to you, and to my flute, that I am still merely a lawyer. Farewell!"

With that he turned on his heel and was gone with a swinging stride up the path and across the moor. His figure stood out upon the sky-line for a moment, and then vanished. But I could hear for some time the tootle-tootle of his flute in the distance, and it struck me that its note was unusually sprightly and clear.



KASIA *

A Polish Idyl

By HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ



a broad glade amidst dense woodlands stood forester Stefane's fir-log, moss-plastered, thatched cabin; byre and granary nestled beside it; in front lay a tiny, hedge-fenced, plowed field, and hard by was a tumble-down well with its creaking sweep. Honeysuckles and sweet-peas infringed the windows; while, amongst flaming poppies, myrtle, crocuses, golden-rod, and pale-eyed asters sought a ray of sunshine. Beyond the cabin a kitchen-garden's cabbages, carrots and radishes set themselves a-row; and, farther still, blue, wind-caressed flax-blossoms and the variegated greens of wheat-fields saluted a vast lake. Only some gloomy cherry-trees stood nigh the dwelling, and one birch-tree, whose slender trailing limbs swept the moss-

grown thatched roof, while in autumn the tree infolded the house lovingly in its foliage. Therein sparrows nested, and doves cooed in a cot on the roof.

On the right hand the glade was flanked by a rampart of fir-trees, stretching beyond one's ken, but cleft abruptly by a clearing that led down to the lapping azure waves. So wide was the lake that, from the opposite shore, one could see but hazily a red church roof and the horizon belt of forest. How the dark fir-trees loved to mirror themselves in the water, until another forest seemed suddenly emerging from the lacustrine depths! Languidly bending over, they watched their flickering reflections or listened unto the light, shuddering wave echoes. Rosy dawns

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and wan gleamings likewise gazed therein, and at night the sombre skyey vault flashed its starbeams down until a new heaven seemed created, more weirdly remote, more inaccessible than the real one.

Forester Stefane dwelt with his sixteen-year-old daughter, Kasia, who was to her father's house what dawn is to the sky. An uncle, now dead, had taught her to read in an old prayer-book; but what he could not teach the forest had taught her—bees had made her thrifty; white wood-doves, careful; chattering sparrows, full of prattle for the gladdening of her father's heart. Thus peacefully lived sire and daughter, and as happily as one might in the forest's profound solitude.



One day old Stefane came home very tired after a tramp through sylvan marshes and fern-lands. It was afternoon. Kasia hastened to prepare his meal, and when he had eaten, she fed the dogs and put away the porringers.



"Father," said she.

"My child."

"I'm going to the forest."

"What, daughter! Thou'lt meet the wolf or some other evil beast."

"I'm going for flowers to decorate the church and the house. To-morrow will be Pentecost."

"Eh! I don't hinder thy going."

Kasia tied coquettishly a blue-flowered, yellow kerchief on her head and whilst looking for a basket hummed: "He flies, flies, flies, the little gray falcon."

"Would thou wert as ardent in work as in trolling little songs!" mumbled the forester, smilingly.

But Kasia laughed merrily, and, having found her basket, said: "I'll be back by dusk to milk the cows; they're in the beech wood. Good-bye till I come again, little father!"

Then, kissing his hand, she started off. He watched her go towards the lake in her white chemise, gathered fast at the waist by a red striped petticoat, and her yellow, blue-spotted kerchief; and he pondered her future. Would happiness be hers? His poor wife had died in giving her birth. They had loved each other so! 'Twas very hard.

But God sends misfortune, and one must be resigned. Yet for little Kasinka he could have wished a different lot.

He closed his sun-dazzled eyes a moment, turning his head towards where the maiden had disappeared. All at once a shrill voice shouted in his ear: "Father Stefanek!"

He looked round abruptly, and frowned at beholding Favronka, the busy-tongued beggar-woman; for though kind to the poor, he detested gossip.

"In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," she murmured, "are you going blind, Father Stefanek? I've been looking at you for five good minutes. What are you staring at so blankly? Can you possibly be in love?"

Stefane merely shrugged his shoulders.

"Sit down, Favronka, while I get you some bread and milk. Anything new a-stirring?"

"Not much. Crops look fair; but that doesn't hinder folks from whining and grudging a poor creature a handful of barley or buckwheat. Life is hard, surely!"

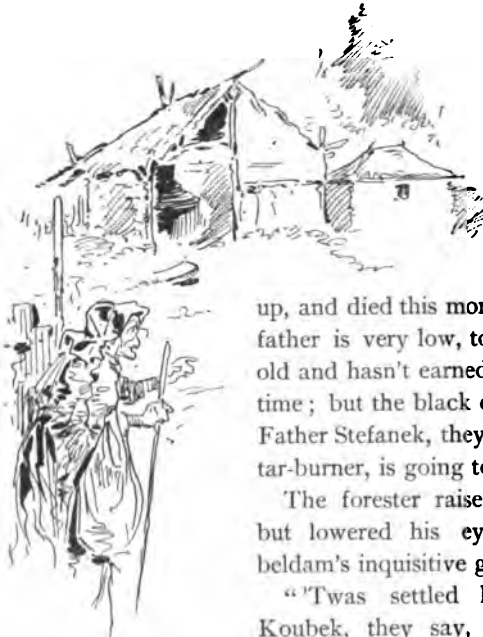
Whilst eating with a relish the thick milk and chunk of bread

brought to her, she asked: "Have you heard of the bad luck of the Piotr family? Their black cow gorged herself with clover when nobody was looking, and swelled

up, and died this morning. Their grandfather is very low, too. However, he is old and hasn't earned anything for a long time; but the black cow—By the way, Father Stefanek, they declare Yanek, the tar-burner, is going to be married."

The forester raised his head quickly, but lowered his eyes on meeting the beldam's inquisitive glance.

"'Twas settled last Sunday. Old Koubek, they say, was at the tavern, touching glasses with Joseph Souknia, Yagda's uncle; he also drank with the girl herself, and said he wanted none other for his son's wife. Yanek drank, too, they say. She's very rich, an orphan, and will get her property at once. I wonder, though, how Yanek could take to so homely a piece! A sly,



prim puss, with red hair and eyes shining like lanterns; nobody likes her. She'll show up the colors to poor Yanek—But where is Kasia? I'd like to see her."

The forester rose, and throwing down the sweep-net that he was making, glared at her.

"She is not here," said he.

The beggar eyed him askance; and, fearing lest she had gone too far, bent her head, and humbly and hurriedly finished eating. Then, putting the fragments from her meal in her bag, and ejaculating "God requite you!" she made off.

For a while Kasia followed the right-hand shore of the lake; then turned off into the forest.

Although it was spring, the heat was oppressive. She was wandering along, singing and swaying her slender body, when she abruptly stopped, blushed, and smiled. Away down the path, half-hidden by the coppice wood, strolled a youth of some twenty summers—Yanek, the tar-burner, who dwelt at the other end of the forest.

At length, perceiving Kasia, he likewise blushed, and his face grew bright.

"Praised be the name of Jesus," he murmured, drawing near.

"To the end of the ages!" she responded. Then as both relapsed into a long silence, she got confused and began rubbing her eyes with the corner of her apron, to put herself in countenance; yet she smiled, casting covert glances.

"Kasia?"

"Yan."

"Is thy father at home?"

"He is."

But that was not what he had wished to ask her and, strange to say, he also got confused, and, with gaping mouth, stood waiting for her to speak.

"Yan?"

"Well, Kasia."

"So the tar-kilns haven't been lighted to-day?"

But she, too, had meant to say something else.

"Why should they be lighted when they are kept burning always? Lame Frank is attending to them. But thou art like a fox, Kasia, prowling round my kilns."

"Thou art finely mistaken," laughed she, heartily; "thy

kilns don't bother me. Besides, I've no time to idle; I must gather flowers for Pentecost."

"I'll go along, too, and if thou dost not send me away, I'll return with thee to thy father's.

Speak, my Kasinka, art thou going to dismiss me? Wilt thou let me return alone to the house? Hast thou no answer?"

"Woe is me," murmured the girl, hiding her face in her hands. "What wouldst thou have me say?"

Then suddenly, all abashed, once more covering her face with her apron: "Seeing that I love thee, Yan; that I assure thee that I love thee a great deal——"

He was about to reply, but she was already far away, ashamed of the flush that crimsoned her cheeks.

"Flowers! flowers! Let us gather flowers!" she cried.

He caught up to her, and together they plunged into the dense undergrowth. Not daring to speak, not knowing how to express the delightful tumult that enswathed them, they were happy. Never had sung the boughs more amorously above them, never had seemed the wind's whispers more caressing, never had bird carol nor mysterious rustling of leaves found a tenderer echo within their hearts. Unconsciously they walked beneath love's marvelous rainbow, which, like hope, beams upon the heavy tear-clouds of human suffering.

All at once, noisy barkings, echoing from fir-tree to fir-tree, filled the woodland, and Bourek, the forester's dog, that had escaped from the cabin to follow his young mistress, came panting along. He put his big paws on the lovers' breasts, while his intelligent eyes seemed to tell that he was conscious of and rejoiced in such happiness.

"Two o'clock already," cried Kasia, with a scared look at the sun, "and I haven't made a single wreath. Go to the left, Yan, and I'll go to the right, and let's pluck fast, for soon it will be evening."

They parted and entered the forest, but Yan kept near enough to watch his sweetheart athwart the quivering ferns and



dusky fir-tree trunks. Lithe, undulating, she was like a *rous-salka* (forest fairy), ever gliding farther into bosky depths.

An adorable day! 'Twixt the trees, bathed in transparent air, a bit of landscape would show, with silvery shimmer of green fields, quivering oat-tassels, and gossamer threads floating innumerable, as if dropped from some celestial distaff.

Kasia wandered ceaselessly in quest of new blossoms.

But Yan, overcome by the heat, sat reclining against an oak's huge bole, and pensively hummed a melancholy folk-song in a minor key, at once harmonious and heart-piercing.

Her basket filled at last, Kasia wondered what had become of her lover, and when she espied him, he looked so gloomy that she exclaimed: "What ails thee, Yan? Has anything happened?"



He shook his head, and, as she knelt on the moss, said, with a singular glance: "If somebody told thee I was to wed some other girl, wouldst thou believe him?"

She pouted roguishly.

"Why some other girl, Yan? Thou hast never, methinks, yet asked my father for me!"

He insisted, losing patience, "Wouldst thou believe him, Kasia?"

He appeared so unhappy that she had not courage to continue teasing him.

"What a question! How can the forest tell tales? I love thee dearly. What more canst thou wish?"

A smile played upon Yanek's features.

"Then," continued the youth, drawing closer, "should any one tell thee of my having danced all night with one girl and drunk her health, thou wouldst not believe him?"

She drew herself up this time, a little mistrustful: "I don't like to hear thee talk so, Yanek! How queer thou art! Canst thou be hiding anything from me? Never hast thou spoken thus before! Dost thou think I bother about the girls with whom thou dancest? Thou art free to dance with and pledge as many as thou pleasest. I'm not jealous. Nay, it gives me pleasure to have thee amuse thyself."

Nevertheless, she averted her face to conceal the upwelling tears?

"All the better!" returned he, thoroughly pacified. "Art thou really sure 'twould give thee no pain?"

"Oh, thou art growing tiresome!" she exclaimed, pulling off her kerchief to fan her heated brow.

"Dearest Kasinka, if I have given thee pain, forgive me!" and he sought to clasp her to him; but, with one bound she escaped and seized her basket: "See my flowers, all wilted! Wouldn't papa scold if he knew of this!"

"I know of a spring where we can sprinkle thy flowers, and get a drink too. It's so hot!"

Still trying to take her hand, he succeeded in leading her into a willow thicket. Humid grasses replaced the bracken, and alder bushes lined the path. Deep stillness reigned within the grove, interrupted only by the water gurgling over pebbles. Many a nymphæa rocked on the ripples, and delicate dragonflies and sparkling beetles fluttered about the broad leaves among clouds of gnats. There were clustering forget-me-nots, ivory-umbeled meadow-sweets, sword-grass, mint and convolvuli coiling round frail osiers. Ravished with the beauty of the spot, to which she had never wandered before, Kasia bent above the water, earnestly scanning its depths in hopes of discovering therein some mysterious forest dweller. She might herself have been a *roussalka*, so exquisite, so vaporous was her reflection.



Turning to her lover, archly: "How shall we drink?" she asked.

"As the birds do," and he pointed out two kingfishers lifting their big bills skyward.

"Thou art a stupid fellow," laughed she.

But he plucked a nymphæa leaf, and, twisting it into a drinking-horn, presented it to her full of water.

"O Yanek, how I would like to see a water-fairy!"

"Hush!" he murmured. "Suppose one should hear thee!"

"Thou art easily scared to-day!" she mockingly replied.

"Why, thou knowest not how wicked they can be. Dost thou remember Pavel, the forester, who died so mysteriously? Well, he was rowing quietly amid the forest when, lo! from behind a

thick bush, uprose a *roussalka*, treacherously. Woodcutter Witold told me all about it. She was tall, slender, with long golden hair, and oh, so beautiful! Witold attempted to whistle and divert Pavel's attention from her; but he might as well have shouted to a deaf man. With eyes ready to pop out of his head, the forester gazed ceaselessly at her. All smiles, she approached the water, and, entering the boat, clasped Pavel in her arms, and presently the two vanished behind the thick-leaved trees. A few days afterward some foresters espied Pavel's corpse among the rushes in a marsh. It was livid, and on each shoulder were five distinct blue marks where the fairy fingers had sunk into the flesh."

"Lord!" murmured Kasia, "father never told me the like of this!"

"Oh, many another tale could I tell thee!" added Yanek, whistling himself a willow-whistle, whence he drew forth sweet, plaintive sounds, such as hover at twilight above the meadowlands.

"Dost thou hear the echo answer thee from the reeds?" murmured Kasia. "Let us go up into the woods again, and finish our wreaths."

As the sun descended, the woodland workers gradually dropped off—the woodpeckers ceased humming on the tree-bark, and the ants, heavily laden, returned to their lodgings.

Suddenly Kasia uttered a smothered cry and threw herself backward: "O Yanek! the *roussalka*!"

Bourek, the dog, got up and growled, whilst Yanek closely scanned the dense thicket.

"There, yonder, behind that tree!" ejaculated the maiden.

There, lean, with long, gesticulating arms and glittering eyes, stood a beggar-woman amongst the shuddering leafage.

"O Mother Favronka! is it thou?" cried Yan.

The beldam tittered. "So I catch thee sparking one lass whilst thou art betrothed to another! Doesn't everybody know thy father asked Yagda in marriage for thee last Sunday?"

"And everybody knew my father was drunk, also. No one shall compel me to wed against my wish."

"Ta, ta! thou art not thy father's son for nothing; a fair marriage-portion would not incommode thee a particle."

"Favronka, thou knowest thou art a liar; and thou shouldst be ashamed to track me into the forest to insult me and this young girl."

"I have not tracked thee; but for an hour I have sought thee, to say that one of thy father's hay-ricks is on fire, and that thou hadst better be at home saving thy property than here making love like a lazy lout."

"Fire at our place!" stammered the youth. "Lord! a brisk wind would set house and granary ablaze! I must go at once!" and without a word to Kasia, he fled athwart the forest.



The beggar-wench chuckled maliciously; for it was all a hoax, a mere ruse to get the young man away.

"Very decent, isn't it, Kasia? for thee to coquet with a man as good as married! Don't sit in another's sled, girl! I speak only for thy welfare. I know what it is to be without a mother."

"But how do you know all this?" inquired Kasia, nervously.

"How? What! when everybody is talking? So Yan hasn't told thee? Why, he's worse than I took him to be. I knew he was fickle, but I wouldn't have thought him as deceitful as this! Poor little lass, thou hast been prettily tricked!"

Big tears coursed down Kasia's cheek.

"So thou wert thinking he meant to wed thee?"

"Yes," nodded Kasia, without speaking.

"Poor innocent! Well, when thou seest him again, thou wilt know what answer to give him if he should dare to renew his courting."

"Ye-ye-es," stammered Kasia.

"Thou wilt tell him an honest youth doesn't keep company with two girls at the same time, wilt thou not?"

Tears almost choked the poor child, a great sob rent her breast, and, starting up, she cried fiercely: "Oh, you are wicked, wicked;" and rushed straightway into the shadowy woodland depths.

Left alone, Favronka began to feel somewhat dismayed at the mischief she had done. It would be hard to explain why she had acted in such a manner. She was not really a bad woman; but her inquisitiveness and insatiable craving for gossip led her on, and when the tar-burner replied so sharply, it stirred up all



the vindictiveness within her, and she was completely carried away by it.

Of course Yanek discovered her falsehood as soon as he drew near his home ; not a trace of fire was anywhere to be seen. So, returning to the forest, he hurried back to the spot where he had left Kasia, and not finding her there, strode off at once in the direction of the forester's. Astonished to meet Stefanek near the lake, he asked whether Kasia had not returned.

"My God, no!" exclaimed the forester. "I set out to hunt for her as soon as I had fed the cattle."

"It is very strange," remarked Yanek, relating all that had occurred. "She must have lost her way."

And both the men re-entered the forest.

As for Kasia, she had run straight ahead for a long while. Now night was come, and hosts of stars appeared in the moonless sky. Where was she? In the bewilderment of flight she had taken the first cross-path, certain of its conducting her to the outskirts of the wood; but, lo! instead of growing sparser the forest shades had grown denser all the time. Ordinarily, being used to the woodland's mystery, Kasia was not afraid of the vast nocturnal silence, untroubled by a human whisper. But her nerves were strained to their utmost, her imagination over-excited by the emotions of the past afternoon, and, above all, the thought of Yan's treachery confused her reason. She recalled every protestation of tenderness, every word of his wooing. Why had he come to spoil her life, if he meant only to forsake her? Never would she have made any advances to him. She would have dwelt peaceably with her father, not recking of Yan's existence. Oh, the men were cowardly! Then she remembered the youth's odd behavior during the day, the sad song, and the curious eagerness to learn whether or not she was jealous. Jealous? Oh, now she was, indeed! How she detested Yagda, the betrothed wife, who had been preferred to her.

A-fevered, with heart throbbing tumultuously, she continued her course, her bare feet walking so fast that they did not feel the thorns lacerate them; while one could have read craziness in her hallucinated gaze. She walked on as though in a nightmare, starting at every step; the shadows were peopled with fantastic creatures, with grinning countenances! The trees seemed to be moving, infinitely multiplied silhouettes; they imprisoned her mechanically; they encircled her with their boughs to prevent her from finding her way again. Now she would mistake the

white leafage of some bush for a lurking *roussalka*; anon the dry leaves rustling produced the effect of a hissing whisper in her ear. How long a time did she flee in this fashion?



All of a sudden she thought she felt something like a cold hand brush against her burning face, and at the same moment a rude shock threw her backward. Ghastly with horror and anguish, she shut her eyes and sank on her knees. Thereupon a long wail resembling a human cry eerily pierced the air, and a black zigzag line traversed the sky.

"Help!" moaned Kasia, and she swooned away.

It was daybreak in the forest. Cool wind wafts stirred the bushes; a white mist, like the filmiest of veils, enveloped the trees; whilst as the sun dispelled this diaphanous drapery, honey-sweet perfumes floated upon the morning air.

Two way-worn men strode thoughtfully along; all night they had been scouring the woodland paths.

"If only she has not fallen into some bog!" murmured the younger man.

"Lord preserve us from such a misfortune!" the older one muttered.

Suddenly the dog, Bourek, whose existence they had quite forgotten, began jumping madly about their legs.

"Bourek! Bourek! God be praised!" ejaculated the older man. "We shall find something out now."

The intelligent brute began to lick the hands of both the men, leaping and barking for joy; then, swift as an arrow, he shot down a path, looking back frequently to see whether he was being followed.

A quarter of an hour after, all three stood before a dense thicket. Carefully the men thrust aside the branches that hit their faces. There, upon the moss, entangled in coiling vine tendrils, lay Kasia, with her eyes closed, and ghastly-white.

Eagerly did they upraise her.

"Hand me the *vodka*, Father Stefanek."

The old man drew a gourd from his pocket, but his hand trembled like a child's.

"Take it; I can't hold it," said he.

His wan gaze could not detach itself from the girl's form.

Gently Yanek put the liquor to the pale lips.

"See! she moves!"

The old man crossed himself. "If thou wouldst get a little water from the brook!" said he, in an unsteady voice.

The youth, picking up Kasia's yellow, blue-starred kerchief, ran and dipped it in the ice-cold water, and coming back, bathed the poor girl's temples. Once more a slight shiver passed over her; she opened her great, startled eyes and cast a long, dreary glance upon her father, that made his heart freeze.

"Kasia!" he cried, desperately, clasping her in his arms. "Kasinka, darling! What ails thee? Speak, in heaven's name!"

But her lips seemed as if congealed, though she looked round listlessly. All at once, catching Yanek's eye fixed upon her, she contracted her features violently, while her hand made a gesture expressive of such terror and scorn that Yanek, not expecting such a welcome, felt his heart leap in his bosom. What! to go all night a-search for her, to think of no one else, and to be thus rewarded!

Already the girl's countenance had resumed its look of heart-rending indifference, as, with bewildered glances, she crouched, mute and rigid, in the moss.

"Lord!" murmured the two men, gazing affrightedly at each other.

"Listen, Yan," spoke the old man; "we must take her home at once. Help me, my son; for I'm sorely shattered."

They bent over her; but at Yan's touch, she writhed as if in a spasm, and savagely repulsed the young fellow.

"What shall we do!" murmured her father.

Just then the long body of a cart, loaded with fir saplings, hove in sight far down the leafy forest way, and soon its axles came creaking along.

"Saved!" exclaimed Stefanek, running to hail the driver; then, taking his daughter in his arms, he carried her unassisted to the cart, and tenderly laid her amongst the resinous needles.

The cart joggled on with the motionless girl, the forester walking downcast beside it, and Yan, soul-dismayed, lagging far in the rear.



At length the forest grew lighter, the reeds by the lake appeared, here and there, topped with a kingfisher's turquoise plumage, or with a melancholy heron perched on one foot: to lend a touch of life to the lonely place.

Through what succession of terrors, thought the two men, had the maid been brought to such a pass?

Now appeared the smiling glade, the little log-house embowered in blossoms and climbing plants, the old well-sweep, and the glistening cherry-trees.

Kasia sat up mechanically, and after her father had helped her down from the cart, she walked into the cabin with a jerky, automaton-like step. The old man followed her, full of fear. Could this be his laughing Kasinka who, only yesterday, ran off with the merry falcon song upon her lips, to weave garlands for the festival of Pentecost!

Now, alas! she trampled upon the poor wreaths scattered nigh the threshold, where Yan had fetched them the previous evening.

Still with the same wild stare Kasia stepped before the little looking-glass hanging against the wall, and wearily smoothed her hair, nowise like a maiden proud of her beauty and in love with life. Without a word, she sought the darkest corner in the dwelling, and with darkened brow, seemed utterly to ignore the presence of her companions.

Pausing at the door-sill, Yan durst not enter; he vaguely dreaded to encounter her cruel gaze.

But her father caught her hands: "Look, Kasinka, now thou art home again: have no fear; tell me all that has happened. Lost in the wood, wert thou? Yet, meseems, thou must have known the forest for nigh on sixteen years!"

She frowned slightly, her eyes grew fierce again, but she proffered no reply.

"Tell all freely to thy old father. Didst thou meet anybody? Favronka, for instance? She is wicked enough to have scared thee. Did she scare thee?"

The puzzled eyes were raised toward her father, but no word escaped her lips.

"Come now, Kasinka! Thou must surely understand me. Why dost thou not answer? If thou art sulking, so much the worse for thee! I've no time to spend dragging the words from thee; and thou well knowest how I hate nonsense."

He spoke gruffly now.

"It is hard, after wading a whole night through the marshes,

to find thee thus! Shall I tell thee that thou hast seen Favronka? That she has addled thy head with her gossip? O thou silly girl! So she told thee Yanek would wed after harvest, and own fields, meadows and a wife—be rich, in fact. Why wilt thou not speak?”

But Kasia still said nothing. Her face was ghastly; her bluish lips seemed petrified. A terrible thought crossed the forester's brain. Clutching the girl's shoulders till he almost crushed them, he cried: “Art thou going mad, Kasinka?”

Livid himself, he gazed in anguish on the pale, wild-eyed creature cowering there before him.

Then he knelt and clasped her in his arms, gently rocking her to and fro.

“Kasia, darling, look at thy old father! Dost thou not know him? Yet he taught thee to walk; and thou rememberest how afraid thou wert of the wolf, and how thou wouldst run to me if thou didst hurt thyself, or if Bourek teased thee, dost thou not? Wasn't I a mother as well as a father to thee?”

“My God! it is awful!” he cried, suddenly rising to his feet. “She doesn't even recognize me!”

Rushing out of doors, the poor man fell, with a pitiful sob, on Yanek's neck.

“O Yan! will she die thus?”

“Shall I go for the doctor?”

“It would take over two hours to get to him. Nay, stay with me. Let us try some other way. Suppose thou shouldst tell her what a liar that woman is? I am sure she's the cause of it all. Besides, Yan”—and his voice faltered—“Kasia has always loved thee. Thou knowest I am now old, but was young once; then, too, a father sees everything. So I said to myself a year or two ago, ‘A fine couple they'll make! for I'm fond of thee also, Yan?’”

Slowly they drew near the maiden.

“What if thou sayest thy father was drunk when he wished thee to marry that girl; that thou hast no liking for Yagda, Yan?” and Stefane looked timidly, yet appealingly, at the youth.



Yanek, with eyes whose caressing fire seemed to encircle Kasia, leaned over most gently, and, laying his hand on her forehead, murmured in the lowest tones: "Nay, Kasia, I do not care for Yagda; thou well knowest that I desire no one save thee."

Rising to her feet, the girl did not repulse him this time. Her lips strove to utter something, but did not succeed in the attempt; and with hands outstretched and supported by the two men, she contented herself with merely taking a few steps up and down the room. Stealing athwart the open window, the victorious sunlight gilded the swaying crowns of the sunflowers, while, blended with faint flower perfumes, the first three notes of the "Angelus" floated across the lake. Reverently the old man bent his head, murmuring: "The angel of the Lord announced to Mary——," while a mute yet fervent supplication ascended from his heart.

Then Kasia, with clasped hands and ecstatic eyes, sank on her knees and stammered forth, well-nigh inaudibly: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

A double ejaculation of joy, love and thankfulness answered her.

Raising her up and setting her on a stool, the two men showered caresses upon her. Then, kneeling, Yan covered her little brown hand with kisses, while the forester laughed and wept all in one breath. As though in a beatific trance, the girl gazed on them, with big tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Kasia, darling, thou livest, thou art saved! Speak, let me hear thee speak!"

Her great, child-like eyes shone radiantly, her head sank gently upon her breast, and, pressing Yan's hand, she faintly murmured, "I am hungry."

Tenderly did the wood-doves coo on the moss-grown thatched roof, whilst the birch-tree's green, trailing, breeze-caressed branches clasped more lovingly the humble, half-ruined dwelling.



THE MILLS OF THE GODS *

BY FRED. A. WILSON

THE curtain of the Varieties went up like a mist, and the orchestra after the overture began a rondeau. The seats were filled with an anxious and expectant audience. Foon Luk, the child wonder, was to appear. Wonderful things had been written about this mite of Chinese femininity who performed such feats of contortion and strength. The playbills had pictured her in full Oriental Court costume, gay with colors, and golden with the dragons on the silks. She was a success before she appeared.

Before a bar of the music had played she came forth from the wings, with short, quick steps toward the footlights. The grateful applause of the audience came to her as she kneeled down on the mat before beginning. Resting on her knees and hands she bent forward until her head touched the floor.

"She is praying," said one in the audience to his neighbor, "that is the way those heathens pray."

He was right; she was praying, but not one of those whose eyes looked at her could have guessed what her prayer was. Amid a dead silence she arose and stood up while a big, strong looking Celestial brought chairs and other paraphernalia upon the stage.

"Hurry," he said to her, roughly, in Chinese, "they will laugh at you if you wait as though you were afraid. Hurry, or you will know what the black stick means when you have finished." She began tremblingly. As fast as the man builded the chairs one on top of the other, her body, serpentine-like, glided in and out of the rungs, through the open backs, and over the seats. It seemed as though she had the power to balance those beneath her. When she had reached a point so high that the man could no longer reach he tossed the chairs up to her, and this was continued until ten chairs stood, one above the other, in the centre of the stage. All the while he had kept talking to her in their native language.

"Beware, if you fall, I will prod you like a pig; make but

* Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

one error and you will never see to-morrow; smile, or you will fail; let a laugh come to your lips, you cat."

To all of these sentences the child replied not one word. She kept her knees from trembling and performed her feats well. When the tenth chair was in position, the man handed her up a lacquer globe. She balanced the globe on the back of the highest chair, then crawling up until she stood on it, she walked it slowly, as it rolled from one end of the chair back to the other. Not a sound was heard in the theatre—the silence was awful, even the music stopped—until she was safe back on the chair seat again. Then the applause burst out, and for the first time a genuine smile came to her lips, and she bowed, half bashfully—like any child would—in the direction of the misty rows of faces beyond the footlights.

Gliding in and out of the chairs as they were taken down, she reached the stage as she had left it. Then came the man's turn. He faced the audience and bowed obsequiously; then stripping off his outer blouse, he threw himself upon a padded table and beckoned the child to him. She came, and he picked her up and raising her on his upturned feet, balanced her a moment and then sent her through the air in a somersault, and caught her as she descended.

"Ai-ya!" she said, and the audience applauded again.

"What is it now?" he asked her.

"It pains my back."

"The black stick will pain you more than that," he answered, as with a quick, deft jerk, he whirled her around again. The act ended.

Hand in hand, they bowed themselves off the stage, amid applause, but were called back to bow again, once, twice, three times, by the enthusiastic audience.

That was the debut of Foon Luk, after two years of hard work under a cruel and vicious owner. She was a slave who had never known freedom. Her parents had sold her for fifteen dollars to Chin Foo, who had taken advantage of her supple limbs and lithe body to make her a paying investment. He had succeeded; and, as he believed, he was on the verge of a fortune. For two years he had trained her and had beaten her with a malacca cane, which he had been pleased to call the "black stick." It was an instrument of torture in her eyes, and even now the mention of it made her tremble. When she prayed to the god set up in the rooms of Chin Foo, she did not pray

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for health or happiness or fortune—she prayed that she might die, and at night, as she lay in her bunk, her lips formed prayers to other gods—unknown to her—for a release. She had known no pleasures in her eleven years of life, and she looked forward to nothing but the work in the theatres, which hurt her back. Her “ai-ya’s” of pain were naturally mistaken by the audience, who applauded them.

Out of the theatre they went to the home of Chin Foo, down dark streets and across lighted avenues. Not one word was spoken until they were safe in the rooms, which looked sorrowful in their dimness. Then he turned on her, half fiercely:

“I will kill you if you ever again cry out with your ‘ai-ya.’ You have cost me enough; you must now begin to earn.”

“It was your heel in my back that hurt,” she began.

“You should have no hurts. Did I cry out like a woman when I appeared before the Emperor, the Son of Heaven, and the clumsy knife-thrower cast a blade which cut my ear?” and he held his hand up to the side of his head, as if the thought of it pained him still. “No; I smiled, as if it put new strength in my limbs. Go to bed.” And she crept away to sleep, while the Chinaman went out among his friends to tell of his success. In her narrow bunk she prayed, but her prayer for release had in it a tincture of revenge, for she begged Kuung-I, the god of justice, to take her master that he might never come back, and then, suddenly, as if some heathen god had looked kindly on her, a thought came to her which made her start, raise up on one elbow, and peer about in the gloom to see if there was anyone in the room. She scarcely dared think of it, yet she could not put it out of her mind. At last she fell asleep and dreamed strange things.

“It is done,” she called out once, then she awoke and shivered. Whatever her thoughts had been, little Foon Luk was changed when she awoke the next day and rehearsed, as well as the space of the room would allow, the most difficult parts of her work.

“What has come over you?” asked Chin Foo, once, when he found her looking at him with a calm and steady eye.

“Nothing,” she answered, evasively, “but to-day I would like to go to the Temple.”

“And spill good wine upon the floor for a love, I suppose?” He was in a good humor.

“No, I want no lovers.”

He dressed her up like a boy, and took her to the Temple of

the Chung Wah Gung San. She prayed before the god of Justice, and she cast the prayer-sticks, and the omens were good. She departed with a light heart.

That day when she went home, and after Chin Foo had gone out, she took his *yen hoe* off the opium tray, and tried to throw it so the point would stick in the door. It was a long while before she succeeded, but when at last the slender point sunk deep in the wood, she was satisfied. Every day when he went out she practiced with it, until at last she became so expert that out of every ten times she threw it, seven times would it stick in the door.

At last, one unlucky day, the long wire needle broke. It did not take Chin Foo long to discover it.

"Have you done this?" he asked, holding up the pieces.

"Yes," she answered. "The more tricks, the more money. I was trying a new one."

"What was it?" he demanded, forgetting in his curiosity to be angry. And when she told him, he was so pleased that he promised to get a set of throwing-knives, and teach her all he knew. They had been doing well at the theatres, and he did not beat her so much as he had before he began to get rich. A new trick meant more money. He bought the knives, and together they practiced until at last he said:

"You throw better than the *hi-tze*, who appeared before the Emperor." Her aim was marvelously straight, and her arm was wonderfully strong, if its strength was judged by the depth the steel blades sank into the wood. He took to praising her, for he was soon to double her work. A chance came for them to go with a circus, and now that the knife-throwing was perfect, they would do two acts, and then he would receive a much larger salary. Ah, the sun of prosperity was shining for him, and he would soon be a rich man, if she would only live long enough.

He signed a contract with the circus manager. It was settled. They were to start through the country in a week. He came home and told the child. She looked startled.

"You do not want to go?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes, yes, I want to go! But—see, I have no more good clothes. I must make some clothes."

He was in a liberal mood. "I will buy you some."

She wanted money before she went. She had tried for it and failed. She looked about the room in despair. Upon her wrist was a jade bracelet. Ah, that would do! She dressed herself in

the boy's suit she had been wont to wear when going about the quarter, and taking one of the throwing-knives, locked the door behind her and slipped down the stairs into the street. She hurried around the corner to the shop of Su Quong, the locksmith, who had always been kind to her.

"Su Quong," she said, "make me a knife like this," and she pulled the broad-bladed weapon out from under her blouse. He took it, and examined it critically.

"Ah, little one, but that is no use. That would cut nothing," and he struck it against a piece of wood. "See, it only bruises."

"Yes, but I want you to make a good one, with the same shape. Make it so keen that the edges will cut through a pillow filled with down. But it must run the same shape, and with a handle like this one."

"And who are you going to kill, little highbinder?" he asked.

"I am not a highbinder," she answered, trembling. "I want the knife for my work at the theatre, but I have no money. You can take my jade," and she held the bracelet toward him.

"I want no money, little one, and if you were a highbinder, I would still be your friend. The gods are not always good to the most deserving."

She ran back to her rooms and was safe once more. She practiced throwing her knives at a revolving disk which Chin Foo had made, and which he said was the most difficult feat known to throwers. She was to do this in the circus. The day before they were to leave she went to the locksmith's to get her knives. The old man had made a marvelously sharp weapon, exactly like the other, but for its keenness and the fact that it had a finer point. He handed them to her.

"I have asked the gods to bless them both," he said gravely. "When you need a friend, come to me. I knew your father." Then she went out. The sharp knife she hid secretly and carefully.

They were with the circus at last. "The Chinese Child Knife-Thrower and premier Contortionist" was a successful favorite. In every town in which the circus appeared, ladies insisted on calling on her in her dressing-room. They made her presents, and raved over her. They did not know what a woman she really was.

Chin Foo, successful beyond his dreams, took to the opium, and cut down his act, so that Foon Luk did nearly all the work. The principal thing he did now was to hold the wooden ball sus-

pended by a rope, and swing it gently, while she threw the knives at it. Once, a carelessly thrown knife had struck him in the side, but as such knives as they were could not penetrate cloth, it fell to the sawdust, and he had scowled at her and called her "a cat." He was careful about scolding her very much now, because a change had come over her. She seemed more of a woman. There was a peculiar light in her narrow eyes, and a firmness about her lips that set him to thinking.

One day, the manager said to him :

"Chin, that ball trick with the knives don't take as well as it used to. What's the matter with you standing up against a board, and letting her throw them around you?"

"See lat?" asked Chin, putting one hand up to his injured ear; "big knife-thlower in Chiny, he thlow before emplorlor 'n hit ear. No good."

But the manager was firm and insisted, and the end of it all was that the next week the Chinese Child Wonder was throwing knives around Chin Foo's head and body, and coming so close to him that he could feel the wind they raised. He told her she threw them too hard, and because she did not answer him he struck her. She cried out in pain, and a woman rider—who heard her—told Chin Foo if he did not keep his hands off her she would get a couple of the canvas-men to give him a thrashing.

The circus had struck a new town on Sunday, and Chin Foo, more than ever a slave to opium, had spent the day with his beloved pipe. He kept at it Monday, and when he dressed to appear in the knife-throwing act, his eyes were half closed and he was drowsy with the drug. He leaned with his back against the board, and the applause which greeted Foon Luk seemed to come from a great distance. He shut his eyes, because the bright lights made his head whirl about unpleasantly.

"Thud!" That was the first knife. He felt it go by his ear. Thud, thud, thud, they came and sunk deep in the board. The audience applauded wildly. There were four more knives. The next one struck under his arm-pit.

"That's a great throw," yelled a man in a seat on the edge of the ring. Scarcely before he had finished, another knife was hurtling through the air. Those who were looking saw it strike the blouse of the Chinaman on the left side, they saw his arms reach up spasmodically, and then he sank down in the sawdust. Like one dazed, the girl stood with two knives still in her hand,

while the circus men rushed over to the wounded man. As they carried him' out of the ring on a litter, she fainted. When she came to, the bareback rider was fanning her, and there were ladies standing around.

"Chin Foo hurt?" she managed to ask.

"Yes," said one of the ladies, "he is hurt very bad."

"Chin Foo dead?" she asked again.

"Yes," she was answered.

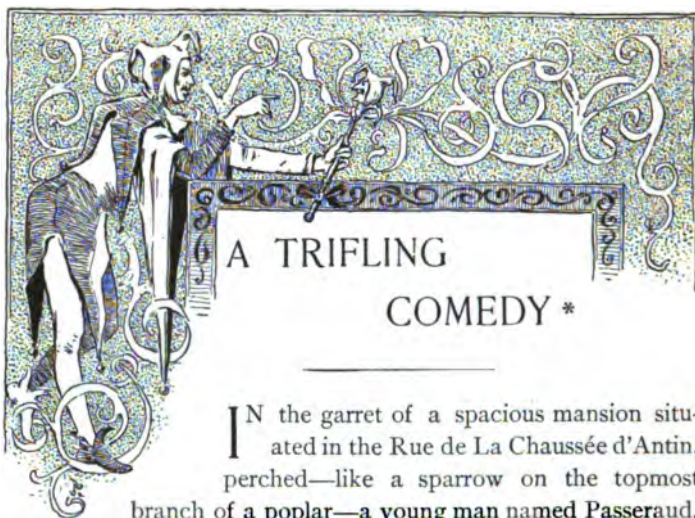
Then she closed her eyes peacefully and fell asleep.

The rural coroner and his jury finally decided it was an accident. The knife which killed the Chinaman was the same as the rest, and there was nothing to show any murderous intent on the part of the child, who was released.

In the trunk of the bareback-rider was a knife, the edges of which were like razors. Long afterwards, when Foon Luk had gone, the rider showed it, blood-stained as it was, to Mlle. Mirabella, the trapeze artist.

"That's what killed that Chinaman," he said. "It would go through boiler iron—that knife would. I helped to carry him in the tent, and I saw it, and swapped it for one of the others. I didn't want to see the little gal convicted."





A TRIFLING COMEDY *

I N the garret of a spacious mansion situated in the Rue de La Chaussée d'Antin, perched—like a sparrow on the topmost branch of a poplar—a young man named Passeraud.

The habits of the youth were peaceable and orderly, his character good, his deportment modest, his costume ragged. The manager of the establishment had expressly forbidden him the possession of a dog, a violin, a sewing-machine, in fact anything whatever that was cumbersome or noisy. He had also enjoined upon this lodger to be in his apartment at the earliest possible hour in the evening. The other lodgers in the house sometimes wondered by what means he kept his hands clean, for the aforesaid manager did not permit him to carry water upstairs, fearing that he might be careless and spill it upon the stairs. However, by dint of goodwill and even temper Passeraud, poor fellow, succeeded in making himself endurable, in this abode where dwelt bankers, tenors, diplomats and lawyers of high repute. He had recently quit the École Centrale with honors, and almost immediately the General Calcium Mining Company of Haut-Péloponèse offered him a situation with a salary of five hundred francs per month (so it was said), certainly enough to shelter him from want.

But he was engrossed with the idea of inventing a self-acting brake that should do away with collisions on railroads, or at least lessen the intensity of the shock, should they occur; so he declined the offer of the mineral company, and devoted himself night and day to the drawing of innumerable diagrams of the brake in operation.

He expected glory and fortune from this achievement. In

* Translated by Pauline Shackelford Colyar, from the French, for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

the meantime a little bread and two sous' worth of Italian cheese served for breakfast; a little bread and two sous' worth of sausage for dinner; a diagram in the intervals. In fact he was half perishing with hunger, but this made no difference to him, his brake (he had perfect confidence in it) was on the eve of being as much self-acting as the most exacting locomotive could have demanded.

One day he met upon the stairway of the first floor a young girl, blonde, charmingly dressed and as graceful as a goddess. She advanced, then disappeared, light and supple, diffusing a subtle perfume of vervain; and Passeraud, astonished at finding so many attractions in one girl, stood motionless on the landing for full five minutes, his mouth open, as though expecting once more a sight of his incomparable neighbor.

The next day, by a coincidence that we should like to believe quite accidental, Passeraud found himself upon the same landing at the same hour. The young girl passed him, and seemed to blush in doing so.

Fearing he had wounded her, Passeraud resolved within himself not to go downstairs again at that hour. The following day he unfortunately remembered that an urgent matter obliged him to go out at the precise moment when departure was forbidden him, according to his resolution of the evening before. He took his hat, much annoyed at a circumstance that forced him to beset, with his presence, a person for whom he felt such great respect.

What he dreaded came to pass; another meeting occurred, and Passeraud was inconsolable when the amiable girl blushed even more than before.

He was now furious with himself; the Unknown, scandalized by such pursuit, had in all probability taken measures to avoid him. At last, convinced of his misfortune, Passeraud took the same route every day at the same hour, and every day made way on the landing for the most desirable of neighbors to pass him by, and, as he had been brought up by a polite mother, he saluted her at each meeting. It was not long before it seemed to him that the slight inclination of the head, which had hitherto acknowledged his reverential bow, now took on a more cordial aspect.

Having remarked this, he went to a shop to look at himself in the glass (he did not possess one of his own), in order to learn if his person was such as to please the taste of so accomplished a

young girl. Then he returned, consoling himself with the reflection that if his coat was badly cut, his face was by no means repulsive. Next he made inquiry, with all necessary precautions, as to the name of the pretty young lady of the first floor; for, scarcely knowing why, he was genuinely anxious to learn it. When he was told that it was Valentine, he was altogether enchanted.

These goings and comings retarded the progress of the automatic brake; the diagrams languished. In short, it was necessary that Passeraud's love should be returned, for if our engineer should sigh in vain, he would at once become a desolate lover—the desolate lover would kill the inventor, and in consequence, all these travelers that his invention was to save would perish.

Therefore, the happiness of Passeraud was equivalent to the safety of thousands of beings preserved from death by the automatic brake.

Such being the case, Passeraud, who was as brave as he was devoted to his fellow-men, reviewed his slender wardrobe, dressed himself as best he could, descended to the apartments of Valentine's father, who was Monsieur Lamantin, owner of the large mansion, and made a request of him so extremely artless, that I blush to record it here.

"Monsieur, I have the honor to demand of you the hand of Mademoiselle, your daughter."

"The hand of my daughter!" said the old man, surprised, while he measured Passeraud from head to foot. "For whom, if you please?"

"For myself, Monsieur."

"For you! Why, are you not my little lodger up—up yonder, under the roof?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then what possesses you? My daughter has four million francs! I consent to enlighten you thus far. Do you understand? Four millions. And you, what have you?"

The engineer replied with frank candor; then he added: "I am not actually rich, but if you give me Mademoiselle Valentine, believe me, my work, my small knowledge——"

"There, that will do. A joke's a joke. Will you be good enough to take yourself off? 'Pon my word, it is enough to make one die of laughter to think of you asking for my daughter's hand. Good-evening."

"But, sir, if before asking your consent I wait until my automatic brake has made me a millionaire, I run the risk of finding Mademoiselle Valentine married to another. You will understand that I do not care to take such a chance."

"That's no concern of mine. What do you suppose I care? Good-evening, young man."

Passeraud went away so miserable that he forgot to be embarrassed; while Monsieur Lamantin slammed the door after him, crying:

"Not a sou! No position! He asks for my daughter's hand. Ha-ha! A joke indeed."

This visit, which resulted so unfavorably to the interests of our friend, left but fugitive traces in the mind of Mons. Lamantin.

What really troubled him and cast a gloom over his countenance was the fact that the chimney of his drawing-room smoked intolerably.

This happened in the month of December, just when he was preparing to give a large reception in honor of his daughter's nineteenth birthday. Mons. Lamantin sent for his architect, who hastened to him, scenting another order.

"Is it only that?" said he, vexed, when he found what was wanted.

"I find it quite enough. It is not amusing to own a chimney that makes us weep all day, like a family in mourning."

"Your chimney was constructed after my plans; that is to say, it does not smoke."

"In spite of that, it does smoke."

"It is because you burn coal. Do not use coal, and you will have a clear fire."

"Perhaps you are right."

The substitution of wood for coal caused no diminution of the smoking of the chimney. Mons. Lamantin, who was a man of decision, procured the address of the finest architect in Paris, and begged of him to deign to come himself and study the question.

The architect, after having examined the chimney at every point, did not repress his opinion, despite the cruel reflection it cast upon his confrère.

"What ass constructed that affair?"

"Lédenté—my architect."

"I should say so—an ass. Have the stack run up fifteen cen-

timetres higher in order to increase the draught. That is what it needs."

"But how simple it is."

"It will; however, suffice."

The alteration was completed, and the chimney smoked as before. But the bill of the noted architect was immense.

"The deuce! What a bill!" Mons. Lamantin could not help exclaiming when he settled it.

Once through with the architects, the proprietor next addressed himself to the chimney-doctors. The first one called had just arrived from Piedmont—"no chimney had ever resisted him." He ordered that a mechanism of cast-iron, shaped like a serpent, should be added to the top of the pipe.

The chimney continued to smoke in the salon.

A second chimney-doctor presented himself. He had come from Piedmont even later than the first. He at once removed, with expressions of disgust, his colleague's serpent, and substituted a helmet of cast-iron.

The chimney paid no attention whatever to the helmet, and smoked until Mons. Lamantin wished it and himself both to the devil.

But here the concière interposed with words of consolation.

"Monsieur is wrong to despair. I have just been talking of the affair with a lodger—oh, a lodger, I must say of the highest standing. This 'little lodger' declares that he can unbewitch the chimney in five minutes."

"Bid him come here instantly, or else leave the house."

With the rapidity of lightning Passeraud, lodger from the upper regions, replied to the summons of Mons. Lamantin. He found his proprietor tramping up and down the freezing apartment.

"Ah, is it you, young man, who flatter yourself that you can in five minutes cure a chimney that is incurable? Try it; I am curious to see you do it."

"Five minutes—that is asking too much, Monsieur. I demand an hour."

"So be it—an hour. Here is a chimney abandoned by all the doctors; if you can succeed in inducing it to send its smoke into the heavens, instead of distributing it about my rooms, I will give you—whatever you wish. My patience is worn out. I can not haggle. Set your own price."

"Monsieur," responded Passeraud with dignity, "you must

give me—the hand of Mademoiselle Valentine. This is my price; but you need not pay unless I succeed.”

“My daughter for a chimney? You wander from the subject, my boy.”

“Very well, sir; call Mons. Garnier, the architect of the opera-house, add to him a selection of engineers, of chemists, of members of the Institute, of professors from high-grade schools, and if among them any, or all of these gentlemen can accomplish in three months what I will do in an hour—viz. : to prevent this chimney or any other from smoking—I consent that you shall regard me as an idiot.”

“The hand of my daughter—your price is dear. But if in reality you possess such a secret, you can make money out of it—heaps of money, and——”

“I have a secret, indeed,” answered Passeraud, “and as I wish to keep it, you must consent to shut me up in this salon for the space of an hour, entirely alone, and you must give me your word not to look through the keyhole. I will not operate otherwise.”

“Just as you wish. But why have you been so foolish as not to have taken out a patent? By so doing, you could avoid such childish precautions.”

“I am not rich enough to pay the first costs of a patent.”

“But why not borrow? If ever an occasion justified a loan, this one does.”

“Monsieur, I detest borrowing.”

“Very well, I will retire now. Make your mysterious manipulations in perfect tranquility.”

“You will not look through the keyhole?”

“I swear it.”

“And I have—your word—if I succeed.”

“Ta-ta-ta, we will see. I don’t wish to have a knife at my throat, but I am a man of my word.”

Alone at last, Passeraud employed the time in a way little in accord with the gravity of the situation. An attentive observer—but Passeraud had banished all such—would have heard him humming the air: “C’est ici que Rose respire.” The same observer would have been further surprised to have seen him as he went from one piece of furniture to another charmed, walking among these beautiful surroundings as though in a dream. Now he reclines on the couch—perhaps Valentine has also sat here. Now he installs himself in a little chair—

this low seat is beyond doubt the one that she prefers. And next studies a full-length portrait of the young girl—ah, that dear image, as he throws kisses to her—“to thee, always to thee.”

These frivolities having consumed the allotted sixty minutes, Passeraud opened the doors, and called to all who chose to come.

“Monsieur, have the fire lighted.”

It was done. The chimney now drew with sufficient force to bring up a bucket from the bottom of a well. A gentle warmth began to diffuse itself over the apartment hitherto so icy. There was not the slightest smoke. The chimney-doctors from Piedmont were vanquished; French architecture laid down its arms. The genius of Passeraud burst forth like the sun, blinding all who looked upon it.

“It is too beautiful,” cried Lamantin, radiant.

“Valentine, this dear boy is a great engineer. He will be my son-in-law, if you consent.”

“Oh, yes, papa.”

A year after these miraculous events, Madame Passeraud—née Lamantin, presented her husband with a son as beautiful as the day. Then Mons. Lamantin gave vent to the following harangue:

“My dear son, explain to me one thing. Three months ago the railroad companies adopted your automatic brake. You receive tons of gold from everywhere. They wish to buy your right in England, America, Italy, Australia, India and Spain. You are rich now, not from your wife's dot, but on your own account. Is that not enough to make you reflect? But what annoys me is that you have another invention of which you make no use.”

“Indeed! what one is that?”

“Modest man. Why, your secret for preventing chimneys smoking to be sure. Ah, now you are not going to tell me that you are too poor to buy the patent.”

“Pooh, that does not amount to much.”

“It would be a veritable mine of wealth. Why neglect so good a thing.”

“Father-in-law, suppose we don't talk about it.”

“Oh, yes, let's do so.”

“Father-in-law, you are forcing me to tell you something that I would prefer to keep to myself.”

“But tell me—tell me.”

“Very well. You must know, then, that I did not stop your chimney from smoking. There is a secret about that. I lived then under the roof, and had only to extend my hand from the window and hold a plate, or something of the sort, over the pipe to stop the draught. It was your fault, my dear sir. Ever since the world began, hard-hearted fathers have forced ardent lovers to win their daughters by stratagem. I have done like the rest of the world. I have improvised a little comedy, and my chief excuse is, that Valentine aided me—it was she who charged the concière to report to you that I was the greatest chimney-doctor extant. Pardon us both, and console yourself by remembering that this is but one of the thousand tricks of fate; for lovers are destined to triumph—it is a law. Thus, my son, born this morning, is rich. Most certainly he will fall foolishly in love with some poor, honest girl. He will not, however, have the pleasure of enacting a farce for my benefit. I declare to you beforehand, that I will give my consent to his marrying this girl who hasn't a sou—otherwise, he will take her without it.”



A DILEMMA IN THE OFFICE*

BY ELIZABETH BARNETT ESLER



FINAL decision had been arrived at, the fiat had gone forth, she must be dismissed. Even Mr. Herbert, who had appeared to temporize a little, had, at the last, even urged it, and there was no hesitation whatever in the others. To be sure, young Clay had frowned and shrugged his shoulders, as at a disagreeable necessity, but he had made no movement to argue against the others, and his brother had shut his thin lips tight and assumed an expression of adamant firmness. Williams had been silent for the most part, joining in the discussion only by frowns and nods of the head when he was called upon by word or a peremptory glance from one of the other three, but he very evidently agreed with them and so words were probably unnecessary.

They were assembled in solemn conclave—none the less solemn because impromptu. They had all happened to come together in Mr. Herbert's room, and the subject had been brought up as by accident, but the opportunity was propitious for discussion, a decision had been arrived at, and they had found themselves confronted by the consideration of immediate action, almost before they realized the need for it.

When this was discovered, there was an ominous silence, which seemed to promise to be lengthy, since no one cared to bring down responsibility on his own head by breaking it.

After some moments of this very irksome silence, Mr. Herbert spoke, hesitating at every word, but with the weight of necessity heavy upon him.

"Well, of course, the matter is settled; now the next thing is—well, naturally, we must tell the young woman and have done with it."

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"Yes, as a matter of course," replied the elder Clay, with almost a precipitancy of haste, hoping in this way to save himself; and his brother, seizing upon the same thought, exclaimed:

"I should think Williams ought to speak to her, should not you? He is the—well, the most dignified and suitable person for the mission, I should think."



Williams frowned ponderously. He looked like his uncle, the Judge, especially while assuming that almost judicial frown, but he made no response to young Clay's suggestion, and his very silence convinced them that he was not available, and solely because he refused to be made so. Then there was quiet again and the thoughts of each man were complex. All felt a sense of mortification that a matter of apparently such small importance, in the face of others of so much greater moment, should have been presented so seriously. It was like a man's shame at the pain of the sting of some insect. Then, also, they were wasting valuable time which each one longed to be using on business more suitable to his dignity. To be actually spending hours in discussing and deliberating upon the dismissal of a typewriter was simply absurd—it was contemptible and undignified, and all were restive and annoyed. Yet, in spite of this, the thing had assumed gigantic proportions. It was like an insignificant article in the confused mind of a person in a fever, and became unreasonably fearful from its unnatural aspect.

They none of them realized the powerful personality of a woman, who, by her presence only, could so control their judgment; or, if they did, the masculine pride of each man would have blinded him to the acknowledgment.

After awhile the younger Clay became uncontrollably restless and forced his hands deep into his trousers pockets and swore under his breath. He was young enough to find relief in bad language



on rare occasions. His brother scowled at him reprovingly. Williams looked amused. He would himself have liked to indulge in an oath or two, but it was not his habit.

Herbert rose, stretched his legs and yawned, lifting his long arms above his head. It was the gesture of nervousness. People yawn and stretch that way in the midst of great nervous tension.

"Well," he said, flushing a little, "I suppose I must speak to her. I brought the trouble about by engaging her services, and I ought, of course, to assume the trouble of dismissing her. I wish I knew exactly the proper terms to use in doing so." His big, soft brown eyes had almost a hunted look as he spoke, and the elder Clay, quite unable to bear the sight of it, said at once, in his thin, penetrating voice: "I don't think so at all. You've had annoyance enough out of the affair. I will speak to her myself," and he turned to the door as if about to carry out his intention at once.



"Well, I don't know, Rufus. Wait a little." There was a deep, abiding and tender affection between these two men. They appreciated one another. The fine-bred, sensitive organization of Herbert appealed, like the sweetness of a woman, to all that was strong and pure and romantic in his friend. They were knit together close by congeniality and companionship, and one could not willingly see the other annoyed or distressed. The younger Clay looked at Herbert with the old surprise renewed; he could not understand, though he always admired the *sans peur et sans reproche* characteristic in this otherwise everyday man. "How in the world did you make the mistake of engaging such a person in the first place, Fredrick; I should think you would have seen at once how——

Mr. Clay did not finish, the unfitness of the typewriter was indescribable. There was the point.

"It was the merest accident. You know all about it. You and George were in Virginia on that business of Graham's, and I didn't know when you'd be back—Peter's mother came on that rainy Friday to say he was down with rheumatism—there were those papers for the Bradley case waiting to be copied, and I did as we always had done before, I advertised. Early Monday morning when I came—Williams was not down yet—I found a number of people in the outer office and, as I passed, I beck-

oned to the nearest to come in here. It happened to be this lady. She was thickly veiled and dressed, moreover, in a long waterproof garment of a nondescript pattern, and I could not, of course, examine her critically. She made perfectly satisfactory answers to all questions and expressed herself entirely capable—as she has proved—for the work; so I took her at once, and upon my soul, Rufus," he concluded, with that rare smile of his, "I really did not see her, to notice her appearance, until you came in and spoke of it."

"Oh, come off!" muttered George Clay, vulgarly. There were other things in Herbert's organization he could not understand.

"Well!" asked Williams, turning from the window. "She has to go, and that's settled. Now, which of you fellows is going to tell her? And I hope when she's gone you will let me engage a boy."

"Why, I have not the slightest objections, Clarence, a boy by all means; but I wish one of you would be good enough to tell me just the form of language a gentleman should use in telling a gentlewoman—I use the term advisedly—who is patiently and industriously and very skilfully earning her living, and the living of we know not whom besides, that she is—well *too beautiful* to properly fill the position of stenographer and typewriter in the offices of himself and his colleagues? For my own part, I do not see my way, I confess."

"Well, that's absurd!" exclaimed Rufus Clay. "You don't have to tell her that!"

"It's the truth," said Herbert, doggedly. "There is no other reason under the sun for shipping her, and you all know it."

"Just say that we have decided to dispense with her services," suggested Williams. "I want to be prepared for the inevitable questioning. She is forced to this, and will not readily give it up. If she, delicate as she looks, has strength enough to sit there day after day, and the publicity of it to such a frail creature must be galling, she has strength enough to force a reason why she should give it up. Now, when she asks me I shall be put out, and I want to be prepared." And when he said this, he felt just as a strong man might who asked a reason for taking a knife out of the hands of a child. The child might cry; he dreaded it, and was ashamed.

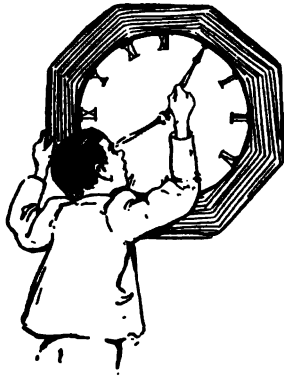
This was the point they had reached, by various roads of argument, for the third or fourth time, when a knock at the door interrupted them, and the cause of the dilemma stood on the

threshold. It was only to announce a client, and to bring in the noon mail; but at sight of her each man slunk off to his own room, and Herbert, a comically guilty look on his face, took his letters, and admitted the visitor, a client of his.

Then came that episode of the apple-blossoms, a trifle in itself, but a straw directing attention to a deep and dangerous current existing only in the imagination of each one, and after which they went about for days with a hang-dog look, evading one another's full glance and seeking the daily duties with an amusing avidity; the most uncongenial tasks, business of the most unpleasant nature preferred to the risk of another general discussion on the subject just referred to, and avoiding a tête-à-tête savagely.

That affair of the apple-blossoms remained a mystery to the last.

It was a perfect spring morning about the end of April; to be absolutely accurate the twenty-ninth of that month. The spring had come early that year, and the day, even at eight in the morning, was very warm, not sultry, but delicious. Little Jimmy had come first, whistling cheerfully as usual. Young Clay used to say they kept him for his whistling, it was so inspiring. On this morning, as on all others, he unlocked the rooms, put on his



linen coat, climbed on a chair and pushed the clock hands on just a very little way, because he had not had much breakfast, and already longed for luncheon. Taking out the history of "Charley Blake: or, The Miner's Joy," he sat down to finish that last chapter, which he accomplished without interruption, when Mr. Carleton came in.

Russell Carleton was a great, red, Irish artist, with a big voice, a heart as large as the ocean, and a talent for summer landscapes that gained him his living, and promised future fame. He had his studios—there were three of them—at the top of the building, and, though there was a wide and comfortable staircase thereto, he preferred a back entrance through the offices of Herbert Clay—Clay & Williams, who were his friends and admirers, and with whom he loved dearly to stop and chat before beginning the day's work.

On this particular April morning he found no one but Jimmy. Advancing upon that youth, who adored him, he began a series of exasperating questions confusing to the boy, who grinned in his joy, and made no effort to reply. In the midst the artist asked abruptly, so that a clever listener would have known it was a matter of import to the questioner :

“ Where is Miss Smith this morning ? She is late, isn't she ? ”

Jimmy glanced with assumed carelessness at the clock, pointing to ten minutes past eight, and he knew that Miss Smith, who was never late, would be in directly.

Even before he could reply, they both heard the approaching footsteps of the lady referred to, and, while Jimmy flew to open the door for her, Mr. Carleton quickly laid on Miss Smith's own table a spray of apple-blossoms which he had been holding behind his back, and then walked rapidly through the rooms and up to his own habitation, chuckling as he climbed the narrow stairs. The truth might as well be acknowledged at once :



the painter of landscapes was in love with Miss Smith. To be in love was his normal condition, and with his artistic temperament, to be in love with the most beautiful woman near was inevitable. But he was sly and cunning and witty and shrewd, so nobody guessed at his passion.

His placing a spray of apple-blossoms thus surreptitiously on the table of his adored one, was a new departure.

He had spent the night out of town with a friend, and as they drove to the station, the tree, in full bloom, had brought her vividly to his mind. He had broken off the blossoms simply for that reason, perhaps intending to carry them to his studio as a palpable reminder or emblem of her ; the leaving of them at her table was an impulse. The next minute Miss Smith came in. She saw the apple-bough in an instant, and kept her eyes on it while she pulled off her gloves, untied her veil, hung up her hat and drew out her chair.

Then she took up the spray and glanced over her shoulder at Jimmy. He was reading the paper. Seeing this, she laid the blooming branch against her cheek, inhaling the fresh smell of it with delight. Putting it down on the table, she bowed over it in

an attitude of adoration, drinking in its delicate beauty with her eyes. Lastly, she kissed it, and then spoke:



“Jimmy, where do you live?”

“Up on Norfolk Street—way up—66o.”

She knew the locality on Norfolk Street—way up, and that there were no apple-trees thereabout.

“Who gave you the apple-blossoms?”

“Nobody never gave me none.”

“Did you buy them? and for me?”

Jimmy looked over his shoulder and his eyes grew large.

“*No ma'am!*” and she was convinced that Jimmy was innocent. At this she looked a little bit frightened, glancing doubtfully from open door to open door of all the rooms about her; then she got up and put the blossoming-rods over on the little stand by the register, but, as if in compassion, stood them with their feet in the drinking-glass—the only one—filled with fresh water. Evidently not yet satisfied with their separateness from all contact with herself, she took them, glass and all, and climbing, as Jimmy had done, on to a chair, put them up on the little clock-shelf, leaning against that hideous bronze time-piece; then she went back to her place.

In half an hour Mr. Williams came in, glanced at the clock with a sense of self-gratulation at the early hour, saw the apple-bough, was reminded to say good-morning to Miss Smith, and passed into his room.

Fully an hour later young Clay came down, lounged through the open door, looked with unconcealed admiration at Miss Smith, whose back was towards him, observed a perfume which he attributed to a handkerchief which that lady had dropped, and which he picked up and held it to his face. It was perfumed, but with faintest violet, which he knew for orris-root. Then, as he put the handkerchief on Miss Smith's table, he

passed under the clock, and his sensitive nose, guiding his eyes, he, too, saw the blossoms, and smiled. Here was material for a little pleasant twitting of somebody, and, smiling still, he went into Mr. Herbert's room, which was empty. He looked then for his brother, who was not there; then he slipped in on Williams, and pointing with his thumb, asked impudently:

"Where did you get the apple-blossoms?"

Williams was deep in a brief, out of which he came long enough to say:

"Give it up;" and young Clay wandered off to his own den.

Herbert came in about five minutes after, saw the decorated clock, scowled heavily, and slammed his door behind him. Mr. Herbert had not shut himself up in this manner alone within the memory of the whole office, and each man, hearing the banging door, looked up surprised. Thus he did not see that Mr. Rufus Clay followed his entrance, and was, as himself, guiltless of the offending blossoms.

All this day and for several succeeding days, the moral atmosphere of the office was surcharged. A more discontented and wretched set of men did not exist. Young Clay grew impatient at trifles, and afterwards melancholy. He used to say that this period was worse than an easterly storm in a country-house. Clay, Sr., watched Mr. Herbert apprehensively; the latter gentleman was nervous to the verge of prostration, and Mr. Williams lost his grip entirely and ran off to a cousin's wedding in New York, although he felt he should not take the time just then from business.

At this time it was, while Williams was still away, that Mr. Herbert sought Mr. Clay privately, and together they determined upon immediate action.

"It won't do," said Mr. Herbert, argumentatively, "it won't do at all to have this condition obtain long. She is perfectly innocent, and unconscious as a child; but nevertheless you can see she has disturbed the even current of the whole office, and—yes, I'll allow you, by her simple presence alone. I do not like it! Frankly, Rufus, I must confess that, though I like the good lady herself, the constant presence of such a woman, one so eminently beautiful and high-bred, is destructive to that calmness and



repose necessary to business like our own, and—well, if you will, that freedom to which we are accustomed.”

Mr. Clay rose to continue the argument on the same lines, thus :

“You are perfectly right, Frederick. I know just what you mean. Why, do you know, I have noticed the greatest attraction in George! Not for the worse, though he is graver. I'm afraid the boy (Mr. George Clay was thirty, but a boy still to his brother)—well, in fact I fear the young fellow is—you see the temptation being ever-present, and, in fact—you understand?” Mr. Herbert did understand, though he also knew that “the boy” had run the gauntlet of polite society for the past ten or twelve years unsinged even.

“Oh, it's not that,” he said, reassuringly. “No doubt the fellow is all right, in fact I know he is indifferent as far as that goes. But the thing is this: the good lady is out of place here. She is not the kind of woman for such a position.”

“I know,” interrupted Mr. Clay, “one insensibly associates her with a drawing-room and afternoon teas, and all that.”

“Yes, and the very element is out of keeping here.”

Young Clay had said once that a man's office should be like his club, entirely free from petticoat government, and both men remembered this as they spoke.

“Well,” said Mr. Herbert, in conclusion, “I'll speak to her this evening.”

And—he did not. No, nor did Clay speak, though he had said deprecatingly, “Oh, leave it to me,” as Herbert had gone out. In fact the matter lay in abeyance for some days longer, and then was settled unexpectedly and without the interference of either of these gentlemen.

It was about three o'clock of an afternoon. All had been to luncheon and the ordinary occupations of the office were in full swing. A client was shut up with Mr. Williams, with whom he was discussing a curious patent case. Mr. Herbert had gone over to the bank for a bit of business before closing time. Mr. Rufus Clay was writing a letter, and his brother was privately smoking a cigarette—with the top of the window pulled down, a precaution he had not always thought of, but things were changed of late—while he was reading some matter of absorbing interest, when Mr. Carleton, the artist, came loafing in. This rubicund gentleman, rather more red and more clumsy and bigger than usual, gave a comprehensive look around, which included Miss

Smith, and then went in to George Clay, who looked up and smiled a greeting, pushing forward a chair with his foot. Carleton slumped down in a heap—which was his easy method of sitting,—took the offered cigarette, but did not light it.

There was perfect stillness, so that the voices of both gentlemen, pitched low as they were, could be distinctly heard in the outer office, where Miss Smith sat alone at her copying, and from the first each word they spoke came clearly to her hearing.

“That was a queer affair all through, last night, was it not?” Russell Carleton spoke.

“Yes, but I wish you’d tell me how it began; I didn’t get in till it was nearly over.”

“Awful row,” murmured Carleton enjoyably; “never saw such a racket in the club in my life.”

“How was it?” asked Clay, soothingly.

“Began when Will Sloan came in. Nobody knew just when or how, but Harry Lea got up all of a fluster and swore awfully, saying for his part he would not stay in the same room with a blackguard and looking pointedly at Sloan, so that everyone saw



whom he meant. Then Sloan, of course, struck him across the face with his stick. Sloan always had a dreadful quick temper.”

“What did Lea mean? that’s what I can’t make out.”

“Why, weren’t you there that night when somebody said something about Will Sloan’s having run off with Richard Harrison’s wife? Lea was in a great taking; he is Harrison’s most

intimate friend. They were always together before Harrison went to New York and married, and naturally, if he thought that Sloan had taken Harrison's wife, he would resent it and not want him in the club."

"Oh, of course not," droned Clay, meekly. "Well, go on."

"Oh, then Lea struck out, and some fellows rushed in and separated them, and they both went off. Every one said Lea was wrong, for in the face of it, there must be a lie somewhere, and a man ought to find out before he goes off the handle that way. Don't you see, if Sloan had gone off with Harrison's wife, who was traced to a foreign-bound steamer, how could he be in the Richmond Club less than four weeks after?"

"That is queer," said Clay, bracing up.

"Where in the devil is Harrison?"

"Gone to Europe after them."

"Well, I'll swear! Do you mean to say Dick Harrison has gone abroad after his wife under the impression that she's away with Sloan."

"Yes," drawled Carleton, "pretty, isn't it?" Just then both men thought they heard from the outer office a sound like a sob or a sobbing sigh, but it was also like the scraping of a chair on the uncovered floor. They looked at each other and listened, but there was no further noise, and the typewriter commenced its irregular click, click as usual. They were quiet a minute, when Clay asked:

"She must have been an awful fool to go off; Harrison is such a fine fellow."

"Yes, and such a snap as it was for her; she had been dreadfully poor, I've been told. But women never know when they have a good thing." This with a tone of resigned, compassionate regret.

"I wonder what the trouble was?"

"Never heard; but Sloan was evidently not at the bottom of it, if she went abroad."

"They must have gone off at the same time to have caused the suspicion."

"Well, I don't know anything about her, but I *do* know that Sloan has been to Canada, for he wrote to me all the time he was gone and brought me an English gun last week, which I have upstairs now, a prime piece I tell you!"

"Why, that was the reason you went off after Lea last night! I wondered."

"Yes, they are all right now. Lea apologized when I told him about the Canada trip, and Sloan was as surprised as anyone to hear about Harrison's misfortune."

"It must have been a curious combination of circumstances that caused Harrison's doubt of Sloan," persisted Clay, who had a lawyer's instinct for getting at the bottom of things.

"Don't know," said Carleton, indifferently; and the talk drifted off that bank into fresher waters.

After half an hour, Carleton got himself out of his chair by a series of astonishing twists and jerks and went back to his paints and canvases.

Mr. Herbert came in. Williams, free from his client, went off to a board meeting and the day wore on. About five in the afternoon the men dropped off one by one. Mr. Herbert had a headache and left early. Mr. Williams did not return from his meeting and Carleton said good-



bye on his way through the offices to go to draw with a man; the two Clays alone were left. At half after five the elder man departed, leaving George still apparently absorbed in that reading of his. His interest had, perhaps, flagged towards the last, for at a quarter of six o'clock he was sleeping quietly.

It was exactly ten minutes of six when Miss Smith, with her hat on and her gloves in her hand, came to the open door of George Clay's room and awoke him by speaking his name. He woke suddenly and with a jerk, and springing to his feet, bowed to her.

He afterwards said, that as he opened his eyes and looked, there seemed to be something luminous about her like a diffused halo of light.

In truth she was very handsome, standing there with her back to the afternoon light that streamed through the window behind her conspicuously, and, under the circumstances of her environment, offensively handsome. She was tall and slender, and shapely and graceful. Her garments, though of the simplest style, were of the finest quality, consisting on this occasion of a

silk-cashmere skirt and a velvet jacket, both black and both absolutely without ornament. She wore shoes of black suede, and gloves of the same, and her hat was a small black toque of straw, bound with a twisted handkerchief, also black. But her eyes were blue as heaven and her hair a gold bronze, and, though she wore it brushed neatly up all around and folded in a kind of bow-knot on top, one noticed it admiringly. Do what she might, provided she did nothing offensive to good taste, she could neither disguise nor even diminish her beauty. She was born exquisitely lovely, and that was the whole of it. It was beyond question.

George Clay bowed, which gave him time to wake up and be surprised. Then she spoke.

"I wish to speak to you a moment, Mr. Clay," she said.

There, also, was another charm—her voice. It was not only musical but refined. The voice and enunciation of the educated woman, which is as entirely distinct from that—sometimes equally as sweet—of the woman of the people, as can be imagined.

"Certainly," said Clay; "please sit down," and he placed his chair.

But she continued to stand while she said :

"I want you to do something for me, if you please. I want you to write a letter for me."

George looked his surprise, and being conscious that he did, dropped his eyes.

"Be good enough to write it now," she continued ; and there was the faintest peremptory ring in her voice.

He looked up quickly and caught her glance. The blue eyes were flashing in command, and her face, always so pale and still, like a mask of woe, as he had often thought, was flushed a delicate, glowing pink. He drew out his desk-chair, under the impulse given by her look, and had actually drawn the paper towards him before he thought to say :

"Perhaps you had best tell me the nature of the letter you wish me to write."

She leaned over his shoulder and dipped the pen in the ink in her impatience, now very evident, and growing in strength every moment. Then she came around where she could look into his face, and said :

"Write, sir, to Mr. Richard Harrison, and tell him what Mr. Carleton knows of Mr. Sloan's Canada trip ; and then add that his wife is quietly earning her own and her mother's living ; and

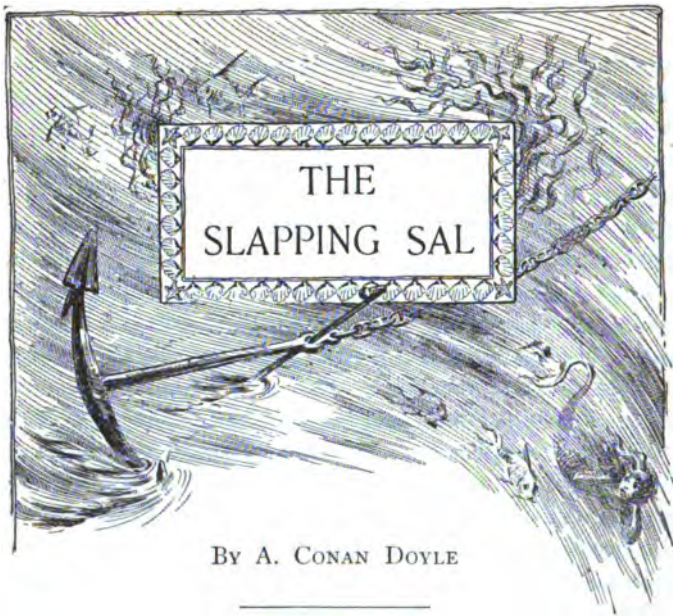
that you have positive knowledge that she prefers to do so than to be longer dependent upon a husband who suspects her honor; and be pleased to add, Mr. Clay, that her whereabouts need be no longer a secret; and—oh, I had no idea," she added, a sob in her voice, "that the world was busy with my name!"

Poor George Clay often described this as the most exciting moment of his life.

"There she stood," he would say, "like a beautiful, vengeful goddess; and I defy any just-minded man to have harbored an instant's suspicion of her. She had been sinned against, and no one could doubt her innocence. Of course I wrote a letter—not just that sort, of course—and got Harrison's address from Lea. Mrs. Harrison consented to leave the whole adjustment in my hands; and the Lord knows I worked hard enough to have exacted a retainer, and to have recovered a large fee afterwards, had it been business. I had often labored to separate married people, but this was my first case to bring them together again. Harrison had been following a false scent as far as Pau; and I had to write three times before I could reach him, and then cabled to start him home. I coaxed her to give up the office work at once, pledging my honor on her husband's good temper; and so represented the whole case, that she clung to me for aid all through, simple as a little girl. It was from first to last the mischief of that little Mrs. Flagg, who had been in love with Harrison herself, and wanted to separate them for her own ends. She came precious near succeeding, confound her! No one but I myself will know the agony of soul that poor, abused child went through. They are in Southern California now. Harrison sometimes writes to me."

But George never finished the story by an explanation of the joy in the hearts of the firm of Herbert Clay, Clay & Williams at the departure of Miss Smith, nor of the alacrity with which they filled her place with "a boy"; and, also, nothing was ever said by way of an explanation, nor any reason given, for Russell Carleton's sudden determination to go to paint views in Russia.





IT was in the days when France's power was already broken upon the seas, and when more of her three-deckers lay rotting in the Medway than were to be found in Brest harbor. But her frigates and corvettes still scoured the ocean, closely followed ever by those of her rival. At the uttermost ends of the earth these dainty vessels, with sweet names of girls or of flowers, mangled and shattered each other for the honor of the four yards of bunting that flapped from their gaffs.

It had blown hard in the night, but the wind had dropped with the dawning, and now the rising sun tinted the fringe of the storm wrack as it dwindled into the west and glinted on the endless crests of the long green waves. The north and south and west lay in a skyline which was unbroken save by the spout of foam when two of the great Atlantic seas dashed each other into spray. To the east was a rocky island jutting out into craggy points, with a few scattered clumps of palm-trees and a pennant of mist streaming out from the bare conical hill that capped it. A heavy surf beat upon the shore, and at a safe distance from it the British thirty-two gun frigate *Leda*, Captain A. P. Johnson, raised her black, glistening side upon the crest of a wave or swooped down into an emerald valley, dipping away to the nor'ard under easy sail. On her snow-white quarter-deck stood a stiff, little, brown-faced man, who swept the horizon with his glass.

"Mr. Wharton," he cried, with a voice like a rusty hinge.
A thin, knockkneed officer shambled across the poop to him.
"Yes, sir."

"I've opened the sealed orders, Mr. Wharton."

A glimmer of curiosity shone upon the eager features of the first lieutenant. The *Leda* had sailed with her consort, the *Dido*, from Antigua the week before, and the admiral's orders had been contained in a sealed envelope.

"We were to open them on reaching the deserted island of Sombriero, lying in north latitude 18 degrees 36 minutes, west longitude 63 degrees 28 minutes. Sombriero bore four miles to the northeast from our port bow when the gale cleared, Mr. Wharton."

The lieutenant bowed stiffly. He and the captain had been bosom friends from childhood. They had gone to school together, joined the navy together and married into each other's families, but as long as their feet were on the poop the iron discipline of the service struck all that was human out of them and left only the superior and the subordinate. Captain Johnson took a blue paper from his pocket which crackled as he unfolded it :

The 32-gun frigates *Leda* and *Dido* (Captains A. P. Johnson and James Munroe) are to cruise from the point at which these instructions are read to the mouth of the Caribbean sea in the hope of encountering the French frigate *La Gloire* (48), which has recently harassed our merchant ships in that quarter. H. M. frigates are also directed to hunt down the piratical craft known sometimes as the *Slapping Sal* and sometimes as the *Hairy Hudson*, which has plundered the British ships as per margin, inflicting barbarities upon their crews. She is a small brig, carrying 10 light guns, with one 24-pound carronade forward. She was last seen upon the 23d ult. to the northeast of the island of Sombriero.

JAMES MONTGOMERY, Rear Admiral.

H. M. S. *Colossus*, Antigua.

"We appear to have lost our consort," said Captain Johnson, folding up his instructions and again sweeping the horizon with his glass. "She drew away after we reefed down. It would be a pity if we met this heavy Frenchman without the *Dido*, Mr. Wharton, eh?"

The lieutenant twinkled and smiled.

"She has 18-pounders on the main and twelves on the poop, sir," said the captain. "She carries 400 to our 231. Captain de Milon is the smartest man in the French service. Oh, Bobby, boy, I'd give my hopes of my flag to rub my side up

against her." He turned on his heel, ashamed of his momentary lapse. "Mr. Wharton," said he, looking back sternly over his shoulder, "get those square sails shaken out and bear away a point more to the west."

"A brig on the port bow," came a voice from the fore-castle.

"A brig on the port bow," said the lieutenant.

The captain sprang up on the bulwarks and held on to the mizzen shrouds, a strange little figure with flying skirts and puckered eyes. The lean lieutenant craned his neck and whispered to Smeaton, the second, while officers and men came popping up from below, and clustering along the weather-rail, shading their eyes with their hands, for the tropical sun was already clear of the palm trees. The strange brig lay at anchor in the throat of a curving estuary, and it was already obvious that she could not get out without passing under the guns of the frigate. A long, rocky point to the north of her held her in.

"Keep her as she goes, Mr. Wharton," said the captain. "Hardly worth while clearing for action, Mr. Smeaton, but the men can stand by the guns in case she tries to pass us. Cast loose the bowchasers and send the small-arm men on to the fore-castle."

A British crew went to its quarters in those days with the quiet serenity of men on their daily routine. In a few minutes, without fuss or sound, the sailors were knotted around their guns, the marines were drawn up and leaning on their muskets, and the frigate's bowsprit pointed straight for her little victim.

"Is it Slapping Sal, sir?"

"I have no doubt of it, Mr. Wharton."

"They don't seem to like the look of us, sir. They've cut their cable and are clapping on sail."

It was evident that the brig meant to struggle for her freedom. One little patch of canvas fluttered out above another, and her people could be seen working like madmen in the rigging. She made no attempt to pass her antagonist, but headed up the estuary. The captain rubbed his hands.

"She's making for shoal water, Mr. Wharton, and we shall have to cut her out, sir. She's a footy little brig, but I should have thought a fore-and-after would have been more handy."

"It was a mutiny, sir."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes, sir, I heard of it in Manilla—a bad business, sir. Captain and two mates murdered. This Hudson, or Hairy Hudson,

as they call him, led the mutiny. He's a Londoner, sir, but as cruel a villain as ever walked."

"His next walk will be to Execution dock, Mr. Wharton. She seems heavily manned. I wish I could take twenty topmen out of her; but they would be enough to corrupt the crew of the ark, Mr. Wharton."

Both officers were looking through their glasses at the brig. Suddenly the lieutenant showed his teeth in a grin, while the captain flushed to a deeper red.

"That's Hairy Hudson on the after-rail, sir."

"The low, impertinent blackguard. He'll play some other antics before we are done with him. Could you reach him with the long eighteen, Mr. Smeaton?"

"Another cable length will do it, sir."

The brig yawed as they spoke, and as she came round a spurt of smoke whiffed out from her quarter. It was a pure piece of bravado, for the gun could scarcely carry half way. Then with a jaunty swing the little ship came into wind again and shot round a fresh curve of the winding channel.

"The water's shoaling rapidly, sir," reported the second lieutenant.

"There's six fathoms by the chart."

"Four by the lead, sir."

"When we clear this point, we shall see how we lie. Ha! I thought as much. Lay her to, Mr. Wharton. Now we have got her at our mercy."

The frigate was quite out of sight of the sea now at the head of this river-like estuary. As she came round the curve the two shores were seen to converge at a point about a mile distant. In the angle, as near shore as she could get, the brig was lying with her broadside toward her pursuer and a wisp of black cloth streaming from her mizzen. The lean lieutenant, who had reappeared upon deck with a cutlass strapped to his side and two pistols rammed into his belt, peered curiously at the ensign.

"Is it the Jolly Roger, sir?" he asked.

But the captain was furious. "He may hang where his breeches are hanging before I have done with him," said he.

"What boats will you want, Mr. Wharton?"

"We should do it with the launch and the jolly boat."

"Take four and make a clean job of it. Pipe away the crews at once, and I'll work her in and help you with the long eighteens."

With a rattle of ropes and a creaking of blocks, the four boats splashed into the water. Their crews clustered thickly into them, barefooted sailors, stolid marines, laughing middies and in the sheets of each the senior officers with their stern schoolmaster faces. The captain, his elbows on the binnacle, still watched the distant brig. Her crew were tricing up the boarding-netting, dragging round the starboard guns, knocking new portholes for them and making every preparation for a desperate resistance. In the thick of it all a huge man, bearded to the eyes, with a red nightcap upon his head, was straining and stooping and hauling. The captain watched him with a sour smile, and then snapping up his glass he turned upon his heel. For an instant he stood staring.

"Call back the boats!" he cried in his thin, creaking voice. "Clear away for action there! Cast loose those main-deck guns. Brace back the yards, Mr. Smeaton, and stand by to go about when she has weight enough."

Round the curve of the estuary was coming a huge vessel. Her great yellow bowsprit and white-winged figurehead were jutting out from the cluster of palm trees, while high above them towered three immense masts with the tricolor flag floating superbly from the mizzen. Round she came, the deep blue water creaming under her forefoot until her long, curving black side, her line of shining copper sheath and of snow-white hammocks above and the thick cluster of men who peered over her bulwarks were all in full view. Her lower yards were slung, her ports triced up and her guns run out all ready for action. Lying behind one of the promontories of the island the lookout men of the *Gloire* upon the shore had seen the cul-de-sac into which the British frigate had headed, so that Captain de Milon had served the *Leda* as Captain Johnson had the *Slapping Sal*.

But the splendid discipline of the British service was at its best in such a crisis. The boats flew back, their crews clustered aboard, they were swung up at the davits and the fall ropes made fast. Hammocks were brought up and stowed, bulkheads sent down, ports and magazines opened, the fires put out in the galley and the drums beat to quarters. Swarms of men set the headsails and brought the frigate round, while the gun crews threw off their jackets and shirts, tightened their belts and ran out their 18-pounders, peering through the open portholes at the stately Frenchman. The wind was very light. Hardly a ripple showed itself upon the clear, blue water, but the sails blew gently

out as the breeze came over the wooded banks. The Frenchman had gone about also, and both ships were now heading slowly for the sea under fore and aft canvas, the Gloire one hundred yards in advance. She luffed up to cross the Leda's bows, but the British ship came round also, and the two rippled slowly on in such a silence that the ringing of the ramrods as the French marines drove home their charges clanged quite loudly upon the ear.

"Not much sea-room, Mr. Wharton," remarked the captain.

"I have fought actions in less, sir."

"We must keep our distance and trust to our gunnery. She is very heavily manned, and if she gets alongside we might find ourselves in trouble."

"I see the shakos of soldiers aboard of her."

"Two companies of light infantry from Martinique. Now we have her. Hard a port, and let her have it as we cross her stern."

The keen eye of the little commander had seen the surface ripple, which told of a passing breeze. He had used it to dart across behind the big Frenchman and to rake her with every gun as he passed. But once passed her the Leda had to come back into the wind to keep out of shoal water. The manœuvre brought her on to the starboard side of the Frenchman, and the trim little frigate seemed to heel right over under the crashing broadside which burst from the gaping ports. A moment later the topmen were swarming aloft to set her topsails and royals, and she strove to cross the Gloire's bows and rake her again. The French captain, however, brought the frigate's head around, and the two rode side by side within easy pistol-shot, pouring broadsides into each other in one of those murderous duels which, could they all be recorded, would mottle our charts with blood.

In that heavy tropical air, with so faint a breeze, the smoke formed a thick bank round the two vessels, from which the topmasts only protruded. Neither could see anything of the enemy save the throbs of fire in the darkness, and the guns were sponged and trained and fired into a dense wall of vapor. On the poop and forecastle the marines in two little red lines were pouring in their volleys, but neither they nor the seamen gunners could see what effect their fire was having. Nor, indeed, could they tell how far they were suffering themselves, for standing at a gun one could but hazily see that upon the right and the left. But above the roar of the cannon came the sharper sound of the piping

shot, the crashing of riven planks and the occasional heavy thud as spar or block came hurtling on the deck. The lieutenants paced up and down behind the line of guns, while Captain Johnson fanned the smoke away with his cocked hat and peered eagerly out.

"This is rare, Bobby," said he as the lieutenant joined him. Then suddenly restraining himself, "What have we lost, Mr. Wharton?"

"Our maintopsail yard and our gaff, sir."

"Where's the flag?"

"Gone overboard, sir."

"They'll think we have struck. Lash a boat's ensign on the starboard arm of the mizzen cross jack-yard."

"Yes, sir."

A round shot dashed the binnacle to pieces between them. A second knocked two marines into a bloody palpitating mass. For a moment the smoke rose, and the English captain saw that his adversary's heavier metal was producing a horrible effect. The *Leda* was a shattered wreck. Her deck was strewn with corpses. Several of her portholes were knocked into one, and one of her 18-pounder guns had been thrown right back on her breech and pointed straight up to the sky. The thin line of marines still loaded and fired, but half the guns were silent, and their crews were piled thickly round them.

"Stand by to repel boarders!" yelled the captain.

"Cutlasses, lads, cutlasses!" roared Wharton.

"Hold your volley till they touch!" cried the captain of marines.

The huge loom of the Frenchman was seen bursting through the smoke. Thick clusters of boarders hung upon her sides and shrouds. A final broadside leaped from her ports, and the mainmast of the *Leda* snapped short off a few feet above deck, spun into the air and crashed down upon the port guns, killing ten men and putting the whole battery out of action. An instant later the two ships scraped together and the starboard bower anchor of the *Gloire* caught the mizzen chain of the *Leda* upon the port side. With a yell the black swarm of boarders steadied themselves for a spring.

But their feet were never to reach that blood-stained deck. From somewhere there came a well aimed whiff of grape, and another and another. The English marines and seamen, waiting with cutlass and musket behind the silent guns, saw with amaze-

ment the dark masses thinning and shredding away. At the same time the port boarders of the Frenchman burst into a roar.

"Clear away the wreck," roared the captain. "What the devil are they firing at?"

"Get the guns clear!" panted the lieutenant. "We'll do 'em yet, boys!"

The wreckage was torn and hacked and splintered until first one gun and then another roared into action again. The Frenchman's anchor had been cut away, and the Leda had worked herself free from that fatal hug. But now, suddenly, there was a scurry up the shrouds of the Gloire, and a hundred Englishmen were shouting themselves hoarse.

"They're running! They're running! They're running!"

And it was true. The Frenchman had ceased to fire and was intent only upon clapping on every sail that she could carry.

But that shouting hundred could not claim it all as their own. As the smoke cleared it was not difficult to see the reason. The ships had gained the mouth of the estuary during the fight, and there, about four miles out to sea, was the Leda's consort bearing down under full sail to the sound of the guns. Captain de Milon had done his part for one day, and presently the Gloire was drawing off swiftly to the north, while the Dido was bowling along at her skirts, rattling away with her bowchasers until a headland hid them from view.

But the Leda lay sorely stricken, with her mainmast gone, her bulwarks shattered, her mizzenmast and gaff shot away, her sails like a beggar's rags and a hundred of her crew dead and wounded. Close beside her a mass of wreckage floated upon the waves. It was the sternpost of a mangled vessel, and across it in white letters on a black ground was printed the "Slapping Sal."

"By the Lord, it was the brig that saved us!" cried Mr. Wharton. "Hudson brought her into action with the Frenchman and was blown out of the water by a broadside."

The little captain turned on his heel and paced up and down the deck. Already his crew were plugging the shot-holes, knotting and splicing and mending. When he came back, the lieutenant saw a softening of the stern lines about his mouth and eyes.

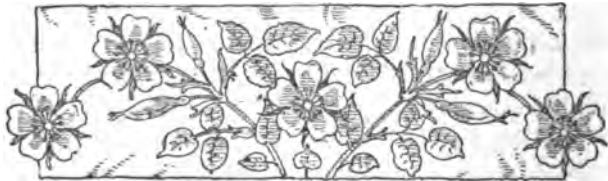
"Are they all gone?"

"Every man. They must have sunk with the wreck."

The two officers looked down at the sinister name and at the

stump of wreckage which floated in the discolored water. Something black washed to and fro beside a splintered gaff and a tangle of halliards. It was the outrageous ensign, and near it a scarlet cap was floating.

“He was a villain, but he was a Briton,” said the captain at last. “He lived like a dog; but, by God, he died like a man.”



A WINDFALL *

BY JANE BARLOW

Author of "Bogland Studies"

THE widow M'Gurk has managed her own farm of more than half an acre ever since her husband's death, which took place one spring several years ago, just when he was about to get in his seed potatoes. They weighed very much on his mind during his last hours, for he gravely doubted the success of his wife's unsupervised operations, and how was she going to live at all if the crop failed on her? She tried to pacify him by assuring him that the ground was frozen as hard as bullets, and all the men in Connaught couldn't work a stroke if they were outside in the field; but he was not deceived, and would have got up if he had been able to stand on his feet. "Pitaties" were all that day the burden of so much discourse as is possible to anyone with double pneumonia, which his neighbors diagnosed as "a quare wakeness on his chest;" but, about sunseting, Father Rooney, summoned by Mad Bell, rode up on his old cream-colored pony, and he gave the sick man some consolation.

"Well, well, M'Gurk," he said, "she'll have good neighbors to assist her anyway, and she'll do grandly with the blessing of God. When I was coming along just now I think I noticed one of the boys getting across the dyke into your bit of field there with a graip over his shoulder, like as if he was about doing a job for you."

M'Gurk sought to verify this cheering news by looking through the span of window which was near his head, but as it happened to be glazed with the lid of a tin biscuit-canister he could not do so, and had to take the statement on trust. Howsoever, he said, "Glory be," and thenceforward seemed "aisier like," until the small hours next morning, when he grew easier still.

Mrs. M'Gurk's subsequent career, though not exactly *grand*, even for Lisconnel, has in a measure, at least, justified Father Rooney's prognostications. The people have been ready enough to do good turns for a neighbor who takes high social rank as a

* From "Irish Idylls"—Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, Publishers.

lone widdy, without chick or child belongin' to her in this world, the crathur. But her own peculiarities sometimes ran counter to their kind intentions. She was not a native of that country side, and had traveled to it along a path declining from better days, most grievous for her to tread, as she had the proud and independent spirit through which the steps of those coming down in the world are vexed with a thousand thorns. After more than half a lifetime, her heart still turned to the place where she had spent her long, young years of comparative prosperity, before her father "got drinking." She could not bring herself to accept the lower level as a permanent one, or to abandon an absurdly palpable fiction according to which she was recognized as well-to-do and in want of nobody's help. Hence, whenever she was known to be in straits, the neighbors had to consider not only their own ways and means, generally a puzzling question, but also susceptibilities on the widow's part, which often proved no less embarrassing and restrictive. A little too much outspokenness, a little over-precipitancy in taking the hint which she was sometimes lothfully constrained to let fall, would convert any attempted relief into grounds of dire offense.

It would not do, for example, to come bouncing in, as Judy Ryan did one evening, bringing a pailful of potatoes, culled cautiously, though in no grudging mood, from a slender store—if Judy threw back a handful at the last moment, it was not her will consented—and saying: "Och sure, Mrs. M'Gurk, I've heard you're run out o' pitaties; why, it's starved you must be, woman alive, cliver and clane. Here's an odd few I've brought you in th' ould bucket, and they'd be more, on'y we're gettin' shortish ourselves." Judy was immediately informed, with a lamentable disregard of truth that Mrs. M'Gurk had more pitaties than she could use in a month of Sundays, and was at the same time given to understand, with an impolite absence of circumlocution, that the sooner she removed herself and her ould bucket, the better it would be. After which the Pat Ryans and the widow M'Gurk were not on speaking terms for many a long day. Then, on another occasion, she gloomily dug her steep potato-patch all over again from top to bottom, and, in consequence, had her potatoes a good fortnight late, whereby half of them rotted in a spell of very wet weather, which occurred before they were fit to lift, simply because Hugh Quigley had finished trenching the ground for them without consulting her, thinking that since she seemed whiles troubled with the rheumatics, forby not being

altogether so soople as she was, she would deem it a pleasant surprise to find the task unbeknownst taken off her hands.

Incidents such as these led Lisconnel to opine that the widow M'Gurk was "as conthrary as the two inds of a rapin-hook," and their tendency was, not unnaturally, to diminish her friends' zeal upon her behalf. Yet she never so far alienated their sympathies but that she found some of them ready to stand by her at a pinch, and, as they said, "humor her the best way they could."

Perhaps Mrs. Kilfoyle, the old woman who remembered impossible things, was most successful in this respect; which need not be wondered at, since people regarded her as a person who possessed more gifts than a turn for romancing. These were at times summed up in a statement that she had a way with her. The way which she commonly used in her delicate transactions with the widow M'Gurk, was to borrow the loan from her of a jug or a mug. What she could want with one, it would have been difficult to conjecture plausibly, for she had an assortment of them much more numerous than any imaginable emergencies could demand, ranged upon her own smoke-blackened shelves. Small articles of coarse crockery would seem to be the one thing in which Lisconnel is sometimes superfluous. However, the fact is that Mrs. Kilfoyle ever and anon toiled up the rush-tussocked slope to Mrs. M'Gurk's abode on the hillside—which she certainly would not have done for nothing, being old, and, though a light weight, less nimble of foot than of wit—with no ostensible purpose other than to negotiate such a loan. It is true that on these occasions she was apt to be struck by a sudden thought just as she took leave.

"Well, I must be shankin' off wid oneseif, Mrs. M'Gurk, and thank you kindly, ma'am. Sure it's troublin' you I am too often."

"Not at all, not at all," from Mrs. M'Gurk, whose gaunt head rose two inches higher with the consciousness of conferring a favor—"don't think to be mentionin' it, Mrs. Kilfoyle; you're as welcome as the light o' day to any sticks of things I've got."

"I suppose now, ma'am, you couldn't be takin' a couple o' stone o' praties off of us? Ours do be keepin' that badly, we can't use them quick enough, and you could be payin' us back when the new ones come in, accordin' as was convanient. If you would, I'd send one o' the childer up wid them as soon as I git home. Sorra the trouble in it at all, and thank you kindly, Mrs. M'Gurk, and good-evenin' to you, ma'am." Then, trotting

down the hill: "I'll bid the lads to be stirrin' themselves. Niver a bit the cratur's after gittin' this day."

Or it might be: "Good-evenin', then, Mrs. M'Gurk, and I'll be careful wid your jug. I was thinkin', be the way, you maybe wouldn't object to the lads lavin' you up a few creels of turf, now our stack's finished buildin', just to keep them quiet, for it's beyond themselves they git entirely if they're not at some job. They do have their mother distracted wid their divilments, the little spalpeens."

I believe the widow was never known to take offense at any of these afterthoughts, though I am not sure that she did not now and then dimly surmise a stratagem, which she would have resented fiercely had the contriver been anybody else than this little old woman, with her white hair like carded bog-cotton, and a sweet, high, piping voice like a small chicken's. But even the other neighbors sometimes managed things adroitly, for Lisconnel is not deficient in tact when it takes time to consider. Still, that tug-of-war between pride and penury could not fail to produce harassing incidents, and the widow M'Gurk swallowed many an ungrudgingly bestowed morsel, with bitter feelings of reluctance, which rather more or less magnanimity would have spared her.

But one day she found herself elevated above these mortifications by a little wave of affluence, which swelled up suddenly under her feet. It was a still November morning, with a smooth, leaden sky, and wisps of paler mist hardly moving on the sombre face of the bog in the distance; not a morning that seemed to promise anything out of the common, yet it brought a letter to the widow M'Gurk. A letter is almost as infrequent an occurrence in Lisconnel as a burglary in a village of average liveliness, and it usually gets there by circuitous and dilatory modes of conveyance, for which the postal regulations are not responsible.

But the contents of Mrs. M'Gurk's blue envelope were fully as astonishing as its appearance had been. They consisted of a money order, accompanied by a document which explained that this was the share accruing to her from the divided estate of some unknown kinsman who had died possessed, as was apparent, of property in Connecticut, U. S. A. And the money order was for the amount of *fifteen shillings*.

Do not suppose that Mrs. M'Gurk ascertained these things at a glance, as we might read a paragraph in a newspaper; the deciphering of them proved a stiff task for a more knowledgable person than herself—though, mind you, it was a quare piece of

print would bother her, or handwriting either, if it was wrote any-ways reasonable. Her first impression, in truth, was that she had received some ominous notice or "warnin'" about her rent, which would imply that she stood in imminent danger of being "put out of it," an apprehension prone to haunt the mind of the dweller in Lisconnel; and, winged with this mirk-feathered fear, she sped down to consult her nearest neighbors, the Kilfoyles. So great was her hurry, that Mrs. Brian Kilfoyle, rinsing a pot outside their door, remarked to her mother-in-law within:

"Here's the widdy M'Gurk leppin' down the hill like an ould spancelled goat. Be the powers, she was nearly on her head that time over a wisp of bent grass. It's much if she's not after scaldin' her hand wid the kettle, for she seems to have got a bit o' white rag on it."

As neither of them could enlighten or reassure her, Brian was shouted for from his adjacent diggings, and even he had to sit for a considerable time on the dyke, with the paper spread down in front of him between two broad thumbs, and with a little breeze blowing through his red beard, before he solved the problem. A small crowd had assembled to hear the result, and was properly impressed by the magnitude of the riches which had flowed into Lisconnel. People are generally loth to be in any way baulked of a strong sensation, and so when Mrs. Sheridan said, after prolonged calculatory mutterings, "Fifteen shillin's—sure that somethin' short of a pound, isn't it now?" there was a disposition to resent the remark, albeit she really spoke with no wish to belittle, but merely from a habit of estimating things negatively.

"It's more than her half-year's rent, so it is, anyhow, whatever it may be short of," said Pat Ryan, sententiously.

"May the devil dance upon the rint," rejoined his brother Tim, "but I'm wishin' you good luck along wid your disthribited fortune, Mrs. M'Gurk."

Public sentiment was, on the whole, with Tim. Of course, if this phenomenal influx of wealth had confined itself less exclusively to a single channel, satisfaction would have been livelier. Pennies jingling in your own pocket ring more silvery than shillings in that of your neighbor, and will do so until coins may bear the date of the millenium. Still, the widow's legacy was a popular measure in Lisconnel, and for the time being created among its inhabitants a strong feeling in favor of Fortune's administration of affairs. Their motives, however, were not

purely disinterested, because some of them,—more especially the women and girls,—would for several weeks retain an irrational conviction that the probabilities of such a letter coming to their own address had been materially heightened. Only by degrees would these illogical persons cease to experience a faint twinge of disappointment when some casual Pat or Mick, returning from the Town, appeared, as might have been expected, empty-handed. It was so easy to imagine someone again bawling along the road: "Where's Mrs. So-and-So? Sure there's a letter for her they gave me down beyant."

There were a few exceptions to this prevalence of generous sympathy. I fear that Mrs. Quigley cannot be acquitted of an attempt to dull an envious pang by rubbing the edge off Mrs. M'Gurk's joy when she said, after a critical survey of the flimsy paper scrap in which it was at present infolded: "Well, now, *I'd* liefer ha' had the money down straight, or, at all ivints, one of them blue-and-white pattron, wid the plain black figures. I've heard tell there does be ivery manner of botheration sometimes afore you can git that sort ped—if you iver git it at all."

Mrs. M'Gurk's face fell as rapidly as a barometer in a hurricane; but before it had time to lengthen more than an inch or so: "Divil the botheration," Brian said. "Herself below at the office 'll just sling the amount at you out of her little windy-box, same as if it was a penn'orth of brown sugar over the counter at Corr's. They might be axin' you to put your name to somethin'; but sure any ould scrawl 'll do, and they 'll settle it up themselves inside. That's all the trouble's in it."

"Och, well, they'll be takin' something off of it for sartin'," persisted Mrs. Quigley, reduced to a but paltry and meagre solace; "they're niver for payin' one the full amount of anythin'. Pennies they'll be takin' off."

But Brian said with confidence, "I question will they. And at all ivints a pinny or so's but a trifle here or there. It's yourself 'ud be countin' the spillin's when they were pourin' you out a sup o' drink."

So Mrs. Quigley returned, out of humor, to her morning's occupation, which happened to be minding a small baby, patching an old, red woolen petticoat with bits of an older blay calico shirt, wishing that the rheumatiz hadn't got such a hould on her right elbow, and wondering by what manner of manes they could contrive to use only the full of the big pot of potatoes daily, when every other potato was bad in the middle, while Mrs.

M'Gurk, her faith in her windfall not appreciably shaken, resumed possession of her postal order, now imprinted blackly with many official stamps.

When the Æschylean Hermés said that Prometheus would not be tolerable if he were prosperous, he voiced a sentiment which most of us have felt at times, though we may never have expressed it so frankly, and which appears rather melancholy and rather grotesque, if one considers it deeply enough. Not that this remark has any special application to the widow M'Gurk, whatever may have been the case with regard to the pioneer philanthropist. Two or three of her neighbors, it is true, did suspect her of seeming "sot up like" by her accession of wealth. But this was merely their imagination. She really was not unduly uplifted, being, indeed, one of the people in whom a sudden shock of good luck awakens a keen and compunctious sense of their neighbors' less happy circumstances. When this half remorseful feeling is retrospective in its action, linking itself with memories of those who can be no longer touched by any freak of fortune, it serves as a very effectual safeguard against over-elation. And that is not at all an uncommon experience among the dwellers in places like Lisconnel.

The widow M'Gurk, then, bore her fifteen shillings meekly, and even listened with patience to the conflicting advice which her neighbors liberally gave her on the urgent question of their investment. Four shillings must go, "body and bones," to pay off a long-standing account at Corr's, that was one fixed point; but with respect to laying out the remainder of the sum there were as many minds as there were women in Lisconnel, and rather more. On the whole, she seemed most inclined to adopt the suggestion offered by Mrs. Kilfoyle.

"If I was in your coat, Mrs. M'Gurk," she said, "I've a great notion I'd be gittin' mysel, three or four stone, or maybe half a barrel, of male—oaten-male, I mane, ma'am, not the yella Injin thrash, that's fitter for pigs than human cratures—God forgive me for sayin' so. That 'ud come expensive on you, ma'am, I know, but then 'twould put you over the worst of the winter grand. Sure, there's nothin' more delightful of a perishin' night than a sup of oatmale gruel wid a taste o' sour milk through it, nothin' so iligant, unless it might be a hot cup o' tay."

Nobody believed Peter Sheridan when he alleged that if the money were his, he'd just slip it away somewhere safe, and have it ready to hand towards the Lady-Day rent. Such unnatural

prudence could be supposed in no one when actually brought to the test. "It was aist talkin', and he himself niver before the world wid a thrupinny bit."

Be that as it may, Mrs. M'Gurk had long before sunset planned a shopping expedition to the Town for the very next day; and it was arranged that the widow Doyne's Stacey should accompany her and help her with her load, which people understood would consist mainly of a heavy meal-bag. An early start was necessary, for daylight had shrunk nearly to its shortest measure, and the Town lies a good step beyond even far-off Duffclane, which, scarcely surpassing Lisconnell in size, and making no better attempt at a shop than a cabin with two loaves filling one window, and half a dozen shrivelled oranges and a glass of sugar-sticks enriching the other, gives little scope for the operations of the capitalist. If you live at Lisconnell, it is convenient to understand that "down below" means Duffclane, and "down beyant," Ballybrosna, pre-eminently the Town.

There were still thin fiery lines quivering low down on the rim of the ashen-grey eastern sky, and to the westward the shadow of a great dark wing still seemed to brood over the bog, when Mrs. M'Gurk, wearing a hooded cloak, borrowed from Mrs. Sheridan, and bearing a battered osier basket with a cord handle, loaned by Big Anne, stood ready equipped for her journey. Before she could start, however, she had to make a round of calls upon her acquaintances to inquire whether she could do e'er a thing for them down beyant. This is a long-established social observance, which to omit would have been a grave breach of etiquette; yet, like other social observances, it sometimes becomes rather trying. On the present occasion one might almost have fancied a touch of irony in the polite question. There were so many things she could have done for them, if—but there was much virtue in that "if." More just then than usual, for the harvest had been indifferent, and an early spell of cold weather had brought keenly home to the inhabitants of Lisconnell the fact that they stood upon the verge of the long winter. And the people were afraid of it. In the face of those white starving days and black perishing nights they durst not break into their queer little hoards of pence—corners of "hankerchers," or high-hung jugs, or even chinks in the wall—any more than they would have opened their door with an unmetaphorical wolf howling expectantly somewhere fast by. So the widow M'Gurk received only few and trivial commissions: a penn'orth of housewife thread, a couple of farthing match-boxes,

and the like. Mrs. Quigley was on the point of bespeaking half a stone of meal, but drew back at the last moment, and resolved to do with potatoes, though her husband, who had begun to scent stirabout for breakfast, looked cast down as he tramped off with his graip. And Mrs. Pat Ryan knew that her children were expecting a penny among them to send for sugar-sticks, so she told them angrily to quit out of that from under her feet and be minding the goat. For, at such times, the heart of the head of affairs has to be hardened, and the process often incidentally gives a rough edge to the temper.

The last people Mrs. M'Gurk called' upon were the Mick Ryans. Old Mick, who had long been past his work, and indeed "past himself entirely," as his neighbors put it, was seated on the dyke near the door, waiting till "they were a bit redded up inside," and thinking vaguely that the wind felt cold. His smoke-dried, furrowed face had hardly more expression in it than the little potato patch that sloped up behind him; but all at once a gleam came into his eyes, and he said very alertly:

"And is it to the Town ye're goin', ma'am?"

"Ah, well now, father, what 'ud you be after at all?" said Mrs. Mick, his daughter-in-law, uneasily; for old Ryan was fumbling in his pockets, where in bygone days there used sometimes to be pennies, but where there never were any now.

"Tobaccy," he said, after a pause, and fumbled on.

"Whethen now, goodness grant me patience, what talk have you about tobaccy these times, man alive?" said Mrs. Mick, with slightly threadbare good-humor. "Where'd you be gittin' a notion of tobaccy? Sure Mrs. M'Gurk"—here signalling with a gutta-percha grimace to her visitor for corroboration—"won't be settin' fut within miles of a tobaccy shop. She's just goin' after a bag o' male. And himself might be gettin' you a bit comin' on the New Year. Didn't he bring you a grand twist on'y last Lady-Day?"

The old man, partly discouraged by the fruitlessness of his researches in his pocket, and partly by the haziness of the prospect held out to him, seemed to let the idea drop, and his face became nearly as vacant a tract as before, with perhaps a shadow on the furrows. And his unmarried daughter, who had also been groping in her pocket but had found nothing to the purpose there, said, under her breath, "the crathur"—two words, which in Lisconnel so often sum up one's judgment upon a neighbor's character and condition.

The widow M'Gurk and Stacey Doyne could not be expected home much before dark, and nobody began to look out for them until quite one o'clock. The ridge of the knockawn behind the widow's cabin commands an ample stretch of the road in both directions, and from that point of vantage there is generally some one on the look-out, most likely for a mere pastime, though watchers there have been sorely in earnest. But the probable proceedings of the two travelers, the various stages of their journey, and all the circumstances connected therewith, furnished unusually abundant material for discussion about the doors and beneath the thatch of Lisconnel all through this quiet November day, not otherwise rich in incident, as nothing more noteworthy occurred than a slight difference of opinion between Mrs. Quigley and Judy Ryan respecting some hens, and an acute yet transitory excitement roused when Mrs. Sheridan's two-year-old Joe was almost swept over the black edge of a bog hole by the trailing tether rope of an unruly goat. Neighbors meeting were at no loss for a remark when they could say, "They'll be better than half-ways by now," or "I wonder what Corr 'll be chargin' her the stone for the male," or "I'm after axin' her to try was there a chanst of anybody wantin' me couple of speckletty pullets. They've given over layin' on me, and I've scarce a bit o' feedin' for them up here at all; when they smell our pitaties boiled, they're in after them like eagles, fit to swally them out o' the pot."

As time wore on these speculations began to take a gloomy tone, for Mrs. M'Gurk was much later returning than had been anticipated, which naturally suggested some mishap. They might have lost the money order, that was the favorite hypothesis; or maybe the people at the post-office—Mrs. Quigley reverted, but now without malign intent, to her original theory—would have nothing to say to it good or bad. About five o'clock, when it was quite dark, a gossoon at the Mick Ryans' supposed, with a grin, that they might "ha' met somethin' quare comin' by Classon's Boreen." Whereupon Mrs. Mick, sitting in the dusky background, might have been seen to bless herself hurriedly, while Sally Sheridan, who stood near the open door, edged several steps further into the room; for the place mentioned is an ill-reputed bit of road. And the next time the rising wind came round the hill with a hoot and a keen, all the women started and said: "Och! the Laws bless us, what was that?"

At last, just as Mrs. Doyne was pointing out how easily one

of them might have happened to put her foot in a hole in the dark, and break the leg of her, the same way that O'Hanlon's son did a twelvemonth since, bringing back a heifer from the fair, and he lying out on the roadside all night, and the baste traipsed off home with herself as contented as you please—hailing shouts, which softened into a gabbling hum at a closer range, put an end to all such surmises.

Mrs. M'Gurk's shopping had been done on liberal lines, to judge by the bulging of the basket, which she set down on the first sufficiently flat-topped dyke of Lisconnel, while she took a temporary rest, and her friends skimmed the cream of the day's adventures. The ill-fitting lid covered an interesting miscellany, which the uncertain moonlight made it difficult to inspect and "price" satisfactorily. In Lisconnel no newly-imported article can be contemplated with equanimity until everybody who is qualified to form an opinion has guessed how much it cost. The first parcel that came out was the cause of the expedition's late return, having been accidentally laid down on a counter, and only remembered when Mrs. M'Gurk and her companion were a long mile and a half on their homeward way. But the widow felt that she would have tramped back wearily twice as far rather than have left it behind, when Biddy, old Mick Ryan's daughter, whispered to her: "Sure, he was lookin' out for somethin', in a manner, the whoule day; I knew by the face of him wheniver there would be a fut goin' past the door, though what got such an idee into his head bangs me. But I'll give you me word, this livin' minyit the crathur has a couple o' matches slipped up the sleeve of his ould coat that he axed the loan of from Larry Sheridan this mornin'; belike he——"

"Arrah now, look at the size o' the lump that is," interposed the daughter-in-law; "I'm rale ashamed, bedad. He'd no call to be talkin' of such things. Faith, ma'am, 'twill ha' stood you in——"

"Whisht then, whisht, you stookawn," protested Mrs. M'Gurk, "and don't go for to be puttin' him out of consait wid his little bit of enjoyment, size or no size."

Meanwhile old Mick sat with the expression of one wrapt away in a soothing reverie, and slowly fingered his dark twist of tobaccy, lingering gloatingly over the moist, newly-cut end. When Biddy offered to fetch him down his little black pipe, he said, "No, begob; I'll just be keepin' the feel of it in me hand for this night." Which he did.

There were other delights in the basket. A bundle of portly brown and white sugar-sticks made some full-grown people secretly wish that they were children too, and left the children themselves, for the time being, without an unsatisfied wish in the peppermint-scented world. It was on this occasion that a reconciliation between Mrs. M'Gurk and Judy Ryan, who, it may be remembered, had offensively obtruded an offering of potatoes, was cemented—durably, to draw omens from intense adhesiveness—by the number and length of the sticks bestowed upon the youthful Pat Ryans. Then there was a large blue bottle with a red-and-yellow label, which contained a “linyeement,” warranted to cure the very worst of rheumatics. This was to be divided between Mrs. Quigley and Peter Sheridan, sufferers of many twinges, who would now command, at any rate, the not-despised consolation diffused by strong odors of turpentine and camphorated oil. The only pity was, that “such powerful smellin’ stuff” should be marked *Poison* so very plainly as to scare any one from trying it “in’ards.” And in one parcel was a coarse warm woolen skirt for Stacey, instead of the thin rag in which she had shivered along many a mile that day; while another swelled with the knitting yarn that Peg Sheridan, who was “lame-futted, and lost widout a bit of work in her hand,” had been fretting for time out of mind. But the purchases whence Mrs. M'Gurk herself derived the keenest pleasure were the two dark-purple, papered packets which she left at the Kilfoyles’ cabin, on her way up to her own; no meagre funnel-shaped wisps, screwed up to receive skimpy ounces and quarters, but capacious bags, that would stand squarely on end when filled and corded, and that you would not err in describing as one pound of two-and-tupenny tea, and four of tupenny-ha’penny soft sugar.

This was, of course, magnificent; still one might have thought that old Mrs. Kilfoyle’s recollections of earlier days, remote though they were, would have prevented her from being so taken aback as to sit with the packages in her lap remarking nothing more appropriate than, “Musha then—well to goodness—sure, woman, dear—och now, begorra—why, what at all”—treble-noted incoherencies, which were borne down by the gruffer tones of Mrs. M'Gurk, who at the same time was saying, over-earnestly for a mere conventional disclaimer, “Ah, now, Mrs. Kilfoyle, honey, don’t let there be a word out of your head. Sure it was just to gratify meself I done it, for I’m rale annoyed—divil a lie I’m tellin’ you—it’s downright annoyed I do be to see the

little tay-pot sittin' cocked up there on the shelf, and niver a dhrop to go in it for you this great while back."

"Ay, that's so," said Mrs. Brian, "nary a grain o' tay she's had sin' poor Thady went, that would be bringin' her an odd quarter-poun' when he was after gettin' a job of work anywheres. But these times, what wid this thing and the other—howane'er it's a grand tays she'll be takin' now entirely," continued Mrs. Brian, who was inwardly calling herself a big, stupid gomach for alluding to Thady, "and the goat's milkin' finely yet awhile, so as there'll be a sup o' milk for her. You'll be havin' great tay drinkin's now, mother, won't you, wid what all Mrs. M'Gurk's after bringin' you?"

But, "The paice of heaven be his sowl's rest," Mrs. Kilfoyle said, as if to herself, with an irrelevancy which showed that her daughter-in-law had failed to turn back the current of her thoughts.

"I'm sure it was oncommon friendly of you, ma'am," Mrs. Brian said to Mrs. M'Gurk, with a semi-reproachful emphasis, which was addressed to someone else.

"'Deed, and that it was," the little old woman responded, remembering her manners, which she very seldom forgot, and hastening back from—who knows where? "There's nothin' I fancy like me cup o' tay; and you to be thinkin' of that. Why, I'll get Norah here to wet us a drop this mortal instant."

"But, Mrs. M'Gurk—why, musha, Mrs. M'Gurk," an exciting possibility had just occurred to one of the neighbors who was seeing her home. "What's gone wid your bag of male all this while? Where have you got it at all? Glory be to goodness, woman alive! it's not after lavin' it behind you anywhere's, you are?"

"Set it down out of her hand belike; or Stacey it was maybe; and it's twinty-siven chances if iver she sees sight or light of it again."

"Well, well, well, begorra, to think of that happenin' the crathur."

"Male is it?" said the widow, with calm. "Sure was it breakin' me own back or the girl's I'd be carryin' a load o' male that far? I could git one of the lads to bring me up a stone handy the next time he's down beyant; that's to say, if I'd make me mind up to be spendin' money on it at all," Mrs. M'Gurk hastened to add, being well aware that 'thruppince-farthin'' was at present the amount of her capital. "I've no great opinion of

male meself. It's a brash. A good hot pitaty's a dale tastier any day."

When Mrs. M'Gurk finally completed her unpacking in the seclusion of her own cabin, it appeared that she had brought nothing home with her, except a penn'orth of salt. The small brown-paper bag did not present an imposing appearance, set solitary on the bare deal table, and she stood looking at it with a somewhat regretful expression for a few moments. She was saying to herself: "If they'd axed an anyways reasonable price for them red wooly wads"—she meant knitted comforters—"hangin' up at Corr's, I might ha' got one for Mrs. Sheridan's Joe. It's starved with the could the imp of a crathur does be, and she's hard set to keep a stitch to its back. But sivenpence-ha'penny's beyond me altogether."

However, perfect satisfaction is unattainable, and few women have felt more contented, on the whole, with the result of a day's shopping than did Mrs. M'Gurk as she tumbled into the rushes and rags of her curiously constructed lair, where she began to dream of tobacco and yarn and alluring bakers' windows in the middle of her first strangely worded "*Hail Mary*."



OUR LAST LODGINGS

BY JAMES PAYN

LET me make myself understood, reader, at the outset. The above title does not refer to that bourne from which no traveler ever returns, and which some have therefore identified with Kilburn. It means simply what it says. I propose to describe the last lodgings occupied by myself and my friend Grateman last Easter, the awful circumstances of which seem certainly worth telling, although they have given each of us a considerable distaste for leaving home at that festive season for the future. I told Grateman how it would be before we started; but he is always self-opinionated; and when he has "the gout flying about him," as he calls it, which he happened to have at the period in question (for I am sorry to say that although he eats fish in Lent, he does not confine himself to that article by any means), he is as obstinate as a mule.

"My good soul," said I, persuasively, "it is idle to think of 'running down' to Sandcliff at Easter-time, at a moment's notice. The place is chokeful. We shall not find a roof to put our heads under; and even if we start by the first train, we cannot be down there till ten o'clock."

"And plenty of time too," interrupted he, impatiently. "The moon will be up, and the sea will be looking lovely. The doctors say I require 'a thorough change,' and the sooner I get it the better. As for rooms, I'll telegraph to the hotel at once."

We telegraphed accordingly, and the reply came back: "Hotel quite full throughout the week; no lodgings to be procured in the town."

"That's all nonsense," explained Grateman on the receipt of this discouraging intelligence. "They're like the dog in the manger, these hotels: if they can't take one in themselves, they do all they can to hinder others from taking one in. Now, I tell you what I'll do. In order to insure everything being in readiness for us when we arrive—for I don't deny the town may be full—I'll telegraph to Frank Surpliss; fellow that was in my year at Oriel, and who lives at Sandcliff; popular preacher there: wish I'd thought of it before."

"You can rely upon him, can you?"

"Of course I can. We were always in the same boat at college, and very literally, too, for he pulled stroke, and I pulled bow in the eight." So he sat down and wrote: *From James Grateman, Colchicum Terrace, London, to Frank Surpliss, Clergyman, Sandcliff* ("Is that the way to put it, eh? However, the clerk will make it right.") *Two bedrooms and a sitting-room, somewhere, for to-night. Have some supper ready; and join us.—* "There: if he is anything like what he was five years ago, he'll snap at that like a trout at a fly. So now, you see, you've got everything settled."

If I had, Grateman had not. It takes a great deal to settle him comfortably when he has "the gout flying about him." He must have everything nice, and a good deal of it, and to the minute, or else his irritation does not confine itself to his toe. In traveling, particularly, he is at such periods hard to please. He must have the seat opposite to him in the railway carriage kept for the accommodation of his feet; and if anybody ventures even into the next seat, his manner becomes unpleasant. On the present occasion, however, we secured a "through" carriage to ourselves, by the judicious investment of a florin; and Grateman took off his boots, and stowed away his many traveling appurtenances overhead and underfoot, with that sense of security that fears no change. At the junction, where a train from another part of London was wont to meet our own, there was a great crowd of passengers, but the silver key which had secured our places had fastened our door, and we remained undisturbed throughout the usual time spent in stoppage. At the last moment, however, an official put his head in at the window, and cried out: "Change here. Make haste, gentlemen; there is not an instant to lose."

"We want no change, man," answered Grateman in the words of Montezuma, in Pizarro, and with much the same magnificent expression of countenance. "We are booked through to Sandcliff."

"We always change here at Easter-time, sir; and you must hurry, I can tell you, if you don't wish to be left behind."

Remonstrance, rage, and an everlasting rancor against the fellow who had so unconscientiously taken his florin, had to be suppressed for the time, while the unhappy Grateman huddled his chattels together, and with his boots in his mouth (I speak the literal truth), limped across the platform to the departing train. It was full of Easter excursionists, and yet even they resented his

appearance and costume, and we only obtained places with the utmost difficulty, and to the great discontent of our fellow-travelers. I really don't think they were to blame for objecting to our society: it was not only that appearances were against my companion as to clothes; indignation, and the not being able to breathe with facility (through his boots), gave him a very truculent appearance. So soon as circumstances admitted of speech, he indulged for some minutes in indiscriminate invective, and then (his sense of humor overcoming his sense of wrong) suddenly burst into roars of laughter. The company evidently took him for a maniac; and when I endeavored to calm him, it was equally clear that they set me down as his keeper. It was a long and wearisome journey, the train stopping everywhere, because it was Easter-time, and we did not arrive at Sandcliff till past ten at night. There was no Frank Surpliss to meet us, nor did the station-master know his address, nor was there any message for us of any kind.

There was not even a fly to take us and our luggage; for the town was as full of lodgers as an egg of meat, and no more were expected by the flymen. There was one very small omnibus, belonging to the Black Horse Hotel, from which we had received the unpromising telegram, and into that we crowded with four others—a man and his wife, who were in the same houseless position as ourselves; a stout old lady, whose absence would have been a relief, yet who observed that it really was not worth while for her to ride at all, since she had such a little way to go; and a good-natured looking young man who unintentionally incurred our hate by stating that he was particularly fortunate, since he had not only a bed at the hotel, but friends in Alma Road, who could have taken him in had he wished it, only it was pleasanter at the hotel. When we reached the inn, we were of course informed that there was no room; but the good-natured young man, after a short but sharp inward struggle, gave up his apartment to the married couple, and got into the 'bus again, the driver of which was instructed by us to try the other inn. This was a long way off, and the good-natured young man, conscious of self-sacrifice, thought it very hard that he was not taken to Alma Road. The stout old lady, too, reiterated her remark that she lived so near at hand that it was hardly worth while for her to ride. At the Gray Mare we were informed with triumph that it was fuller than its rival; but that lodgings were to be procured in Babylon Terrace. This was a sort of hanging-garden half-way up the cliff,

and took us twenty minutes to reach it, during which the good-natured young man grew very melancholy, and even the stout old lady murmured that "if she had only know'd, she would never have ridden." At Babylon Terrace we were informed that "the 'ouse was full—and no thanks to them people at the Gray Mare—a week ago and more." It was now considerably past eleven, and Gratemán's expressive countenance was quite a picture. "Let us order supper," said he, "at the inn, at all events." But even that idea failed to dissipate his gloomy forebodings, and he inquired significantly of the stout old lady, evidently with an eye to the worst, at what time in the morning the sun rose in those parts. We both, indeed, began to look at the 'bus with a view to its convenience as a sleeping apartment, and a most unpromising appearance it presented. "I *do* wish he'd go to Alma Road," muttered the once good-natured young man, with testy impatience; and, "Well, I might ha' got to my place sooner on my own legs," echoed our lady-companion.

At the Gray Mare we got out with our portmanteaus; and whether that poor young man ever got to Alma Road, or that old lady ever reached the home that lay so near, and yet seemed unapproachable, I know not. There is no space in these columns for any woes except our own. Our first act was to promise a mighty guerdon to "the boots," if only he should succeed in getting us apartments for the night; and off he started for that purpose, so sanguine and self-reliant that we sat down to our late supper in tolerable spirits. But as the minutes flew by, and one after another of the inmates of the coffee-room went off to bed with a cheerful "Good-night" to their friends, and the clock-hand drew near to midnight, and yet "the boots" returned not, we began to experience a collapse. The landlady had already offered us two sofas in the ladies' coffee-room, which Gratemán had declined with thanks. Both of us might, under the circumstances, be said to be of a retiring disposition, but Gratemán was particularly modest; and the idea of sleeping in an apartment devoted by day to the fair sex, and to which one of them might at any time return, having by chance forgotten something, was too much for his nerves. As time wore on, however, we began to think less delicately upon this matter, and sent out the waiter to say that we would have the sofas. The reply came back that they had been taken since our arrival by two distinguished foreigners, who were already in occupation of them.

We had no hope that any good-natured young man at the

Gray Mare would turn out for *us*; for we had already become unpopular with the guests of that establishment. The few late sitters up in the coffee-room were of a genial, not to say convivial, turn, and had endeavored to enter into conversation with us; but we, engrossed by the terrible circumstances of our position, had rejected their advances; their well-meant and civil remarks about the weather and Mr. Disraeli had seemed but bald, disjointed chat to us; and they, good lack! had taken the inattention of us poor houseless wanderers for pride. At midnight "the boots" returned, dispirited, jaded, down-at-heel (if I may use the expression) with the news that there was but one bed in the town, and that a very little one. Grateman and I looked at one another significantly as each produced a silver coin from his pocket. "You toss, I cry," said my companion, gloomily. "Tails." I think by his tone he felt he was going to lose. The shilling came down with the blessed effigy of her gracious Majesty uppermost, and the vacant bed was mine.

"No," said I, with a burst of magnanimity; "you have the gout. Take it; enjoy it (I mean the bed); and never mind me."

If a lover of human nature (whereas there was only the sleepy waiter) had been in that coffee-room, he could not have failed to be pleased at the ensuing spectacle; at the generous disinterestedness (although I say it, who should be silent) upon the one side, and at the forbearance and disinclination to take advantage of a disinterested liberality upon the other. Grateman said it was he who had cajoled me down to Sandcliff; and indeed it was quite true that his ridiculous obstinacy and self-confidence had alone brought us to this dreadful pass. But I said: "Pooh, pooh; we are equally to blame" (though that, of course, was absurd). The noble struggle as to who should suffer for both was really touching. At last the unsympathetic waiter observed that the house was a-going to shut up, so we had to do the same. We left the Gray Mare (it looked quite white in the moonlight) in company with the still faithful, because unpaid, "boots," bearing a port-manteau in each hand. He dropped mine at my lodgings.

"And now, sir, where am I to take yours?"

"That is the very question, boots, which you must decide for me," replied Grateman; and he placed in his hand a couple of half-crowns.

As though electrically moved by contact with the precious metal, this faithful retainer cried: "Lor', sir, I have it; and I

might have had it an hour ago." He was not referring to the money. He had really an idea. "You shall sleep in a first-class carriage at the railway station, sir. I know the night porter, sir; and he will call you in the morning, and bring you your hot water just as snug as though you were with us. It's not at all unusual, when the town's chokeful, as it is now, I do assure you."

Grateman's features expressed no surprise, for he was so dead beat that he could have slept anywhere; and he confessed to me afterwards that he had had thoughts of a bathing machine, numbers of which we had passed drawn up in a field, like a herd of amphibious beasts, awaiting the arrival of the summer season. But, in his helpless condition, I could not but see him safely housed, or rather carriaged. The night porter seemed pleased to have a guest, and placing a board between the opposite seats, and putting a cushion upon it, made up a tolerable *extempore* bed in a couple of minutes. Instead of bed-clothes, my friend had our two railway rugs; and, altogether, if it was not luxurious accommodation, it was better than being "lodged" like corn, by the wind and rain, which might have happened to him.

"I shall have to call you early, sir," said his chamberlain with a grin, "because this carriage goes with the early parliamentary to London;" and so we left him, already half asleep, with his gout and his railway rugs flying about him.

Perhaps you will think me unfeeling and sardonic in the above description of my friend's sleeping arrangements; but when you have read what happened to me that night, you will perceive that I have reason to be envious of Grateman, and therefore unsympathizing. His rest was destined to be Sardanapalitan compared to mine. I make no reflection on the bed, which was soft, nor on its furniture, which was clean, nor on the apartment itself, which the boots had with so much diligent toil secured for me. I will even allow that Mrs. Binks, the landlady, was not only buxom, but kindly, and not at all "put out" by my exceedingly late arrival; and yet it was something in her appearance that first gave me the notion that all was not right in No. 4 Paradise Gardens. "I hope you will be comfortable, sir," said she, fervently, when she wished me good-night; but there was that in her tone which seemed to add, "although I shall be uncommonly surprised if you are."

But the room, as I have said, was a comfortable room enough, on the ground floor, and communicating by folding-doors with the little dining-room, in the grate of which a cheerful fire was

burning; and I felt thankful for warmth and shelter, and not disposed to entertain suspicions and forebodings. I disrobed myself with deliberation, and sat in my dressing-gown smoking a pipe or two, and reading in the *Metaphysical Magazine* one of my own articles, which is the very pleasantest sort of reading I know, until one o'clock, and then, with a nod of satisfaction and the confidential remark, "What an uncommonly intelligent writer this is!" I got into bed, and fell asleep in a moment; nothing but the extraordinary merit of the literature could have kept me awake so long.

I don't know how many hours or minutes I had been asleep, but something suddenly roused me to acute consciousness; there was no touch, no sound; but "that wonderful sense of human companionship which strikes through sleep and trance, and may be even death itself,"* warned me that there was another person in the room; another "sympathetic member of the great United Family of Man,"* unless, indeed (which delicacy forbade me to imagine) it was a lady. As I gazed with straining eyes before me, the blackness of night faded into gloom, and in the gloom I saw a misty figure standing by the chest of drawers on which I had placed my watch and money.

"Who are you?" cried I, in a terrible voice (for fear is a thing unknown to me).

There was no reply. I repeated my inquiry in still more determined accents, and then a tremulous voice answered: "Oh, sir, don't 'ee tell Mr. Binks; but I am Mrs. Binks."

Can you imagine anything more embarrassing than my position? "The mind, stored with historical incidents, rushes with lightning speed over the past,"* but finds no parallel to my awful position later than that of the esteemed patriarch Joseph. "Oh, don't 'ee, don't 'ee tell Mr. Binks," repeated the quivering tones, and this time they were so very tremulous that I felt that not even a misplaced infatuation for myself could have so transformed my landlady's straightforward if somewhat melancholy speech. It was certainly not the Mrs. Binks whom I had seen who thus addressed me.

"Wicked woman!" cried I, "who are you?"

"Oh, sir, don't 'ee tell Mr. Binks, but I am Mrs. Binks."

"You old Poll parrot," said I, angrily (for I now perceived

* Something of this sort was in the article above referred to; and I cannot resist the temptation of a quotation or two. Authors will easily forgive me; and the general public cannot but be the better for it.

that her voice was cracked with age), "leave this room immediately, or I will send for the police."

"I'll go and sit in the parlor, sir," responded she, meekly, and she opened one of the folding-doors and closed it behind her. As she did so, the light from the embers, which were still glowing, disclosed to me an ancient female, nearer a hundred than any other round number, and with a head that shook not so much with the palsy of age, as with that of mental imbecility. It was plain to me at once that my untimely visitor had survived her wits. Poor old lady! I repented already of having spoken to her so harshly; but I also regretted that there was no lock on my door. However, overcome with fatigue, I placed a heavy chair against the door of communication, which opened inwards, and fell once more into a sound sleep. The unwilling movement of this obstacle over the carpet awoke me at dawn. The ancient female, tired of her own company, was evidently again about to present herself; and she did so. Daylight became her, poor soul, even less than firelight. She looked more than a hundred now, and if I might compare the human form divine with that of the feathered creation, she bore a most extraordinary resemblance to a molting cockatoo.

"My good lady," said I, in a tone (I hope) of gentlemanly remonstrance, "this sort of thing will not do. If *you* can go without sleep, *I* can't. What *are* you coming here for, and what *does* it all mean?"

"Oh, sir, don't 'ee tell——"

"Yes, I will," cried I, sharply; "I'll tell Mr. Binks. If you don't leave my room *instantly*, and promise never to enter it again, I'll tell Binks as sure as your name's whatever it is."

But long before I had concluded this fortunately imagined menace, the poor lost creature had taken herself off in alarm, and I heard her stockinged feet slide along the passage, and go wearily down the kitchen stairs.

But I could not get to sleep again, and might for that matter just as well have passed the night in the small omnibus. I lay long, however, and rose to a late breakfast, so that it much surprised me not to see Grateman, whom circumstances, I knew, must have compelled to rise hours before, and who had promised to be with me at that meal. When I told the waiting-maid what had happened to me, she did not seem at all surprised.

"That's master's mother," explained she. "Being quite mad, she is put to sleep in the back kitchen, only sometimes she goes

wandering round the house at night like a bad spirit. Lodgers, like yourself, don't like it; and that's why this house is always the last in Sandcliff to be let."

"But, poor thing," said I, "if she is mad, why be angry with her?"

"She ain't more mad than she is wicked, sir," responded the abigail, darkly; then added, with intense unction, "Drat her!"

I saw that there was mystery enough in No. 4 Paradise Gardens to account for any amount of melancholy in Mrs. Binks the younger; that she was more unfortunate in her mother-in-law even than most people, was abundantly clear; but not being a commissioner in lunacy, I did not venture to push my inquiries. Besides, there was pressing matter for my attention in the absence of Grateman. What *could* have become of him? True, the morning was beautiful, and might well have tempted him for a stroll, but not with those tender feet of his, for a four hours' walk, unless the "complete change" had already altered my friend beyond all recognition. At ten o'clock I started for the railway station, still expecting to meet him at every turn of the road. On my arrival at the terminus, I found the night porter had gone home for the day, and that nobody knew anything about Grateman. The station-master derided the idea that anybody could have been accommodated with a bed in a first-class carriage, and delicately insinuated that I was one of those who rise early in the morning to follow strong drink.

I gave him my card to let him know that he was dealing with a public character; and he grew very respectful at once. "There's a telegram just come for you, sir," said he; "only we didn't know your address, although, of course, we are well acquainted with your *name*."

This was pleasant of the man, and I nodded affably. The telegram was from Grateman, and ran as follows: "I am at home again. That infernal rascal forgot to call me, and I never woke till the train arrived at London Bridge. A very impudent letter from that fellow Surpliss, who 'pays no attention to telegrams during the Easter season.' Gout flying about me worse than ever; I never mean to go to Sandcliff again."

As for myself, I don't go so far as to say that; but if I do ever visit Sandcliff, I shall—until I receive some trustworthy intimation of the decease of Mrs. Binks the elder—avoid No. 4 Paradise Gardens, where the boots engaged for me My Last Lodgings.

HOW OLD MAN CORN HELD POSSESSION*

BY CHARLES MALCOM PLATT

IT was Sunday evening and supper was going on at old man Corn's. A little blaze flickered in one corner of the big, black fireplace, scarcely lighting up its cavernous depths. A few weeks earlier huge piles of logs had flamed and roared there



imperiously, but now spring had come and only fire enough to cook by was needed. The uncertain light showed three occupants around the oil-cloth-covered table: old man Corn, his wife, and their youngest boy, Jake, apparently about sixteen years old. The cabin door was open, and in the quiet of the waning twilight could be heard the

rushing sound of the "branch" below, and the melancholy monotonous cry of a whip-poor-will in the skirt of the woods hard by. A large yellowish dog lay sprawling flat on the porch outside, twitching nervously and now and then emitting low growls as he dreamed of some sheep-killing adventure in the mountains.

"Where was you at all the evenin', Jake," said Mrs. Corn, passing the coffee-pot to give her husband his second cup.

"Me and Bob Hinkley went down to Slab Town school-house to hear Elder Snorts preach."

"I heard the 'sociation done stopped Elder Snorts' preachin' on 'count o' his stealin' widder Huger's shoat last winter."

"The 'sociation done turned Elder Snorts out en the church, but I reckon they couldn't stop his preachin' unless they put a padlock on his jaw and kep' him from passin' 'round the contribution box," replied Jake, knowingly. The old man gave a

* Written for Short Stories. Illustrations by H. M. Walcott.—Copyrighted.

grunt of amusement and thrust his great, hairy hand across the table to break off a chunk of the cold corn-bread.

"Say, Pap," said Jake, swallowing hastily and breaking out again with increased animation, "comin' home, we met up with Zeb Ruth on his way back from the still-house. He was plum full o' liquor an' gab, too. He says the old man has jest got in from Marshal court. He seen lawyer Himes there, and Himes told him that our papers fer the patch ain't no 'count, 'cause the words 'heirs and signs,' or somethin' like that, wasn't put in the writin', and he says that, so fer's the patch's concerned, we-all ain't no better'n squatters."

"Shucks!" said Corn, impatiently pushing back from the table. "Zeb Ruth ain't got sense 'nough to bell a buzzard, and Jerry Himes ain't no lawyer to *hurt*, I ken tell ye. Why, last time I was up to court, he only had one case; defendin' Harrison Lyle fer 'sturbin' religious meetin' by puttin' a polecat under the preacher's desk. He made a big speech to the jury, snortin' and pawin' fer up'ards o' an hour, and argued from the constitution an' the statute-book that the varmint come up himself through a hole in the floor while Harrison was lyin' drunk at a corn-shuckin'; but the jury come in in less'n five minutes an' found him guilty, and the jedge give him a powerful tongue-lashin' and a sentence of twenty-five dollars fine and three months 'n jail. Next mornin' Jerry sent some o' the boys over to the jail to tell Harrison not to be affeared, fer he was goin' to move the court fer a new trial. 'Boys, fer the Lord's sake don't let him,' says Harrison. 'If that man Himes makes another speech fer me, I'll be hanged yit. Tell him I'm in a bad 'nough fix now, an' to jest keep his head shet.'"

"It all comes o' that diggity Mis' Ruth," interjected Mrs. Corn, spitefully. "Since she went to Asheville last winter, when old man Ruth sold his tobakker crop, she thinks she's too good fer this settlement; talkin' 'bout street-cars an' sayin' that sun-bonnets look perfectly ridic'lous at a preachin', an' that her gals sha'n't work no more 'n the crops. The Ruths! pushed like they are fer bread an' meat, and Mis' Ruth a-sendin' over here only last week fer gourd seed an' bean seed 'n to borry a little coffee!"

"An', Pap," added Jake, in evident enjoyment of having kept back the best piece of his news till the last. "Zeb allows that him an' his dad 're comin' up to the patch in the mornin' to take possession in the name o' the new timber comp'ny, an' Joe Led-better says he's goin' 'long with 'em jest to see the fun."



Corn started at if he had heard the buzz of a rattlesnake and then, to the surprise of Jake and Mrs. Corn, went out the door without answering and sat down on the edge of the porch. The house grew quiet, and still the old man sat there digging his heel into the ground and sometimes whistling softly. His thoughts seemed far away; maybe he was getting drowsy. Once or twice he looked over his shoulder through the cabin door, but nothing could be seen except a feeble, glistening light thrown by the dying embers of the hearth upon some polished surface high up against the wall; probably it was the barrel of a shot-gun that Jake kept hanging upon some deer horns. The last vestige of the twilight was gone, and two or three stars, undimmed, peeped serenely through the overreaching branches upon the bent figure on the porch. The unfailing note of the whip-poor-will kept descending from the woods above, and now a little fuzzy, white owl was adding his mellow "whoot-toot-toot," just to call attention to the silence. The bells of some distant, sauntering cattle tinkled. A crap-apple tree in the corner of the garden breathed out waves of perfume, languorous in their sweetness.

Finally, the old man arose, took the water-bucket from the shelf where it stood alongside of a battered tin wash-basin and walked stiffly down the path leading to the spring. He drank a great gulp of water out of the big, yellow gourd dipper, then filled the bucket and, as he turned and stumbled back towards the cabin, muttered slowly, "Comin' to take possession, are they? Durn their souls! If they try it, they'll find 'taint healthy." This deliverance seemed to quite restore the old man to himself again, for he suddenly straightened up, strode on to the cabin at his usual long, swinging gait, set down the bucket, closed the door, and in a twinkling had turned in for the night.

The next morning, Corn was out of bed long before "sun-up." While his wife was preparing the breakfast of biscuits, fried bacon and coffee, he hustled through the chores with all the sprightliness befitting a man at the beginning of the week, with planting time coming on, too, as the white plumes of the dogwood gave infallible sign.

"Jake," said he, when their hasty meal was finished, "you git

up some wash wood fer your Ma, and then ketch out the mule and take a turn o' corn down to the mill. We're mighty nigh out o' bread. I'll hitch up the steer and go to breakin' in the Patch. We must do about now. I see Hinkley's folks done got their crop in, an' our upland oughter be planted last o' this week, sure."

He went out towards the barn, and in a few minutes reappeared at the end of the porch mounted on Lit, the steer. Lit had just come through a hard winter and hence carried little covering except his hide, on which the hair stood up thick and shaggy as the coat of a bear; but, as Jake had once observed, "his runnin' gear was all right," and so, indeed, quite too visibly it seemed. He had lost a horn as a punishment for having gouged out the eye of his yoke-fellow, the mule, one day while they were being worked together. And now he stood strangely bedight for plowing, in scraps of old harness, a bridle with a blinder wanting, a collar gnawed by the rats, with big tufts of stuffing sticking out, and a back-band made from a strip of bagging. Mrs. Corn was standing on the porch, before her a little heap of clothes all ready for washing. "Jest reach me that shootin' iron," said Corn; "I might see some varmint or somethin'." His wife handed him the shot-gun without uttering a word.

"Gee, Lit! Come up!" He thumped his heels vigorously against the sides of the steer, whistled to the yellow dog, and in a few minutes the trio could be seen briskly making their way up the branch in the direction of the Patch. A Quixotic figure the old man cut, thus mounted, with the broad brim of his rusty wool hat fastened up squarely in front and flapping limply down behind upon neck and shoulders, his gun resting easily across his arm, as if it were no stranger to him, and his long, dangling legs terminating in a display of white woolen socks above run-down brogans. Mrs. Corn watched him steadily until he disappeared around a bend in the "branch," and even then she kept on looking and listening, though it was impossible to hear any longer the jingling of the trace-chains that swung from Lit's collar.



Presently she gathered the heap of clothes and went down to the "branch," where, in the shade of a great gnarly oak, stood the iron wash-pot and the bench for "beatlin'." Sousing the clothes in the water, she laid them on the bench and began to smack them sharply with her beetle or paddle. After a few strokes she stopped short. Yes, those were the voices of men ascending the "branch." She stepped forward a little and, shielding her eyes with her hand, looked searchingly down the stream. In a moment more she could make them out well enough: old Joab Ruth and his son, Zeb, with their guns on their shoulders and, shambling along behind, the tall, lank form of Joe Ledbetter.



The Ruths seemed moody, but Joe was doing enough talking for the whole company, and every now and then he slapped his thighs and burst out into a big laugh which topped off with a wild, high-keyed whoop. When the men halted opposite her, Mrs. Corn was paddling the clothes again, as if there was nobody about. Her back was turned towards them.

"Howdy, Mis' Corn," said Joe, affably.

"Howdy," she answered, without looking up.

"The old man's plowin' in the Patch this mornin', I reckon?"

"Reckon!" As they moved once more, Mrs. Corn turned around and deliberately taking the snuff-stick from her mouth for the sake of clearer utterance, called after them, "You men hain't no call to go up t' the Patch, nohow. If you-all goes to r'arin' and pitchin' up thar, somebody's 'goin' to git hurt. You hear me, now." There was no reply and Mrs. Corn began putting the clothes into the wash-pot.

Away up at the Patch, old man Corn was "plowing the steer," as he would have said. The clearing was on a mountain side. Above and at each end dense forests pressed closely upon it, cutting off all outlook; but below, the view down towards the "branch" was unobstructed. Midway up, as if balancing themselves cautiously, the man and the steer crept across the rough surface of the field. Their progress seemed like the performance

of a tight-rope walker. A single false step, and what then? But Lit was sure-footed, and this was the sort of culture which the Corns had known for generations.

Here and there stood gloomily aloft the huge, dead trunks of noble trees which had been girdled by the axe and left to die, the sad ghosts of their former selves, stretching out naked and mutilated arms as if in mournful protest against their fate. At the side of one of these the old man had set down his gun, and by it, too, the yellow dog lay dozing. High in the air a big turkey-buzzard was lazily swinging round and round.

All at once the dog started and began to bark. Corn stopped his work and looking off towards the "branch" saw three men who had just emerged from the woods and were now climbing the slope in the direction of the Patch.

Then he kept on plowing till they reached the fence and stopped, the two Ruths resting their long rifles upon the topmost rail and peering over, while Joe Ledbetter mounted up and perched himself comfortably alongside.

"Good mornin', Mister Corn," said old Joab Ruth, with the uncertain, hesitating air of a man about to begin an untried and difficult sort of negotiation.

"Good-mornin', gentlemen," returned Corn. "What kin I do fer ye?"

"We've come up to see ye on a little matter o' business," said Ruth, rapidly gathering courage, and going on in a hard, determined voice. "Me an' Zeb's done rented this clearin' o' Harris, the agent o' the timber company, an' we've come here to take possession, bein' your title to it's no good, an' it a-fallin' inside the company's boundary. You know them writin's?"

"There ain't no use o' us disputin' 'bout writin's," said Corn, interrupting angrily. "Ye say you've come to take possession. Now, how are ye goin' to do it? I'm here an' I calc'late to stay here, onless somethin' in pertic'lar happens. Ye can't take possession a-standin' there an' lookin' over like a couple o' hungry critters nosin' 'round a corn-crib."

"Let's grab th' old idiot," urged Zeb, growing hot under the sarcasm, "and throw him out bodaciously." And, suiting the action to the word, the two men scrambled hastily over the fence, and started up the clearing. Even at this critical moment, old man Corn's presence of mind failed him not a whit. There was the steer. It would never do to let him get frightened, and

career driverless down the hill, the plow flying after him. So Corn coolly loosed Lit's traces; and then he made a rush for his gun.

The Ruths caught the direction of the old man's straining gaze, and for the first time saw the shot-gun standing behind the tree. A keen sense of danger thrilled them, like a flame suddenly bursting into their faces.

To overtake Corn was impossible, and yet he must be stopped. Even now the weapon seemed almost in his grasp.

"If I can't beat ye to it, I reckon here's somethin' that kin," growled Zeb under his breath, and, with one swift glance along



his rifle, he fired. But the hurry of the onset over the ridges of the new-plowed ground disturbed his aim, and the bullet whizzed wide of its mark, and raised a little cloud of dust where it buried itself in the hillside. The crack

of the rifle roused the old man to fury. With a tigerish leap he reached his gun, and, turning quick as thought, discharged one barrel full at Joab Ruth, who fell as if struck by lightning. The contents of the other hit Zeb just as he had started to run. He staggered across the field, and sank face downward into a great purple bed of violets that grew in a corner of the fence.

A few minutes later everything was very quiet at the Patch. Lit was placidly grazing in a distant shady nook. The buzzard that had been flying about all the morning kept circling lower and lower, and at last, uttering a harsh little croak, flapped heavily down on to the fence. He sidled along the rail uneasily, cocking his head now this way, now that, and appeared to be curiously inspecting a red spot on Zeb Ruth's back, just above where his white cotton suspenders crossed.



Mrs. Corn was hanging out her washing when Joe Ledbetter came tearing past her down the "branch" like one

of Dante's wind-swept wraiths, his eyes protruding, and mortal fear graven on every feature.

The man who had gone up "jest to see the fun" had indeed seen it.

Mrs. Corn divined as much, and there was a ring of fierce triumph in her voice as she shouted after the wild, flying figure, already almost beyond range of her voice :

"I done told you fool men ye hadn't no call t' go up ter the Patch."



ETCHING: PEDRO *

By S. L. BACON

IT was only a street *gamin*, born of the streets, of the smoke, the dust, the toil. He was an Italian boy, of perhaps sixteen years. He had the shelter of a broken boat on the wharf, and the possession of a hand-organ and the monkey, Flip.

He was slender and well-shapen, with hair fine, like corn-silk. He loved the monkey, and Flip loved him.

The organ played three squeaky tunes and the part of a fourth, and the pennies were few which it invoked.

But what did it matter to be hungry when one loved ?

Before one house, with a latticed window, there was a girl's face, and there Pedro went every day, for he loved her.

She gave Flip sweet cake ; she gave his master pennies.

Her face had the fine cutting of a cameo ; her eyes had the clearness of still water.

When the organ played, she smiled. Then Pedro was happy ; he smiled back, and his teeth were like white shells in water.

At night he said : " Flip, we will have only bread and milk, the rest I will save for her ; one day I will marry her."

When he looked at the stars, he said :

" They are not brighter than her eyes ; when I am rich and can marry her, she shall have a dress made of sunbeams, and little gold shoes. And you, Flip, you shall have a new cap."

It was early springtime ; the air was fresh with new earth odors. Pedro's hair curled with the warmth. He came to her house. There was a carriage before the door. She was not at the window. In vain Flip climbed the lattice, in vain the organ played. Pedro stopped suddenly and stood motionless.

Through the open door she came, softly, steadily, happily. She did not see Pedro, nor Flip, nor the organ. Her eyes shone.

Her dress was gray, like a cloud. Her hand rested on the arm of a man. He was tall, with blonde whiskers.

The boy stood motionless, watching the carriage out of sight.

He did not play any more tunes. He lifted his carefully hoarded pennies from their hiding-place, counting them with infinite care. Then he got up and brushed his sleeve across his eyes. " You shall have a new cap, Flip," he said.

* Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

MY FIANCÉ'S GLASS EYE *

BY ANDRÉ DE BLAUMONT

HE was tall, dark and, to my taste, altogether charming. Last evening, for the first time, we walked in the winding alley of the park; the straight avenue which stretched itself under the windows of the house had been until now the only witness to our confidences; I loved dearly this avenue, with its great oak-trees placed at regular distance apart, the benches for talking quite at one's ease, the green grass all around and beyond. When one wandered off a bit, the huge window panes, which seemed, by the light of the setting sun, great wide open eyes, all smiling at our happiness.

"Walk along the avenue with Monsieur de Valente, Angèle," my mother had said to me at the beginning of our engagement. "The alleys of the park are altogether too damp."

And I walked along the avenue, gently resisting Raoul (he was named Raoul), who appeared to have, I do not know why, a marked preference for the covered alleys.

"Mamma says the alleys are damp. Had we not better remain here?"

That evening, however, my head was turned, and something tugged at my heart-strings—he was to leave the next day to hunt up some paper necessary for our marriage.

Eight days without seeing him! How could I live! And he, taking advantage of my trouble, made me turn into the damp alley, which, by the way, in spite of its bad reputation, seemed to me as dry as possible.

"My Angèle, you are not going to forget me during these eight days?"

"Forget you!! Ah!!"

I would have lifted my hands to take Heaven as a witness that such a thing could never happen, if he had not held them tightly clasped in his own. It is not my habit to lose myself in sentimental protestations, my vivacity forbids it, and this time not more than at others did I play my nature false.

* Translated by Mrs. Huntington Denton, from the French, for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

"Raoul, you love me, do you not? Well, then I wish to tell you all my faults. I shall be more tranquil if you know them beforehand. You would see them sooner or later; so listen! I am very wilful. I will not yield to you; you may as well make up your mind to it. Then, I am quick as gunpowder. I stamp my foot, I scream, I even cry at times. Happily all this passes quickly. Besides that, I am a coquette, like all women. You will not be jealous I hope. And then, what else? I can't quite tell—a little gourmande at times, not wicked, not deceitful—I find nothing else. So much then for the moral side. As to the physical, what can I have wrong there? You must know that also. Ah! one of my finger-nails is not quite the same as the others; look! but it seems to me that isn't too ugly."

And, releasing my hand, I showed him a little pink nail, a little squarer than the others, a very innocent eccentricity of Nature. Raoul laughed, and wanted to kiss it, but I drew away my hand.

"I have also lost a wisdom-tooth, which is lost forever, alas, so I can never be altogether wise. They took it out because it came too soon. Now, sir, it is your turn. Confess yourself."

Raoul, visibly embarrassed, remained silent.

"Go on. Have a bit of courage. You may be quite easy. I shall not scold. I do not know your faults, but it is quite certain you have some. In the first place, you are near-sighted, for you wear a monocle instead of an eye-glass, with which, it seems to me, you would see much better. Mamma says that glass causes you to make such fearful faces; but I don't think so. You please me as you are. However, take out the glass so that I can see how you look when your face isn't crooked."

I had seized with a little, gentle gesture the string of the monocle, when Raoul stopped my hand.

"No, my little Angèle, leave it there. Without it, I should no longer see you. I am near-sighted, very near-sighted, it is true; and I want to see you, Angèle, for you are the joy of my eyes."

Then, before even I had time to think, he had taken me, drawn me to him and covered my eyes and my hair with kisses.

"Raoul, how naughty of you! enough of that—if you please."

"Why naughty? Are you not my fiancée, my darling little wife?"

"When I am your wife it will be quite different; let me go, I will not remain here, it is too dark under these trees."

I had succeeded in releasing myself and holding down my hair which, under those soft kisses, was flying in all directions, as if charged with electricity. I escaped by running to the Avenue. There was no longer any question of making Raoul confess; blushing violently I was thinking of quite different matters.

The next day he was gone. What a frightful moment this departure! when, standing on the front steps, I had turned away my head so as not to see Joannés gather up the reins, the horses pull together, the victoria sway; in a word, so as not to see they were taking him away from me.

Papa had gone with him to the station, while mamma and I breakfasted alone together. It was dismal in the extreme.

Mamma ate as usual, which I couldn't understand; as for myself, I ate only a very little, just enough to sustain me, and even that with difficulty. Every mouthful stuck in my throat.

In the midst of the breakfast Justine opened the door.

"Madame, Monsieur de Valente has left his glass eye in his room. Shall it be sent to him?"

Had the heavens been opened to let fall on the table the sun and the moon, I couldn't have felt a greater shock. The end of the world will, perhaps, be nothing to equal it. I repeated with horror:

"His glass eye, Justine?"

"Yes, mademoiselle; it is on the washstand."

Mamma grew pale, but remained calm.

"Very well, Justine, you may leave the room. We will see if it is necessary to send it to him."

I had only two alternatives, either to faint away or burst into convulsive sobs. I chose the latter.

"Mamma—mamma, he has a glass eye! Good Heavens, is it possible? How horrible! I shall never console myself! I shall die of grief!"

"Calm yourself, my child, calm yourself. It is ridiculous to put yourself in such a state. This gentleman has deceived us, that is all. I always thought he had rather a queer expression."

Mamma had risen, and I was sobbing on her breast.

"Why did he not tell me? I, who had avowed all my own defects—the nail, the wisdom-tooth and the anger—all—everything! Dear me! how unhappy I am! And only last evening he had said, 'You are the joy of my eyes.' He should have

said, 'You are the joy of my eye.' Ah, it is dreadful—dreadful!"

"Come, quiet down; don't cry like that. I tell you it is ridiculous. Think no more about it; try to calm yourself. How unfortunate it is that things have gone so far! Only eight days before the wedding, and everything ready! Well, it is a good thing we found it out in time."

I hardly listened. One question burned in my throat.

"He has another eye to change with, mamma; and this one, which he has used, is probably put in water to cool."

Mamma was horribly worried; I knew nothing whatever about it. I have never known anyone intimately who had a glass eye, and do not care to know how they manage.

She continues a little monologue all to herself: "It is pleasant. All this trousseau, marked with a V. We never will find the same initial again; and my husband will listen to no one else. He was charmed with this gentleman at first sight. The references were perfect; the Jesuit fathers, his colonel, and everyone. That is so like a man; one can never count on them. A pretty discovery, indeed. I always thought there was something extraordinary about him; the individual never pleased me, and I was quite right."

I had raised my head; the vision of the glass eye gazing at me from the depths of the wash-basin still troubled me profoundly. But another vision came also to my memory.

I saw again my fiancé, so good, so tender. I heard once again all our prospects for the future; all our plans made together; and suddenly it seemed to me to be last evening, and a rain of kisses was falling on my hair. I had not told mamma about these kisses; but I felt that I loved Raoul with his one eye, and that nothing would induce me to give him up. All my courage came back to me.

"Mamma, I am sure he lost that eye in some honorable, magnificent way; it is a wound of which he should be proud; in saving someone, perhaps, from a fire; in sacrificing himself, it is certain—he is so good, he has such noble sentiments. I quite understand he would dislike confessing it."

"What do you say? Are you quite crazy? Do you think I am going to allow you to marry this man with such an infirmity? You, beautiful as you are, and only seventeen, and with your fortune too? No, a thousand times no, my child; do not forge yourself a romance of devotion and sacrifice, it is perfectly use-

less. I will never consent to your marriage with a man with one eye. Should he lose the other, he would be quite blind, and how agreeable that would be!"

"But, Mamma, I will be his faithful dog; I will lead him, I will take care of him and will love him in spite of his infirmity, in spite of everything which interferes to separate us!"

I was in an extraordinary state of exaltation. My sobs began again harder than ever and did not promise soon to stop, when Justine re-entered the room, her honest face showing every expression of astonishment and stupefaction.

"It isn't possible that Mademoiselle can put herself in such a state because M. de Valente has forgotten his eye; at all events, he can buy another if he needs it before this evening, and he won't throw himself in the river because he hasn't that thing in his face."

And Justine showed me, hanging delicately at the end of her fingers, Raoul's monocle that I knew so well, with its round glass encircled with tortoiseshell, which seemed to me for the moment like a luminous halo. My emotion forbade my speaking. Mamma, however, went quickly towards Justine.

"Is that what you call a glass eye, Justine?"

"Certainly, Madame; it seems to me that's the name for it. In any case it doesn't suit Monsieur Raoul, and Mademoiselle would do well to give him spectacles when they are married; it is strange that men of the present day think it pretty to look with one eye—like that; it must be very difficult to keep it in place. I should never know how,"—and Justine, with a comical grimace, stretching her mouth and turning up her nose, tried to introduce the monocle underneath her right eyebrow. I could contain myself no longer. My tears and sobs turned to idiotic laughter—I was so content! So happy!

It is now twenty-five years since all that happened.

Raoul has been an excellent husband—quite as unendurable as that order of individual always is. He has worn spectacles now for a long time, and when he wishes to see anything, looks with his two eyes. The monocle is buried in a bureau drawer. I keep it as a relic of tears and laughter, and shall will it to my grandchildren if God gives me any. My daughters are engaged and I have already told them that the alleys of the Park are cold and damp in the evening! Each one has his turn in this world—life passes and very soon there will be nothing left of our household but my fiancé's Glass Eye.

THE MOTHER OF "PILLS"*

BY ELLA HIGGINSON

"PILLS! Oh, Pills! You Pillsy!"

The girl turned from the door of the drug-store, and looked back under bent brows at her mother, who was wiping graduated glasses with a stained towel, at the end of the prescription counter.

"I wish you wouldn't call me that," she said; her tone was impatient but not disrespectful.

Her mother laughed. She was a big, good-natured looking woman, with light-blue eyes and sandy eyebrows and hair. She wore a black dress that had a cheap, white cord-ruche at the neck. There were spots down the front of her dress where acids had been spilled and had taken out the color.

"How particular we are gettin'," she said, turning the measuring glass round and round on the towel which had been wadded into it. "You didn't use to mind if I called you 'Pills,' just for fun."

"Well, I mind now."

The girl took a clean towel from a cupboard and began to polish the show-cases, breathing upon them now and then. She was a good-looking girl. She had strong, handsome features, and heavy brown hair, which she wore in a long braid down her back. A deep red rose was tucked in the girdle of her cotton gown and its head lolled to and fro as she worked. Her hands were not prettily shaped, but sensitive, and the ends of the fingers were square.

"Well, Mariella, then," said Mrs. Mansfield, still looking amused; "I was goin' to ask you if you knew the Indians had all come in on their way home from hop pickin'."

Mariella straightened up and looked at her mother.

"Have they, honest, ma?"

"Yes, they have; they're all camped down on the beach."

"Oh, I wonder where!"

"Why, the Nooksacks are clear down at the coal-bunkers, an'

* The writer of this story has been awarded the prize in the "Best Story" competition. Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

the Lummies close to Timberline's Row ; an' the Alaskas are all on the other side the viaduck."

"Are they goin' to have the canoe race?"

"Yes, I guess so. I guess it'll be about sundown to-night. There, you forgot to dust that milk-shake. An' you ain't touched that shelf o' patent medicines!"

She set down the last graduate and hung the damp towel on a nail. Then she came out into the main part of the store and sat down comfortably behind the counter.

Long before Mariella was born, her father had opened a drug-store in the tiny town of Sehome, on Puget Sound. There was a coal mine under the town. A tunnel led down into it, and the men working among the black diamonds, with their families, made up the town. But there was some trouble, and the mine was abandoned and flooded with salt water. The men went away, and for many years Sehome was little more than a name. A mail boat wheezed up from Seattle once a week ; and two or three storekeepers—Mr. Mansfield among them—clung to the ragged edge of hope and waited for the boom. Before it came, Mr. Mansfield was bumped over the terrible road to the graveyard and laid down among the stones and ferns. Then Mrs. Mansfield "run" the store. The question "Can you fill prescriptions?" was often put to her fearfully by timid customers, but she was equal to the occasion.

"Well, I guess I can," she would say, squaring about and looking her questioner unwaveringly in the eye. "I guess I'd ought to. I've been in the store with my husband, that's dead, for twenty years. I'm not a regular, but I'm a practical—an' that's better than a regular any day."

"It's not so much what you know in a drug-store as what you *look* like, you know," she sometimes confided to admiring friends.

It is true Mrs. Mansfield was often perplexed over the peculiar curdled appearance of some mixture—being as untaught in the mysterious ways of emulsions as a babe—but such trifles were dismissed with a philosophical sigh, and the prescriptions were handed over the counter with a complaisance that commanded confidence. The doctor hinted, with extreme delicacy, at times, that his emulsions did not turn out as smooth as he had expected ; or that it would be agreeable to find some of his aqueous mixtures tinged with cochineal ; or that it was possible to make pills in such a way that they would not—so to speak—melt in

the patient's mouth before he could swallow them. But Mrs. Mansfield invariably laughed at him in a kind of motherly way, and reminded him that he ought to be glad to have even a "practical" in a place like Sehome. And really this was so true that it was unanswerable.

So Mrs. Mansfield held the fort; and as her medicines, although abominable to swallow, never killed any one, she was looked upon with awe and respect by the villagers and the men in the neighboring logging-camps.

Mariella was brought up in the drug-store. She had the benefit of her mother's experience, and, besides that, she had studied the "dispensatory"—a word, by the way, which Mrs. Mansfield began with a capital letter because of the many pitfalls from which it had rescued her.

"Mariella is such a good girl," her mother frequently declared; "she got a real good education over at the Whatcom schools, an' she's such a help in the drug-store. She does make a beautiful pill."

Indeed, the girl's pill-making accomplishment was so appreciated by Mrs. Mansfield, that she had nick-named her "Pills"—a name that had been the cause of much mirth between them.

Mariella was now sixteen, and the long-deferred "boom" was upon them. Mrs. Mansfield and her daughter contemplated it from the store door daily with increasing admiration. The wild clover no longer velveted the middle of the street. New buildings, with red, green or blue fronts and nondescript backs, leaped up on every corner and in between corners. The hammers and saws made music sweeter than any brass band to Sehome ears. Day and night the forests blazed backward from the town. When there were no customers in the store, Mariella stood in the door, twisting the rope of the awning around her wrist, and watched the flames leaping from limb to limb up the tall, straight fir-trees. When Sehome hill was burning at night, it was a magnificent spectacle; like hundreds of torches dipped into a very hell of fire and lifted to heaven by invisible hands—while in the east the noble, white dome of Mount Baker burst out of the darkness against the lurid sky. The old steamer Idaho came down from Seattle three times a week now. When she landed, Mrs. Mansfield and Mariella, and such customers as chanced to be in the store, hurried breathlessly back to the little sitting-room, which overlooked the bay, to count the passengers. The old colony wharf, running a mile out across the tide-lands to deep water,

would be "fairly alive with 'em," Mrs. Mansfield declared daily, in an ecstasy of anticipation of the good times their coming foretold. She counted never less than a hundred and fifty; and so many walked three and four abreast that it was not possible to count all.

Really, that summer, everything seemed to be going Mrs. Mansfield's way. Mariella was a comfort to her mother and an attraction to the store; business was excellent; her property was worth five times more than it had ever been before; and, besides—when her thoughts reached this point Mrs. Mansfield smiled consciously and blushed—there was Mr. Grover! Mr. Grover kept the dry-goods store next door. He had come at the very beginning of the boom. He was slim and dark and forty. Mrs. Mansfield was forty and large and fair. Both were "well off." Mr. Grover was lonely and "dropped into" Mrs. Mansfield's little sitting-room every night. She invited him to supper frequently, and he told her that her fried chicken and "cream" potatoes were better than anything he had eaten since his mother died. Of late his intentions were not to be misunderstood, and Mrs. Mansfield was already putting by a cozy sum for a wedding outfit. Only that morning she had looked at herself in the glass more attentively than usual while combing her hair. Some thought made her blush and smile.

"You ought to be ashamed!" she said, shaking her head at herself in the glass as at a gay, young thing. "To be thinkin' about gettin' married! With a big girl like Pills, too. One good thing: He really seems to think as much of Pills as you do yourself, Mrs. Mansfield. That's what makes me so—happy, I guess. I believe it's the first time I ever was real happy before." She sighed unconsciously as she glanced back over her years of married life. "An' I don't know what makes me so awful happy now. But sometimes when I get up of a mornin' I just feel as if I could go out on the hill an' sing—foolish as any of them larks holler'n' for joy."

"Mariella," she said, watching the duster in the girl's hands; "what made you flare up so when I called you 'Pills'? You never done that before, an' I don't see what ails you all of a sudden."

"I didn't mean to flare up," said Mariella. She opened the cigar-case and arranged the boxes carefully. Then she closed it with a snap and looked at her mother. "But I wish you'd stop it, ma. Mr. Grover said——"

"Well, what 'id he say?"

"He said it wasn't a nice name to call a girl by." Mariella's face reddened, but she was stooping behind the counter.

Mrs. Mansfield drummed on the show-case with broad fingers and looked thoughtful.

"Well," she said, with significance, after a pause; "if he don't like it, I won't do it. We've had lots o' fun over it, Pills, ain't we—I mean Mariella—but I guess he's got a right to say what you'll be called, Pi—— my dear."

"Oh, ma!" said Mariella. Her face was like a poppy.

"Well, I guess you won't object, will you? I've been wond'rin' how you felt about it."

"Oh, ma," faltered the girl; "do you think, honest, he—— he——"

"Yes, I do," replied her mother, laughing comfortably and blushing faintly. "I'm sure of it. An' I'm happier 'n I ever was in my life over it. I don't think I could give you a better stepfather, or one that w'd think more of you."

Mariella stood up slowly behind the counter and looked—stared—across the room at her mother, in a dazed, uncomprehending way. The color ebbed slowly out of her face. She did not speak, but she felt the muscles about her mouth jerking. She pressed her lips more tightly together.

"I hope you don't think I oughtn't to marry again," said her mother, returning her look without understanding it in the least. "Your pa's been dead ten years"—this in an injured tone. "There ain't many women—— Oh, good mornin', Mr. Lester. Mariella, 'll you wait on Mr. Lester? Well"—beaming good-naturedly on her customer—"how's real estate this mornin'? Any new sales afoot?"

"*Are* there?" repeated that gentleman, leaning on the show-case and lighting his cigar, innocent of intentional discourtesy. "Well, I should *smile*—and smile, broadly, too, Mrs. Mansfield. There's a Minneapolis chap here that's buyin' right an' left; just *slashin'* things! He's bought a lot o' water-front property, too; an' let me tell *you*, right now, that Jim Hill's behind him; an' Jim Hill's the biggest railroad man in the U. S. to-day, an' the Great Northern's behind *him!*"

"Well, I hope so." Mrs. Mansfield drew a long breath of delight. Mr. Lester smiled, shrugged his shoulders, spread out his hands, and sauntered out with the air of a man who has the ear of railroad kings.

"Are you goin' to the canoe races to-night, Mariella?" began her mother, in a conciliatory tone.

"I don't know. Might as well, I guess."

The girl was wiping the shelf bottles now; her face was pale, but her back was to her mother.

"Well, we will have an early supper, so you can get off. Mercy, child! Did you break one o' them glass labels? How often 'v' I told you not to press on 'em so hard! What one is it? The tincture cantharides. Well, tie a string around it, so we'll know what it is. There ain't no label on the aconite bottle, nor the Jamaica ginger either—an' them settin' side by side, too. I hate guessin' at things in a drug-store—'specially when one's a poison. Have you scoured up them spatulas?"

"Yes 'm."

"Well, I'll go in an' do up the dishes, an' leave you to 'tend store. Don't forget to make Mr. Benson's pills."

But Mr. Benson's pills were not made right away. When her mother was gone, Mariella got down from the step-ladder and leaned one elbow on the show-case and rested her chin in her hand. Her throat swelled in and out fitfully, and the blue veins showed, large and full, on her temples. For a long time she stood thus, twisting the towel in her other hand and looking at the fires on the hill without seeing them. Some of their dry burning seemed to get into her own eyes.

Mr. Grover, passing, glanced in.

"Mariella," he said, putting one foot across the threshold, "are you goin' to the canoe races?"

The girl had darted erect instantly, and put on a look of coquettish indifference.

"Yes, I am." Her eyes flashed at him over her shoulder from the corners of their lids as she started back to the prescription-case. "I'm goin' with Charlie Walton!"

When Mariella had gone to the races that night, and customers were few and far between, Mr. Grover walked with a determined air through Mrs. Mansfield's store and, pushing aside the crimson canton-flannel portières, entered her cheerful sitting-room. On the floor was a brussels carpet, large-flowered and vivid. A sewing machine stood in one corner and Mariella's organ in another. The two narrow windows overlooking the sound were gay with blooming geraniums and white curtains tied with red ribbons. There was a trunk deceptively stuffed and cretonned into the semblance of a settee; and there was a

wicker-chair that was full of rasping, aggravating noises when you rocked in it. It had red ribbon twisted through its back and arms, Mrs. Mansfield was sitting in it now, reading a novel, and the chair was complaining unceasingly.

Mr. Grover sat down on the trunk.

"Mrs. Mansfield," he said, looking squarely at her, "I've got somethin' to ask of you, an' I'm goin' to do it while Mariella's away."

"That so?" said Mrs. Mansfield.

The color in her cheek deepened almost to purple. She put one hand up to her face, and with the other nervously wrinkled the corners of the leaves of her novel. She lowered her lids resolutely to hide the sudden joy in her eyes.

"I guess you know what I've been comin' here so much for. I couldn't help thinkin', too, that you liked the idea an' was sort of encouragin' me."

Mrs. Mansfield threw one hand out toward him in a gesture at once deprecating, coquettish and helpful.

"Oh, you!" she exclaimed, laughing and coloring more deeply. There was decided encouragement in her honest blue eyes under their sandy lashes.

"Well, didn't you now?" Mr. Grover leaned toward her.

She hesitated, fingering the leaves of her book. She turned her head to one side; the leaves swished softly as they swept past her broad thumb; the corners of her mouth curled in a tremulous smile; the fingers of her other hand moved in an unconscious caress across her warm cheek; she remembered afterward that the band across the bay on the long pier, where the races were, was playing "Annie Laurie," and that the odor of wild musk, growing outside her window in a box, was borne in, sweet and heavy, by the sea winds. It was the one perfect moment of Mrs. Mansfield's life—in which there had been no moments that even approached perfection; in which there had been no hint of poetry—only dullest, everyday prose. She had married because she had been taught that women should marry; and Mr. Mansfield had been a good husband. She always said that; and she did not even know that she always sighed after saying it. Her regard for Mr. Grover was the poetry—the wine—of her hard, frontier life. Never before that summer had she stood and listened to the message of the meadow-lark with a feeling of exaltation that brought tears to her eyes; or gone out to gather wild pink clover with the dew on it; or turned her

broad foot aside to spare a worm. Not that Mr. Grover ever did any of these things; but that love had lifted the woman's soul and given her the new gift of seeing the beauty of common things. No one had guessed that there was a change in her heart, not even Mariella.

It was well that Mrs. Mansfield prolonged that perfect moment. When she did lift her eyes, there was a kind of appealing tenderness in them.

"I guess I did," she did.

"Well, then,"—Mr. Grover drew a breath of relief—"you might 's well say I can have her. I want it all understood before she gets home. I want to stop her runnin' with that Walton. Once or twice I've been afraid you'd just as leave she'd marry him as me. I don't like to see girls gallivant with two or three fellows."

Mrs. Mansfield sat motionless, looking at him. Her eyes did not falter; the smile did not wholly vanish from her face. Only the blood throbbled slowly away, leaving it paler than Mariella's had been that morning. She understood her mistake almost before his first sentence. While he was speaking her thoughts were busy. She felt the blood coming back when she remembered what she had said to Mariella. If *only* she had not spoken!

"Well," she said calmly, "have you said anything to Mariella?"

"Yes, I have; lot's o' times. An' I know she likes me; but she's some flirtish, and that's what I want to put a stop to. So, with your permission, I'll have a talk with her to-night."

"I'd like to talk to her first myself." Mrs. Mansfield looked almost stern. "But I guess it'll be all right, Mr. Grover. If you'd just as soon wait till to-morrow, I'd like to be alone and make up my mind what to say to her."

Mr. Grover got up and shook hands with her awkwardly.

"I'll make her a good husband," he said, earnestly.

"I don't doubt that," replied Mrs. Mansfield.

Then he went out and the crimson curtain fell behind him.

When Mariella came home her mother was sitting, rocking, by the window. The lamp was lighted.

"Pills," she said, "I want you to stop goin' with that fello'."

The girl looked at her in silence. Then she took off her turban and stuck the long black pins back into it.

"I thought you liked him," she said, slowly.

"I do, but Mr. Grover wants you—an' I like him better."

"Wants *me!*" Mariella drew up her shoulders proudly.

"Yes, you," replied Mrs. Mansfield, laughing. The humor of the situation was beginning to appeal to her. "He says he'd told you. You must of laughed after I told you he wanted me."

"Oh, ma, does he want me, honest?"

"Yes, he does." She was still laughing.

"An' don't you mind, ma?"

"Not a mite," said the widow, cheerfully. "I'd rather he'd marry you than me; only I thought he was too nice a man to be lost to the fam'ly."

"Oh, ma!"

"Well, get to bed now. He's comin' in the mornin' to see you."

She took up the lamp and stood, holding it, irresolutely.

"Pills," she said, looking embarrassed, "you won't ever tell him that I—that I——"

"Never, ma!" exclaimed the girl, earnestly; "as long as I live."

"All right, then. Look out! You're droppin' tallo' from your candle! Don't hold it so crooked, child! I wouldn't like him to laugh about it. Good-night."

As she passed through the kitchen she called out: "Oh, Pills! Mr. Jordan brought in a mess of trout. We'll have 'em fried for breakfast."

The girl came running after her mother, and threw her arms around her.

"Oh, ma; are you sure you don't care a bit?"

"Not a bit," said Mrs. Mansfield, kissing her heartily. "I just thought he ought to be in the family. I'm glad it's turned out this way. Now, you go to bed, an' don't forget to roll up your bangs."

She went into her room and shut the door.



ETCHING: ALOHA *

BY MARY BELLE WALLACE

IT was sunset at the island of Hawaii. The little native huts trembled beneath their weight of dried grasses and tangled clusters of lianas and honeysuckle. Around was a sea of tropical green, delicate tamarinds, fan-palms and bananas shaded one into the other—and gleaming through all, was the beautiful Pacific, looking like a belt of liquid crystal in an emerald setting.

A young woman stood at the open doorway of one of these huts, awaiting the coming of her lover. The simple meal of poi and cocoanut milk had been carefully prepared, her own toilet arranged after the native fashion, and upon her brow and breast she had entwined the graceful leis, the flowers of which contrasted brilliantly with the dusky coloring of her skin.

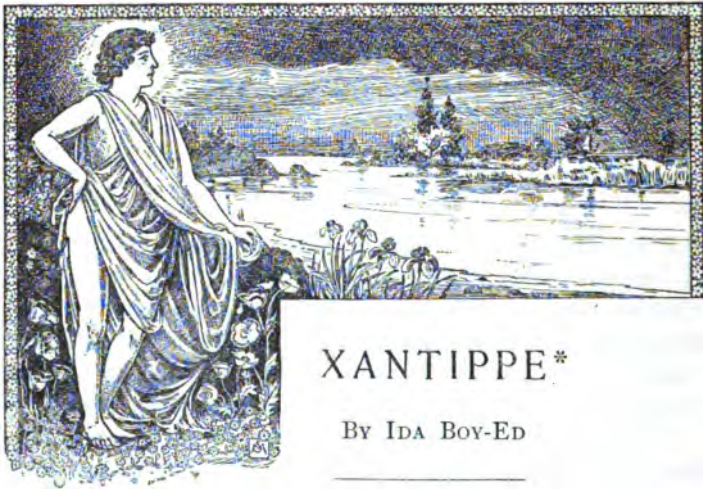
It was the seventh night that she had waited thus—and still he came not.

As the night wore on, her soul was filled with a strange dread. She threw herself with a despairing cry upon a bed of moss, and with arms outstretched, called his name with all a woman's tenderness. He was so strong; he was so brave; and he loved her so. Thoughts of his last fond embrace filled her heart—with a gleam of hope she held out her arms and clasped the dream-shape to her breast—he had not forsaken her, he still loved her, he would return!

The beautiful isle of Molakai lay like a jewel in the tropic light, but like a jewel with a flaw at its heart.

As the slow beauty of the moon came up, it disclosed the figure of a man standing with dumb agony upon the edge of a cliff, listening to the sobbing and the swaying of the waters. In his eyes was a world of anguish, in his heart despair. As he strained his eyes seaward, he beheld in the distance a garden of roses and palms, and a young girl standing by an open door awaiting his coming. But she will never see him again, for he is a leper, and has been transported to this doomed village, to live as an outcast among a people who for evermore owe but one duty to the world, and that is—to die.

* Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.



XANTIPPE*

BY IDA BOY-ED

DAPHNE stepped lightly out over the threshold of her door. The sun was shining with an intolerable glare on the white marble walls of the houses around and on the white lime-dust of the pavement, causing Daphne's bright, laughing eyes to wink and blink involuntarily. She drew a thin, gauzy veil over her head and face and slipped, keeping carefully within the sparse shadow cast by the walls of the houses, to a dwelling near-by. Raising a heavy curtain hanging before the entrance-door, she tripped softly inside. The room, however, was quite empty. It was a small, square room, the walls colored dark red; its only furniture a tripod, on which were burning dimly two chased silver lamps.

"She will be in the Gynakeion," said Daphne to herself softly, and raising another curtain, which hung exactly opposite, she passed through into a second room. There, under a portico which led out into a courtyard, upon a circular marble bench, sat the one whom she was seeking—a young and beautiful woman. A long white garment, with a border embroidered in crimson, lay in heavy, graceful folds about her small outstretched feet; an upper garment (the chiton) of the same color as the robe was gathered closely up about her neck, but left her slender arms quite bare, one of which rested languidly upon the carved back of the seat. The woman's small head was bound with three narrow scarlet silken fillets, her wavy hair caught up in a loose knot at the back of her neck. Hearing the curtain rustle, she

* Translated by Emma Maude Phelps, from the German, for Short Stories.
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turned her head and smiled as her dark eyes caught sight of Daphne's smiling face peeping from among its folds. Kissing her hand, she pointed toward the court and shook her head, as a warning to the newcomer not to speak too loud. In the court, regardless of the sun's hot rays, by the side of a fountain (a lion's head, from whose open mouth a slender stream of water fell into a shallow basin), two men were seated in earnest conversation.

Daphne glided noiselessly up to her friend's side, and seating herself upon the ground, laid her head upon the other's knees. She sat there some moments in silence, endeavoring to catch what it was the men were discussing. In vain. She could hear only the sound of their voices; that of the principal speaker—a dark, swarthy man, of middle age, with a flat nose and thick, protruding lips—was sonorous and mellow; his companion's, high-pitched and squeaking. After a few minutes' silence, Daphne whispered:

“How ugly he is—thy Socrates!”

“But so learned, so wise, so great,” murmured the other in answer; but she sighed as she spoke.

“Thou sighest. Hast wearied on the first day of thy wedded life of thy philosopher?” inquired Daphne, with a bright, side-long glance.

“No,” answered Xantippe, proudly. “Is he not the most learned, the wisest man in all Athens? And I am happy to think he considered me worthy to be his wife. Thou shouldst have heard the speech with which he welcomed me to his roof yesterday. Among other things he told me that there were evil demons who lurked in corners and cupboards to tempt young wives to be neglectful of their duties. But there was also a deity who, living under our roof, would take me under his protection, guard me from evil, and help me to resist temptation, whom I must propitiate by humility and wifely obedience. But how can I do this, when Socrates himself prevents me?”

“Socrates—prevent thee! Speak, and tell me how this can be.”

“Thou knowest I was wedded against my will to Antisthenes, preferring Glaucus, to whom my parents refused me. Should I learn from thee, however, that the wife of a philosopher has reason to complain of her lot, I shall no longer reproach my parents in my heart for bestowing me on the merchant and denying me to the scholar.”

“Thou knowest,” answered Xantippe, “that it is my duty to

see that my lord's table is well supplied with suitable food. But how can I do this when he gives me no money. Three times I went this morning to him asking him gently, "Give me, I pray thee, a *tetrobolon*, that I may buy fish and vegetables for the mid-day meal." Twice he gave me no answer; the third he spoke not to me but to Euclid, who arrived here this morning from Megara: "Euclid, why does this woman trouble us and disturb us at our discourse?"

Before Daphne could open her mouth to speak the words of sympathy trembling on her lips, Socrates, leaving his seat at the fountain, approached, followed by his friend.

"According to the sun, it should be midday, my Xantippe. I am hungry. If the midday meal is prepared, we will partake of it. Euclid, too, will bear us company."

Daphne smiled maliciously at the thought that the philosopher and his pupil were likely this day at least to go hungry.

Xantippe, however, blushed with shame. She arose from her seat trembling and, standing with downcast head before her husband, in faltering tones explained why the midday meal was not prepared.

She had asked him hours ago for money to buy food, but he had given her none.

Euclid laughed jeeringly at her words, but Socrates replied mildly, "Justice is one of the chiefest virtues belonging to man. As I gave thee no money at thy request, the fault is mine. The next time, however, my Xantippe, when I do not heed thy words, raise thy voice and continue speaking until thou succeedest in attracting my attention. Let the evening meal therefore be prepared earlier than usual. And now fetch us a vessel of wine, that we may continue our discourse with minds and bodies refreshed."

Xantippe's beautiful face cleared up at Socrates' quiet words. "Thou seest," she whispered, when she and Daphne were alone together again, "how kind and just he is."

And she kept her husband's advice, to raise her voice while speaking to him, fixed firmly in her memory.

The next day, therefore, when Socrates turned a deaf ear to her request for money (he being at that time in earnest conversation with Daphne's husband, Antisthenes), she raised her voice, as she had been bidden by him; and as he still continued oblivious to her request, she screamed, in a voice so shrill and loud that she herself was startled at the sound of it, "Socrates, give me some money!"

The philosopher disturbed, and anxious to continue his discourse with his friend, promptly complied with her demand.

In a very few days, however, Socrates' ears became accustomed to his wife's tones, shrill as they had grown. And Xantippe, on her part, found it impossible (accustomed as she was by this time to the high key necessary to make herself audible to her husband) to lower her voice when speaking to others.

Daphne therefore remarked complainingly to Xantippe's friends and her own: "Xantippe's voice grows harsher and shriller every day. Not content with screaming at her philosopher, she begins now to scream at us."

Xantippe soon found it necessary to ask Socrates for money to buy new garments. When she succeeded at last in making her husband understand what it was she required, he shook his head doubtfully, and answered:

"In my eyes, my Xantippe, thou art beautiful and lovely in thy present garments—old and shabby though they be. Beware of vanity, which is also a demon."

Xantippe, however, was not satisfied with this judgment of her husband, philosopher though he was, concerning the garment she was wearing. Daphne, too, assured her that the robe was not fit to be worn.

When, therefore, Xantippe for a second time, with tears and shrill upbraidings, insisted on Socrates complying with her desire, the philosopher, to be rid of her, gave her three times as much money as she had asked for. And Xantippe, overjoyed, was able to buy for herself, besides the coveted garments, a fillet of gold for her hair, and an armlet in the shape of a serpent, of an Egyptian who sold jewelry in the bazar.

From that day Xantippe's voice grew louder and louder, until her husband grew to shudder at the very sound of it.

And not only Daphne—but soon all Athens—all Greece—all the world proclaimed Xantippe a scold and a shrew who, by her complaints and upbraidings, made the life of her philosopher-husband a burden to him.

Poor Xantippe!

A CANINE ISHMAEL *

FROM THE NOTES OF A DINER-OUT

BY F. ANSTEY

“TELL me,” she said suddenly, with a pretty imperiousness that seemed to belong to her, “are you fond of dogs?” How we arrived at the subject I forget now, but I know she had just been describing how a collie, at a dog-show she had visited lately, had suddenly thrown his forepaws round her neck in a burst of affection—a proceeding which, in my own mind (although I prudently kept this to myself) I considered less astonishing than she appeared to do.

For I had had the privilege of taking her in to dinner, and the meal had not reached a very advanced stage before I had come to the conclusion that she was the most charming, if not the loveliest person I had ever met.

It was fortunate for me that I was honestly able to answer her question in a satisfactory manner, for, had it been otherwise, I doubt whether she would have deigned to bestow much more of her conversation upon me.

“Then I wonder,” she said next, meditatively, “if you would care to hear about a dog that belonged to—to someone I know very well? Or would it bore you?”

I am very certain that if she had volunteered to relate the adventures of Telemachus, or the history of the Thirty Years' War, I should have accepted the proposal with a quite genuine gratitude. As it was, I made it sufficiently plain that I should care very much indeed to hear about that dog.

She paused for a moment to reject an unfortunate *entrée* (which I confess to doing my best to console), and then she began her story. I shall try to set it down as nearly as possible in her own words, although I cannot hope to convey the peculiar charm and interest that she gave it for me. It was not, I need hardly say, told all at once, but was subject to the inevitable interruptions which render a dinner-table intimacy so piquantly precarious.

“This dog,” she began quietly, without any air of beginning a

* From “The Talking Horse.”—U. S. Book Company.

story, "this dog was called Pepper. He was not much to look at—rather a rough, mongrelly kind of animal; and he and a young man had kept house together for a long time, for the young man was a bachelor and lived in chambers by himself. He always used to say that he didn't like to get engaged to anyone, because he was sure it would put Pepper out so fearfully. However, he met somebody at last who made him forget about Pepper, and he proposed and was accepted—and then, you know," she added, as a little dimple came in her cheek, "he had to go home and break the news to the dog."

She had just got to this point, when, taking advantage of a pause she made, the man on her other side (who was, I daresay, strictly within his rights, although I remember at the time considering him a pushing beast) struck in with some remark which she turned to answer, leaving me leisure to reflect.

I was feeling vaguely uncomfortable about this story; something, it would be hard to say what, in her way of mentioning Pepper's owner made me suspect that he was more than a mere acquaintance of hers.

Was it *she*, then, who was responsible for——? It was no business of mine, of course; I had never met her in my life till that evening—but I began to be impatient to hear the rest.

And at last she turned to me again; "I hope you haven't forgotten that I was in the middle of a story. You haven't? And you would really like me to go on? Well, then—oh, yes, when Pepper was told, he was naturally a little annoyed at first. I daresay he considered he ought to have been consulted previously. But, as soon as he had seen the lady, he withdrew all opposition—which his master declared was a tremendous load off his mind, for Pepper was rather a difficult dog, and slow, as a rule, to take strangers into his affections, a little snappy and surly, and very easily hurt or offended. Don't you know dogs who are sensitive like that? I do, and I'm always so sorry for them—they feel little things so much, and one never can find out what's the matter, and have it out with them! Sometimes it's shyness; once I had a dog who was quite painfully shy—self-consciousness it was really, I suppose, for he always fancied everybody was looking at him, and often when people were calling he would come and hide his face in the folds of my dress till they had gone—it was too ridiculous! But about Pepper. He was devoted to his new mistress from the very first. I am not sure that she was quite so struck with him, for he was not at all a lady's dog, and

his manners had been very much neglected. Still, she came quite to like him in time; and when they were married, Pepper went with them for the honeymoon."

"*When they were married!*" I glanced at the card which lay half-hidden by her plate. Surely *Miss So-and-so* was written on it?—yes, it was certainly "Miss." It was odd that such a circumstance should have increased my enjoyment of the story, perhaps—but it undoubtedly did.

"After the honeymoon," my neighbor continued, "they came to live in the new house, which was quite a tiny one, and Pepper was a very important personage in it indeed. He had his mistress all to himself for the greater part of the most days, as his master had to be away in town; so she used to talk to him intimately, and tell him more than she would have thought of confiding to most people. Sometimes when she thought there was no fear of callers coming, she would make him play, and this was quite a new sensation for Pepper, who was a serious-minded animal, and took very solemn views of life. At first he hadn't the faintest idea what was expected of him; it must have been rather like trying to romp with a parish beadle, he was so intensely respectable! But as soon as he once grasped the notion and understood that no liberty was intended, he lent himself to it readily enough and learnt to gambol quite creditably. Then he was made much of in all sorts of ways; she washed him twice a week with her very own hands—which his master would never have dreamt of doing—and she was always trying new ribbons on his complexion. That rather bored him at first, but it ended by making him a little conceited about his appearance. Altogether, he was dearly fond of her, and I don't believe he had ever been happier in all his life than he was in those days. Only, unfortunately, it was all too good to last."

Here I had to pass olives or something to somebody, and the other man, seeing his chance, and, to do him justice, with no idea that he was interrupting a story, struck in once more, so that the history of Pepper had to remain in abeyance for several minutes.

My uneasiness returned. Could there be a mistake about that name-card after all? Cards *do* get rearranged sometimes, and she seemed to know that young couple so very intimately. I tried to remember whether I had been introduced to her as a Miss or Mrs. So-and-so, but without success. There is some fatality which generally distracts one's attention at the critical

moment of introduction, and in this case it was perhaps easily accounted for. My turn came again, and she took up her tale once more. "I think when I left off I was saying that Pepper's happiness was too good to last. And so it was. For his mistress was ill, and, though he snuffed and scratched and whined at the door of her room for ever so long, they wouldn't let him in. But he managed to slip in one day somehow, and jumped up on her lap and licked her hands and face, and almost went out of his mind with joy at seeing her again. Only (I told you he was a sensitive dog) it gradually struck him that she was not *quite* so pleased to see him as usual—and presently he found out the reason. There was another animal there, a new pet, which seemed to take up a good deal of her attention. Of course, you guess what that was—but Pepper had never seen a baby before, and he took it as a personal slight and was dreadfully offended. He simply walked straight out of the room and downstairs to the kitchen, where he stayed for days.

"I don't think he enjoyed his sulk much, poor doggie; perhaps he had an idea that when they saw how much he took it to heart they would send the baby away. But as time went on and this didn't seem to occur to them, he decided to come out of the sulks and look over the matter, and he came back quite prepared to resume the old footing. Only everything was different. No one seemed to notice that he was in the room now, and his mistress never invited him to have a game; she even forgot to have him washed—and one of his peculiarities was that he had no objection to soap and warm water. The worst of it was, too, that before very long the baby followed him into the sitting-room, and, do what he could, he couldn't make the stupid little thing understand that it had no business there. If you think of it, a baby must strike a dog as a very inferior little animal: it can't bark (well, yes, it *can* howl), but it's no good whatever with rats, and yet everybody makes a tremendous fuss about it! The baby got all poor Pepper's bows now; and his mistress played games with it, though Pepper felt he could have done it ever so much better, but he was never allowed to join in. So he used to lie on a rug and pretend he didn't mind, though, really, I'm certain he felt it horribly. I always believe, you know, that people never give dogs half credit enough for feeling things, don't you?

"Well, at last came the worst indignity of all: Pepper was driven from his rug—his own particular rug—to make room for

the baby; and when he had got away into a corner to cry quietly, all by himself, that wretched baby came and crawled after him, and pulled his tail!

“He always *had* been particular about his tail, and never allowed anybody to touch it but very intimate friends, and even then under protest, so you can imagine how insulted he felt.

“It was too much for him, and he lost the last scrap of temper he had. They said he bit the baby, and I’m afraid he did—though not enough really to hurt it; still it howled fearfully, of course, and from that moment it was all over with poor Pepper—he was a ruined dog!

“When his master came home that evening he was told the whole story. Pepper’s mistress said she would be ever so sorry to part with him, but, after his misbehavior, she should never know a moment’s peace until he was out of the house—it really wasn’t safe for baby!

“And his master was sorry, naturally; but I suppose he was beginning rather to like the baby himself, and so the end of it was that Pepper had to go. They did all they could for him; found him a comfortable home with a friend who was looking out for a good house-dog, and wasn’t particular about breed, and, after that, they heard nothing of him for a long while. And, when they did hear, it was rather a bad report: the friend could do nothing with Pepper at all; he had to tie him up in the stable, and then he snapped at everyone who came near, and howled all night—they were really almost afraid of him.

“So, when Pepper’s mistress heard that, she felt more thankful than ever that the dog had been sent away, and tried to think no more about him. She had quite forgotten all about it, when, one day, a new nursemaid, who had taken the baby out for an airing, came back with a terrible account of a savage dog which had attacked them, and leaped up at the perambulator so persistently that it was as much as she could do to drive it away. And even then Pepper’s mistress did not associate the dog with him; she thought he had been destroyed long ago.

“But the next time the nurse went out with the baby, she took a thick stick with her, in case the dog should come again. And no sooner had she lifted the perambulator over the step, than the dog *did* come again, exactly as if he had been lying in wait for them ever since outside the gate.

“The nurse was a strong country girl, with plenty of pluck, and as the dog came leaping and barking about in a very alarm-

ing way, she hit him as hard as she could on his head. The wonder is she did not kill him on the spot, and, as it was, the blow turned him perfectly giddy and silly for a time, and he ran round and round in a dazed sort of a way—do you think you could lower that candle-shade just a little? Thanks!” she broke off suddenly, as I obeyed.

“Well, she was going to strike again, when her mistress rushed out, just in time to stop her. For, you see, she had been watching at the window, and although the poor beast was miserably thin, and rough, and neglected-looking, she knew at once that it must be Pepper, and that he was not in the least mad or dangerous, but only trying his best to make his peace with the baby. Very likely his dignity or his conscience or something wouldn't let him come back quite at once, you know; and perhaps he thought he had better get the baby on his side first. And then, all at once, his mistress—I heard all this through her, of course—his mistress suddenly remembered how devoted Pepper had been to her, and how fond she had once been of him, and when she saw him standing, stupid and shivering, there, her heart softened to him, and she went to make it up with him, and tell him that he was forgiven and should come back and be her dog again, just as in the old days!—”

Here she broke off for a moment. I did not venture to look at her, but I thought her voice trembled a little when she spoke again. “I don't quite know *why* I tell you all this. There was a time when I never could bear the end of it myself,” she said; “but I have begun, and I will finish now. Well, Pepper's mistress went towards him, and called him; but—whether he was still too dizzy to quite understand who she was, or whether his pride came uppermost again, poor dear! I don't know—but he gave her just one look (she says she will never forget it—never; it went straight to her heart), and then he walked very slowly and deliberately away.

“She couldn't bear it; she followed; she felt she simply *must* make him understand how very, very sorry she was for him; but the moment he heard her he began to run faster and faster, until he was out of reach and out of sight, and she had to come back. I know she was crying bitterly by that time.”

“And he never came back again?” I asked, after a silence.

“Never again!” she said softly; “that was the very last they ever saw or heard of him. And—and I've always loved every dog since for Pepper's sake!”

"I'm almost glad he did decline to come back," I declared; "it served his mistress right—she didn't deserve anything else!"

"Ah, I didn't want you to say that!" she protested; "she never meant to be so unkind—it was all for the baby's sake!"

I was distinctly astonished, for all her sympathy in telling the story had seemed to lie in the other direction.

"You don't mean to say," I cried, involuntarily, "that you can find any excuses for her? I did not expect *you* would take the baby's part!"

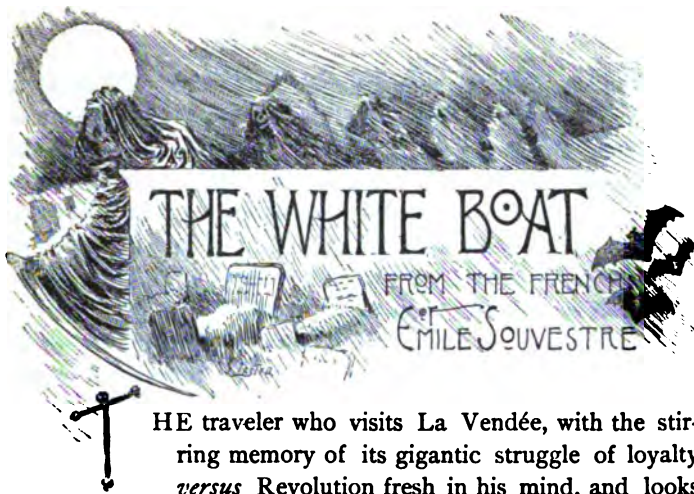
"But I did," she confessed, with lowered eyes—"I *did* take the baby's part—it was all my doing that Pepper was sent away—I have been sorry enough for it since!"

It was her own story she had been telling at second-hand after all—and she was not Miss So-and-so! I had entirely forgotten the existence of any other members of the party but our two selves, but at the moment of this discovery—which was doubly painful—I was recalled by a general rustle to the fact that we were at a dinner-party, and that our hostess had just given the signal.

As I rose and drew back my chair to allow my neighbor to pass, she raised her eyes for a moment and said, almost meekly:

"I *was* the baby, you see!"





THE traveler who visits La Vendée, with the stirring memory of its gigantic struggle of loyalty *versus* Revolution fresh in his mind, and looks on it as the land that, in the space of three years, became the grave of five Republican armies, as well as of the greater proportion of its own heroic population, would naturally expect to find in the inhabitants a people gloomy and daring, proud, impetuous and warlike.

To his astonishment, he sees himself surrounded by a race quiet, thoughtful, taciturn almost to dullness, and whose might, like that of their powerful yoked oxen, slumbers and asks but for repose. Such is the case especially in the hill-country of La Vendée proper, the region of the pure Pictish blood.

But if the physiognomy of the Vendéans be marked by a general sameness, nothing can be more varied than the aspect of their country. The eastern shore is indeed barren, dark and gloomy; but to the north stretches a long tract of undulating country, rich in golden meadows and fertile fields and dotted with noble forest trees, in whose shade nestles many an orchard-circled château and peaceful hamlet. Totally different again is the appearance of La Vendée proper, a long and boundless plain of golden corn, almost without trees. No sooner is the harvest brought in, than the waste and dreary stubble lands are covered with loads of lime, giving to them, in the distance, the appearance of an interminable battlefield strewn with bleaching bones. Proceeding onward towards the south, to the marshes, we find ourselves again in a new world. The Marais, as it is called.

The land here shows, like an accident, an exception—a creation of art, a sort of rustic Venice. The corn and the fruits seem

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to ripen on piles, and the flocks to be grazing on floating pastures. Ever since the sixteenth century, efforts have been made to reclaim tracts of this marsh by drainage on the Dutch plan, and some business connected with one of these recently drained tracts, gave me the long-desired opportunity of seeing something of the mode of life of the Cabaneers—the name by which the inhabitants of the reclaimed lands are known, as Hutters is that appropriated to the dwellers in the marsh.

I had made an appointment with Guillaume Blaisot, the farmer with whom my business was to be transacted, to meet him at Marans, at the mouth of the Sèvre, opposite to the Isle of Rhé, in Pertuis-Poitou. I reached Maillepais, after a very uncomfortable journey, by the diligence, hoping to proceed by water.

As I was waiting at the door of the little inn for the arrival of the boat that mine host had promised me, I perceived an old acquaintance approaching, whom, by his little waxcloth hat and his wooden leg, I had at once recognized as Maître Berand, better known as Fait-tout. Berand was one of those equivocal traders who get a livelihood by various nameless handicrafts, and who, in common parlance, are said to live by their wits. He now assured me that business called him in the direction in which I was going. I invited him to embark with me in the boat, which at that moment came alongside. He thankfully accepted my invitation, and I thus secured a companion, who, if not altogether trustworthy, was at least well acquainted with the country and its inhabitants, and who was, moreover, himself an interesting subject for my observation.

Immediately on leaving Maillepais, we found ourselves in the district familiarly known as *le Marais Mouillé*, and a wonderful spectacle it presented. As far as the eye could reach, it seemed as it were a water-landscape, whereon numberless islets, fringed with willows and ivy, were floating; now and then we passed a larger one, on which hemp and flax were cultivated. On the most elevated point of these little islands stand the solitary dwellings of the hutters; they are of plaited wicker-work, and look like so many beehives. They have neither window nor chimney, and the door appears too low for a full-grown man to enter without stooping. We could generally distinguish a fire flickering on the hearth, and sending its smoke through all the interstices of the basket-work. The older huts are often covered with a mass of vegetation; and not unfrequently the willow wands

woven into the dwelling bud and sprout, and form a thick green trellis-work of leafy branches around the hut. The people find their food in the waters by which they are surrounded, the neighboring towns offering a ready market for their fish and ducks. In winter, when the waters often rise to the level of their dwellings, the poor people are forced to take refuge, with their wives and children, in their boats, which are kept by them ready for such emergencies. In these, they frequently pass long days and nights, till the floods are abated.

As I wished to see the interior of one of these huts, we drew towards the shore and landed. The inside was incrustated with a black and shining coating of soot. In the dusky background, two cows were lying down and chewing the cud at ease before a sort of rough crib. This was the only piece of furniture in the hut, with the exception of a pair of earthen pitchers, a clumsy stool and a hurdle covered with a layer of moss; on this lay a woman whose appearance showed her to be suffering from the biliary fever so common in this moist and foetid atmosphere. To our words of comfort she at first made no reply; but at length, rousing herself, she said :



“What good can anything do me? I have seen the *White Boat!* All I want is the priest.”

These words had a startling effect, not only on the sailor who accompanied us, but on Fait-tout, notwithstanding his habitual readiness to parade his scepticism.

“The *White Boat!*” exclaimed both together, in a half whisper, at the same time looking towards the shore.

“Yes, yes,” continued the sick woman, with feverish excitement; “I was coming with a bundle of willows from the other side of the island, and there, gliding noiselessly through the channel, I saw the death-boat, with the yellow dwarf seated at the helm; and as I passed, I heard him cough and groan; I felt his poison breath upon me, and fell to the ground. My husband found me lying and brought me home, and I have never raised my head since, and never shall.”

I endeavored to soothe the poor woman, and to explain the thing as an optical delusion; but she stared wildly into the darkness, and my companions slipped quietly away; I myself felt a

sort of indefinable dread, thus left alone in the dusky hut with the dying woman, and hastened into the air.

When we got back to the boat, our conversation was in monosyllables; and to set it agoing, I made some inquiries respecting the young Blaisot whom I was to meet at Marans. At the sound of his name, Fait-tout started from his reverie, but made as though he had not heard me, and called my attention to the great number of boats that were lying in a little bay which we were then crossing. It was no uncommon sight, but he wished to divert me from my subject.

We did not reach Marans till late in the evening, and there were no tidings of Blaisot at the inn. To my repeated and urgent inquiries, the host replied with a counter-question:

“Do you mean the old Jerome Blaisot?”

“No; the question is of his son, Guillaume,” said Fait-tout, answering for me, and with singular emphasis.

“The tall Guillaume?” repeated the man in astonishment.

“And why not?” I rejoined sharply. “I have an appointment with him to take charge of a business which is likely to be as advantageous to him as to me. I should rather ask what reason he can have for staying away.”

“Nay,” replied mine host, with some hesitation, “how can any third person assign reasons for another? To-morrow is our market-day, and there will surely be some of Blaisot’s people in the town. You can ask them, sir, any questions you please.”

“Ask, indeed!” muttered Fait-tout in a mocking tone, as I moved away, half satisfied.

Marans is now the principal port of La Vendée, and the depot



of the export fisheries, and, the following day, was thronged with hutters, bringing in the rich spoils of the fishing and the chase. Still, all my inquiries for Blaisot were unavailing; and the evident shyness in answering—the frequent assumption of stupidity, as though they could not understand me, raised my previous uneasiness to the highest pitch.

On my return to the inn, I found Berand the centre of a won-

dering circle. He was etching an allegorical decoration on the arm of a sailor.

"Behold!" he said to me, complacently, "here is Love, Religion and the Royal Flower. Though my own idea, I must say it is a work of art!"

I finally took counsel with mine host, who advised me to proceed, in his conveyance, to the cottage of the Blaisots, which was about a mile and a half distant. *Fait-tout* would be my guide. In half an hour the matter was arranged and Berand and I set off. At sunset we reached Jerome Blaisot's cottage. In a field by the roadside I saw an old man tending sheep. A black sheep of unusual size trotted familiarly beside him.

"There is old Jacques, the shepherd, and his Flemish sheep," said *Fait-tout*. "That *Flandrine* knows as much as most dogs, which is more than most men! She would die for any one of the Blaisots."

We approached the cottage. An elderly man appeared on the threshold, but, without responding to our greeting, he turned and called "*Loubette! Loubette!*" A girl came out of the door behind him. I observed her awkward height and ungainly form, but not until I stood beside her did I notice the extreme strength and sweetness of her face. On my calling for her brother, the old man uttered a quick exclamation, but, silencing him with a glance, the girl said quietly:

"You are, doubtless, the gentleman whose letter we gave back to the postman two days ago?"

"Gave back again! And why did you do that?"

"Because he to whom it was addressed is not here."

"Nor in all little Poitou!" exclaimed the old man.

"But you know where he is," I rejoined; "you could have given the postman the necessary instructions."

"We know nothing," cried the father; "and he who says otherwise is no friend of ours. *Guillaume* is away on his own errand, without either consulting or revealing it to us,—this I do solemnly aver."

"Yes, yes, father," interrupted the maiden; "you see that the gentleman meant well by my brother, and why then should you make a disturbance, or deny him? You will take some refreshment with us, sir?" And so saying, she covered the table, and thus diverted my questionings and my curiosity.

After a while, the old Blaisot appeared to have regained his self-possession, and to have formed some great resolution. He

began by asking me my reason for coming, and my answers had the effect of quieting his suspicions altogether; and without any further allusion to his son, we talked of things in general, and then discussed the business I had in hand, and the conditions on which it could be executed.

By degrees, however, and with the deepening twilight, the conversation flagged, and we sat in silence. Loubette went up and down the room, busied about household matters, and often stood as if listening at the window; then she came and sat down with us again. Suddenly a most strange and piercing cry, like that of a bird, sounded without. Both father and daughter started up, but each with a very different expression of countenance. He said, half aloud:

“It is the night-raven, and at so late an hour!—that, too, bodes no good.”

She seemed to be listening intently; and, as three similar sounds were heard in quick succession, each drawing nearer and nearer, she said, in a trembling voice, which was little in accordance with her words:

“Ay, a boat must have disturbed him in his nest. It is the sleeping-time of beasts, but the eating-time of men. If you please, sir, supper is now ready.”

She had already lit a lamp, and we sat ourselves down to a table covered with a clean cloth, and well provided with simple fare. As the old peasant gradually thawed, and threw off the curse of suspicion—the sad inheritance of this people—I began to be quite comfortable; and only remarked after a while, that the girl, who had often risen from the table to see about one thing or another, as well as about my sleeping quarters for the night, had now absented herself altogether.

Fait-tout also withdrew, saying that he had business in the neighborhood. So Blaisot and I remained alone.

The old man told me a good deal about his son—how brave, obedient and industrious he used to be, and how he had been betrothed to a wealthy maiden of the district; who had been faithless to him, and taken another person—and how, since then, he had become altered in everything. He was even going, in answer to a question of mine, to explain what he meant by this, when we heard heavy footsteps and the clattering of arms outside, and in a moment the door was opened, and the brigadier of the gendarmerie of Chaillé entered the room in full uniform, let the butt-end of his musket fall noisily on the floor, and greeted

us in the peculiar, jovial and free-and-easy tone belonging to his class.

Old Jerome rose, then sank down again as pale as death, when William was called for.

"He is not here," he said, brokenly. "I swear it!"

"Then where shall we find him?" questioned the officer. "Speak now! Your son is a *refractoire*—we have orders to arrest him, and the government has placed a fine upon his head. So you will not speak? Ah, I understand—it is because you are



a traitor to the government yourself! Well! We shall see—Papa Jerome! We shall see!"

The old man now declared in the most eloquent manner his attachment to the July dynasty, and his ignorance respecting any offense committed against any government whatsoever.

"Hold your peace, you old hypocrite!" replied the soldier, with a certain degree of confidence in his tone. "Do not we know you of old? Did not you do just the same when you were thirty or forty years younger? Truly, it is not so serious an affair as it was then. The Blues did not understand a joke: and a bullet or the guillotine soon made an end of the refractory. But still, mind what you are about, for the prison and the galleys are no trifle, and an execution in the house—I say, old fellow!"

The poor man would perhaps have been able to bear all threats against life and liberty, but the thought of being deprived of his goods and chattels by an execution woke his covetousness—the hereditary vice of the peasants of Poitou.

"For the sake of the Holy Virgin, M. Durand," he piteously exclaimed, with his hands clasped, "do but believe me! William has never returned home since——"

Here he stopped, having observed the scrutinizing glance cast on him by the officer, who said:

"Your son was seen yesterday at Vallembreuse. It is likely that his father knows not where he passed the night! Enough prattle—I shall search the house!"

Just then Loubette's voice was heard without, and one of the brigadier's men, who were stationed without, dragged her roughly in—she protesting angrily the while.

“Ah! Here we have the lady of the house,” cried the officer, ironically. “Where dost thou come from at so strangely late an hour, my dear?”



“From a place where one does not say *thou* to girls one has not the honor to know, Monsieur!” Loubette answered boldly; “but since you would know, Monsieur, I have been taking the shepherd his supper!”

The gendarmes at once confronted her—they had caught her coming from the very opposite direction. But Loubette was not to be puzzled by this. She asserted that she had gone round to the field where the sheep were feeding for the purpose of fetching the sickle, which she had forgotten at noon.

“Perhaps you may think that I wanted to cut bread with this,” added she with a sneer, as she drew the sickle from under her apron.

The brigadier now tried to catch her by all manner of artful questions and assertions; but she parried them so well, that he began to contradict himself, and knew no longer what he was about.

“There's no catching the subtle creature!” he exclaimed at last, in dudgeon. “Two of you stay here to watch these people, and the rest of us will rummage the whole place—he must be here.”

The brigadier had taken no further notice of me than that implied in his first curt greeting, for he knew me before. But I plainly saw that he found my presence inconvenient. I followed him to the house-door, and heard one of the gendarmes say to him: “Was not that a boat that glided over the water behind the bushes yonder?”

In fact, we soon heard the sound of oars, and the trilling of a cheerful song, then a scream, and a momentary silence; then some quick oar-strokes, a rustling in the thicket; and, an instant after, the vagabond Berand, my traveling companion, rushed towards the house, breathless, and evidently beside himself, and

threw himself down upon the bank before the door. At once assailed by the brigadier, who not unreasonably charged him with being an old drunkard, he broke out into the following unconnected sentences:

“ I have seen—seen him! There—there—I tell—I tell you.



He glided in his white boat out from the bushes—and—and—under the trees opposite—and he was gone!”

“ But *who*, in the name of all that is holy ? ” screamed out the brigadier in his impatience.

“ Who ? He ! The White Boat, and the little yellow man at the helm ! And he had a corpse in its white grave-clothes lying across the boat before him ; its head was hanging over the water ! ”

“ The wooden-leg is drunk ; ” laughed the brigadier.

“ Would to God I had dreamt it, and were not sober ! ” said poor Berand. “ But I have not only seen but heard. ‘ Turn back, unhappy man ! ’ the figure exclaimed, ‘ or I will turn thee round and round. ’ The brandy still gave me courage to answer, ‘ Man or woman, whom hast thou there ? ’ But it cried out in a voice that went through the marrow of my bones, ‘ I have got tall William to-day, and in eight days I shall have thee ! ’ That was enough for me ; and here I am, thank God, at least on dry land still ; and in eight days hence, I shall take good care to be far enough from here ! ”

Scarcely had the cripple named the name of William, than the brigadier hurried off, with an exclamation, to the canal, and all his party after him. We heard the click of their muskets as they

cocked them in setting off; next, we heard the brigadier call out three times, and then a gun was fired; and, on hastening to the place whence the sound came, we found the gendarmes collected on the banks of the side canal:

“If the little yellow man has escaped us, he has at all events left his freight behind him,” called out the brigadier, as he pointed towards a moonlit spot on the opposite side of the small canal which belonged to Blaisot’s land. With horror, we discovered a corpse stretched out at full length in the moonlight. The gendarmes brought out the boat in which our wooden-legged friend had just arrived, and went to fetch the body. Scarcely had they laid it down upon the dyke, than Loubette, followed by her father and their guard, rushed towards it, kneeling down to look at the face, and finding it unrecognizable through decomposition, snatched at the right hand of the corpse, and exclaiming “Holy Virgin, it is my brother!” sprang up, and held out a ring to her father, naming the names of William and Louise inscribed on it, and a flaming heart between them.

After the first outburst of grief, the girl attained a remarkable degree of composure; though there was something overstrained and excited about it; and it was often interrupted by almost convulsive gestures, wringing of the hands and deep-drawn sobs. However, it was such as enabled her to give all the orders she deemed necessary.

Agreeably to her directions, the corpse was taken to an out-building near the house, to which Loubette made her escape as soon as she had, with inconceivable celerity, prepared everything against the arrival of guests.

The old father appeared quite broken down and childish with grief and horror; and, with lamentable groans, and unconnected cries, he meekly allowed himself to be led back to the arm-chair in his own room.

Either by the shot, or by the sort of presentiment or instinct which never fails to draw people to a place where a calamity has occurred, even before any definite tidings of it can have had time to reach them, a number of the country people of the neighboring district were soon collected. Loubette was now busily occupied; for, according to the popular custom, which makes a death, as well as a wedding or a christening—joy and sorrow alike—a pretext for eating and drinking, she had to provide both food and liquor, during which task she seemed to be struggling rather with anxiety than grief. Old Jerome

welcomed each arrival with loud lamentations, which did not, however, interfere with his activity in passing round the jug.

As soon as Loubette had attended to her guests, and especially seen that the gendarmes were favorably placed as regarded the cider-jug and the brandy-pitcher, she hurried out again, and placed at the threshold of the little out-house, where lay the corpse, covered with a coarse linen cloth, two lighted candles, which were not rendered superfluous by the dawning light—for it was a dark corner enough.

The maiden was seated at the entrance with her head covered, and, as one neighbor after another came in, she appeared neither



to see nor hear, and kept all at a distance by the violence of her emotion; so that even those who would fain have taken a nearer look at the body, refrained from passing her. Each fresh comer was contented with a hasty glance and a murmured prayer, and then withdrew.

After awhile, the aged shepherd appeared, a venerable form, that seemed rather to belong to other times.

“*This* also comes in the train of old age,” he said in a half whisper, as he remained standing close to Loubette. “The son of the house, whose birth I commemorated, lies dead upon the bier, and the daughter sits weeping at the threshold!”

“God is proving our faith and patience, Master Jacques,” replied the girl, looking up, as if struggling with contending purposes, and then, deeply moved, looked sadly in the old man’s face, as he continued his wailings.

He placed his broad hand upon her head, as if to bless her; but his lamentations only increased her grief, for he spoke of

the virtues of the deceased, evidently an object of affection to the neighborhood. At length, groaning deeply, he shaded his face with his hands, and the few large tears that trickled slowly over his furrowed cheeks, seemed though by the greatness of his agony from fountains that had long been dry. He now made a movement towards the corpse, and, at first, Loubette appeared inclined to hinder his advance, but checking herself, she muttered in an undertone, "The gray-head will not betray us!" and followed him with looks of earnest attention.

He lifted the cloth that covered the face, but let it fall immediately. There was no trace of identity; and the spectacle revealed by the uncertain light was one of horror. The pet sheep, which had accompanied the old man, and at first attentively sniffed the air around the corpse, now turned unconcerned away—a great offense in the eyes of old Jerome.

"I have thought more highly of the beast than it deserved," he said sullenly. "It is no better than the children of men! Should you not recognize your master's son, living or dead—even though his features be disfigured? Such is the way of the world—to have no memory for the absent and the dead?" And he withdrew, accompanied by the sheep, which looked half ashamed, half surprised at his reproof.

The brigadier, finding I had studied the law, had asked me to visit the body, and to draw up the *procès-verbal* of the finding of the corpse. Berand offered to assist me.

On the discovery of a *corps malheureux*—as a body whose manner of death is suspicious is termed in this country—it happens that the next of kin devolve the duties of preparing it for burial on an official styled the *grave-digger of the lost*, who is seldom a person of good repute, although the pay is excellent. Master Fait-tout seemed, nevertheless, accustomed to the work; and his help was acceptable, for it was no pleasant task; and I wrote what he dictated in answer to my inquiries.

On a sudden, as he was busied with the right arm, he burst into an exclamation of astonishment.

"What is the matter?" I cried.

"What is the matter!" he replied softly, coming nearer to me; "what do you see on this arm?"

"I see a tattooing mark, such as you were making to-day at the inn at Marans."

"Just so: the *grande-pièce*—the altar, the lily, the cross, and a cipher. Now, except the lad on whom I etched it this morning,

there is only one in all Lower Poitou who has the *grande-pièce* on his arm; and that is, or was—not Guillaume Blaisot, but Pierre Sauvage, called the well-reputed, who was drowned a week ago, no one knew where, or how, and now——”

A half-suppressed scream prevented the completion of the sentence, and on looking round, we saw Loubette standing erect at the entrance, pale, and with disheveled hair and flaming eyes, and her arm stiffly extended.

“Come hither, maiden!” he exclaimed, “your brother is alive! At least, this is no more he than it is His Holiness the Pope of Rome.”

But her emotion was at first too great for words; and when she did speak, the accents were not those of joy, but of anguish and terror:

“On thy life—on thy salvation, say not another word! And who allowed you to meddle with the dead? what business have you here?” she added, with a deep groan, at the same time approaching him.

I quieted her with a word of explanation and assurance. She grasped my hand, but cast a look of suspicion on my assistant. The latter, after a short pause, during which he displayed more feeling than was his wont, exclaimed:

“Now I see! You knew that it was not Guillaume?”

She nodded assent.

“You are a brave lass, and I understand the game; and may the deuce take me if I meddle or mar! I’ve no such liking for the bloodhounds, especially since ‘the glorious days’ in Paris yonder. So, my word upon it, I’m silent.”

“Now I know the meaning of the bird-call,” said I to Loubette; “a signal that Guillaume was there with the corpse, was it not?”

Again she nodded, and whispered, faintly smiling:

“He had most fortunately seen it lying in the mud at the border of a little creek two hours ago, and arranged it all with me. He is in concealment, while he is supposed to be dead, and the hue and cry is thus stopped. He hovers about here, as though Louise had bewitched him, and declares that he must speak to her yet once more.” She turned again to Berand.

“You keep our secret?” she said, looking earnestly at him, and holding out her hand.

He was about to grasp it in his own, when he suddenly drew back, and exclaimed, angrily:

“Not so fast! Your fine brother, then, was the yellow dwarf with the hollow cough, and the corpse in his White Boat, who gave me such a fright as he chased me on the water? No, that was too much—that’s not to be forgiven! To make such a fool of me, and terrify me like a child with a scarecrow! We’ll see what the brigadier says to that game!”

Earnestly I strove to appease him; but, unluckily, another weight dropped into the wrong balance.

“No, no,” said he; “what a fool I should have been! The Sauvages have offered fifty pounds for the body of their son, and I may as well have the reward as anyone else.”

He was rushing out, but she stood in the doorway, and placing both her hands on his shoulders, and looking at him with sharp



and earnest gaze, while her cheeks glowed with excitement, she said, in a calm, but harsh and determined voice:

“Look well to yourself, wooden-leg: you have a choice to make. Are we in future to be friends or foes? Give me your word that you will say no more than you are asked, and from this hour you have a home in the house of the Blaisots—and you know the value of such a home to you and the like of you. Or say but a word, make but a sign—a gesture that may involve peril to my brother, and you have Loubette Blaisot for your deadly enemy,—and Loubette keeps her word for good and for

evil. If *you* know it not, ask throughout Lower Poitou; and then, old man, ask yourself whether it can bring you either honor or profit in this country to betray a loyal Vendean to the gendarmerie? Guillaume is *lost* if he is not dead! Do you understand? As to the promise of the Sauvages, the Blaisots can fulfil it as well."

A host of conflicting feelings was struggling in the man's breast. It was mortified vanity alone that had caused him to swerve from his original resolution, and he was able to estimate Loubette's gratitude, as well as her vengeance, at their proper value. He now put his hand into that which she held out.

"Done!—I keep counsel."

It was indeed high time that we came to an understanding; for all the neighbors had withdrawn, and the brigadier had called twice; and scarcely had we turned again towards the corpse, and Loubette resumed her attitude at the entrance, when he appeared and inquired if the deposition were not yet ready, as it was time he should be setting out. I hastily wrote the concluding words, and handed the document to him. He scarcely looked at it; and it was evident that the cider had done its work. Calling his men together, he departed with them and old Jerome, to make his deposition before the nearest magistrate.

No sooner had the tread of the gendarmes died away in the distance, than Loubette sprang to the back-door, and repeated the bird-call that I had heard at the beginning of the evening. After a few minutes, in company with a young peasant, she walked into the room.



The resemblance between them was striking. He seemed a manly young fellow, and his face bore traces of the grief he had suffered through his faithless sweetheart. Loubette made us known to one another, and I immediately offered to take him with me to Marans, whence he could easily get across the country. He accepted my proposal with sincere thanks; and Loubette—bravest, strongest soul that I have ever known—rose and laid her arms about his neck: "You must go now!" she whispered; and I then saw that, with him, the light would go out of her life.

"My father!" whispered the young man. But Loubette shook her head, and without a tear in her brave, beautiful eyes, with even a smile, to give him courage, on her lips, she pushed him gently out from the home they had always known together, out into the darkness and the uncertainty of the night.

Berand staid to dig a grave in the garden; for the brigadier had decided that Guillaume had taken his own life, and could have no Christian burial. Guillaume took his seat beside me in the car, gathered up the reins, and we were off. We drove on for about an hour and a half, when he suddenly halted, and said:

"Excuse me, sir, I will not detain you, but I have business here, hard by."

I represented to him the risk he incurred, and expressed my surprise at his having any business that could hinder him for a quarter of an hour under such circumstances. It availed not, and he only entreated me to wait for him.

"Only ten minutes!" he exclaimed, with emotion. "It is no business—it is but a house—a look. I cannot leave the country without"—and he was gone.

I fastened the horse to a tree, and followed, to be at hand in case of trouble. He stood awhile beneath a tree that was growing out of the hedge which surrounded the garden. The window of a projecting angle of the building was just opposite, and doubtless he had good reasons for choosing his post. The curtains were drawn, and the inmates of the house seemed buried in sleep. The distant village clock struck three, and I thought it high time

that we were again on the road. I approached, and bade him be comforted, and take courage. He turned swiftly at sight of me, and his expression awed me; it was rather one of anger than of sorrow, with the same stern fixed look that he had in common with his sister.

"One moment more!" he whispered, softly. "She must know that I have been here, and then she will see how to settle it with her conscience. Yes, I hope she may learn that my corpse was found here!"



Just then a light appeared at one of the windows, and the wailing cry of a little child crept out on the still air of the night.

The young fellow beside me trembled, and the stern expression about his lips changed to one of pain. He looked at me helplessly a moment, and then he said, in a hushed voice:

“ Louise! Ah, I did not know—Loubette did not tell me!”

“ Come!” I said, touching his arm gently. “ Come! For Loubette’s sake you must be off!”

“ True!” he said, “ it is all over.”

He let go the bough, which swung back against the window, and fastened the cravat round his neck; and in a few seconds was seated by my side, lost in thought, and rapidly urging forward the horse on the road to Marans.

He drew up at the bridge of Vix, and declared that his route now lay in a different direction. I offered him the charge of a little farm in Touraine, if he would let me know where to find him. He was evidently grateful for my sympathy, but declined the offer, saying:

“ It can’t be; I must live as the rest do. To manage a farm properly, I must have a wife, and I could not think of that. Man must labor in the quietness and the peace of his heart and of his life, and that I cannot do. I should never see a gendarme without thinking that he was seeking me.”

“ You are dead for the gendarmes, Guillaume, for all the world except Loubette and me,” I replied, jestingly. But the words made a painful impression on him.

“ It were perhaps the best thing that could happen for me, for us all—if it were true,” he rejoined, gloomily. But recovering himself quickly, he imparted to me his plan, which was to seek a home with some friends in the Talmond country. I made some inquiries as to his means of subsistence; but he was shy, and broke off the conversation abruptly, saying that he had still far to travel and that people were coming in sight along



the road from Marans. He was right. We had scarcely time for a brief farewell and a hearty grasp of the hand when he was lost to sight in an adjoining thicket and I saw him no more.

But among the bodies of those shot by the gendarmerie in the slight rising that took place soon afterward in La Vendée, on the appearance of the Duchess de Berri, that of Guillaume Blaisot and of his brave sister, Loubette, were found side by side.



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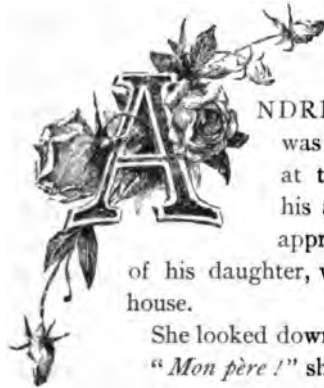
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BY CLAUDE M. GIRARDEAU



ANDRÉ MICHAUX, the old botanist, was digging diligently in the garden at the Oaks, too much engrossed in his absorbing occupation to notice the approach or to heed the exclamations of his daughter, who had hurried to him from the house.

She looked down at his stooping figure despairingly. "Mon père!" she called again, this time bending to his ear, so that her curls fell over his neck—"mon père! the British have taken Charleston. Lord Cornwallis is in the city. They say he is to send troops to harry the low country."

The old man looked up at last. "My flowers! my plants!" he gasped, staggering to his feet. "Do you think they will touch them?"

He spread out his arms as if to embrace the garden. The vision of the detested red-coats trampling down the prim box-hedges, destroying the rare exotics, and maiming the trees—perchance his precious *Cupressus lusitanica* and his acclimated camellia; japonicas, planted by his own hands, for the first time in the New World—filled him with terror.

The garden was ablaze with a regal splendor of color from the blossoming avenues of azaleas and thickets of roses. The

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lovely *Nelumbium luteum*, brought by Michaux from Hindostan, spread its golden-tinted, magnolia-like chalice upon the clear waters of the artificial lake behind the manor-house.

The house itself rose amid its pomegranates, its oranges and moss-draped oaks, white-pillared, wide-roofed, with imposing wings and turrets; the Winged Sheaf of its English owner in relief above the spacious doorway and upon the stone shields of casement and coping.

Noble by birth, the owners of the Oaks had ever been republican in principle. They headed the revolution against the Lords Proprietors in 1719. One of them had been a Royal Governor, with letters patent from William, Earl of Craven, Palatine. One had been a member of the Assembly in 1749. One was Speaker of the same body in 1750, and afterwards President of the Continental Congress. Later on, the son of this President signed a fair name to the Declaration of Independence, and thus cut off his people and himself effectually from hope of Tory preferment.

His wife's sister married the last of the Royal Governors, Lord William Campbell, brother to the Duke of Argyle; but the Colonial patriot dared to propose the imprisonment of his brother-in-law when Carolina drew her sword in defense of her rights, and for this high treason himself languished for two years in a Florida prison; his family detained in Charleston; his beautiful home left to the chances of war.

The old botanist, Michaux, had planted the garden at the Oaks and adorned the place with his own hands, and had left his own dwelling to care for his patron's desolate and deserted home.



He had but one joy in life—the collection and cultivation of rare plants, both exotic and indigenous. The fields and swamps of the rice-country rewarded his search with many curious semi-tropic specimens of orchidaceous growth. Indeed, so absorbed was he in this delightful pursuit, that he was indifferent to, or oblivious of the fact that his daughter was growing up beside his flowers

as rare an exotic as any one of them.

His younger, many-sided days had taken the botanist all over

the world, in quest not only of curious plants but of strange adventures.

In one of his travels he bought in Ispahan a Circassian, whom he afterward married. She bore him but one child and died before his first voyage to the New World.

He never married again, but became completely absorbed in his work and settled not far from Charleston, content to let the French and English colonists, the Dissenters and the Churchmen, fire their brains over religion and politics, while he potted among his plants and presented his patron's wife with the rare blossoms of the camellia trees or the uncanny flowers of the fleshly orchids.

To-day, therefore, he looked about him, quaking.

He scarcely knew who Lord Cornwallis was. Names, save of plants, sifted through his brain as though it were a sieve. But he knew what unrestrained soldiery could do, and he trembled for his flowers.

His daughter trembled,—but for herself and him, noting with a pang his preoccupation and bewildered indifference to her safety.

“What shall we do?” she exclaimed, glancing nervously behind her. “Whither shall we go? We cannot remain here, and alone. How can Colonel Marion with his handful of men defend us against a victorious army. Oh, my father, I am so afraid.” She crept trembling to her father's breast. The old man had an orchid in one hand and looked perplexedly from it to her. Then he held it carefully off at a distance from danger, while he put an unaccustomed arm about her shaking figure.

“Do not cry, p'tite. Look at this. Is it not beautiful? Observe the brown spots, the rich depth of purple in the cup. . . Ah! If Mistress Middleton were but here to see it. She is a woman of learning and appreciation in these matters. Perchance I can send a negro to Charleston with it.”

He gazed bemused at the strange flower, his limp arm dropping from his daughter's slim waist.

Camille dried her tears and began to laugh a little.

“Dearest, most impracticable of fathers! have you forgotten already that the British are in Charleston? Listen, we must pack up our few belongings here and find some place of safety; else the good God alone knows what may chance. Come, come! we have no time to lose. The ground burns my feet.”

She stood on tiptoe with nervous impatience.

"In a moment," muttered Michaux, grovelling at the root of a plant again.



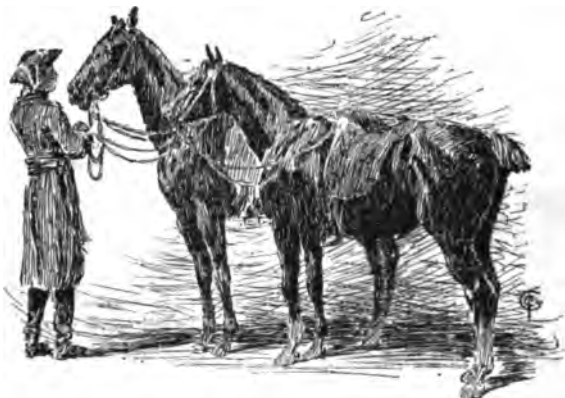
Camille hesitated a moment, lifted her bare shoulders in a faint, despairing shrug, and flew back to the house. She gathered up whatever of plate and valuables had been left behind when the family had been detained in the city, not forgetting various papers of importance and some money belonging to her father. The greater part of the Middleton plate was stored in a chest in one of the lumber-rooms. She knew it might as well be spread upon the piazzas. But where to hide it was the question. They could not go away and leave it for pillage of soldiery and slaves. She went distractedly from room to room, looking eagerly out of every window as she passed it, racking her brains to discover not only a hiding-place for gold and silver, but for her father and herself. She paused in the hallway and looked long at a panel in the wall; then pressed a boss in the carved border of leaves and flowers, and it slid aside, revealing a confined space in which not only plate, but human beings had before found shelter; but the thought of fire occurred to her, and she let the panel slip noiselessly into place again.

It was late in the afternoon and at sunset the old botanist came into the house, forgetful of everything save the fact that he had discovered a new bloom on a long-disappointing plant. He descanted at great length upon it, eating his supper absent-mindedly, and not seeing that Camille ate nothing at all, but sat opposite him, white with apprehension.

After supper the old man buried himself among his books and dried specimens, while Camille, accompanied by a black woman with a branched candlestick, went about the house securing it as best she could. The night was bright and at the back door Camille stepped upon the piazza to look about her. Two horses were standing in shadow near the steps, held by a man who looked like a soldier, although he was not in uniform. Camille spoke to him; he replied in a low voice. She sent the woman to the slave-quarter and went into the house, much lighter of heart.

As she entered the drawing-room a figure, cloaked and spurred, met her at the door, took the candle from her and holding it aloft, studied her fair face intently.

“Francis!” she exclaimed—“Colonel Marion, I mean,” she added, blushing deeply. “You here . . . and the British?”



“Yes, I know,” said Marion, with a smile. He set the candle down and drew her to a sofa, taking both of her hands in his and kissing them ardently.

“Camille!” he said, hurriedly, “forgive my presumptuous bluntness. I love you—love you. I cannot tell why I have waited all this time to say it, when my heart has said it every day, ever since I laid eyes upon you. I was afraid to say it before, . . . but now . . . the thought of Archibald Campbell . . .”

Camille shuddered. “‘Mad Archy’! Do not mention his hateful name. Why should you speak of him now?”

“Then he is nothing to you?” cried Marion, eagerly, looking full into her eyes.

“That swaggering, fighting Englishman?” whispered Camille, scornfully. “I detest him.”

“Could you love a swaggering, fighting Frenchman, and a Huguenot to boot?” whispered back Marion, his bearded lips not two inches from her laughing rosy ones.

“Ah, *mon Dieu!*” she exclaimed, letting two tears illumine and contradict her smile, “Francis!”

Their lips met in a long kiss.

“Ah!” she cried, drawing back. “Ah, Francis, you must not stay here a moment longer. I think the beating of my heart is the sound of British horses on the road. . . . But what is my

father to do? Where shall we go? . . . Is it safe for us to stay here?"

She began to tremble again, even in his embrace.

"My dearest," replied Marion, "I came to tell you that it is not safe to remain a day longer in this place. . . . You must go back to the house near the Rectory. Would to heaven I could take you with me, but half of the time we are in the swamp and canebrake or in the deep morass; with nothing to eat but potatoes and few enough of them," he added, ruefully. "God knows what the end will be. With Charleston in the hands of the

British, . . . with Moultrie a prisoner of war, and Colonel Hayne. . . ." His emotion at the recollection of the death of that gallant soldier choked him.

"*Ciel!*" exclaimed Camille, "do not stay here and meet his fate. I beg, I implore you to go at once!"

Her lover looked at her longingly. "Oh, Camille, it fairly unmans me to look at you! Can you not cover up these glorious curls? Put spectacles before these subduing eyes? Disguise this sylph's figure? You must, my darling; you must. Put on the Madras handkerchief and the homespun dress, the russet shoes and the brass earrings. Dye this dazzling skin a dingy brown, and be for a time your father's housekeeper. Promise me, Camille." He looked appealingly at her.



She picked up the candle he had put down, and went to a mirror, wreathed with roses and upheld of gilded cherubs, smiling at her reflection therein. Her short-waisted gown caught her under the arms, with an airy puff over her swelling breast and a

ripple of lawn and lace midway between breast and throat. The skimp skirt displayed a slipper of red morocco, and fitted almost without a fold from thigh to knee, revealing the slender roundness of her elegant figure. Her lovely arms were covered from shoulder to wrist, but with a lawn so fine that their very dimples were visible. She turned her head archly over her shoulder and glanced at the distracted lover, who leaned from the lounge and watched her intently.

“Dye my white skin,” she said, coming slowly back to him, “and tie a madras over my hair? *Jamais!* Besides, my ears are not pierced, and I would not wear the brass hoops if they were. And then, think you I could find a pair of russet shoes to fit that?” She thrust out one little red-shod foot and smiled into his eyes.

He drew her to his breast. “My darling,” said the Colonel, slowly, “you must do something of the kind or my heart will burst. Reflect! I cannot be near to protect you . . . the Governor is in prison . . . Lord Campbell and his ruffian brother are not ten miles away, with the British army in Charleston. Do you think your poor father will be able to protect you in these times . . . my beautiful? I cannot take you with me. I cannot hide you as I would a bale of silk or a string of pearls. You must hide yourself. The dye will soon wash off; if the shoes are large, so much the better. These little feet would ill-become a slave and serving-maid.”

“But,” she said, quietly, “suppose the British remain in Charleston? Suppose the war ends with the submission and not the independence of the Colonies? What will you do then?”

He put her gently from him and got upon his feet.

“I could not survive the ruin of my country,” he said, hoarsely.

“You know Lord Cornwallis would give you a colonelcy in his army to-morrow,” the sweet voice continued. “Archibald . . . Lord William said as much. If not . . .”

“Well, and if not?” said Marion. “If not, sweetheart?”

She raised her dark eyes to his stern face.

“I could not live in a canebrake,” she said, with an enchanting smile, shaking her delicate head.

“Nor shall you,” cried Marion, kneeling beside her and kissing her passionately. “My darling, my white lily of France, my Persian rose. . . . But the Colonies will never despair while Washington and Gates survive. And Carolina will never yield while Picken, Sumter, Lee and Marion——”

"Have a sweet potato to eat and a swamp to live in," she finished, laughing a little. "But listen; I have racked my brains to find a hiding-place for Mistress Middleton's plate. . . . And now I think. . . ." she whispered at his ear.

In spite of his trouble he laughed and choked, and laughed again, and caught and kissed her, then let her go to fetch her cloak. As they went into the hall, Camille pressed a finger on the wall and the panel slipped aside.

"Did you know of this?" she asked.

"No, I am glad you showed it me," said the Swamp Fox, finding the boss and impressing its position upon his memory.

Then the young orderly who held the horses helped his colonel to carry the heavy boxes of plate and money to the spot Camille selected. The old botanist had fallen asleep in the library, so they did not disturb him and at last the work was done.

"And now, Camille," said Marion, earnestly, standing by his horse, "you and your father must positively return to your home to-morrow, as early as possible. It is more secluded and much

safer than the Oaks. . . . And promise me to put on the slave's dress!"

"Very well," said Camille, with a sigh. "I will."

A long embrace. A last kiss. He was gone.

The next day, whatever of hangings and pictures could be taken down Camille thrust into the secret room, and telling her father what Colonel Marion had said, induced him to leave his beloved garden and the Oaks. They took up their abode in a small, valueless house near old St. James. Camille, with many qualms and much distaste, darkened



her dazzling face and neck and arms with a dye cunningly devised by her father, to whom, in his lucid moments, the disguise commended itself, though he frequently forgot her existence. Her bright hair she folded close under a slave's madras; hid her

elegance beneath a dull blue homespun, and shuffled about in russet shoes two sizes too large for her.

She kept within doors and sat at her wheel, slipping off the despised shoes while she spun, thinking of Marion and his men.

The old botanist often stole away to the gardens at the Oaks, and sometimes would be gone all day until Camille sent a faithful slave for him at nightfall, while she herself indulged in many a cry when she found herself forgotten and alone, her heart in her mouth at the snapping of a twig.

One day a slave rushed in with the news that the British were at the Oaks.

"Mad Archy an' de Britishers dey een de house an' dey ax fuh de silber plates an' de pictures. An' dey done a-tie up de driber fuh mek um tell, 'e mos' daid, but no kin tell 'e enty know. Dey chop up de groun——"



"The ground!" shrieked Michaux, wringing his hands. "Not the garden?"

"Yes, massa," said Congo, grinning. "Dey ride dey hosses ober de flower-baids an' swim um een de pon'."

This was enough.

"*Mon dieu!*" wailed Michaux, frantic with grief, "my *Cupressus*,—my *Nelumbium*, my orchids,—my azaleas . . . *Ciel!*"

He ran out of the house and was gone before his daughter or Congo could touch him.

Archibald Campbell and several others of Cornwallis's officers sat at dinner drinking and carousing, waited upon by the trembling blacks. Campbell, familiarly called "Mad Archy" on account of his ungovernable temper, was a swaggering, buccaneering fellow of about seven and twenty, with a great, spreading yellow beard and bold, insulting eyes. He was a reckless dare-devil and a hot Tory, breathing death and destruction to the Republican colonists.

He was more than half-drunk when the dining-room door flew open and Michaux, greatly excited, entered, bareheaded and breathless.

"Hello!" shouted Mad Archy, as he came in, "what have you done with the Middleton plate and money, old man? Where have you hidden them and, by God! your lovely daughter?"

Surprised at this unexpected onset, Michaux looked about him, helplessly.

"What have you done with my flowers?" he stammered. "Some one has destroyed the *Cupressus lusitanica*, the sacred tree of the Grand Lama, and the Sylphide is ruined—utterly ruined!" His voice rose to a shrill falsetto scream. He wrung his hands.

"Sylphide be damned," cried Campbell, furiously. "Where is the sylph? And where are the plate and the pictures?"

"I know not," muttered Michaux, distractedly. "And the hedge of geranium, the flower of the Holy Ghost, the camphor-tree and the champak! Who has dared to ride across the flower-beds and terraces on horseback?"

The drunken company gave a great shout as the old botanist stood shaking in the doorway, his pigtail trembling with rage and sorrow, his glasses blurred with tears.

Campbell sprang up from table, followed by the others. Their horses were at the door. They leaped to the saddles. Mad Archy grasped Michaux by an arm, and struck out diagonally across the gardens. On they rushed, trampling through hedge and flower-bed, whacking at blooming bush and curious tree with sword and rapier until they reached the pond, into which



Campbell tossed Michaux, considerably more dead than alive. He fell like a lump of lead into the midst of the Sacred Lilies. A scream came from the opposite bank. A woman, in the coarse dress of a common slave, stood wringing her hands and screaming:

"Save him—save him! He cannot swim! Oh, save my father!"

Campbell pricked up his ears at the last words, dragged the poor, drowning Michaux from the lily-pods and entangling stems and flung him on the bank. He then swam his horse across and gave chase to the flying figure. He soon overtook her, leaned down and snatched off her madras. The sunlight flashed from her flat folds of hair. They looked flame-red against her bronzed skin.

"Ah, ha, Camille!" shouted Campbell, catching her about the waist. He held her before him on the saddle and spurred down the road.

Her shoes dropped off. Her hair came down. She sobbed and screamed as they hurried past the little house and stopped at the door of old St. James.

The rector was within.

"Come out, worthy sir!" bawled Archibald the Mad. The reverend doctor appeared at the door.

"Marry us immediately," shouted Campbell, dropping to the ground with his armful.

"But . . . but . . ." stammered the doctor.

"Oh, Doctor Le Jau!" shrieked poor Camille, struggling to escape her would-be bridegroom's iron grasp. "Do you not know me? Camille Michaux! For God's sake do not marry me to this devil of a man."

"Marry us instantly," cried Campbell, drawing a huge pistol,



"or, by heaven, I'll put a bullet through you, parson or no parson."

All in a flutter, the reverend doctor spread open his book of Common Prayer, and began in a tremulous voice. There was another shriek from the bride, a trampling of horses, a confused sound

of struggling, of hand to hand fighting, and many savage oaths from Mad Archy. But Marion and his men had seized their prey. Campbell was tied upon his horse and then, taking the half-fainting girl by the hand, Colonel Marion whispered a few words in her ear. She looked with a shudder at the cursing, foaming red-coat strapped to his horse, blushed scarlet through her dyed skin, and said in a small voice, "I will."

The reverend doctor opened his book again, and this time the ceremony was read without interruption. The bridegroom kissed the bride, his men murmured their hasty congratulations, while the shoeless bride clung to the parson, hiding her mortification from her husband's eyes.

Mad Archy swore many a strange and fearful oath, and in the twinkling of an eye the band disappeared as silently and as swiftly as it had come.

The poor old botanist was heart-broken over the destruction of his plants and so injured by the mad ride that he fell ill of a fever and died in a few months' time. For a year or more the fate of the Carolinas wavered in the balance: "Cornwallis and Greene, Tarleton and Marion, Rawdon and Sumter, chased each other back and forth, now pursuing, now pursued, like so many spectres."

At last Stewart was penned by Greene after the bloody victory of Eutaw Springs. Count de Grasse flung a French sword into the trembling scales, and in October the Dutch watchmen

went about the streets of Philadelphia, crying:

"Bast twelfe o'glock und Cornvallis es dagen!"

Governor Middleton, released from durance vile in Florida, rejoined his family at the Oaks.

Marion, now a general, took his wife to the Oaks, where the mistress



of the mansion was seeking in vain for the family plate and papers. "I daresay we can tell you something of them," said the General, slyly, glancing at his wife, who looked like a Mohammedan's dream of paradise as she sat talking to the Governor, her dazzling complexion whiter than ever from its temporary eclipse.

"Forgive me for forgetting them," said Camille, "but this terrible war drove everything out of my mind. I believe I thought of nothing but Francis for a year. . . . Now, if you will come with me."

She smiled at her husband as they followed her.

In one corner of an inclosure near the "quarters" was a pen full of pigs. A motherly sow with a promising litter of white and black, rolled and grunted in the mud. "Well?" said Mistress Middleton as they looked over the fence at her. "We have always had a pig-stye here, and not even a Revolution has been able to clean it out."

Camille laughed.

"I thought it would be the last place in the world a British soldier would think of exploring for buried treasure. I am sure Madame Grogarde is wallowing on the very spot. General Marion and one of the Prioleau's helped to dig the hole."

The complaining occupant of the stye was unceremoniously ejected with her squealing litter, and the boxes found just where they had been buried.

"Not even the slaves suspected the place," said Camille, delightedly.

"Did you know," asked the Governor, of Marion, as they went back to the house, "that Cornwallis was actually in bodily fear of you, General? He would never sit in a strange house in the country, but always on the piazza or in the yard—continually on the watch for the darting of the hawk."

The Swamp Fox smiled. "I understand," he replied, "that his officers complained bitterly because I 'would not fight like a Christian and a gentleman.'"

"What has become of that 'Christian and gentleman,' Mad Archy?" inquired Mistress Middleton.

Camille slipped a hand under her husband's arm and trembled. He smiled down into her eyes.

"He is in England and is married, I am told, to a woman of rank."

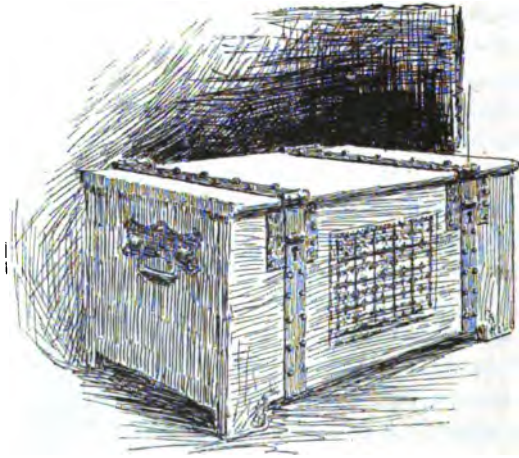
"I am sorry for his wife," whispered Mistress Francis at the hall-door, and the General stooped and kissed her.

"Pray tell us, General Marion," said Mistress Middleton, smiling demurely, "how you chanced upon the scene just on the nick of time that day."

Marion put out a hand as they passed along the hall and pressed the boss. The panel slid aside.

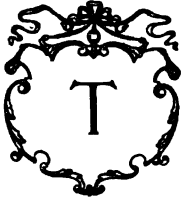
"I had been hiding here for several hours, watching the British officers and listening to their unguarded speech. Thanks to the wine they drank, I discovered exactly what Cornwallis intended to do. I had stationed my men about the fields, and 'Mad Archy' was not the only bird we bagged that day."

The Governor and his wife went into the drawing-room. The Marions paused at the door. "*Mon ami*," said Camille with an adorable blush, "I want to tell you that I was mistaken. . . . I would live in a canebrake before I would live without you."



ETCHING: A NIGHT-LANDING AT HILO*

BY ELSIE S. NORDHOFF



HE rusty chain rumbles down into the depths beneath the ship, disturbing a thousand little fishes, which, swimming to the surface, dart hither and thither, leaving trails of phosphorescence in their wake, seeming to the eyes of the weary Traveller like shooting stars mirrored in the water before him. The brilliancy of the sky is hidden by a tropical haze, which has risen from the sea. The sleepy barking of a dog floats across the bay,—his last bark of remonstrance before he goes to sleep for the night and to visit the land of dreams, to which the monotonous lapping of the water against the bow urges the Traveller. Half dreaming as he leans upon the rail, listening to the distant night-noises and inhaling the perfumes the wind blows from the shore—jasmine, oleander, azalea and broom—he sees the gardens in which they grow, and the waves lapping the bow become the splash of an enchanted fountain. Roused from his reverie by the regular dip of paddles, and voices, he sees the shadowy canoes draw nearer the ship and hears the bare feet of the natives pattering on the deck, then, by the yellow glare of a lantern, he descends into the boat. The canoe slips silently across the dark water.

Suddenly the snow-capped peak of Mauna Loa is covered with a rose-colored light and the whitecaps grow pink in the reflection.

"Pele! Pele!" cry the natives, invoking the blessing of the Goddess of Fire. The canoe glides on towards the breakers, while the distant glow in the sky dies slowly. "Ie-e-e-e," intones the native at the helm, standing to steer the canoe with an oar. "Ie-ee-e-e" is drawled back by the crew, as they cease paddling. They pause but a moment before the helmsman sings "Ahie-ee-e-e."

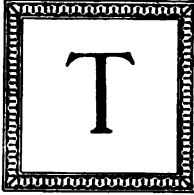
With a bound the canoe darts forward. Behind it rises a wall of water hiding ship and sky. On it dashes, sweeping all before it. The canoe rises to its crest like a gull and is borne by the velocity of the wave landward and safe upon the sand.

A soft flurry of rain from a passing cloud and the pink glow from the burning lake of Kilauea welcome the Traveller to Hilo!

* Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

MR. BROWNLOW'S CODICIL *

BY AUGUSTE BLONDEL



TWO years had run on since the first appearance of Lilian, while three years had passed without receiving the habitual visit of my client. My clerk, the one that has been there since the beginning,—for at present I have more than one,—awaited him with anxiety. I presume that some half-crowns given by Mr. Brownlow added considerably to his weekly pay. Perhaps, also, he nourished in his secret heart a tender sentiment for his pretty visitor. An absence so long was without precedent. I determined to present myself at Vine Cottage to learn the reason. I was received by one of the daughters of my client. She informed me that her suffering father had kept his bed for several days.

“ Was he seriously attacked ? ”

“ It was feared so.”

“ Was he conscious ? ”

“ Yes, but he was very feeble.”

“ Could I see him ? ”

“ He could not be questioned, he suffered too much to see any one.”

The responses of this woman made me believe that Mr. Brownlow would die. I thought of the beautiful child, so dear to the old gentleman. I thought of the mother also, for the inquiries I had made on this subject had been most favorable to her. It was true she was doing the simple daily work of a spinner ; but by her culture and by her character she had shown herself far above her condition. Poor woman, she had suffered so much during the illness of her husband and the infancy of Lilian ! She had known peace and security for scarcely two years, and now, if old James Brownlow was going to die, there was before her misery and torturing want. Therefore, in my double character of friend and man-of-law, I requested to be admitted to an interview with my client.

* Translated from the French, for Short Stories, by Mrs. H. L. B. Porter.
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While I was formulating my request, the second daughter of Mr. Brownlow entered. She joined her sister in opposing my wishes. Their attitude was so glacial, so inflexible, that I feared they had divined something of the truth. I tried now to make them change their minds.

"The doctor," they affirmed, "had prohibited all visits."

"Will you permit me to await the arrival of the doctor? I can prove to him how necessary it is that I should see Mr. Brownlow?"

"Certainly not," answered Mrs. Wrench. "It shall not be with my consent, if the last moments of my father are troubled with business."

My prayers were useless, so I resorted to strategy. I took my hat, shrugged my shoulders, as a man who had discharged his duty, and felt relieved thereby.

"As you please, my dear ladies; but I forewarn you, so that later you may have nothing to blame me for. I can only tell you this: if I cannot speak to your father to-day, it may make some difference in the amount of your inheritance."

That was very nearly true; but not in the sense I had given them to understand. This thrust went home. I had touched the sensitive point—avarice.

The sisters exchanged a look and commenced whispering to each other. I hoped to see them fall into the snare; but two women of this species make very strong antagonists, even for the cleverest man-of-law.

"Mr. Sarr," said the widow, "will, of course, be present to explain to us exactly what Father does. We can then decide what will be the best course for us to take."

She puckered up her thin lips and cast at me an inquisitorial look.

"No, I cannot assent to the condition you demand of me. The business is of an absolutely private nature. Diverse interests are at stake; but, believe me, the matter is probably of the greatest importance."

The sisters again exchanged a glance, as if to say, "We have already decided." Mrs. Wrench crossed her hands upon her lap.

"If it is so, sir," she said, "you cannot see Mr. Brownlow. What secrets can a father have from his daughters?"

"In short, we do not believe a word of your story," added the other, defiantly.

"And," continued Mrs. Wrench, mechanically, "if there is,

indeed, a secret, perhaps that letter discovered by us a few days ago has something to do with the mystery."

She held out to me a letter, written in a childish hand, and which contained these words:

"DEAR GRANDPAPA:

"I have had a cold and I cannot go to-day. I love you dearly.

"Yours, LILIAN."

Thus they knew something or, at least, suspected something.

"Answer me," cried Mrs. Wrench, tapping violently with her foot, "who is this Lilian—the child of that abject woman, I suppose? It is concerning her you wish to speak to my father; and she, no doubt, is your important business?"

I was saved an answer, as at this instant the door opened suddenly, and upon the threshold, enveloped in an old dressing-gown, appeared an emaciated, feeble being. It was my client, who fell breathless upon the seat nearest him.

The doctor had no need to tell me that the moments of my dear friend were numbered. In ten days sickness had absolutely destroyed him, and death was written upon his pale countenance.

He seemed so exhausted that I feared he would die on the spot. His daughters looked at him in mute astonishment and—shall I confess it?—I was tempted to rejoice greatly at their discomfiture. Running to the other side of the room, where fortunately I found the sideboard furnished with liquors and glasses, I filled a tumbler with brandy.

The dying man swallowed a few drops and seemed revived.

"Go out," he said, in a husky voice, and shook his skeleton hand towards his daughters. "Go out this instant!"

The women remained immovable in their places with an air of silent defiance. "Go out," continued he, "or I take God to witness I will leave a testament by which everything I have goes to a hospital."

His voice was feeble and he spoke with difficulty; but the words and the accents were so severe, so haughty, I could scarcely believe that he who spoke them was my timid and hesitating old friend. His daughters, not less surprised than I, went slowly and reluctantly out of the room.

My client fell back in his chair. "Shut the door and lock it," he murmured. Then he put his hand in mine. "God be thanked you are here at last; I have expected you every minute for many days!"

"I had no idea that you were sick."

"They have told me that they had sent to your house, and that you were away."

"I have not received any letters and I have not left the city for several weeks."

"Then they have lied. They have not let me see anyone, and they even tried to hide from me the gravity of my condition. I heard your voice and dragged myself as far as here. It was necessary to see you before it was too late."

The sweat stood upon the brow of the old man, and he appeared so feeble that I made him take a little more brandy.

"Add a codicil," he said. "I wish to leave all to my dear little Lillian—all."

"No, not all!" I answered, surprised. He again relapsed into his habitual hesitation.

"No, no," he replied, "not all. My daughters have been good, very good. But I wish to leave 6,000 pounds to my little Lillian, my poor Dick's child."

I proposed to write a codicil at once, and for this purpose sought pen and paper; but the eternal temporizing of my client again was uppermost.

"No, not now," he murmured. "I am better, perhaps I shall recover. But bring me the deed to-morrow morning, and I will sign it."

I had no intention of letting him draw back before death came and I had already commenced to write the codicil. But scarcely had I traced two or three lines, when my old client fainted. In vain I tried to restore him. Very much against my will I was obliged to seek help.

Mrs. Wrench was in the corridor and I am not sure that even at that moment her ear had not just quitted the keyhole, while her sister was not far behind her. The look which they cast on me expressed in eloquent terms what they thought of me.

We carried Mr. Brownlow to his bed. The servants ran to find the doctor, and I withdrew, trusting that my client might be sufficiently well on the morrow to insist on my being admitted to his bedside.

The next day, at nine o'clock precisely, I was at Vine Cottage, and was not surprised at being peremptorily refused entrance. I awaited the doctor, stopped him in the passage and begged him to come to my aid—or at least to make known to my patient that I was there.

He would promise me nothing, however, and I saw from the tone of his answers that the events of the former evening had done me harm in his eyes. When he came out of the house, he did not hesitate to tell me the whole of his thoughts. "Conduct so injudicious as mine might not only injure the patient, but his own career as a physician." Controlling my indignation I tried to put before him the circumstances, but he would not listen to me. "At least tell me how you found Mr. Brownlow this morning?"

"As bad as possible; he has but a few hours to live."

"Then," said I, "in refusing to come to my aid you will condemn to poverty the being he loves the best in the world."

"I have nothing to do with family discussions," he replied, as he shut the door of his carriage and drove away. I left the place but only to return at different intervals throughout the day. Each time admittance was refused me, and I had reached the end of my expedients. Was there no way of corrupting the servants? Unfortunately the door was always opened by Mrs. Wrench or her sister. I could not legally force a way, and entrance effected by violent means, even with the most laudable purposes, had always damaged a case in the eyes of the law. At last, heart-sick, I regained my lodgings, but I was fully determined to recommence my attempts the next day as soon as morning came.

I dwell at some distance from Vine Cottage, in a house occupied by several lodgers. In the apartment above mine lived a young man, Robinson, with whom I was on excellent terms. I had finished drinking my tea and was reading when he knocked at the door. He came to ask me if I would make one of a party at whist with some of his friends. I had little inclination to meet people and, feeling sad and downcast, I declined Robinson's invitation, preferring to pass the evening with my book and pipe. I began to read again, and for some time I continued to do so without my attention being distracted by the peals of laughter which came down to me from overhead. But whatever I read, it was always Mr. Brownlow who occupied my thoughts. Perhaps, even at that moment, he was breathing his last sigh or perhaps was calling on me to help him carry out his wishes.

I bitterly blamed the folly of my client, and myself as well, for not having remained till I had assured the fortune of the young girl. In a word, it seemed to me that I had managed the affair very badly, and I felt very unhappy with the part I had taken,

The clock struck half-past eleven. I shut my book and debated whether I had better go to bed or if I should smoke another pipe, when I heard some one knock at the street-door. "Some friend of Robinson's who is late," murmured I, "they will continue to amuse themselves all night." I thought I heard the mistress of the house answer the summons and then my door opened, and to my astonishment and stupefaction I saw Mr. Brownlow appear. I thought at first that I was dreaming, so impossible did it seem that this man who, the evening before, seemed scarcely able to sustain himself, this man whose agony still haunted me, was here in my chamber, clothed as during our last interview!

He appeared ill indeed, and his face was as cadaverous as when I last saw him in his parlor.

At this unexpected sight the voice died within my lips and I felt incapable of speech or motion.

How Mr. Brownlow was able to rise at night and traverse the distance which separated his home from mine, I could not tell. He so feeble, he who the evening before had fainted before taking a dozen steps or pronouncing as many words!

It was inexplicable, but it was not impossible since he stood before me. I recovered myself at last, and offered a chair to my client. He sat down with an air of fatigue.

"My dear sir," I said to him, "you have been extremely imprudent."

He turned his head and looked at me.

What was there in that look that froze the blood in my veins? What made my hair stand on end and caused me to feel that my senses were wandering? Until this day I have been unable to solve this problem. There was something in it all inexplicable, inconceivable; something which changed my feelings from astonishment to terror—a terror which moved me strongly to rush from the room to save myself from some unknown danger.

"It is necessary that I sign the codicil this minute," he said.

Although his voice sounded strange, it recalled me to myself. At any price, it was imperative not to lose the occasion thus presented. I drew from my pocket the document and spread it before Mr. Brownlow.

"Wait one minute," stammered I. "I must go in quest of witnesses. It is always necessary to have witnesses."

"You will hasten," he replied. And again his eyes met mine. I tried to avoid that look, but when I went out of the room I

trembled from head to foot. Once on the stairway, I laughed at my terrors, and the card-party of Robinson's seemed to me a very happy coincidence. Nothing simpler than to go to my neighbor and ask two of the players to serve as witnesses. It was necessary that the codicil should be executed first, and after that, all legal formalities having been observed, I could take leisure to inform myself how Mr. Brownlow had been able to reach my house.

Robinson and his friends uttered a "hurrah!" on seeing me appear. I was acquainted with the guests, and among them were fortunately two lawyers, who had some knowledge of the present case.

"Sorry to disturb you, gentlemen," I said, in explanation of my appearance; "but two of you will be so kind as to step down to my room, to serve as witnesses to a testament. Thomas and Hicks, my dear fellows, spare me a moment of your valuable time."

The two gentlemen put down their cards and were about to follow me, when suddenly a thought came to my mind.

The case which called for their presence was without precedent, since a sick man had risen from his death-bed to go and have his will altered. If Mr. Brownlow should die to-morrow, or within a few days, the codicil of the will would certainly be disputed; but there were nine persons assembled in the card-room. What if I should take them all as witnesses? How could such attestation be questioned? Therefore, retracing my steps, I said:

"On further reflection and in order to avoid future litigation, I should be greatly obliged if you would all come down."

"You can never take too many precautions," said Hicks, approvingly, as the guests of Robinson arose to follow me.

"It is only old Brownlow," I heard Thomas say, as he entered my room.

"It is certainly he," added Hicks. "Anyone would say that the poor old gentleman was at the point of death!"

I held a pen towards my client. In doing so our hands met, and I shivered at the icy touch. He signed his name with an admirably firm hand; his signature was duly attested by Thomas and Hicks; the others assisted by looking very curiously over their shoulders. Mr. Brownlow saluted these gentlemen, while I again apologized for interrupting their play. Then our numerous witnesses wished us good-evening, and returned to their

game. I now cast my eyes towards the codicil, and then turned towards my client, to ask him a question; but I was incapable of uttering a single syllable when I met his gaze. For a second time I noticed that same mysterious, indescribable look which had so strangely struck me, and I trembled like a leaf.

“It is necessary that I should return,” said Mr. Brownlow, and he rose with pain, and as if by a superhuman effort.

“Let me call a cab for you?” I stammered.

He shook his head and moved towards the door, which he opened. Upon the threshold he turned, and, for the last time, fixed his eyes upon me. I fell helplessly into an arm-chair, my heart beating as if about to burst.

The clock struck midnight, and some seconds after, not without great effort, I rose and went in search of my client. But one road led directly to his dwelling, and I ran over it as quickly as possible, but met no one. Thinking that I must have passed Mr. Brownlow without seeing him, I retraced my steps; but in vain. Once more I took the road to Vine Cottage. I rang and the door opened immediately. A servant, her apron up to her eyes, was standing at the door.

“Has Mr. Brownlow returned?” I asked. The young girl looked stupidly at me. I repeated my question, adding “that he had just gone from my house.” She seemed not to comprehend, but said: “The master died at half-past eleven.”

Then I was crazy, or else I had been dreaming. Returning to my room, I found that Robinson's card-party had not yet broken up.

The first thing I did was to go to my desk. There, in perfect condition, lay the codicil signed a little before midnight.

It can be easily understood that trouble ensued when I produced the codicil.

My late client's amiable daughters declared they should be happy on the day they saw me arrested for falsehood, conspiracy, and other atrocious crimes, to prove which they would gladly expend their last penny.

Happily, the executors of the testament were men of ability and honor, and they would not permit a suit lost in advance.

As for me, I had nothing to hide, since it was clearly established that James Brownlow had signed the codicil in presence of ten witnesses, disinterested, and all well known.

Free as the daughters were to declare that it was physically

impossible for James Brownlow to leave his bed that night, we had absolute certainty that he had done so, that he had come to my house, and that he had signed the document.

Moreover, our witnesses were impartial, while those of our adversaries were manifestly prejudiced, venal.

Their unproved assertions were unheeded, and after some attempts at a compromise the legacy was paid.

Amongst the public the rumor spread that my client had succeeded in rising from his bed, and had enough strength to reach my house and assure himself the accomplishment of his last will.

Years ran on before I was able to exchange words with the doctor who had attended Mr. Brownlow. I remembered perfectly that he had lent a too-ready hearing to the calumnies raised against me. He decided, however, to offer apologies, and he did it so completely that I ended by forgiving him.

He then recounted to me a strange thing.

According to all appearances Mr. Brownlow had died at half-past eleven at night. The doctor descended the stairs to announce the fatal news to the daughters and remained to console them in his best manner.

Before leaving the house he returned to the death-chamber, to give a last look at the deceased.

While he contemplated Mr. Brownlow's peaceful face, he saw his eyes suddenly open and the man whom he had pronounced dead, drew a long breath as if he had experienced a rest after long fatigue. Then the eyes closed again, there was a little spasm and this time Mr. Brownlow was really dead.

"But," said the doctor, "I should have been ready to swear in any court that it was utterly impossible for that man to have moved hand or foot at the hour you gave for his visit."

I thanked Heaven he had not been called to make that declaration.

"The number of your witnesses was so crushing that I should have been ruined professionally. If one believed in the supernatural"

Yes, if one believed in the supernatural, but, like the doctor, I do not believe in it.



THE flickering lights from an array of Chinese lanterns, hung on the branches of an old oak, but dimly revealed a group of people beneath. Seven men and five women, sitting in a circle, passed continuously from hand to hand a ring suspended on a stout cord, endeavoring to evade the eyes of a woman in the centre of the circle, who watched perplexedly, striving to detect which hand concealed the ring on the moving cord. The players mirthfully chanted in a minor key:

*“ Il court, il court, le furet,
Le furet des bois, mesdames.
Il a passé par ici,
Il repassera par là.”*

Siron, a young man with brown eyes and a dark, pointed beard, felt a little warm hand slip the ring hurriedly into his. He passed it on and, remembering the hand, turned slightly and for the first time regarded his neighbor. She was, at a glance, Parisian to the finger-tips. Bareheaded, the night breeze strayed her bronze-gold hair across her brow. The oval face, with complexion like old ivory, had only one thread of color, the lips—Tuscan red. She returned his look and he saw that her eyes were black, with a fringe of straight, long lashes, the prettiest he had ever seen.

The game went on, and amidst the noisy mirth he smiled at the haphazard of chance that had brought him there. Parisian also, he was one of the numberless horde who paint for pleasure. The 10,000 francs annuity he owned permitted an unusually pretentious studio in the Latin Quarter, and the indulgence of his taste for glaring impressionists. In perception he was a thorough artist and, thinking Brittany of late too fashionable, he had come to a colony of painters he knew of, clinging close to the

* Written for Short Stories, with illustrations by George T. Tobin.—
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skirts of Fontainebleau Forest. On arriving, he found the *table-d'hôte* deserted, but Marcelle, the *garçon*, informed him that the guests had left a message to join them in the forest, if he so pleased. After dinner he had strolled out, half-curious, intending to stay a moment, and so reached the trees where, detecting



the flicker of lanterns, he had joined the group, dropping into a vacant place in their circle. In this manner he had not previously observed Mademoiselle Céleste, whom all apparently knew, and whom he quickly determined to know himself.

"It is very exciting," he said, leaning towards her.

"*Ah oui, mais nous sommes en-*

fants," she replied, smiling at him and adding another glance, an initiatory survey, as it were. Then, "You came late to-night, did you not?"

This was delightful. His coming had been observed. "Yes," he answered, "by the last diligence."

But Siron's countenance fell as she continued, composedly :

"Quite so; Marcelle said we would have thirteen to-night. Are you superstitious?" And, not waiting for a reply, she turned her attention to the game.

The woman in the circle, perplexed and half vexed at her elusive searches, fixed her eyes suddenly on Céleste. "If you please, Mam'zelle," she said, and all the bantering of the others could not dissuade her from an investigation, which disclosed the ring in the small pink palm of Céleste. Laughingly, the latter rose, taking her place in the centre, and the game recommenced.

"*Il court, il court, le furet.*"

Later, having unearthed a culprit, Céleste resumed her place a little flushed by the exercise, but still with lips making the dominant color of her face.

"Well," she said frankly to Siron, "what went wrong with Paris?"

"Nothing," he replied, still smarting under the identity of Number Thirteen. "Nothing; it was all with me. Indigestion, I suppose."

"Eh? exactly;" and then to the man on her other side, "Monsieur says he has the indigestion."

Siron bit his lips furiously. What sort of a woman was she? Pretty, certainly, but she sat and deliberately amused herself at his expense. Céleste's neighbor had leaned forward and was regarding him, nodding in sympathy. "Wait till *déjeuner*, Monsieur; you will need your courage."

Then the mirth went round and the lighter characteristics of the French came to the surface. A laugh at any cost—jollity forever, and why not? Were they not cut loose from that great city, panting with breath of July; and was not to-morrow insecure and to-day their holiday? Siron found himself plied with questions, half pleasant, half absurd, in which their hotel, "The Golden Spoon," was plentifully dipped in sarcasm. Finally Siron was on the verge of ill-humor, on observing which the others transferred their banter, when turning, he met the eyes of Céleste who, to his surprise, was regarding him sadly, wistfully almost.

"Do you know," she said, as the game was abandoned and the defaulters were paying their forfeits, "you remind me of some one I knew long ago. Your eyes, I suppose."

Siron, in reality an amiable fellow, was ashamed of his momentary petulance, and resolved to show her he had forgotten it.

"And you," he said softly, "you only remind me of the heroine of a vivid dream I once had. A woman marvelously beautiful, and of whom, in the vision, I was forever beseeching a portrait."

She frowned slightly, then smiled. "That was a very pretty speech," she said. "*Allons donc*, I wonder if you mean it?" She glanced at him sharply, then, as if convinced, declared, "I will believe you did, at all events, and may sometime reward you."

Céleste kept her word in a manner as naïve as was all else she did. Being one of the culprits, she of course was in debt, and for forfeit she came to Siron, presenting the side of her face to

be kissed. He understood in a second and caught his breath; bending, he kissed her lightly near the ear. The faint wave of perfume emanating from her seemed a commingling of all the



delicious scents he could recall. Then he remembered and fancied it sandal-wood. His lips touched a skin soft as a flower's petal, and the lobe of a little ear unmarred by jewelry. This quaint old custom, that ends a game so popular yet in France, was a novel experience to Siron, a man reserved beyond his years. Moreover, he found that the distinction conferred by Céleste had raised him in favor with the rest of the

group. She was evidently a favorite, and they displayed towards her almost affection. Despite her twenty-five years or so, she seemed younger than the other women, more vivacious, and was evidently leader in this small coterie of Bohemia. It was an existence without restriction, social or otherwise; yet in this instance made up of people to whom harm was a stranger. Bathed in this atmosphere of country life, the Boulevards, the *cafés*, the sordid frivolities of a Paris faded from remembrance as though they were not.

Siron had seen, on the Rue de Rivoli, the work of an artist on the opposite side of the circle, and whom he remembered as Jacques Dubois. So, when the latter neared him, he asked, amid the general confusion of departure, to be informed who was his neighbor.

"Mademoiselle Céleste," said Dubois, curtly, and as they had started on the return Siron received no further satisfaction. Through the soft air, with only the stars and their lanterns for guidance, they retraced their way, now under a canopy of foliage, now under patches of dark sapphire sky; at times in single file, singing,

"Dans la prison de Nantes, Là-haut. Là-haut."

Then two started some furious argument about nothing, in which all joined, and which later terminated in a laugh.

Once Céleste caught a fire-fly and gayly held it close to her

face. "*Le Feu Follet!*" They were all delighted, these men and women artists, quick to note an effect. Year in and year out they sought this quaint rose village, which for inspiration of



the brush has never been exhausted. Working diligently while the daylight lasted, missing sleep for the sunrise and dinner to depict its fading rays, yet never too weary for a frolic at night.

As they neared the edge of the forest Siron approached Céleste, intent on asking her a question, which he prefaced by saying :

"All we need is a moon to make it fairyland, Mademoiselle."

But her mood had altered and she answered, coldly: "Surely, as an artist you don't demand it with such a sky?"

Puzzled by this unexplainable change he said no more, and it was not until stretched on his little cot at the hotel, counting the strokes of a distant clock proclaiming midnight, that he recalled what he had intended to ask Céleste. It was to be allowed to paint her as "*Le Feu Follet.*" To-morrow, though, would do, and then, remembering her capriciousness—Well, no, by Heaven! He'd think it over.

Two weeks went by. A paradoxical fortnight to Siron; one of exhilarating lassitude, of exciting evenness. When ended, he had, without a question of herself or antecedents, without a thought of them, formally proposed to Mademoiselle Céleste that she would honor him by becoming Madame Siron. It had come about in the usual manner. The pendulum ticked off each fatal hour, but not until the last did Siron realize his love or premeditate its avowal.

The morning following his arrival he was attacking his loaf of bread and bowl of coffee under an arbor in the courtyard of the hotel. "The Golden Spoon" was a structure like the old road-houses demolished since the Revolution—those situated beyond what were then the confines of Paris. A wide gable faced the road, and under one side an archway was built for entrance to the court. The house straggled around the court, with a staircase built on the outside for access to the upper storey. Rose vines covered the entire structure, even creeping down to the little house occupied by Emanuel, the old foxhound. Under a latticed arbor next the *salle à manger* dinner was often served. Beyond this was a large studio, whose walls were decorated with the gay, the fanciful, and occasionally with unconscious genius.

When Céleste ran down the stairs, radiant in a blue dress of light material relieved with knots of black velvet, Siron thought her even more charming in daylight. Again she reminded him of Paris, from her pretty, absurd hat to her high-heeled, bronze shoes on which she balanced herself. She dropped her gloves on a neighboring table and nodded to him unreservedly. He noticed that her hands were very white and the rings she wore of costly make-up.

He joined her. "How is it, Mademoiselle," he said, "on seeing you this morning, I am convinced I have passed you on the Champs Elysées?"

She laughed, exposing her small teeth. "I do not know," she replied, "seeing that it is a certainty you never have. I have shunned Paris for a long time." Noting his look of surprise, she shrugged her shoulders. "Why? Because my doctor forbids. It's noisy and I have nerves. So I come here instead, as many as four times a year. You will let me see your work, perhaps?"

She was a rapid talker and often threw a score of questions into a sentence that neither began nor ended in one. What seemed odd to Siron was that she lost interest in her queries before they were answered. Now she had apparently forgotten her question, for she called to Marcelle, ordering her coffee, then began a conversation with an American girl at the next table, who sang expressively and did good water-colors.

Probably this heedlessness was Céleste's chief charm. She could never be rude, yet men felt intuitively the desire to chastise her as they would a rebellious child. And yet, why? Because they failed to hold her interest, and the fact piqued them to renewed exertion. Siron determined to gain her attention.

"Mademoiselle," he interposed, "you remember that fire-fly you caught last night? It gave me an idea. If you will allow me some sittings, I will paint you as '*Le Feu Follet*,' in your dark dress of last night, with a black background. Oh, quite effective, you know. I am sure it could be hung next spring."

She was listening now, apparently impressed with his idea.

"And when do you want a sitting?"

"At your convenience," he replied, smiling.

She gave him another surprise: "Well then, this morning, and I will change my dress for the one of which you speak."

So in this unexpected manner the picture was evolved. They

found a sheltered spot in the forest a half mile away, and with

some dark material for back-

ground and Céleste for inspira-

tion, "*Le Feu Follet*" began.

Siron, even in brushing the

outlines, found his hand un-

usually dexterous. The young

girl was a splendid subject,

seeming content to sit in-

definitely, her back against

the curtain, with no apparent

weariness. When he glanced

from his work her eyes were on

him, and yet, he could have

sworn, with absent mind. She

answered his questions bright-

ly, but at times with a slight

effort. Again her attention to the picture became absorbed.

She would direct at him a volley of sarcasm, then indorse a bit

of work he had dashed off half unconsciously. In this man-

ner he was alternately bowing delightedly, biting his lips

from vexation and, while still annoyed, flushing with pleas-

ure at some unexpected praise. Once, when his ears were

tingling with an incisive witticism, she said, very kindly, her

voice a note softer: "I've always been a wretched critic. You must not mind what I say, Monsieur."

But if she had been absent-minded during the sitting, assur-

edly her spirits revived as they returned towards the hotel by a

narrow footpath, picturesque, but longer than the high-road.

Yes, she liked painters. She had begun to work, once upon a

time, herself, but had given it up as a failure, like all else she



undertook. Protesting, he declared that he was convinced that she was clever; she displayed a decided knowledge of the older painters. There was Millet, for instance, who in pastorals had no rival. She had studied his work. "An artist through and through," she said, "no dawdler, but working from sunrise till dark, painting the toilers in the fields with a fidelity that made them cross themselves in wonder. And France, did she appreciate him? Lacking the scanty bread and wine, the little oil he needed, his genius faded and death claimed his brushes. Rousseau," she went on, "was more fortunate, securing at least the Cross of Honor." Then launching into literature—Did he know Voltaire? Ah, he was an ideal! A free-thinker, yes; but with what purity of thought and expression. And Renan, whose words flowed like the Seine, swift and deep. Céleste clasped her hands. "God, to write like that!"

Siron, looking at her, was startled. Her eyes, he fancied, had changed color and were darkening. Across her brow was a slight wrinkle, as if of pain. Surely this woman's mind was unexplainable. Last night he deemed her a child; now she seemed aged, engrossed by topics that dwarfed her beauty.

Even as he looked she smiled, her attention distracted. They had reached a travelling shooting-gallery, stationed at the edge of the forest. Just now the sole person in charge was a small and very dirty boy, sitting on the lower step of the van, but possessed of a peculiarly winning face. The two stopped to examine the interior of the booth. Some grotesque wooden heads with gaping mouths, and eggshells suspended by strings, served for targets. The gallery was encased in cheap red bunting, and on a rude counter was an assortment of firearms. The boy addressed them, but Siron did not understand. Céleste, however, talked rapidly to him and ended by giving him a five-franc piece.

"He speaks a patois of the south of France," she explained, "and has just informed me that his mother has a baby only a few days old. The father is in the hospital, ill. So you see the business has devolved on this boy."

Siron lost no time in following her example with a contribution, and when the delighted urchin begged them to make use of his entire stock they laughingly declined.

They reached the hotel as the gong was sounding for *déjeuner*. At the foot of the stairs Siron detained her.

"Tell me," he said, "first, where you found time to read so

much philosophy, and also where you learned to understand patois?"

She hesitated impatiently. "Well, you see, philosophy was all I could find. And about the patois, there was a case from——"

Dubois was coming down the stairs and she paused abruptly. Jacques frowned at the young man and addressed himself to Céleste. "Where have you been?" he asked, and Siron was stung by the anxiety and impatience of his manner.

Céleste, leaning lightly over the balustrade, threw back her head and laughed. The laugh seemed to Siron slightly forced, and on her face appeared a look of triumph.

"Where?" she made answer, maliciously, as she again started up-stairs; "why, having my portrait painted for the *Salon*, stupid."

The picture progressed rapidly. Céleste was equally as enthusiastic as Siron, and each morning found her ready for the sitting, gayly depreciating the continued use of her black costume, which she pretended had become tattered and torn from such constant wearing. The weather was exceptionally favorable; a succession of cloudless days, cooled by a regularly recurring breeze.

One day the young man, tormented by a recollection, said to her:

"And about Dubois? You have known him long, if I may ask?"

Céleste, looking up, interrogated, "Why, didn't you know he is my cousin?"

At the information Siron's face brightened. Here, then, was an explanation of the familiarity he had seen between them, and thereafter he no longer took account of Dubois, whose actions, after all, he told himself, were only of a brotherly character.

A week sped by and the two with whom these pages particularly deal evinced towards each other no stronger sentiment than



friendship. Even when twelve days had passed and the picture was practically in a state of completion, Siron was no more in love than on the night of his arrival. He had a strong liking for this girl, the sudden fancy of a hitherto reserved man. At times he thought her caustic, then frivolous, then again eccentric; but his admiration for her beauty, her grace and gentleness, outbalanced all criticism.

A mere circumstance brought his inner feelings to the surface.

Céleste had expressed a desire to visit the "Cavern of the Brigands," reputed to have been a stronghold for bandits of the preceding century. So, one afternoon, they started, heedless alike of the suddenly oppressive atmosphere and some ominous clouds



above the horizon. The road led them first into the forest, and then to a narrow defile hedged in by gigantic boulders, the path gradually ascending to the eminence on which the cavern was situated. They were both too absorbed in their conversation to heed the distant rumble of thunder. He was telling her of his childhood. His father had been a well-to-do resident of Hâvre, doing a commercial business with America. Siron's elder sister had married a native of French Guiana and resided there. So when the father died his mother had sent him to stay with his grandmother in the country, while she paid a lengthy visit to her daughter. It was

during this sojourn that she died, so the care of him had devolved upon his grandmother, much as though he had been her child. Constantly in the fields, he had grown up strong, with an intense love of Nature, leading him to try to depict her not as she might be, but as she was. Portraits, too, he had studied, generally devoting the winter in Paris to this branch, and doing the outdoor world in summer.

Céleste laughed with the zest of a child. "Come, now, you

must have been very amusing, roaming about Le Hâvre with bare legs and a dirty face !”

Even as they laughed the first flash of lightning forked almost across their path. Siron felt Céleste tremble at his side and, glancing at her, saw her speechless with fright.

“Quick,” he said, striving to encourage her, “we must reach the cavern or be well drenched.” And taking her hand they hastened up the path, over rocks and slippery patches of fir needles, he bruising his hands in pushing aside the bushes, and she her delicate feet on the rocks that strewed their way ; pursued by the increased volleys of thunder and, at intervals, an arrow of green light tracing itself across their vision. When they reached the cavern and could stop for breath, indifferent to the now fast falling rain, Céleste sank down involuntarily, whiter than the lace she wore about her throat. Siron returned to the mouth of the cave, fascinated by the view it disclosed. Away below him stretched the valley of the Seine and Marne, torn by great winds and deluged by a mighty downpour. At times a wave of mist obscured his vision, and then again it rolled aside, exposing the storm-swept country. It had grown very dark and Siron turned, mindful of the terror that Céleste seemed suffering. She had retired to the rear of the cave, and all he had to guide him to her were her eyes, so luminous that they seemed to scintillate in the increased obscurity.

“Are you ill, Céleste ?” he said, unconscious of his familiarity, taking her hand, which was cold as the wall that shut them in.

“No,” she said, hoarsely, in such a strange and altered tone that he scarcely recognized it. Thereafter she would say no more, sitting with her eyes fixed on the garish scene without, where the lightning seemed to be concentrating its attack upon their eminence. There came a moment's cessation and then a roar that shook the earth like the salute of heavy artillery, and with it rose a cry from Céleste, wrung from her by the very force of the explosion. In the accompanying flash of lightning Siron saw her eyes, brilliant as emeralds, and, in the elusive light, as green.

But it seemed to him that they had scarce experienced their



fright when, as if satiated, the storm rolled away. When they emerged the sun was gilding the wet knoll on which they stood, and below them was a forest of trees, whose leaves were smiling at the draught they had received.

Silently he helped the girl descend the rain-swept path, and when they reached the hotel could only find a word to express the hope that she would suffer no harm from their adventure. In truth, his mind was chaos, filled with a great and unreasoning joy that benumbed his senses. For with the storm had come a love for Céleste, a feeling within him that unsteadied the universe and left him faint at the sudden realization.

That night she did not appear at dinner, and later Siron, deep in thought, paced the narrow confines of his room. Dubois had said at table that Céleste was leaving. An opportunity verbally to tell his love might not come; and with the realization of this he rang for pen and ink, and Marcelle appearing, directed him to light the candles and draw his curtain.

"Céleste," he wrote, "I love you. It came to me this afternoon, suddenly, like the storm. I knew it all in an instant, and



would have told you; but somehow the words died on my lips. So I have decided to write you, to try to paint in words how much I love you. If you could feel my heart beat now as I write you this, the first love I have ever penned to a woman, you would know that all which gives me breath and life you own. Though absence intervened and years compounded themselves, to-day could never be the past, or to me other than my present and my future. I

dare not hope that you have looked on me with more than liking. God grant that it may be so, and that within your heart the devotion I feel may in time engender a return. For the rest—I have an income both from my work and from a

legacy, insufficient certainly, but then I fear little from this with you. It is the other, dear, over which my pen falters. Can you, will you love me? I can say no more."

The letter was written in that small, irregular chirography that clings to artists whose hands can wield a brush but not a pen with deftness. After signing, Siron dispatched it to Céleste's room. Then, rapidly undressing, he extinguished the lights and endeavored to court forgetfulness. But how vainly! Persistently his eyes remained sleepless and, in a procession, events of the last fortnight marshalled themselves before him. Then those of the preceding winter; and presently, with a leap, he was a boy again at Håvre, down by the wharves where those great, black steamers, with their red funnels, were alternately fastened and unfastened. Then——.

But Siron's musings ceased; he had heard a call, and he started up, thoroughly aroused. It scarcely seemed the cry of a human being, but that of an animal, sharp and intense. Yet absurd! What beast could possibly have made so strange a noise? He rose from his bed and struck a match. Two o'clock. Going to the window he leaned out. Not a movement, not a sound, save the chirp of the crickets and the bark of a dog a mile distant. The moon, in its first quarter and lacking strength, was declining behind the forest. From the court he distinguished the faint reflection of a light. At length the fresh air seemed to quiet him; for, returning to his bed, he soon fell asleep—the sleep of fatigue, accompanied by a regular and long-drawn breathing.

It was the opened window that awakened him. Grayness was over all and, from the absence of the sunrise, he judged it not yet five o'clock. The stamp of a horse suddenly attracted his attention. Going to the window he saw standing before the archway a cab, its lamps still lighted and the driver apparently asleep on the box, while the horses, from their jaded condition, appeared to have suffered severe usage. Siron, interested, turned to don his dressing-gown. When he again reached the window the scene had changed. The driver, thoroughly awake, was standing by the door of the conveyance, holding it open, while through the court of the hotel Siron detected footsteps.

In a moment two men and a woman appeared. The first, an elderly man with gray hair, but unknown to Siron. Behind him was Jacques Dubois, and on his arm——? The watcher rubbed

his eyes in incredulity. Could it be Céleste? In the dim light Siron distinguished her face, very pale and drawn.



As she put her foot on the carriage-step she threw up her head and laughed back at Dubois, that same ringing laugh that Siron knew so well. But now to him it was worse than frivolous. Where was she going at this hour, and why was she amused, with pale face and great lack-lustre eyes? As he asked himself the question Céleste entered the cab, the elder man closely following, and, as the driver gained his box, Dubois stepped aside. Forgetful of their fatigue, the horses started briskly.

Then it occurred to Siron, who had been too fascinated by the scene to move, that it *was* Céleste he had seen thus leaving, and with a stranger. Hurriedly, he donned his clothes and in a minute was descending the stairs, cold with apprehension. Reaching the studio he found Marcelle undoing the shutters, and as the growing light penetrated the room he saw the picture "*Le Feu Follet*" as he had left it the previous day. A black background, relieved by the face of Céleste, slightly smiling, and almost with the expression he had seen a moment since. The whole study was fantastically heightened by gleams of a phosphorescent greenish shade.

Hurrying to the courtyard he encountered Dubois. The latter had circles beneath his eyes, and looked as though he had not slept for hours.

"What does it mean? Where has Céleste gone?" said Siron, hoarsely, barring the other's path.

Dubois raised his brows ironically. "Pray, what is that to you?" he said.

For answer the young man pointed to a letter Dubois held in his hand. It was unopened and was Siron's declaration of the previous night.

In an instant Jacques seemed to comprehend, for his face

softened. "Is it possible?" he murmured. "Her father should never have left her here so long."

Siron, infuriated, caught him by the arm. "What does it mean?" he again demanded.

The other answered slowly: "Did you not guess? Do you not know that, during the absence of the moon, and at certain periods, they are perfectly themselves? We brought her here occasionally, in hopes the change would benefit her, but she is incurable."

"What do you mean? For God's sake tell me!" Siron could only reiterate.

"Why, that Céleste is insane! For five years she has been an inmate of the asylum at Charenton and—Hello, you're falling! Wait—now I've got you! I say, Marcelle, quick—some cognac for the gentleman!"



THE CONQUEST OF DOÑA JACOBA *

BY GERTRUDE ATHERTON

A FOREST of willows cut by a forking creek, and held apart here and there by fields of yellow mustard blossoms fluttering in their pale green nests, or meadows carpeted with the tiny white and yellow flowers of early summer. Wide patches of blue where the willows ended, and immense banks of daisies bordering fields of golden grain, bending and shimmering in the wind with the long even sweep of rising tide. Then the lake, long, irregular, half choked with tules, closed by a marsh. The valley framed by mountains of purplish gray, dull brown with patches of vivid green and yellow; a solitary gray peak, barren and rocky, in sharp contrast to the rich California hills; on one side fawn-colored slopes, and slopes with groves of crouching oaks in their hollows; opposite, and beyond the cold peak, a golden hill rising to a mount of earthy green; still lower, another peak, red and green mulberry and mould; between and afar, closing the valley, a line of pink-brown mountains splashed with blue.

Such was a fragment of Don Roberto Duncan's vast *ranch*o of Los Quervos, and on a plateau above the willows stood the *adobe* house, white and red-tiled, shaped like a solid letter H. On the deep veranda, sunken between the short forearms of the H, Doña Jacoba could stand and issue commands in her harsh, imperious voice to the Indians in the *rancheria* among the willows, whilst the long *sala* behind overflowed with the gay company her famous hospitality had summoned, the bare floor and ugly velvet furniture swept out of thought by beautiful faces and flowered silken gowns. Behind the *sala* was an open court, the grass growing close to the great stone fountain. On either side was a long line of rooms, and above the *sala* was a library opening into the sleeping-room of Doña Jacoba on one side, and into that of Elena, her youngest and loveliest daughter, on the other. Behind the house were a dozen or more buildings: the kitchen; a room in which steers and bullocks, sheep and pigs, were hanging; a storehouse containing provisions enough for a hotel; and

* A selection from "Blackwood's" by permission of the author.

the manufactories of the Indians. Somewhat apart was a large building with a billiard-room in its upper storey and sleeping-rooms below. From her window Elena could look down upon the high-walled corral with its prancing horses always in readiness for the pleasure-loving guests, and upon the broad road curving through the willows and down the valley.

The great house almost shook with life on this brilliant day of the month of June, 1852. Don Roberto Duncan, into whose shrewd Scottish hands California had poured her wealth for forty years, had long ago taken to himself a wife of Castilian blood; and to-morrow their eldest remaining daughter was to be married to a young Englishman, whose father had been a merchant in California when San Francisco was Yerba Buena. Not a room was vacant in the house. Young people had come from Monterey and San Francisco, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. Beds had been put up in the library and billiard-room, in the store-rooms and attics. The corral was full of strange horses, and the huts in the willows had their humbler guests.

Francisca sat in her room surrounded by a dozen chattering girls. The floor beneath the feet of the California heiress was bare, and the heavy furniture was of uncarved mahogany. But a rich satin quilt covered the bed, lavish Spanish needlework draped chest and tables, and through the open window came the June sunshine and the sound of the splashing of the fountain.

Francisca was putting the last stitches in her wedding-gown, and the girls were helping, advising, and commenting.

"Art thou not frightened, Panchita," demanded one of the girls, "to go away and live with a strange man? Just think, thou hast seen him but ten times."

"What of that?" asked Francisca, serenely, holding the rich corded silk at arm's-length, and half closing her eyes as she re-adjusted the deep flounce of Spanish lace. "Remember, we will ride and dance and play games together for a week with all of you, dear friends, before I go away with him. I shall know him quite well by that time. And did not my father know him when he was a little boy? Sure he cannot be a cruel man, or my father would not have chosen him for my husband."

"I like the Americans and the Germans and the Russians," said the girl who had spoken, "particularly the Americans. But these English are so stern, so harsh sometimes."

"What of that?" asked Francisca again. "Am I not used to my father?"

She was a singular-looking girl, this compound of Scottish and Spanish. Her face was cast in her father's hard mold, and her frame was large and sturdy; but she had the black luxuriant hair of Spain, and much grace of gesture and expression.

"I would not marry an Englishman," said a soft voice.

Francisca raised her eyebrows and glanced coldly at the speaker, a girl of perfect loveliness, who sat behind a table, her chin resting on her clasped hands.

"Thou wouldst marry whom our father told thee to marry, Elena," said her sister, severely. "What hast thou to say about it?"

"I will marry a Spaniard," said Elena, rebelliously. "A Spaniard and no other."

"Thou wilt do what?" said a cold voice from the door. The girls gave a little scream. Elena turned pale, even Francisca's hands twitched.

Doña Jacoba was an impressive figure as she stood in the doorway. A tall, unbowed woman with a large face and powerful, penetrating eyes. A thin mouth, covering white teeth, separated the prominent nose and square chin. A braid of thick black hair lay over her fine bust, and a black silk handkerchief made a turban for her lofty head. She wore a skirt of heavy black silk and a shawl of Chinese *crêpe*, one end thrown gracefully over her shoulder.

"What didst thou say?" she demanded again, a sneer on her lips.

Elena made no answer. She stared through the window at the servants laying the table in the dining-room on the other side of the court, her breath shortening as if the room had been exhausted of air.

"Let me hear no more of that nonsense," continued her mother. "A strange remark truly to come from the lips of a Californian! Thy father has said that his daughters shall marry men of his race—men who belong to that island of the North; and I have agreed, and thy sisters are well married. No women are more virtuous, more industrious, more religious, than ours; but our men—our young men—are a set of drinking, gambling vagabonds. Go to thy room and pray there until supper."

Elena ran out of an opposite door and Doña Jacoba sat down on a high-backed chair and held out her hand for the wedding-gown. She examined it attentively, and gave a faint smile of approval.

"The lace is beautiful," she said. "There is no richer in California, and I have seen Doña Maria Antonia de la Guerra's and Doña Modeste Castro's. Let me see thy mantilla once more."

Francisca opened a chest nearly as large as her bed and shook out a long square of superb Spanish lace. It had arrived from the city of Mexico but a few days before. The girls clapped their admiring hands, as if they had not looked at it twenty times, and Doña Jacoba smoothed it tenderly with her strong hands. Then she went over to the chest and lifted the beautiful silk and *crêpe* gowns, one by one, her sharp eyes detecting no flaw. She opened another chest and examined the piles of underclothing and bed-linen, all of finest woof, and deeply bordered with the drawn work of Spain.

"All is well," she said, returning to her chair. "I see nothing more to be done. Thy brother will bring the emeralds, and the English plate will come before the week is over."

"Is it sure that Santiago will come in time for the wedding?" asked a half-English granddaughter, whose voice broke suddenly at her own temerity.

But Doña Jacoba was in a gracious mood.

"Sure. Has not Don Roberto gone to meet him? He will be here at four to-day."

"How glad I shall be to see him!" said Francisca. "Just think, my friends, I have not seen him for seven years. Not since he was eleven years old. He has been on that cold, dreadful island in the North all this time. I wonder has he changed?"

"Why should he change?" asked Doña Jacoba. "Is he not a Cortez and a Duncan? Is he not a Californian and a Catholic? Can a few years in an English school make him of another race? He is seven years older, that is all."

"True," assented Francisca, threading her needle; "of course he could not change."

Doña Jacoba opened a large fan and wielded it with slow curves of her strong wrist. She had never been cold in her life, and even a June day oppressed her.

"We have another guest," she said in a moment—"a young man, Don Dario Castañares, of Los Robles Rancho. He comes to buy cattle of my husband, and must remain with us until the bargain is over."

Several of the girls raised their large black eyes with interest.

"Don Dario Castañares," said one; "I have heard of him. He is very rich and very handsome, they say."

"Yes," said Doña Jacoba, indifferently. "He is not ugly, but much too dark. His mother was an Indian. He is no husband, with all his leagues, for any Californian of pure Castilian blood."

Elena had gone up to her room and would have locked the door had she possessed a key. As it was, she indulged in a burst of tears at the prospect of marrying an Englishman, then consoled herself with the thought that her best-beloved brother would be with her in a few hours.

She bathed her face and wound the long black coils about her shapely head. The flush faded out of her white cheeks and her eyelids were less heavy. But the sadness did not leave her eyes nor the delicate curves of her mouth. She had the face of the Madonna, stamped with the heritage of suffering,—a nature so keenly capable of joy and pain that she drew both like a magnet, and would so long as life stayed in her.

She curled herself up in the window-seat, looking down the road for the gray cloud of dust that would herald her brother. But only black crowds of crows mounted screaming from the willows, to dive and rise again. Suddenly she became conscious that she was watched, and her gaze swept downward to the corral. A stranger stood by the gates giving orders to a *vaquero*, but looking hard at her from beneath his low-dropped sombrero. He was tall, this stranger, and very slight. His face was nearly as dark as an Indian's, but set with features so perfect that no one but Doña Jacoba had ever found fault with his skin. Below his dreaming, ardent eyes was a straight, delicate nose; the sensuous mouth was half parted over glistening teeth, and but lightly shaded by a silken mustache. About his graceful figure hung a dark red serape embroidered and fringed with gold, and his red velvet trousers were laced and his yellow riding-boots gartered with silver.

Elena rose quickly and pulled the curtain across the window; the blood had flown to her hair, and a smile chased the sadness from her mouth. Then she raised her hands and pressed the palms against the slope of the ceiling, her dark, upturned eyes full of terror. For many moments she stood so, hardly conscious of what she was doing, seeing only the implacable eyes of her mother; then down the road came the loud regular hoof-falls

of galloping horses, and with an eager cry she flung aside the curtain, forgetting the stranger.

Down the road, half hidden by the willows, came two men; and when they reached the *rancheria* Elena saw their faces. A sandy-haired, hard-faced old Scotsman, with cold blue eyes beneath shaggy red brows, and a dark slim lad, a Californian every inch of him. Elena waved her handkerchief and the lad his hat. Then the girl rushed down the stair and over to the willows. Santiago sprang from his horse, and the brother and sister clung together, kissing and crying, hugging each other until her hair fell down and his hat was in the dust.

"Thou hast come!" cried Elena at last, holding him at arm's-length that she might see him better, then clinging to him again with all her strength. "Thou wilt never leave me again—promise me! Promise me, my Santiago! Ay, I have been so lonely."

"Never, my little one. Have I not longed to come home that I might be with thee? O my Elena! I know so much. I will teach thee everything."

"Ay, I am proud of thee, my Santiago! Thou knowest more than any boy in California—I know."

"Perhaps that would not be much," said he, with fine scorn. "But come, Elena *mia*, I must go to my mother; she is waiting. She looks as stern as ever; but how I have longed to see her!"

They ran to the house, passing the stranger, who had watched them with folded arms and scowling brows. Santiago rushed impetuously at his mother; but she put out her arm, stiff and straight, and held him back. Then she laid her hand, with its vise-like grip, on his shoulder, and led him down the *sala* to the chapel at the end. It was arranged for the wedding with all the pomp of velvet altar-cloth and golden candelabra, and he looked at it wonderingly. Why had she brought him to look upon this before giving him a mother's greeting?

"Kneel down," she said, "and repeat the prayers of thy Church—prayers of gratitude for thy safe return."

The boy folded his hands deprecatingly.

"But, mother, remember it is seven long years since I have said the Catholic prayers. Remember I have been educated in an English college, in a Protestant country."

Her tall form curved slowly toward him, the blood blazed in her dark cheeks.

"What!" she screamed, incredulously, "thou hast forgotten

the prayers of thy Church—the prayers thou learnedst at my knee?”

“Yes, mother, I have,” he said, desperately. “I cannot——”

“God!” she cried. “God! Mother of God! my son says this to me!” She caught him by the shoulder again and almost hurled him from the room. Then she locked her hand about his arm and dragged him down the *sala* to his father’s room. She took a green-hide *reata* from the table and brought it down upon his back with long sweeps of her powerful arm; but not another word came from her rigid lips. The boy quivered with the shame and pain, but made no resistance—for he was a Californian, and she was his mother.

Joaquin, the eldest son, who had been hunting bear with a number of his guests, returned shortly after his brother’s arrival, and was met at the door by his mother.

“Where is Santiago?” he asked. “I hear he has come.”

“Santiago has been sent to bed, where he will remain for the present. We have an unexpected guest, Joaquin. He leans there against the tree—Don Dario Castañares. Thou knowest who he is. He comes to buy cattle of thy father and will remain some days. Thou must share thy room with him, for there is no other place—even on the billiard-table.”

Joaquin liked the privacy of his room, but he had all the hospitality of his race. He went at once to the stranger, walking a little heavily, for he was no longer young and slender, but with a cordial smile on his shrewd, warmly colored face.

“The house is at your service, Don Dario,” he said, shaking the new-comer’s hand. “We are honored that you come in time for my sister’s wedding. It distresses me that I cannot offer you the best room in the house, but, Dios! we have a company here. I have only the half of my poor bed to offer you, but if you will deign to accept that——”

“I am miserable, wretched, to put you to such trouble——”

“Never think of such a thing, my friend. Nothing could give me greater happiness than to try to make you comfortable in my poor room. Will you come now and take a siesta before supper?”

Dario followed him to the house, protesting at every step, and Joaquin threw open the door of one of the porch-rooms.

“At your service, señor—everything at your service.”

He went to one corner of the room and kicked aside a pile of

saddles, displaying a small hillock of gold in ten- and fifty-dollar slugs. "You will find about 30,000 dollars there. We sold some cattle a few days ago. I beg that you will help yourself. It is all at your service. I will now go and send you some *aguardiente*, for you must be thirsty." And he went out and left his guest alone.

Dario threw himself face downward on the bed. He was in love, and the lady had kissed another man as if she had no love to spare. True, it was but her brother she had kissed, but would she have eyes for any one else during a stranger's brief visit? And how could he speak a word with her alone in this crowded house? And that terrible dragon of a mother! He sprang to his feet as an Indian servant entered with a glass of *aguardiente*; and when he had burnt his throat he felt better. "I will stay until I have won her, if I remain a month," he vowed. "It will be some time before Don Roberto will care to talk business."

But Don Roberto was never too preoccupied to talk business. After he had taken his bath and siesta, he sent a servant to request Don Dario Castañares to come up to the library, where he spent most of his time, received all his visitors, reprimanded his children, and took his after-dinner naps. It was a luxurious room for the Californian of that day. A thick red English carpet covered the floor, one side of the room was covered by a crowded book-case, and the heavy mahogany furniture was handsomely carved, although upholstered with horse-hair.

In an hour every detail of the transaction had been disposed of and Dario had traded a small *rancho* for a herd of cattle. The young man's face was very long when the last detail had been arranged, but he had forgotten that his host was as Californian as himself. Don Roberto poured him a brimming glass of *angelica*, and gave him a hearty slap on the back.

"The cattle will keep for a few days, Don Dario," he said, "and you shall not leave this house until the festivities are over. Not until a week from to-morrow—do you hear? I knew your father. We had many a transaction together, and I take pleasure in welcoming his son under my roof. Now get off to the young people, and do not make any excuses."

Dario made none.

The next morning at eight Francisca stood before the altar in the chapel, looking very handsome in her rich gown and soft mantilla. The bridegroom, a sensible-looking young English-

man, was somewhat nervous, but Francisca might have been married every morning at eight o'clock. Behind them stood Don Roberto in a new suit of English broadcloth, and Doña Jacoba in heavy lilac silk, half covered with priceless lace. The six bride's-maids looked like a huge bouquet, in their wide delicately colored skirts; and their dark eyes, mischievous, curious, thoughtful, flashed more brilliantly than the jewels they wore.

The *sala* and Don Roberto's room beyond were so crowded that some of the guests stood in the windows, and many could not enter the doors; every family within a hundred leagues had come to the wedding. The veranda was crowded with girls, their sparkling faces draped in black mantillas or bright *rebosas*, their full gray gowns fluttering in the breeze. Men in jingling spurs and all the bravery of gold-laced trousers and short embroidered jackets, respectfully elbowed their way past brown and stout old women that they might whisper a word in some pretty, alert little ear. They had all ridden many leagues that morning, but there was not a trace of fatigue on any face. The court behind the *sala* was full of Indian servants striving to catch a glimpse of the ceremony.

Dario stood just within the front door, his eyes eagerly fixed upon Elena. She looked like a California lily in her white gown; even her head drooped a little as if a storm had passed. Her eyes were absent and heavy; they mirrored nothing of the solemn gayety of the morning; they saw only the welts on her brother's back.

Dario had not seen her since Santiago's arrival. She had not appeared at supper, and he had slept little in consequence; in fact, he had spent most of the night playing *monté* with Joaquin and a dozen other young men in the billiard-room.

During the bridal mass the *padre* gave communion to the young couple and to those who had made confession the night before. Elena was not of the number, and during the intense silence she drew back and stood and knelt near Dario. They were not close enough to speak, had they dared; but the Californian had other speech than words, and Dario and Elena made their confession that morning.

During breakfast they were at opposite ends of the long table in the dining-room, but neither took part in the songs and speeches, the toasts and laughter. Both had done some maneuvering to get out of sight of the old people and sit at one of the many other tables in the *sala*, on the corridor, in the court;

but Elena had to go with the bride's-maids, and Joaquin insisted upon doing honor to the uninvited guest. The Indian servants passed the rich and delicate, the plain and peppered dishes, the wines and the beautiful cakes for which Doña Jacoba and her daughters were famous. The massive plate that had done duty for generations in Spain was on the table, the crystal had been cut in England. It was the banquet of a grandee, and no one noticed the silent lovers.

After breakfast the girls flitted to their rooms and changed their gowns, and wound *rebosas* or mantillas about their heads; the men put off their jackets for lighter ones of flowered calico, and the whole party, in buggies or on horseback, started for a bull-fight which was to take place in a field about a mile behind the house. Elena went in a buggy with Santiago, who was almost as pale as she. Dario, on horseback, rode as near her as he dared; but when they reached the fence about the field careless riders crowded between, and he could only watch her from afar.

The *vaqueros* in their broad black hats shining with varnish, their black velvet jackets, their crimson sashes and short black velvet trousers laced with silver cord over spotless linen, looked very picturesque as they dashed about the field jingling their spurs and shouting at each other. When the bulls trotted in and greeted each other pleasantly, the *vaqueros* swung their hissing *reatas* and yelled until the maddened animals wreaked their vengeance on each other, and the serious work of the day began.

Elena leaned back with her fan before her eyes, but Santiago looked on eagerly in spite of his English training.

"*Caramba!*" he cried, "but that old bull is tough. Look, Elena! The little one is down. No, no! he has the big one. Ay! *yi, yi!* By Jove! he is gone—no, he has run off—he is on him again. He has ripped him up! *Brava! Brava!*"

A cheer as from one throat made the mountains echo, but Elena still held her fan before the field.

"How canst thou like such bloody sport?" she asked, disgustedly. "The poor animals! What pleasure canst thou take to see a fine brute kicking in his death agony, his bowels trailing on the ground?"

"Fie, Elena! Art thou not a Californian? Dost thou not love the sport of thy country? Why, look at the other girls. They are mad with excitement. By Jove! I never saw so many bright eyes. I wonder if I will be too stiff to dance to-night?"

Elena! but she gave me a beating! But tell me, little one, why dost thou not like the bull-fight? I feel like another man since I have seen it."

"I cannot be pleased with cruelty. I shall never get used to see beasts killed for amusement. And Don Dario Castañares does not like it either. He never smiled once, nor said '*Brava!*'"

"Aha! and how dost thou know whether he did or not? I thought thy face was behind that big black fan."

"I saw him through the sticks. What does 'by Jove' mean, my Santiago?"

He enlightened her, then stood up eagerly. Another bull had been brought in, and one of the *vaqueros* was to fight him. During the next two hours Santiago gave little thought to his sister, and sometimes her long black lashes swept above the top of her fan. When five or six bulls had stamped and roared and gored and died, the guests of Los Quervos went home to chocolate and siesta, and the others returned to their various *ranchos*.

But Dario took no nap that day. Twice he had seen an Indian girl at Elena's window, and as the house settled down to temporary calm, he saw the girl go to the *rancheria* among the willows. He wrote a note and followed her as soon as he dared. She wore a calico frock, exactly like a hundred others, and her stiff black hair cut close to her neck in the style enforced by Doña Jacoba; but Dario recognized her imitation of Elena's walk and carriage. He was very nervous, but he managed to stroll about and make his visit appear one of curiosity. As he passed the girl he told her to follow him, and in a few moments they were alone in the thicket. He had hard work persuading her to take the note to her mistress, for the girl stood in abject awe of Doña Jacoba; but love of Elena and sympathy for the handsome stranger prevailed, and the girl went off with the missive.

The staircase led from Don Roberto's room to Doña Jacoba's; but the lady's all-seeing eyes were closed, and the master was snoring in his library. Malia tiptoed by both, and Elena, who had been half asleep, sat up, trembling with excitement, and read the impassioned request for an interview. She lifted her head and listened, panting a little. Then she ran to the door and looked into the library. Her father was sound asleep; there could be no doubt of that. She dared not write an answer, but she closed the door and put her lips to the girl's ear.

"Tell him," she murmured, horrified at her own boldness—

"tell him to take me out for the *contradanza* to-night. There is no other chance." And the girl went back and delivered the message.

The guests and family met again at supper; but yards of linen and mounds of plate, spirited, quickly-turning heads, flowered muslin gowns and silken jackets, again separated Dario and Elena. He caught a glimpse now and again of her graceful head turning on its white throat, or of her sad, pure profile shining before her mother's stern old face.

Immediately after supper the bride and groom led the way to the *sala*, the musicians tuned their violins and guitars, and after an hour's excited comment upon the events of the day, the dancing began. Doña Jacoba could be very gracious when she chose, and she moved among her guests like a queen to-night, begging them to be happy, and electrifying them with her rare smile. She dispelled their awe of her with magical tact; and when she laid her hand on one young beauty's shoulder, and told her that her eyes put out the poor candles of Los Quervos, the girl was ready to fling herself on the floor and kiss the tyrant's feet. Elena watched her anxiously. She adored and feared her mother. Her father petted her in his harsh, abrupt way; if she had ever received a kiss from her mother, she did not remember it; but she worshiped the blinding personality of the woman, although she shook before the relentless will. But that her mother was pleased to be gracious to-night was beyond question, and she gave Dario a glance of timid encouragement, which brought him to her side at once.

"At your feet, señorita," he said, "may I dare beg the honor of the *contradanza*?"

She bent her slender body in a pretty courtesy. "It is a small favor to grant a guest who deigns to honor us with his presence."

He led her out, and when he was not gazing enraptured at the graceful swaying and gliding of her body, he managed to make a few conventional remarks.

"You do not like bull-fighting, señorita."

"He watched me," she thought. "No, señor. I like nothing that is cruel."

"Those soft eyes could never be cruel. Ay, you are so beautiful, señorita."

"I am but a little country girl, señor. You must have seen

far more beautiful women in the cities. Have you ever been in Monterey?"

"Yes, señorita, many times. I have seen all the beauties, even Doña Modeste Castro. Once, too—that was before the Americans came—I saw the Señorita Ysabel Herrera, a woman so beautiful that a man robbed a church and murdered a priest for her sake. But she was not so beautiful as you, señorita."

The blood throbbed in the girl's fair cheeks. "He must love me," she told herself, "to think me more beautiful than Ysabel Herrera. Joaquin says she was the handsomest woman that was ever seen."

"You compliment me, señor," she answered, vaguely. "She had wonderful green eyes. So has the Señora Castro. Mine are only brown, like so many other girls."

"They are the most beautiful eyes in California. They are like the Madonna's. I do not care for green eyes." His black ones flashed their language to hers, and Elena wondered if she had ever been unhappy. She barely remembered where she was, forgot that she was a helpless bird in a golden cage. Her mate had flown through the open door.

The *contradanza* ends with a waltz, and as Dario held her in his arms his last remnant of prudence gave way.

"Elena, Elena," he murmured, passionately, "I love thee. Dost thou not know it? Dost thou not love me a little? Ay, Elena! I have not slept one hour since I saw thee."

She raised her eyes to his face. The sadness still dwelt in their depths, but above floated the soft flame of love and trust. She had no coquetry in her straightforward and simple nature.

"Yes," she whispered, "I love thee."

"And thou art happy, *querida mia*. Thou art happy here in my arms?"

She let her cheek rest for a moment against his shoulder. "Yes, I am very happy."

"And thou wilt marry me?"

The words brought her back to the present, and the light left her face.

"Ay," she said, "why did you say that? It cannot ever be."

"But it shall be! Why not? I will speak with Don Roberto in the morning."

The hand that lay on his shoulder clutched him suddenly. "No, no," she said, hurriedly; "promise me that thou wilt not speak to him for two or three days at least. My father wants

us all to marry Englishmen. He is kind and he loves me, but he is mad for Englishmen. And we can be happy meanwhile."

The music stopped and he could only murmur his promises before leading her back to her mother.

He dared not take her out again, but he danced with no one else, in spite of many inviting eyes, and spent the rest of the night on the corridor, where he could watch her unobserved. The walls were so thick at Los Quervos that each window had a deep seat within and without. Dario ensconced himself, and was comfortable, if tumultuous. Elena sang once during the evening,—not a love-ballad, but that saddest and most beautiful of all Spanish songs, "The Last Sigh of the Moor." So passionate was her cry, "Ay, *nunca, nunca, nunca mas!*" that Dario knelt on the slopes of Granada and kissed the hand of Boadbil el Chico with adoring fealty, then shuddered with the superstition of his race as he realized that the despairing words came from the lips of Elena Duncan.

With dawn the dancing ended and quiet fell upon Los Quervos. But at twelve gay voices and laughter came through every window. The family and guests were taking their cold bath, ready for another eighteen hours of pleasure.

Shortly after the long dinner, the iron-barred gates of the corral were thrown open and a band of horses, golden-bronze in color, with silvery manes and tails, silken embroidered saddles on their slender backs, trotted up to the door. The beautiful creatures shone in the sun like burnished armor; they arched their haughty necks and lifted their small feet as if they were California beauties about to dance *El Son*.

The girls had on their short riding-skirts girt with gay sashes, and little round hats were on their heads. The men wore thin jackets of brightly colored silk, gold-laced knee-breeches, and silver spurs. They tossed the girls upon their saddles, vaulted into their own, and all started on a wild gallop for the races.

Dario, with much maneuvering, managed to ride by Elena's side. It was impossible to exchange a word with her, for keen and mischievous ears were about them; but they were close together, and a kind of ecstasy possessed them both. The sunshine was so golden, the quivering, visible air so full of soft intoxication, they were filled with a reckless animal joy of living—the divine right of youth to exist and be happy. The bars of Elena's cage sank into the warm resounding earth; she wanted

to cry aloud her joy to the birds, to hold and kiss the air as it passed. Her face sparkled, her mouth grew full. She looked at Dario, and he dug his spurs into his horse's flanks.

The representatives of many *ranchos*, their wives and daughters, awaited the party from Los Quervos. But none pushed their way between Dario and Elena that day. And they both enjoyed the races; they were in a mood to enjoy anything. They became excited, and shouted with the rest as the *vaqueros* flew down the field. Dario bet and lost a *ranchita*, then bet and won another. He won a herd of cattle, a band of horses, a saddle-bag of golden slugs. Sure, fortune smiled on him from the eyes of Elena. When the races were over they galloped down to the ocean and over the cliffs and sands, watching the ponderous waves fling themselves on the rocks, then back, and rear their crests to thunder on again.

"The fog!" cried some one—"the fog!" and with shrieks of mock terror they turned their horses' heads and raced down the valley, the fog after them like a phantom tidal-wave; but they outstripped it, and sprang from their horses at the corridor of Los Quervos with shouts of triumph and lightly-blown kisses at the enemy.

After supper they found eggs piled upon silver dishes in the *sala*, and with cries of "*Cascaron! Cascaron!*" they flung them at each other, the cologne and flour and tinsel with which the shells were filled deluging and decorating them.

Doña Jacoba again was in a most gracious mood, and leaned against the wall, an amused smile on her strong, serene face. Her husband stood by her, and she indicated Elena by a motion of her fan.

"Is she not beautiful to-night, our little one?" she asked, proudly. "See how pink her cheeks are! her eyes shine like stars. She is the handsomest of all our children, *viejo*."

"Yes," he said, something like tenderness in his cold blue eyes, "there is no prettier girl on twenty *ranchos*. She shall marry the finest Englishman of them all."

Elena threw a *cascaron* directly into Dario's mouth, and although the cologne scalded his throat, he heroically swallowed it, and revenged himself by covering her black locks with flour. The guests, like the children they were, chased each other all over the house, up and down the stair; the men hid under tables, only to have a sly hand break a *cascaron* on the back of their heads, to receive a deluge down the spinal column. The bride

chased her dignified groom out into the yard, and a dozen followed. Then Dario found his chance.

Elena was after him, and as they passed beneath a tree he turned like a flash and caught her in his arms and kissed her. For a second she tried to free herself, mindful that her sisters had not kissed their lovers until they stood with them in the chapel; but she was made for love, and in a moment her white arms were clinging about his neck. People were shouting around them; there was time for but few of the words Dario wished to say.

"Thou must write me a little note every day," he commanded. "Thy brother's coat, one that he does not wear, hangs behind the door in my room. To-morrow morning thou wilt find a letter from me in the pocket. Let me find one there too. Kiss me again, *Consuelo de mi alma!*" and they separated suddenly to speak no more that night.

The next morning, when Elena went to Joaquin's room to make the bed, she found Dario's note in the pocket of the coat, but she had had no opportunity to write one herself. Nor did she have time to read his until after dinner, although it burned her neck and took away her appetite. When the meal was over she ran down to the willows and read it there, then went straight to the favorite lounging-place of an old *vaquero* who had adored her from the days when she used to trot about the *rancho* holding his forefinger, or perched herself upon his shoulder and commanded him to gallop.

He was smoking his pipe, and he looked up in some wonder as she stood before him, flushed and panting, her eyes glancing apprehensively about.

"Pedro," she said, imperiously, "get down on thy hands and knees."

Pedro was the color of tanned leather and very hairy, but his face beamed with good nature. He put his pipe between his teeth and did as he was bidden. Elena produced the pencil and paper she had managed to purloin from her father's table, and kneeling beside her faithful *vaquero*, wrote a note on his back. It took her a long time to coin that simple epistle, for she had never written a love-letter before. But Pedro knelt like a rock, although his old knees ached. When the note was finished she thrust it into her gown and patted Pedro on the head.

"I love thee, my old man. I will make thee a new salve for thy rheumatism and a big cake."

As she approached the house her mother stood on the corridor watching the young people mount, and Elena shivered as she met a fiery and watchful eye. Yesterday had been a perfect day, but the chill of fear touched this. She sprang on her horse and went with the rest to the games. Her brother Joaquin kept persistently by her side, and Dario thought it best not to approach her. She took little interest in the games. The young men climbed the greased pole amid soft derisive laughter. The greased pig was captured by his tail in a tumult of excitement, which rivalled the death of the bull; but Elena paid no attention. It was not until Dario, restive with inaction, entered the lists for the buried rooster, and by its head twisted it from the ground as his horse flew by, that she was roused to interest; and as many had failed, and as his was the signal victory of the day, he rode home somewhat consoled.

That night, as Dario and Elena danced the *contradanza* together, they felt the eyes of Doña Jacoba upon them, but he dared to whisper:

"To-morrow morning I speak with thy father. Our wedding-day must be set before another sun goes down."

"No, no!" gasped Elena; but for once Dario would not listen.

As soon as Elena had left his room next morning, Dario returned and read the note she had put in her brother's pocket. It gave him courage, his dreamy eyes flashed, his sensitive mouth curved proudly. As soon as dinner was over he followed Don Roberto up to the library. The old man stretched himself out in the long brass and leather chair, which had been imported from England for his comfort, and did not look overjoyed when his guest begged a few moments' indulgence.

"I am half asleep," he said. "Is it about those cattle? Joaquín knows as much about them as I do."

Dario had not been asked to sit down, and he stood before Don Roberto feeling a little nervous, and pressing his hand against the mantelpiece.

"I do not wish to speak of cattle, señor."

"No? What then?" The old man's face was flushed with wine and his shaggy brows were drooping heavily.

"It is—it is about Elena."

"Elena?"

"Yes, señor. We love each other very much. I wish to ask your permission that we may be married."

The brows went up with a rush ; the stiff hairs stood out like a roof above the cold, angry eyes. For a moment Don Roberto stared at the speaker as if he had not heard, then he sprang to his feet, his red face purple.

“ Get out of my house, you —— vagabond ! ” he shouted. “ Go as fast as God Almighty'll let you. You marry my daughter—you —— Indian ! I wouldn't give her to you if you were pure-blooded Castilian, much less a half-breed whelp. And you have dared to make love to her ? Go !—do you hear ?—or I'll kick you down the stairs ! ”

Dario drew himself up and looked back at his furious host with a pride that matched his own. The blood was smarting in his veins, but he made no sign and walked down the stair.

Don Roberto went at once in search of his wife. Failing to find her, he walked straight into the *sala*, and taking Elena by the arm before the assembled guests, marched her up-stairs and into her room, and locked the door with his key.

Elena fell upon the floor and sobbed with rebellious mortification and terror. Her father had not uttered a word, but she knew the meaning of his summary act, and other feelings soon gave way to despair. That she would never see Dario Castañares again was certain, and she wept and prayed with all the *abandon* of her Spanish nature. A picture of the Virgin hung over the bed, and she raised herself on her knees and lifted her clasped hands to it beseechingly. With her tumbling hair and white face, her streaming, upturned eyes and drawn mouth, she looked more like the Mater Dolorosa than the expressionless print she prayed to.

“ Mary ! mother ! ” she whispered, “ have mercy on thy poor little daughter. Give him to me. I ask for nothing else in this world. I do not care for gold or *ranchos*, only to be his wife. I am so lonely, my mother—for even Santiago thinks of so many other things than me. I only want to be loved, and no one else will ever love me who can make me love him. Ay ! give him to me ! give him to me ! ” And she threw herself on her face once more and sobbed until her tears were exhausted. Then she dragged herself to the window and leaned over the deep seat. Perhaps she might have one glimpse of him as he rode away.

She gave a little cry of agony and pleasure. He was standing by the gates of the corral whilst the *vaqueros* rounded up the cattle he had bought. His arms were folded, his head hung forward. As he heard her cry he lifted his face, and Elena saw

the tears in his eyes. For the moment they gazed at each other, those lovers of California's long ago, while the very atmosphere quivering between them seemed a palpable barrier. Elena flung out her arms with a sudden, passionate gesture, and he gave a hoarse cry and paced up and down like a race-horse curbed with a Spanish bit. How to have one last word with her? If she were behind the walls of the fort of Monterey it would be as easy. He dared not speak from where he was. Already the horses were at the door to carry the eager company to a fight between a bull and a bear. But he could write a note if he only had the materials. It was useless to return to his room, for Joaquin was there, and he hoped never to see that library again. But was there ever a lover in whom necessity did not develop the genius of invention? Dario flashed upward a glance of hope, then took from his pocket a slip of the rice-paper used for making *cigaritos*. He burnt a match, and with the charred stump scrawled a few lines:

“Elena! Mine! Star of my life! My sweet! Beautiful and idolized. Farewell! Farewell, my darling! My heart is sad. God be with thee. DARIO.”

He wrapped the paper about a stone, and tied it with a wisp of grass. With a sudden flexile turn of a wrist that had thrown many a *reata*, he flung it straight through the open window. Elena read the incoherent words, then fell insensible to the floor.

It was the custom of Doña Jacoba to personally oversee her entire establishment every day, and she always went at a different hour, that laziness might never feel sure of her back. Today she visited the *rancheria* immediately after dinner, and looked through every hut with her piercing eyes. If the children were dirty, she peremptorily ordered their stout mammas to put them into the clean clothes which her bounty had provided. If a bed was unmade, she boxed the ears of the owner and sent her spinning across the room to her task. But she found little to scold about; her discipline was too rigid. When she was satisfied that the huts were in order, she went down to the great stone tubs sunken in the ground, where the women were washing in the heavy shade of the willows. In their calico gowns they made bright bits of color against the drooping green of the trees.

“Maria,” she cried, sharply, “thou art wringing that fine linen too harshly. Dost thou wish to break in pieces the bridal

clothes of thy señorita? Be careful, or I will lay the whip across thy shoulders."

She walked slowly through the willows, enjoying the shade. Her fine old head was held sternly back, and her shoulders were as square as her youngest son's; but she sighed a little, and pressed a willow branch to her face with a caressing motion. She looked up to the gray peak standing above its fellows, bare, ugly, gaunt. She was not an imaginative woman, but she had always felt in closer kinship with that solitary peak than with her own blood. As she left the wood and saw the gay cavalcade about to start—the burnished horses, the dashing *caballeros*, the girls with their radiant faces and jaunty habits—she sighed again. Long ago she had been the bride of a brilliant young Mexican officer for a few brief years; her youth had gone with his life.

She avoided the company and went around to the buildings at the back of the house. Approving here, reproaching there, she walked leisurely through the various rooms where the Indians were making lard, shoes, flour, candles. She was in the chocolate manufactory when her husband found her.

"Come—come at once," he said. "I have good news for thee."

She followed him to his room, knowing by his face that something had happened. But she was not prepared for the tale he poured forth with violent interjections of English and Spanish oaths. She had detected a flirtation between her daughter and the uninvited guest and, not approving of flirtations, had told Joaquin to keep his eyes upon them when hers were absent; but that the man should dare and the girl should stoop to think of marriage, wrought in her a passion to which her husband's seemed the calm flame of a sperm-candle.

"What!" she cried, her hoarse voice breaking—"what! A half-breed aspire to a Cortez!" She forgot her husband's separateness with true California pride. "My daughter and the son of an Indian! Holy God! And she has dared!—she has dared!—the little imbecile!—the little—— But,"—and she gave a furious laugh,—“she will not forget again.”

She caught the green-hide *reata* from the nail and went up the stair. Crossing the library with heavy tread, as if she would stamp her rage through the floor, she turned the key in the door of her daughter's room, stood over the girl, who still lay on the floor, although consciousness had returned. As Elena saw her mother's face she cowered pitifully; that terrible temper seldom

dominated the iron will of the woman, but Santiago had shaken it a few days ago, and Elena knew that her turn had come.

Doña Jacoba shut the door and towered above her daughter, red spots on her face, her small eyes blazing, an icy sneer on her mouth. She did not speak one word. She caught the girl by her delicate shoulder, jerked her to her feet, and lashed her with the heavy whip until screams mingled with the gay laughter of the parting guests. When she had beaten her until her own arms ached, she flung her on the bed and went out and locked the door.

Elena was insensible again for awhile, then lay dull and inert for hours. She had a passive longing for death. After the suffering and the hideous mortification of that day, there seemed no other climax. The cavalcade rode beneath her windows once more with their untired laughter, their splendid vitality. They scattered to their rooms to don their bright evening gowns, then went to the dining-room and feasted.

After supper Francisca unlocked Elena's door and entered with a little tray on her hand. Elena refused to eat, but her sister's presence roused her and she turned her face to the wall and burst into tears.

"Nonsense!" said Francisca, kindly. "Do not cry, my sister. What is a lover?—the end of a little flirtation. My father will find thee a husband—a strong, fair English husband like mine. Dost thou not prefer blondes to brunettes, my sister? I am sorry my mother beat thee, but she has such a sense of her duty. She did it for thy good, my Elena. Let me dress thee in thy new gown, the white silk, with the pale blue flowers. It is high in the neck and long in the sleeves, and will hide the marks of the whip. Come down and play *cascarones* and dance until dawn and forget all about it."

But Elena only wept on and Francisca left her for more imperative duties.

The next day the girl still refused to eat, although Doña Jacoba opened her mouth and poured a cup of chocolate down her throat. Late in the afternoon Santiago slipped into the room and bent over her.

"Elena," he whispered, hurriedly. "Look! I have a note for thee."

Elena sat upright on the bed and he thrust a piece of folded paper into her hand. "Here it is. He is in San Luis Obispo, and says he will stay there—remember, it is but a few miles away, my——"

Elena sank back with a cry and Santiago blasphemed in English. Doña Jacoba unlocked her daughter's hand and took the note and led Santiago from the room. When she reached her own, she opened a drawer and handed him a canvas bag full of gold.

"Go to San Francisco and enjoy thyself," she said. "Interfere no further between thy sister and thy parents, unless thou preferrest that *reata* to gold. Thy craft cannot outwit mine, and she will read no notes. Thou art a foolish boy to set thy sense against thy mother's. I may seem harsh to my children, but I strive on my knees for their good. And when I have made up my mind that a thing is right to do, thou knowest that my nature is of iron. No child of mine shall marry a lazy vagabond who can do nothing but lie in a hammock and bet and gamble and make love. And a half-breed! Mother of God! Now go to San Francisco and send for more money when this is gone."

Santiago obeyed. There was nothing else for him to do.

Elena lay in her bed, scarcely touching food. Poor child! her nature demanded nothing of life but love and, that denied her, she could find no reason for living. She was not sport-loving like Joaquin, nor practical like Francisca, nor learned like Santiago, nor ambitious to dance through life like her many nieces. She was but a clinging, unreasoning creature, with hot blood and a great heart. But she no longer prayed to have Dario given her. It seemed to her that after such suffering her saddened nature would cast its shadows over her happiest moments, and she longed only for death.

Her mother, becoming alarmed at her increasing weakness, called in an old woman who had been midwife and doctor of the county for half a century. She came, a bent and bony woman who must have been majestic in her youth. Her front teeth were gone, her face was stained with dark splashes like the imprint of a pre-natal hand. Over her head she wore a black shawl, and she looked enough like a witch to frighten her patients into eternity had they not been so well used to her. She prodded Elena all over as if the girl were a loaf of bread and her knotted fingers sought a lump of flour in the dough.

"The heart," she said to Doña Jacoba, with sharp emphasis, her back teeth meeting with a click, as if to proclaim their existence. "I have no herbs for that," and she went back to her cabin by the ocean.

That night Elena lifted her head suddenly. From the hill opposite her window came the sweet reverberation of a guitar; then a voice which, though never heard by her in song before, was as unmistakable as if it had serenaded beneath her window every night since she had known Dario Castañares.

“EL ULTIMO ADIOS.

Si dos con el alma
 Se amaron en vida
 Y al fin se separan
 En vida los dos,
 Sabeis que es tan grande
 La pena sentida.
 Que con esa palabra
 Se dicen adios
 Y en esa palabra
 Que breve murmuran,
 Ni verse prometen,
 Ni amrase se juran,
 Que en esa palabra
 Se dicen adios.
 No hey queja mas honda,
 Suspiro mas largo,
 Que aquellas palabras
 Que dicen adios.
 Al fin ha llegado
 La muerte en la vida;
 Al fin para entrambos
 Muramos los dos;
 Al fin ha llegado
 La hora cumplida
 Del última adios.
 Ya nunca en la vida
 Gentil compañera
 Yo nunca volvamos
 A vernos los dos.
 Por eso es tan triste
 Mi accento pose,
 Por eso es tan triste
 El último adios.”

They were dancing downstairs; laughter floated through the open windows. Francisca sang a song of the bull-fight in her strong high voice; the frogs chanted their midnight mass by the creek in the willows, the coyotes howled, the owls hooted. But nothing could drown that message of love. Elena lit a candle and held it at arm's length before the window; she knew that its ray went straight through the curtains to the singer on the hill, for his voice broke suddenly, then swelled forth in passionate

answer. He sat there until dawn singing to her; but the next night he did not come, and Elena knew that she had not been his only auditor.

The week of festivity was over; the bridal pair, the relatives, the guests went away. Quiet would have taken temporary possession of Los Quervos had it not been for the many passing guests lavishly entertained by Don Roberto.

And still Elena lay in her little iron bed, refusing to get out of it, barely eating, growing weaker and thinner every day. At the end of three weeks Doña Jacoba was thoroughly alarmed, and Don Roberto sent Joaquin to San Francisco for a physician.

The man of science came at the end of a week. He asked many questions, and had a long talk with his patient. When he left the sick-room, he found Don Roberto and Doña Jacoba awaiting him in the library. They were ready to accept his word as law, for he was an Englishman and had won high reputation during his short stay in the new country.

He spoke with curt directness. "My dear sir, your child is dying because she does not wish to live. People who write novels call it dying of a broken heart; but it does not make much difference about the name. Your child is acutely sensitive, and has an extremely delicate constitution—predisposition to consumption. Separation from the young man she desires to marry has prostrated her to such an extent, that she is practically dying. Under the existing circumstances she will not live two months and, to be brutally frank, you will have killed her. I understand that the young man is well-born on his father's side, and possessed of great wealth. I see no reason why she should not marry him. I shall leave her a tonic, but you can throw it out of the window unless you send for the young man," and he walked down the stair and made ready for his departure.

Don Roberto translated the verdict to his wife. She turned very gray, and her thin lips pressed each other. But she bent her head. "So be it," she said; "I cannot do murder. Send for Dario Castañares."

"And tell him to take her to perdition," roared the old man. "Never let me see her again."

He went down the stair, filled a small bag with gold, and gave it to the doctor. He found Joaquin and bade him go for Dario, then shut himself in a remote room and did not emerge until late that day.

Doña Jacoba sent for the maid, Malia.

"Bring me one of your frocks," she said, "a set of your undergarments, a pair of your shoes and stockings." She walked about the room until the girl's return, her face terrible in its repressed wrath, its gray consciousness of defeat. When Malia came with the garments she told her to follow and went into Elena's room and stood beside the bed.

"Get up," she said. "Dress thyself in thy bridal clothes. Thou art going to marry Dario Castañares to-day."

The girl looked up incredulously, then closed her eyes wearily.

"Get up," said her mother. "The doctor has said that we must let our daughter marry the half-breed, or answer to God for her murder." She turned to the maid. "Malia, go downstairs and make a cup of chocolate and bring it up. Bring, too, a glass of angelica."

But Elena needed neither. She forgot her desire for death, her misgivings of the future; hope gave her strength. She slipped out of bed and would have taken a pair of silk stockings from the chest, but her mother stopped her with an imperious gesture, and handed her the coarse shoes and stockings the maid had brought. She raised her eyes wonderingly, but drew them on her tender feet without complaint. Then her mother gave her the shapeless undergarments, the gaudy calico frock, and she put them on. When the maid returned with the chocolate and wine, she drank both. They gave her color and renewed strength; and as she stood up and faced her mother, she had never looked more beautiful or more queenly in the silken gowns that were hers no longer.

"There are horses' hoofs," said Doña Jacoba. "Leave thy father's house and go to thy lover."

Elena followed her from the room, walking steadily, although she was beginning to tremble a little. As she passed the table in the library, she picked up an old silk handkerchief of her father's and tied it about her head and face. A smile was on her lips, but no joy could ever crowd the sadness from her eyes again. Her spirit was darkened for all time, her nature had come to its own.

They walked through the silent house, and to Elena's memory came the picture of that other bridal when the very air shook with pleasure, and the rooms were jeweled with beautiful faces; but she would not have exchanged her own nuptials for her sister's calm acceptance.

When she reached the veranda she drew herself up and turned to her mother with all that strange old woman's implacable bearing.

"I demand one wedding-present," she said. "The greenhide *reata*, I wish it as a memorial of my mother."

Doña Jacoba, without the quiver of a muscle, walked into her husband's room and returned with the *reata* and handed it to her. Then Elena turned her back upon her father's house and walked down the road through the willows. Dario did not notice the calico frock or the old handkerchief about her head. He bent down and caught her in his arms and kissed her, then lifting her to his saddle, galloped down the road to San Luis Obispo. But Doña Jacoba turned her hard old face to the wall and laid it there.





THE MONALDI

NOCTURNE*

BY JOSEPHINE P. PEABODY

THE Monaldi Nocturne, I will venture to say, is unknown to the general musical public.

That it would occasion some curiosity and not a little criticism if it came to the notice of a connoisseur, is quite probable; but it would hardly meet with the appreciation which is its due as a work of conscientious labor, nor would many guess how great an event its composition was, in one life, at least.

Now it came to be written in this wise.

Antonio Guiseppè Monaldi was copying music by the window. It was very late in the afternoon—a November afternoon—and the twilight, like charity, was beginning to cover a multitude of sins, including the defects in Antonio's penmanship.

Antonio, be it understood, was not a virtuoso, but a boy eleven years old, and as for the music, he was copying that for the German young man on the next floor. These eleven years in the mind of Antonio (or Tony, as his American mamma called him) formed a series of dim and discomfoting recollections, the winters being very disagreeable and the summers even more so.

Tony's father, a poor Italian, had died when Tony was a baby, leaving him nothing but a long name, some cheap tobacco and a tiny silver image of the Madonna—on a brass chain. Tony's mother was a patient, tired-looking woman, who spent half of her time, when she was not washing clothes, wondering how she had ever happened to marry Monaldi,—and the other half teaching Tony to read and write.

That she performed the latter part quite creditably was proved

* Written for Short Stories. Illustrations by Abby E. Underwood.—Copyrighted.

by the fact that Tony, at the age of nine, had presented her with a paper bearing the inscription, "I Must Always Love My Mother." He had begun each word with a capital to show more clearly his accomplishment in that direction.

But Tony's mother was ill to-day,—ill with something that had an unpleasant-sounding name, and Tony was to share Karl Lanzberg's room, on the floor below.

If it had not been for the German young man, Karl Lanzberg, what would he have done? Karl had come as a revelation to



him months before. A grown-up man was he, twenty-one years old, at least; and he could play on the violin wonderfully. He taught people the piano, too, when he could. He had even taught Tony himself until the little old instrument he brought when he came, disappeared mysteriously from the tenement. He wrote terribly long "pieces," which he got Tony to copy for him sometimes, since he had discovered the boy to be one of quick intelligence and observant industry.

Just now, while Tony was scratching "Ped.——" "Ped.——" "Ped." throughout his work, interspersing these directions with stars, as Karl had done, he meditated upon the improvement that had taken place in his life since the young musician had come to live on the second floor.

Under the influence of his remarks Tony's eyes had been opened to some of the possibilities as well as the evils of existence.

With that precocity which poverty sometimes causes, the little fellow grew to believe that he might be great some day. (This was the chief possibility.) On the other hand, he had learned . . . that the painted Indian maiden who guarded the tobacco-shop next door, was not a thing of beauty; and he felt a secret shame as he looked out of the window upon her and remembered that he had once admired her terra-cotta cheeks.

Just as he laid down his pen, in the twilight, a weak-voiced hand-organ began to drone its monotonous complaint in the street below. Tony listened scornfully.

"*That!* That is not music," he said aloud, out of the superior knowledge gathered from Karl. "That is done with a crank, and it is not a good tune, besides. It is a whine. I could make a much better one,—I, by myself."

Thus did Tony first assume the obligations of composition. He had never thought seriously of being a composer, before. With those words, a new idea rose before him, dim and beautiful. He loved music,—of course. He had even, long ago, before Karl came, listened to this selfsame hand-organ with respectful curiosity. Karl had praised his first efforts on that piano which had been banished from some strange necessity.

What if he, Tony, could be a real musician some day and earn money? It seemed to him a very easy life, pleasanter than most. It seemed to involve teaching one or two young women to play; it also involved writing a great amount of music and taking it to a large printing-place, to a man who always sent it back parceled very neatly.

While Tony was cogitating thus, Karl walked into the room hurriedly. His thin face was flushed and happy, his dreamy eyes alight.

"Ach, the good boy!" he cried, cheerily, "and he has done all this? So much? It is goot—very goot," he added, scanning Tony's work, which had improved in certainty, including the execution of G clefs.

"That man—did he want your music, Karl?" inquired the boy, instinctively feeling that the change in his friend's manner was due to some miracle in connection with the publisher.

"Ja," answered Lanzberg. "Yes, Tonee, and he has paid for it, moreover. And besides this goot thing, I begin to hope. Ach, yes! I shall not alway be here."

"Going away?" hesitated Tony.

"Some joy-bringing day," said Karl. "Come now, with me. You cannot see the mother to-day. We shall eat together, we two."

Antonio Guiseppè Monaldi listened to his friend's music that evening with even closer attention than usual. He was thinking not only of the melody, but of the connection between the sounds he loved and the multitudinous notes he was wont to copy for Karl on paper. He had learned to read a little while the piano yet abode there and, on this evening, he listened quite critically, as became an embryonic composer. He drank eagerly the tones which his friend's inspired bow drew from the

violin, and reflected that he had never played so happily before.

Those little laughter-notes that struck a thrill of mirth through him, singing hope always ; those dreamy phrases that said plainly : "Once, long ago, oh, very long ago—one forgets when—it was cold and dark. For the cold and the dark and hunger always go together. . . . But that was very long ago! . . ."

The violin laughed a little, softly to itself, and Tony distinctly heard it murmur, "Ach!" in dreamy retrospection. Then came such a song—a song of days to come and of the country, where there were no signs that said, "Keep off the grass"; such a place as Tony intended to take his mother to, just as soon as she recovered from that illness. Tony had heard the Old Lady on the First Floor say that it was this tenement that had made her sick, although, why living in a particular place should make anyone ill, was more than Tony understood. He reflected that it must be the cause of his headache, however ; he had lived there so long. . . .

Karl, looking at the child's wide eyes and flushed cheeks, laughed a little and stood absently humming for a moment.

The light died out of his face ; the old, weary lines settled about his young mouth ; he drew a sharp breath. Then, seeing the dumb anxiety with which Tony was regarding him, he said, gently, "Have I frightened thee? Listen then," and drew his bow softly over the strings again.

That which he played was very low, and oh, how sweet ! But there was such a sadness in it that Tony felt suddenly very hungry and undersized and thought of his mother downstairs. Those



cold little shivers that shook the melody sometimes, too, made his throat ache. . . .

"What was it, Karl?" he asked, when Karl laid down the violin; and Karl smiled slowly and said "A Nocturne."

Tony had heard of such things as Chopin nocturnes very often. He had also heard Karl speak of Bach fugues and Palestrina. But what manner of composition a fugue might be he had no idea, whereas the word "nocturne" conveyed a distinct impression to his mind.

"I will write a nocturne," he said softly that night, while Karl was out. He stood, pressing his face against the chilly pane and trying to catch sight of the one visible star.

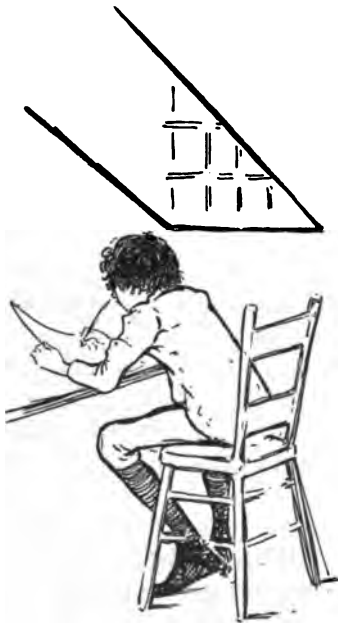
This nocturne should sound just as the dark made him feel—lonesome and rather achy that evening; and he decided that it should have some shivers in it, if he could possibly put them there. He hummed desperately for a few moments a dreary little air which he had thought of in the afternoon.

As soon as Karl had left him, next day, he fell to work. He hummed over the notes which had come to him and thought of more.

From his experience with Karl's old piano and his observations since, he had discovered that when one reached the end of a melody, it was a good idea to go on for several measures with something different or nothing in particular, and at last to come back to the melody again. "Something different," he repeated, "or nothing special. . ."

He chose the latter plan, as it was less of a drain upon his newly-found inventive powers, and in the course of an hour he felt that he was ready to commit his work to paper. This was

the hardest part, Tony thought, as he sat down at the table, having spread thereon one of Karl's manuscripts and a fresh sheet of music-paper. He made a wonderful clef to start with, and encouraged by its elegance he hastened on with the F clef



and a brace. Some time elapsed before the notes appeared, since Tony was obliged to think hard and count the lines and spaces carefully before he could write any of them; but as this nocturne consisted chiefly of repetitions it was easy enough to copy those notes, and the task was at length accomplished.

To overcome difficulties in the time he consulted all of Karl's music in search of similar circumstances. His methods of making rests he took from Karl's copy; and liking the appearance of long curved lines here and there over the notes he scattered several throughout his composition.

After meditating the plan of having "shivers" in it, he reluctantly gave it up as an impracticable one; for, after all, one could not tell just how to make them or where to put them or whether they should point up or down, and besides this, people might find some difficulty in playing them. Tony resolved to be considerate.

Before noon he ran down-stairs in a state of great excitement to see the Old Lady on the First Floor. She liked Antonio and had sometimes coaxed him into her room where he sat, very shy and uncomfortable, staring at the little old melodeon which she would not relinquish, even in this abode, because a daughter of hers had played on it in some bygone golden day.

Having astonished the Old Lady by requesting that he might be allowed to play on her "queer little pianner," Tony marched into the room and, with a beating heart, perched on a chair before the instrument, to try his nocturne.

He discovered that a melodeon, especially a very old one, is a strange thing. It would not sing at all. He pressed the keys heavily; not a sound came.

At this unexpected reception of the nocturne, Tony turned to look at the Old Lady for an explanation. She sat comfortably nodding and smiling at him.

"It won't go," said Tony.

"You hev ter put your feet to it, I guess. . . . My darter used ter," she explained.

Tony wondered upon what portion of its time-worn frame he was to place his feet. He noticed a small strip of green carpet suggestively worn. He rested both feet upon it and nearly slid from his seat when this carpet gave way unexpectedly. Tony



touched the first note, cautiously; it mewed piteously, and there was a disheartening silence until the next note came. Tony was disturbed, but for all that, when he had played laboriously the whole of it, and repeated it again and again, he was a proud and happy boy.

He put some notes in the bass this time, and wrote them with a pencil on his manuscript; and when the Old Lady, who sat nodding at him, said, "Sweet, pretty," he rose to depart, feeling quite professional.



During luncheon with Karl, and until the latter had left him, he maintained absolute silence concerning his work. He would not tell anyone just yet. But as

soon as he was alone, he fell to work again. The manuscript was quickly copied and those bass notes added. It seemed to Tony that there were few of them, but he reflected that no one can do as much with his left hand as with his right, unless, indeed, he be left-handed.

The whole composition seemed astonishingly short now that it was finished;—it only occupied a few bars.

But Tony wrote "Nocturne" heavily above it, and feeling the lack of something in the upper left-hand corner—something ending in *oso*, he found on referring to his guide, and he inscribed the word "*Maestoso*" there, and rose, with burning cheeks.

Finished at last! How beautiful it looked! How black the notes were! (The blank spaces made it look as if he had done it all quickly,—easily!) How promising those G clefs were, and the "ff" in the centre! All his own, too! . . . And some day he would be famous, and people would play this and say: "What! Don't you know this! It's the *Monaldi Nocturne*!"

Tony snatched his hat and his music and ran down-stairs. He knew where the publisher lived. He had been there often with Karl. He, too, would have a violin and a piano some day; he would take his mother



away to the country, where she would get well; he would make a fortune. They would never come back to this house—this house that made people's heads ache.

As he was passing the Old Lady's door, she came out into the hall suddenly, shook her head at Tony and then kissed him emphatically.

Something in her manner gave the child a sudden chill of dread.

"Poor little thing," she said, quaveringly. "Lying dying."

Tony knew that she was speaking of his mother, and in a certain terror and desperation he ran down the steps as fast as his legs would carry him.

The word "dying" conveyed to him a new, strange impression of horror, but he felt that if he could only sell his nocturne and take his mother away, he could keep this phantom at bay.

Yes, yes—the nocturne would end all their troubles; there would be no more illness—no hunger—no—

He had reached the publisher's abode, and straight to the publisher he ran, breaking in upon that gentleman's reverie and



holding out to him the sheet of paper—forgetting even to be shy in this new terror. "Mine," Tony gasped, "it's mine!"

The publisher looked at him, then at the paper, laughed a great deal and then frowned.

Tony was staring at him in blank-eyed unhappiness. He knew very well that he had never intended the nocturne to be funny. He was struck dumb with bitter amazement.

"Take it away," said the man. "I am very busy, don't interrupt me."

Tony grasped the paper and then suddenly sobbed aloud in the anguish of his overcharged soul.

"Mother?" questioned the publisher, not unkindly. "What's the matter?"

"Dip—dip——"

"Diphtheria?" prompted the busy man. "Here; run along

now," and, handing him a dime, he pushed the broken-hearted composer from his sanctum.

Karl Lanzberg, coming home at dusk, found the child crouching by the window, in his own room, feverish and half-delirious. The Monaldi Nocturne had failed to accomplish its mission, for



Tony's mother was dead and the boy himself had symptoms of the mysterious illness with the unpleasant name.

The Old Lady who owned the melodeon and who had praised Tony's composition, was the only one who could have told Karl anything about that effort; but such old ladies forget quite easily, and the little composer that week took a very long journey indeed,—and never came back to tell Karl about it.

But it came to pass, by the irony of Fate, that one day, years after, when Karl Lanzberg had become a famous musician and had died, the following paragraph appeared in a newspaper:

"Among the manuscripts of the late celebrated Karl Lanzberg was discovered a hastily-penned fragment, evidently embodying the *motif* for a nocturne.

"Most of the notes were merely indicated, and the whole was suggestive of a vague musical idea, carelessly expressed; but the relic was of great interest as an unknown sketch by so great an artist. It was sold at auction with the rest, for a large sum, and the proceeds of the sale were sent by the trustees to the Fresh Air Fund of this city."



THE ST. BERNARD MYTH *

BY W. L. ALDEN

Author of "A Lost Soul," "Adventures of Jimmy Brown," Etc.

SOME one had told a dog-story showing the miraculous intelligence and profound piety of a French poodle. The Colonel listened with an incredulous smile on his grim face. When the story was ended and we had all expressed our surprise and admiration, as is the custom when dog-stories are told, and had carefully suppressed our conviction that the man who told the story was as impudent as he was mendacious,—as is also the custom of these occasions,—I asked the Colonel to favor us with his views in regard to canine sagacity.

"There are dogs that show signs of good sense now and then," he replied. "Even human beings do that occasionally. But as to these yarns about dogs who calculate eclipses and have conscientious objections to chasing cats on Sunday, I don't believe a word of them. Talk about fish-stories! Why, there isn't a fish caught or uncaught that can begin to stimulate the imagination to the extent that a dog will stimulate it. I have known fishermen who could convert two minnows into a string of thirty trout, averaging two pounds each, and I have seen these men slink away crestfallen before a man who told stories of what his fox-terrier had done the day before. What I don't understand is why people pretend to believe dog-stories. We all know that the dog is a well-meaning, stupid, parish-vestry sort of an animal, but we listen to the thumpers that some men tell about him without even a cough.

"Look at the lies that have been told for the last hundred years about the St. Bernard dogs! People really believe that, when a snowstorm comes on, the St. Bernard dog goes out with a blanket, a flask of whiskey, a spirit-lamp, a box of matches, some mustard plasters, and a foot-bath strapped on his back. When he meets a frozen traveller we are told that he sits down and lights his spirit-lamp, mixes some hot whiskey and pours it

* From "Told By The Colonel."—J. Selwyn Tait & Sons, New York, Publishers.

down the traveller's throat; gives him a hot footbath, puts mustard plasters on the soles of his feet, rubs him down and wraps him up in the blanket, and then hoists him on his back and brings him to the convent, where the monks put him to bed and read prayers to him till he feels strong enough to put some money in the contribution-box and to continue his journey. Now, I've been to the St. Bernard convent. I went there just to meet one of these dogs and see for myself what he could do. There was a pack of about forty of them, but the only thing they did was to sit up all night and bark at the moon, while the monks shied prayer-books and wooden sandals at them out of the windows. I wanted to see a few travellers rescued from the snow, but the monks said the supply of travellers had been running low of late years; still, they added, if I'd go and sleep in a snow-bank a mile or two from the convent, they would see what could be done. I wasn't going to risk the forfeiture of my life-insurance policy by any such foolishness as that, so I came away without seeing any dog-performance. However, I saw enough, a little later on, to convince me that the St. Bernard dog is about the biggest kind of canine fool that ever imposed on credulous people.

"The monks had a whole penful of genuine St. Bernard puppies, and I bought one. I am ashamed to tell you how much I paid for it. I could hire an army mule to kick me every time I think of the transaction. I took the puppy to the States with me—I was living at New Berlinopolisville, in the State of Iowa, at the time—and brought him up as carefully as if he had been my own son. He grew to be a big, rough-haired dog—one of the biggest I ever saw. And I can't say the monks cheated me in respect to his breed. Of course it was all a matter of luck that he didn't turn out to be a poodle or a black-and-tan terrier. The fact is that no man or monk knows what one of those pure-blooded St. Bernard pups that are sold at the convent will turn out to be when he gets his growth. He is liable to be anything in the line of a dog, from a yellow cur up to a Siberian bloodhound. I once knew a man who bought a St. Bernard pup from one of the very holiest of the entire gang of monks, and that puppy grew up to be a red fox. But you all know of the St. Bernard puppy lottery, and I won't take up your time commenting on it.

"The monks told me that the puppy would not need the least training. His instinct was so wonderful that the moment he

should catch a glimpse of snow on the ground he would rush off to rescue travellers. 'You just load him up with blankets and things,' said the monk, 'and send him out in the snow, and he'll rescue travellers till you can't rest.' The dog was nearly a year old before I had a chance to try his powers, but one November we had a regular blizzard, and when the snow quit falling it was at least two feet deep on a level, not to speak of the drifts.

"After breakfast I tied a whiskey-flask around the dog's neck and put a blanket on his back, and told him to go out and begin his blessed work of mercy. I was alone in the house at the time, for my wife had gone on a visit to her mother and the cook had got herself arrested for being drunk and disorderly, so there was no one to make any objection to the use of one of my wife's best blankets. The dog barked with delight when he saw the snow, and rolled in it for a few moments just so as to get the blanket good and wet, and then he started down the street at a gallop. I lived something more than a mile from the village, and there were no houses nearer than half a mile, and as the dog took the road leading away from the village, I did not think that he would stand much chance of picking up any travellers. He didn't return until noon, and then he didn't bring anybody home on his back. He did, however, bring six tramps with him, three of whom were pretty drunk, they having drank all the whiskey in the flask. The other three said that the dog had promised them a drink if they would follow him, and they hoped I would be as good as the dog's word. As I wasn't armed and as the tramps carried big sticks and evidently meant business, I judged it best to sustain the dog's character for veracity and get rid of them peaceably. They went away after wrestling with a pint of good whiskey, and all the time that idiotic dog was wagging his tail as if he deserved the Humane Society's medal, instead of deserving a thrashing for trying to rescue tramps when nature had taken the trouble to furnish a blizzard expressly to thin them out.

"I explained to the dog with my riding whip the view that he must take of tramps in the future, and then I sent him out again, after filling up his whiskey-flask and giving him another blanket in the place of the one that the tramps had stolen. I told him that in the future I should prefer to have him rescue women and children, especially the latter, and that if he found a frozen male traveller, he had better confine himself to giving information to the police, instead of lavishing whiskey on possibly undeserving

people. He went off, somewhat humbled, but still in excellent spirits, and in a short time rushed up my front steps, dropped something on the door-mat and rushed off again. At first I thought that the idiot had been rescuing somebody's linen that had been hung out to dry, but when the linen began to make remarks in a loud voice, I found that it was a particularly lively baby.

"Of course I couldn't let the little innocent lie and freeze on my doorstep, so I brought it into the house and did my best to quiet it. As I had never had much experience with babies, I found myself in a pretty tight place. I had no milk to give the baby, so I mixed a little flour and water till it looked like milk and got a little of it down the baby's throat. Then I shook it on my knee till it dropped asleep. I put it in my bed, intending to go out and find some woman who would come and attend to it, when I heard the dog barking and, on opening the door, saw his tail disappearing down the street, and saw that he had left another infant on the door-mat.

"The first baby was a saint in comparison with this one, which was a sort of infantile tramp in appearance and was as noisy as it was dirty. It would not have anything to do with flour and water, and though I shook it on my knee till I must have loosened all its organs, it refused to go to sleep. So I finally gave it a rubber overshoe to bite on, and put it in a bureau drawer in the spare room and told it to howl its head off if it felt that such was its duty toward mankind. Then I started a second time to search for a woman, and I nearly fell over a third baby on the doorstep. That infernal dog had brought it while I was struggling with the infantile tramp, and he was now off searching for more infants. I wrapped this one up in a blanket and sat down on the doorstep with it, resolved to wait till that dog came back and to lock him up till I could get enough babies off my hands to give me a chance to kill him. I was bound not to miss him, for if I did he would probably keep on till he had brought me all the babies in the country. This baby was the best of the lot, for it slept in my arms without saying a word or expressing the slightest desire to be shaken. In about twenty minutes the dog reappeared with another invoice of babies. This time he brought a brace of twins, as nearly as I could judge, but it was his last exploit that day. I got him by the collar before he could start out again and locked him up in the cellar. The babies I put in a heap in a big clothes-basket that they could not climb

out of, and left them to have a crying-match for the championship till I could find a nurse.

"I didn't have as much trouble in that matter as I had anticipated, for before I could get out of the house some one rang the front-door bell and pounded and yelled as if it were a matter of life and death that the door should be opened instantly. I opened it, and there was a woman who called me every name she could lay her tongue to, and wanted me to give her back her baby instantly. I showed her the babies and told her to take her choice. In fact, I begged her to take away the whole lot, but she said I was worse than a murderer, and after selecting one of the least desirable of the babies, she rushed off with it, promising to send me a policeman immediately. I had never expressed the least desire to see a policeman, but such is female gratitude! I had offered that woman five babies, free, gratis, and for nothing, and instead of being grateful she wanted to get me into trouble.

"I had still four babies on my hands, and as they were now all awake and making all the noise they knew how to make, I put them all in the clothes-basket together, so they could enjoy one another's society. It wasn't a bad plan, and I recommend it to any mother with a noisy pair of twins; as it is certain to reduce the noise by one-half. Two of my babies were so occupied with putting their fingers in the other babies' eyes and in investigating their hair that they had no time to cry. I admit that the two who were undergoing investigation did their best to make a riot, but even then there was only half as much noise as there would have been had the other two joined the concert.

"I thought it so probable that the mother who had visited me was only the first of a procession of mothers, that I gave up the idea of going out to look for a nurse, and stayed at home to receive the mothers politely. It was not long before one presented herself. She was an Irishwoman and the only sensible one of the lot. When she saw that her baby was safe and contented and had a good grip on the hair of a black-eyed baby, she sat down and laughed, and said that she never saw anything so sweet before. According to her account, she lived about a mile from my house, and she was standing at her front-door looking at the landscape when the dog bounded in, caught up the baby out of the cradle, and carried it off. At first she thought the dog was the devil, but presently she remembered that the devil's time was too much occupied with Irish affairs to permit him to steal

babies in Iowa, so she followed the dog as rapidly as she could make her way through the snow. She tracked him by the prints of his paws until she came to my door and instead of calling me a kidnapper and talking about the police, she was full of pity for me, and volunteered to stay and take care of the whole menagerie until the last of the babies should be called for and taken away.

"The remaining mothers arrived in the course of an hour. I locked myself in the top of the house and left the Irishwoman to explain things. As I afterwards learned, the intelligent dog had knocked two women down in the street and stolen their babies out of their arms, and had also broken into two houses, in the last one of which he had bagged his brace of twins. All the mothers, except the Irishwoman, were as unreasonable as they could possibly be. They insisted that I deliberately trained dogs to steal babies; and they had no doubt that my object in stealing them was to vivisect them. As for the dog, they were convinced that he was mad, and that their babies would be sure to die of hydrophobia. Two of the women brought their husbands with them, who asked to see me, explaining that they desired to blow my head off. The Irishwoman nobly lied to them, telling them that she had driven me out of the house with a club, and that I was on my way to Chicago, and far out of reach. The mothers and their husbands went away at last, and as soon as it was dark I stole out of the back-door and took the first train for St. Paul. I didn't show myself in New Berlinopolisville for the next year.

"What became of the dog? Oh! I forgot to say that the Irishwoman promised to take care of him and to cure him of his passion for babies. I am sorry to say that she did not succeed. She kept him tied up for six weeks; but one day he broke loose and captured a baby out of a baby-wagon in the park. But the baby's father happened to be with it, and he was one of the best pistol-shots in town, having been a judge of the Montana Supreme Court. He got the drop on the dog before the beast had gone ten feet away with the baby; and though they afterwards had to pry the dog's jaws open in order to get the baby loose, no harm was done to the latter. I settled all the lawsuits without letting them go to trial, although it cost me considerable, and I finally judged it best to remove to another State.

"Now, I suppose that some one will be enough of an idiot to repeat this story, with variations, as a proof of the wonderful

intelligence of the St. Bernard dog. If it is intelligence that leads a dog to steal other people's babies and dump them on a respectable man, I'd like to see what idiocy would do for such a dog. No, sir, depend upon it, the stories about St. Bernard dogs are invented by the monks, after stimulating their minds by reading the 'Lives of the Saints' and by going trout-fishing. Probably the monks have gradually brought themselves to believe most of the stories. They look like a credulous set of people; and I should rather like to try them with a good American political speech, full of campaign statistics, and see if they could believe it. I shouldn't be in the least surprised if they could."



SUNSHINE JOHNSON, MURDERER *

BY LUKE SHARP



BEING the two men together and knowing that one of them was a murderer, there was one chance in a thousand that the visitor would pick out the right man as the criminal. The white man sat on an easy canvas camp-chair. He was a tall, thin man, with a stern, forbidding look on his face that might have been caused by remorse, but which, more probably, was caused by dyspepsia. There were certain inflexible lines about his mouth which showed him to be a man of great determination, and his firm-set lips were lips that appeared never to smile. His sharp eyes had a clear and steady look in them that went through a man, and few of those around him cared to meet those eyes when there was a spark of anger in them. He was such an unerring judge of character that he had come to believe he could not make a mistake, which is a dangerous state of thinking for a man in his position, because a mistake made by him might mean death to somebody. Nevertheless, he trusted people that no one else would think of trusting, and his trust was rarely taken advantage of. This man was J. S. Flint, the head of Tall Mountain Penitentiary.

The black man who stood beside him, and who was receiving some instructions from him, had the simple, trustful, child-like face which is so often found in the negro race. He seemed to have difficulty in keeping his broad mouth from relaxing into a smile; and only the fact that he was talking with the Master of the Penitentiary kept down his exuberant good nature. No convict would take the liberty to smile while Jackson Flint talked to him, but this negro was a privileged character even if he wore the striped suit of an inmate of the Penitentiary. He was Sunshine Johnson, in for life, a murderer, yet on his arm rested Jackson Flint's little curly-headed daughter, aged six, and her

* From "Tavistock Tales." J. Selwyn Tait & Sons, N. Y., Publishers.

arms were round the negro's black neck and her fair cheek was pressed close to his dusky face. The murderer was one of the convicts that Jackson Flint trusted. He had certainly an easy time of it; he waited on the table, took care of the children and did any odd job about the house. The negro was called "Sunshine" by every one around the camp. Doubtless he had not been christened that name, but he had been called by it before he entered the Penitentiary, and by that name he was known on the books of the institution. If a visitor, attracted by his name or his beaming countenance, so full of good nature and love of all humanity, asked the Superintendent who he was, Flint's brows would knit together in a frown as he answered, shortly, "A lifer;" if the visitor still pressed for information as to his crime, the frown grew deeper and the answer gruffer—"A murderer." Most people gave a gasp at this bit of information as they saw the negro playing with the pretty child of the Superintendent; but Jackson Flint was not a man anyone would care to ask personal questions of, and if the astonishing state of things caused a look of surprise to come over the visitor's face, the look was seldom translated into speech. Sometimes the inquisitive visitor sought information from Sunshine himself. When asked about his crime Sunshine always looked embarrassed and generally cast an appealing glance at the questioner. He stood on one bare foot and slowly rubbed the ankle of it with the toe of his other foot, while a look of perplexity came over his countenance.

"Foh de Lohd, boss, I dunno much about it, dat's de truf. I 'spects I killed de man. He's daed anyhow, and somebody done it, and dey said it was me; yes, dey proved dat at de Cohts. You see I was drunk at the time, and I dunno anything at all about it. 'Spects dat's de reason dey didn't hang me at the time. I'se very sorry I done it if I *did* do it." And then Sunshine would make an excuse to run away and play with his little charge.

The Penitentiary was little more than a camp composed of rough wooden buildings, and was situated on a spur of the mountain overlooking the great, deep valley, from the bottom of which the turbulent little river sent up an unceasing roar. All around were the high peaks of the mountain range, closing the place in apparently without a break, although there was an unseen, narrow, rocky gorge through which the river escaped, and along whose banks the single line of railway track ran. The mountains all around were densely wooded, and not a building

was in sight anywhere, except a large hotel at the bottom of the valley, which was a sort of summer resort, with broad verandas. The eternal silence of its location was broken only by the brawling river that ran beside it, and by the occasional trains which passed close to the hotel, as part of the big house was a station on the line. Passengers on the railway coming to this hotel, when they first caught sight of it, away down in the valley below them, generally made a motion to get their small bits of baggage together, preparatory to leaving, but the conductor used to say to them, good naturedly :

“ We are not quite there yet ; I wouldn't make a move for a minute or two if I were you ; just watch that hotel.”

Then, looking out of the car window into this incomparably grand valley, the passenger found himself taken round and round the circumference of the great gulf. Now the hotel was directly below him, again he was looking at it from across the valley ; round and round the train went, getting gradually lower and lower, and it was nearly an hour after the passengers' first sight of the hotel that the train drew up under its very verandas.

The convict settlement on the spur of the mountain was invisible from the railway track, but the convicts were there because the railway was there. They were hired out to the railway company by the State Government, and as the train dashed by, sometimes the passengers were shocked to see, standing close in by the cliffs beside the tracks, twenty or thirty black men in convict garments, some with ball and chain attached to their ankles. And then, as the train flashed on, white men with rifles on their shoulders were seen guarding the workers on the railway. Nevertheless, if a man had his choice of his prison, this particular convict camp would be likely to be the one chosen, if he knew about it. It had a glorious situation, the air was pure and clear, so much so, that the locality was one of the noted health resorts of America. A visitor was generally astonished when he examined the camp to find what little difficulty a convict would have in escaping from it. Here and there were tall board erections, on which a man was stationed with a rifle or shot-gun. There was no wall around the camp, its only protection being a small picket-fence, easily leaped over. But Nature guarded the prisoners. On almost every side the descent was steep and even precipitous, but a convict would run no danger for life or limb in making the descent. But although a convict might easily have leaped the slender barrier, and might have dodged the

shots from the men on the wooden towers, his escape was next thing to hopeless; he had to climb over the mountain to get away, and a telegraph station in the convict settlement quickly apprised all civilization outside this wilderness that such and such a man had escaped. The usual result of an attempt to escape was that a week or ten days after the leap over the barrier a gaunt, starved man came out of the wilderness and gave himself up at the first place where he could get something to eat. Often he failed in scaling the mountain and returned after a few days to the camp itself. The very frailty of the fence around the camp showed the utter hopelessness of attempting to escape.

On the particular day in summer to which this account relates there had been a furious storm of rain in the mountains. The clouds seemed to have become entangled among the peaks, and they hung over the valley, unable, like the prisoners, to escape, and poured their floods into it until the little river had become a wild and raving torrent, gleaming here and there in white among the dark trees. Towards night the clouds succeeded in breaking away and floated over to the west, but the mutter of distant thunder showed that the storm was not yet over, while the heat seemed more oppressive than ever even after the terrible day's rain. When darkness set in, the watery, silvery sickle of the moon hung over the valley and filled it with a weird, dim, tremulous light. The roar of the torrent, increased by the stillness all around, came up from the bottom of the valley on the night air.

The Master of the Penitentiary sat in a rocking-chair on the veranda of his wooden house, smoking his corn-cob pipe. What little coolness there was, was outside and not inside the house. Suddenly a burst of childish laughter broke on his ear, and looking to the left he saw his little girl lashing Sunshine Johnson as if he were a horse, while that good-natured individual trotted up and down with the child on his shoulders.

"Sunshine," cried the master, "what are you doing with Dorothy out so late as this?"

The negro came to an instant stop at the sound of the master's voice, and the child even hushed its laughter. Little Dorothy was much more afraid of her stern father than of the good-natured murderer.

"Well, you see, massa, it's like this," said the negro, deferentially. "Little Dot had to be in de house all de day on account of de rain, sir, and it's so warm inside dat her mother *she* thought we cud play a little before she goes to bed, and den little Dot,

sir, *she* thought she'd like to ax you, sir, if she might stay up and see de midnight express."

"The midnight express, nonsense!" cried Flint. "Dorothy, you don't want to stay up so late as that?"

The little girl made no answer, but clung tighter with alarm around the negro's neck and whispered into his ear.

"She'd like very much to stay up, sah; she hasn't seen it for a long time. I don't think it would do her any harm, sah."

"Oh, she's whispered that to you, has she?"

The negro laughed a little and then checked himself. "Well, massa, I don't think it would do her any harm, sah; you see it's so warm dat de little gall she couldn't sleep at night, anyway, and perhaps after she sees de train den she goes to sleep, sah."

"Oh, very well," said Flint, "if her mother said it's all right, it *is* all right."

And then he took to smoking again, and perhaps wondered why it was that his little girl preferred to whisper her request in the negro's ear rather than to speak it out to him. But a man who has charge of a hundred desperate convicts is apt to lose that softness of demeanor which commends itself to children. The midnight express, he knew, was a great sight to see on a dark night. The train appeared with its long row of lights from out a tunnel, and passing by the convict settlement, disappeared among the trees and through another tunnel. It came in sight again on the other side of the valley, its long line of lights appearing to crawl slowly around the mountain, while the roar of the train mingled with the roar of the torrent below. Thus it appeared and disappeared at different intervals and at different levels, sometimes going in one direction and sometimes in another, but always getting farther and farther down, like an enchanted train that had become entangled in the mountain slopes. It was alternately a row of lights and a roar, then darkness and silence, until it stopped at the station at the bottom of the valley and with a final shriek of the whistle, that echoed long after the train had gone, disappeared through the notch into the more open country beyond on its way to the Atlantic seaboard, which it would reach the next morning.

It was really the time for the train when Jackson Flint was startled by a cry from his child. What he saw the next moment simply paralyzed him for the time. Sunshine Johnson had picked up a lantern which stood on the platform in front of his

quarters, and shouting to Dorothy, "*Run in de house, honey ; run in de house!*" leaped the fence and made off into the woods.

The little girl clung to the palings of the fence and cried for her comrade. The clear voice of Jackson Flint startled everyone in the camp :

"Come back, you black scoundrel ; where are you going ?"

A wave of the lantern was the only reply.

Then Flint quickly put his hand to his hip and drew his seven-shooter. The sharp crack of the revolver clove the midnight air.

"Run in de house, honey ; run in de house," repeated the negro, at the top of his voice.

And then the master noticed that his little, crying, curly-headed girl stood in a line between him and the escaping convict.

As a general thing Flint was an unerring shot ; but now his hand trembled as he fired over his little girl's head six times, and then threw the empty revolver on the ground. Every time he fired, the rapidly disappearing negro swung the lantern over his head.

Flint shouted to the sleeping guards on the towers :

"Why don't you fire? Fire at him with the shot-gun." Flint clinched his teeth and awaited the result. His command had been practically a sentence of death, and he knew it. The rifle sends one pellet of death, the shot-gun sends a dozen leaden messengers, each shrieking for a life.

Three men on the towers fired almost simultaneously from the shot-guns, whose scattering fire raked and tore through the bushes. Again the negro swung the lantern over his head, but this time there was a shriek of pain from him, although he never stopped in his headlong career, and the next instant was out of sight and hearing.

All the convicts had long ago been locked up in their quarters, and most of the officials had turned in, but now pale-faced men came hurrying up to the master. The Assistant-Superintendent hurried forward, partially dressed, and said to his chief :

"Anything wrong, sir ?"

"Yes."

"Anyone escaped ?"

"Yes."

"Who is it, sir ?"

"Johnson."

"Not Sunshine?" said the Assistant, in amazement.

Flint turned on him savagely. "I said Johnson; what other Johnson is there here?" and he glared with clenched fists at his subordinate.

The other did not answer for a moment; then he said: "Shall I turn out the guard and search for him, sir?"

"No, go to bed."

Little Dorothy, silent and frightened at the firing, clung gasping to the paling. Her mother came out and ran towards her, bending over her and trying to calm her fright, satisfying herself that the child was not hurt. With the little girl in her arms, she approached her husband.

"Who was it?" she said, in tremulous tones.

"Take that child in," thundered the Master of the Penitentiary. "What is she doing out at this hour? And get inside yourself."

Mrs. Flint turned without a word, for she knew her husband in this mood had better be left alone. He strode up and down the platform of the veranda muttering to himself. "He is sure to be caught and then——" Flint ground his teeth: and there was no question but it would go hard with the trusted convict when he was caught.

The bitterness of it all was that the whole camp—convicts and guards—knew how he had trusted Sunshine Johnson, and then he had fired at him, and missed him.

After an hour's walking back and forth Flint sat down again in his chair and covered his face with his hands, thinking over the startling events of the night. Suddenly a very soft and low voice made him spring from the chair to his feet.

"Massa Flint," said the voice. Sunshine, with the lantern in his hand, stood before him in a very dejected and crestfallen manner, his clothes torn by the bushes and brambles through which he run.

"You scoundrel!" cried Flint, "what did you do that for?"

"Well, you see, massa," said the negro, apologetically, "you didn't hear it, did you, sah?"

"Hear what?"

"Hear de landslide. I heard it rattle down on de track, and I knew I had to jump if I was to save that express—I saved it though. I 'speck de rain loosened de bank in de new cut; der's a regular mountain of gravel down on de track, sah."

The hard eyes of the master filled with tears, and he placed

both hands on the negro's shoulders, who, like a culprit, gazed on the ground. Flint struggled with his agitation for a moment, but seemed unable to say just what he wanted to say. Finally he spoke commonplace enough: "Then you saved the express, did you, Sunshine?"

The negro looked up. The master had always called him Johnson. "Yes, massa, and de kendorctor he's a-comin'. We need a shovelling gang out dar at onct."

"All right, Sunshine," said Flint. "You go and tell the Sub. to come here at once, and tell him to rout out a gang to clear away the dirt. Say, what's the matter with your arm?"

Sunshine's left arm hung limp by his side, and now that the lantern-flashed upon it, Flint saw blood trickling down his hand. Sunshine looked sheepish and guilty, and scratched his ankle with his bare toe.

"Well, you see, sah, I got hit a little on dat arm when they fired de shot-guns. Don't expect dey fired at me, you see, sah; guess dey wouldn't ah hit me if dey had, dey sort o' fired promiscuous like," he added, as if it were necessary to make an excuse for the men who shot him. "Can't expect very good shooting, you know, for thirteen dollars a month, kin you?"

"Go into the house," said Flint. "I will rout out the gang myself, and I'll send the doctor to you at once."

At this moment the conductor with a lantern hanging from his elbow, and a brakeman, clambered up from the track into the convict camp. The conductor was a jovial fellow who knew Flint.

"Hullo," he said, "what's this you've been doing to us? Been trying to smash up the night express? Say, the whole side of a mountain seems to have come down over the track."

"Well," said Flint, gruffly, "you may be mighty glad you didn't get your train smashed up in it. You would have if it hadn't been for one of my niggers."

"Yes, I know that," said the other, who didn't know, however, the risk the negro had run in order to save the train. "But, say, how soon can we have this cleared away? We've got the Governor of North Carolina on board, and he's as mad as the mischief at the delay. If we had the Governor of South Carolina too, it wouldn't be so bad, because they could ask each other the celebrated question, but you see he's traveling alone in his private car."

Flint was a serious man and did not understand the bibulous

joke connected with the names of the Governors of North and South Carolina, but he pricked up his ears at the mention of that official.

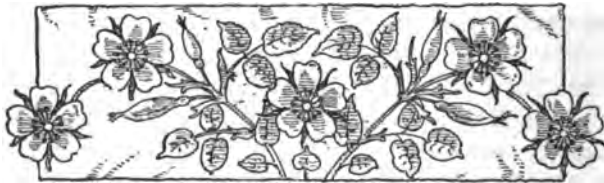
"Oh, he's on board, is he? Well, I'm glad of it. I want him to pardon a lifer."

"Well," said the conductor, scratching his head, "I wouldn't ask him just now if I were you, because he's not in the best of humor."

"I don't think he'll ever be in better humor to do what I want him to than now, because if it hadn't been for my lifer, his private car might be lying down at the bottom of the ravine with him smashed up in it."

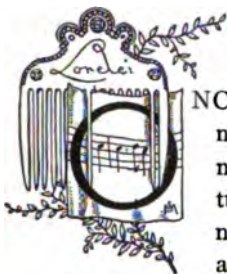
"Oh, that's how the matter stands," said the conductor; "well, I guess the Governor 'll do it."

And the Governor did it.





BY RUDOLF BAUMBACH



ONCE upon a time there was a little boy by the name of Frieder and he had neither father nor mother. The child was pretty as a picture and when he ran about on the street near his home, people would stand still and ask: "To whom does the little boy belong?"

Then the cross old woman who had raised him on thin broths and plentiful scoldings would answer: "He is a good-for-nothing boy and the best thing that could happen to him would be that God would take him away to Heaven." But Frieder was not anxious to go to Heaven yet; he liked it very well down here, and he grew up like the red-capped thistles behind his foster-mother's house. Playmates he had none. While the other boys in the village built mills and let their little boats, made from the bark of some tree, float about in the brook, or while they romped about in the hay, Frieder used to sit on the hillside and mimic the birds.

One day, when thus occupied, he was met by old Claus, a fowler by profession. He was pleased with the pretty lad and made friends with him. From that time on, the two were often seen sitting together peaceably in front of the fowler's hut like two old fellow-soldiers. Claus could not only tell wonderful stories about the forest, but he knew how to play the fiddle and, after he had given Frieder a rickety old violin as a present, he instructed him in the art. The pupil was a great credit to his

* Translated by Fred. J. Taussig, from the German, for Short Stories, and illustrated by F. Schuyler Mathews.—Copyrighted.

master, for, before a month was over, he could play three or four little songs very well. The old fowler felt very much touched by this and he spoke these prophetic words :

“ Frieder, think of me ; if God grants me life, I will yet see you playing first violin Sundays at church.”

When Frieder was fifteen years old the neighbors came together and consulted about him. It was time, they said, for him to study some occupation so as to earn a living, and when they asked him what he wanted to be, he answered : “ A fiddler.” Thereupon the people threw up their hands in dismay at his impudence. But just then there stepped out from the crowd a burly-looking man, who took the lad by the hand and said, with dignity : “ I will try and see if I can't make something of him.” And all those who were standing about considered Frieder lucky in having found such a master.

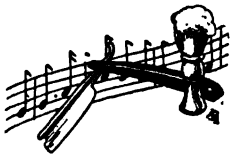
The latter was not such an insignificant person either. He cut the hair and beards of the peasants, put on leeches, and pulled out bad teeth, sometimes even good ones. He was both the barber and the surgeon of the place, and the people always used to call him “ Doctor.”

On that very same day Frieder went over to the house of his future patron and in the evening he began his work by going to the tavern to fetch a glass of beer for his master. Gradually he learned how to make a lather, how to strop a razor, and the other things that belonged to the trade. His master was satisfied with him, only he disliked the fiddling at which Frieder spent all his spare moments, for, in the barber's opinion, it was a useless occupation.

A few years passed by. . Then the day came, at last, on which Frieder's skill as a barber was to be put to a test. If this was passed to the satisfaction of his master, he could then go out into the world and seek his fortune as a travelling journeyman. The test consisted in this : he had to shave off his master's beard.

The important day arrived. The barber sat in the chair, a white towel about his neck, and leaned back his head. Frieder lathered his double chin, passed the razor a few times back and forth over the razor-strop, and started to work.

Suddenly there arose in front of the house sounds of harp and flute playing ; a band of travelling musicians was passing along the road. The hand of the barber-



boy became unsteady as he heard the music, and on the cheek of the master lay an ugly gash, reaching from the end of his ear to his nose.

Alas, poor Frieder! The chair on which the barber was sitting fell backwards on the floor. Bleeding and angry, he sprang up and gave his pupil a ringing box on the ear. Then he flung open the door, pointed with his fingers toward the blue skies, and shrieked: "Go to the cuckoo."

Now, in the country where Frieder lived, people said "Go to the cuckoo," just as we would say in English "Go to Jericho," meaning only that he should go away, it mattered not where. But Frieder did not know this, and took the barber at his word. So he packed up his little trifles, took his violin under his arm and went to the cuckoo. The cuckoo lived in a forest under an oak, and happened to be at home as Frieder inquired for him. He listened patiently until the boy had finished his story, then he shrugged his wings, and said:

"My young friend, if I were to help all who were sent to me, I would have plenty to do. The times are hard and I am glad to have provided moderately for my own children. The eldest is boarding with a family of wagtails, the second my neighbor Redstart has taken into his house, the third child, a girl, is under the protection of an old hedge-sparrow, and the wren is taking care of the two youngest. I myself have to keep on the go from morning till evening to get along at all. For fourteen years I have been nourishing myself on hairy cankerflies and that kind of food was not meant for such as you to eat. No, I cannot help you, I am sorry to say."



Thereat Frieder hung his head sadly, said good-by to the cuckoo and moved away. He had not gone far before the cuckoo called out after him: "Stop, Frieder, I have got a good idea. Perhaps I can help you after all. Come along." He spoke, stretched out his wings and flew ahead, pointing out the way to Frieder.

The latter had trouble to follow his guide, for the underbrush of the forest was thick, and there were lots of brier-hedges. At last it grew clearer between the trees, and a stretch of water sparkled ahead,

"Here we are," cried the cuckoo, and settled down on an alder. Before the young fellow lay a dark green pond, which was fed by a foaming waterfall. Reeds and yellow flags stood along the shore, and white water-lilies with large leaves floated on the surface.



"Now, pay attention," said the wise bird. "When the sun declines and lights up the spray of the waterfall in seven colors, then the Neck will rise from the bottom of the pond, where he owns a crystal palace, and will sit on the shore. Don't be afraid; but address him. The rest will come out all right."

So Frieder thanked the cuckoo and the latter flew away quickly into the woods.

When the seven colors of the rainbow shone over the waterfall, sure enough, the Neck came up out of the depths. He had on a little red coat and a white collar. His hair was green and hung about his shoulders like a tangled mane. He sat down on a rock, which rose above the smooth surface of the pond, let his feet dangle in the water and began to comb his hair with his ten fingers. That was a tiresome job, for in his tangled hair hung sea-weed, water-worts and little shells, and the Neck cut terrible faces in his attempts to straighten out his hair.

"Now is the proper time to address the merman," thought Frieder. He took heart, stepped out of the alder brush, which had concealed him till now, drew off his hat, and said: "Good evening, Master Neck."

At the mere sound of a voice, the Neck jumped plump into the water like a frightened frog. Soon, however, he stuck his head out again and said, gruffly: "What do you want?"

"By your leave, Master Neck," began Frieder, "I am an apprenticed barber, and it would be a great honor to me if I were allowed to comb your hair for you."

"Aha!" said the Neck, joyfully, and rose out of the water, "you are just the fellow I am after. What trouble and worry my hair is giving me since the Lorelei, my niece, so basely deserted me! What didn't I do for that ungrateful person! And one

fine morning I find her gone, and my golden comb is gone too, and now she sits, they say, upon a rock on the Rhine and is keeping company with a boatman. If that's the case, that golden comb of mine will soon be squandered."

With these words the Neck sat down on a rock. Frieder took out his shaving implements, tied a white towel about the merman's neck and combed and oiled his hair till it was as smooth as silk; then he parted it evenly from the forehead all the way back to the neck, took off the towel and made a bow, as his master had taught him.

The Neck got up and regarded with great pleasure his reflection in the surface of the water. "How much do I owe you?" he asked.

Frieder had already the usual expression, "Just as you like," on his lips; but, luckily, before it was too late, he thought that one must take the opportunity to strike the iron while it is hot. So he cleared his throat and told the Neck the story of his life.

"So you would like to be a fiddler?" asked the Neck, as Frieder finished. "Take your fiddle in your hand and let me hear something of your art."

So the lad took up his fiddle, tuned the strings and played his best piece; and, as he finished with a smart flourish, he looked inquiringly at the Neck.

A grin spread over the merman's face, and he said, "Now listen to me." Then he reached down to a bank of reeds and drew out a fiddle and bow, settled down comfortably and began to play.

Frieder had never before heard such music. First it sounded as if the evening wind were playing in the rushes, then it sounded like the roaring of a cataract and at last like a smoothly flowing tide. The birds in the branches became silent, the bees ceased their humming and the fishes raised their heads out of the pond to listen to the sweet sounds. But the boy's eyes were filled with tears.

"Master Neck," said he, raising his hands pleadingly, as the merman let his bow rest, "Master Neck, be my teacher."

"That is impossible," answered the Neck, "even if it were only on account of my grown-up nixie-daughter. But it is not



necessary either. If you will give me your comb, you will become a fiddler without a peer."

"My whole shaving apparatus, if you want it," exclaimed Frieder, and presented it to the merman.

The latter quickly grasped the proffered bundle and disappeared in the pond.

"Stop! stop!" the boy cried out after him; but his cries were in vain.

He waited one hour, he waited two, but, if there was anyone disinclined to make his appearance, it was the Neck.

Poor Frieder sighed deeply, for he thought it was evident that the treacherous merman had deceived him, and with a sad heart he turned to go away—whither, he did not know.

Just then he saw lying at his feet the fiddle-bow of the Neck.

He stooped to pick it up and, as he held it in his hands, he felt a thrill that went from his finger-tips to his shoulder-blade, and something urged him to try the bow.

He wanted to begin with one of his favorite jigs, but it was as if a hidden power guided his hands. From the strings issued tones so sweet and clear that Frieder remembered only once before in his life having heard the like, and that was just a moment ago, while the Neck was playing.

The birds came fluttering nearer and sat listening in the branches, the fishes sprang out of the water, and the deer and roes stepped out of the woods and looked at the fiddler with intelligent eyes.

Frieder did not know what was happening to him. Whatever passed through his mind and whatever moved his heart found its way to his hand, and through his hand to his instrument, and thence issued as sweet strains.

The Neck stuck his head out of the water and nodded approval.

Then he disappeared and was never seen again.

And Frieder stepped out of the forest still fiddling, and passed through all the kingdoms of the earth, and played before kings and emperors.

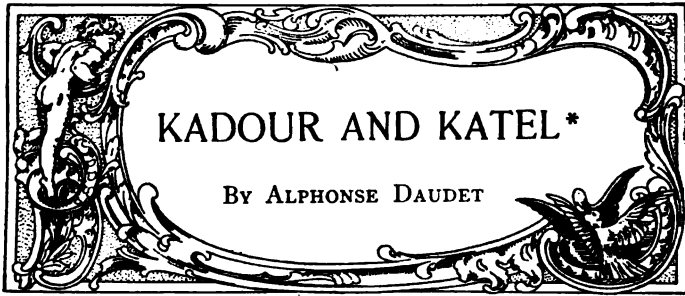
The yellow gold poured into his hat, and he would have become a very wealthy man, had he not been a true musician.

But a true musician never becomes rich.

He had given away his shaving implements. So he let his

hair grow as the mighty Samson did in olden times. The other players imitated him, and from that time on, even to our day, they still wear long, disheveled hair.





KADOUR-BEN-CHERIFA, sergeant-major in a native regiment of *Tirailleurs*, was almost dying the evening they carried him to Rippert's sawmill on the Sauerbach; and for five long weeks, racked by the pain of his wounds and burning with fever, he lived as though in a dream. At times he thought himself still in the thick of battle, shouting and leaping through the flax-fields of Wissembourg; or, again, he was away off in Algeria, in the house of his father, the Caïd of the Mat-matas.

At last one day he opened his eyes and became vaguely conscious of a bright, calm, white-curtained room, with green branches swaying outside its windows in the soft, tempered sunshine; and near his bed a silent little sister of charity, but a little sister without beads or silver cross or blue veils; only two heavy braids she had, falling down over a velvet bodice. From time to time some one would call out, "Katel—Katel!" and the girl would go away on tip-toe; and the wounded boy could hear in the distance a sonorous young voice, as refreshing to listen to as the brook running under the sawmill's windows.

Kadour-ben-Cherifa has been ill a long time; but the Ripperts have taken such good care of him that his wounds are healed, and they have hidden him so well that the Prussians have not found him to send him to die of cold in the Mayence prisons. Now he commences to talk, to show his white teeth and to take a few steps around the room, letting one of his sleeves—the one with a wide, gaping hole in the midst of its embroideries—fall empty over a well-dressed and bandaged, but still impotent arm. Every day Katel carries a wicker-chair down into the little sawmill garden for the convalescent, and finds for him the sunniest corner, along the wall, where the grapes ripen quickest; and

* Translated by Frances Alley Weston, from the French, for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

Kadour who, being a Caid's son, was educated at the Arabian college in Algiers, thanks her in somewhat barbarous French, well sprinkled with *bono bezeffs* and *macach bonos*.

Without realizing it, the young Arab is under a spell. This easy gayety of a Frankish girl, whose life is as free as a bird's, without enveloping veils out-of-door or barred windows at home, astonishes and enchants him. So different from this is the cloistered life of the women of his land—the little white-masked, musk-perfumed Moorish women. Katel, on her side, finds Kadour a trifle too black; but he seems so good, so brave, and he does so detest the Prussians! One thing only troubles her. Off there in that Algeria of Africa men have the right to marry several wives. Katel cannot understand that at all; so when the Algerian, to tease her, says, in his jargon: "Kadour marry soon; he take four wives—four!" Katel becomes very angry.

"Oh, what a wicked Kadour; what a heathen!"

Then the Arab laughs a hearty, boy's laugh; but suddenly he becomes serious again and is mute before the young girl, opening upon her eyes so wide—so wide, you would think he wished to carry her away in their gaze.

It was thus that the loves of Kadour and Katel commenced.

Now that he is well, Kadour has returned to his father, and you can imagine if there has been merry-making in his honor in the land of the Matmatas. The reed flutes and little Arab drums have played their prettiest airs to receive him. As the old Caid, who was sitting before his door, saw in the distance, coming down the cactus alley, this beloved son whom he thought dead, he shook under his woollen burnous as though with a chill. For a whole month there was an uninterrupted series of *difas*, of *fantasias* in the tribe. The Caïds and Agas of the neighborhood disputed with each other the honor of having Kadour-ben-Cherifa for their guest; and every evening, in the Moorish cafés, they would make him tell them over and over again of the great battles in which he had taken part.

But all these honors, all this feasting, do not make Kadour the happier. In the paternal abode, surrounded though he be by all the associations of his boyhood, his horses, his dogs, his guns, there is yet something always lacking: Katel's cheery words and pleasant laughter. The perpetual chatter of the Arabian women which used to cause his heart to beat so quickly, now wearies and annoys him. He no longer admires headdresses of coins,

nor wide trousers of rose-colored satin. Talk to him rather of long braids falling down without pearls, or gauze, or flowers; only intermingled with threads of gold from the setting sun in a little Alsatian garden.

But if Kadour would? In the next tribe to his there are beautiful black eyes watching him from behind the barred windows of the Aga's dwelling. Beautiful eyes so elongated with *kohl* that their every glance is an indolent caress. But Kadour no longer cares for eyes like that. What he dreams of, what he longs for, is Katel's kind look which used to make the tour of his room so quickly to see that nothing was lacking for his comfort; and in which the life was always dancing like light in the blue depths of water-drops.

Little by little, however, the charm of the blue eyes wears off; that tender charm intermingled in his mind with the first experiences of convalescence, its first walks out of doors, and with the climate of France, so soft and temperate. Kadour has finally forgotten Katel. In the whole Chélif valley nothing is talked of but his approaching marriage with Yamina, the daughter of the Aga of Dzendel.

One morning a long line of mules could be seen on the road leading to the town. It is Kadour-ben-Cherifa, who is going with his father to select the wedding-gifts. Their whole day is spent in the bazars examining burnouses, all shot with silver, rich carpets from Smyrna, amber necklaces and ear-drops; and as he handles all these pretty jewels, these drifts of silk and shimmering stuffs, Kadour thinks only of Yamina. The Orient has completely reconquered him, but more from the force of habit and the influence of the place and surrounding objects, than by any bond of the heart.

At the close of the day, the mules, drawn up in line, laden with closely-packed hampers of finery, were descending one of the outer streets of the town when, on approaching the Arabian Office they were stopped by a crowd assembled in the street. It was a band of emigrants that had just arrived. As nothing had been made ready to receive them, the poor things had come to the Office to protest and question. The more disheartened remained seated on their boxes, wearied from the journey, annoyed by the curiosity of the crowd; and over all these exiled ones, like an additional touch of sadness, shone the rays of the setting sun. Night was coming on to make still more wretched for them the mystery of this unknown land and the

discomfiture of their arrival. Kadour looked at them mechanically. But all at once a deep emotion arose in his heart. The costumes of the old peasants—the velvet bodices of the women—all those heads the color of ripe wheat—and here his dream takes actual shape, he has just recognized the pretty features, the thick braids and the smile of Katel. She is there, a few paces from him, with the old man Rippert, the mother and the little ones; all so far away from their sawmill and the Sauerbach that still runs by the little abandoned home.

“Kadour!”

“Katel!”

He has become very pale, she has blushed a little.

So then! it is all arranged. The Caïd's house is large, and while waiting for a piece of land to be allotted to them, the family will install themselves there. Quickly the mother gathers together the bundles scattered around her, and calls the little ones, who are already at play with the stranger children. They are all crammed into the hampers with the stuffs; and Katel laughs with all her heart to find herself so tall, seated high up in the Arabian saddle. Kadour laughs too, less loudly though, with a feeling of deep, contained happiness. As night is coming on and it is cold he envelopes his companion in a fine, striped burnous, which drapes its shimmering folds and fringes around her: motionless and straight in her lofty seat, she looks like some blonde Mussulman girl who has left her veils behind her. Kadour thinks of it as he looks at her. And then there come to him mad ideas, a thousand wild projects. Already he has determined to release the Aga's daughter from her word to him.

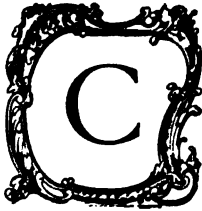
He will marry Katel. No one but Katel. Who knows? Perhaps some day they will again be returning thus from the town, they two alone in a lane of laurel roses, she laughing in her high perch on the mule, he by her bridle as now. And feverish, deep in his dreams, he starts to give the signal for departure; but Katel stops him in her sweet voice:

“Not yet—my husband is coming; we must wait for him.”

Katel was married. Poor Kadour!

A NIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN *

BY LUDWIG GANGHOFER



ILLI is in a hurry. It is already dark in the valley, and the first star twinkles in the dark blue sky.

There is still much to do in the cottage. Cilli has nimble fingers, but they are no nimbler than her fleeting dreams. Prosaic work and restless eagerness do not agree,—what wonder then that Cilli's task is slighted as she works so fast and impatiently?

Over the broad meadow rings a clear yodel in a woman's voice. It is a signal from a neighboring cottage and means: "I am ready, are you?" Cilli springs to the door and can just distinguish her friend, with a huge bundle on her back, and by her side, another girlish figure carrying an equally large load. The evening wind brings to her ear the light laughter of the two girls. Cilli returned to her task, saying: "I must work faster." Another quarter of an hour, and she is ready.

After tying a bundle of faggots together, she hurries to her room to put on her best holiday clothes. How pretty she looks in the dark green skirt and flowered apron, the black velvet bodice and white embroidered gamp. Golden hair frames her charming face, with its red lips and dark blue eyes. It is no wonder that Martl is head over ears in love with her. "One thing more," laughs she, and scrapes the glowing coals into a little heap on the hearth. Then she puts on her leather cap, lifts the faggots to her shoulder and trips lightly from the cottage. It is now so dark she can scarcely see the stones scattered through the field. The cows look like black stumps in the grass, but she hears them chewing their cud, and now and then the tinkle of their bells. With hurrying steps she hastened up the slope where the other girls have gone before her. Suddenly stumbling over a stone, she falls and hurts her knee. With a little cry she recovers herself, but a strange presentiment overcomes her, and

* Translated by Kate E. Roberts and Florence L. Call, from the German, for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

she makes the sign of the cross over face and breast. She will gladly fall, yes,—but into the arms of her sweetheart. Dismissing her forebodings with this thought she goes on again.

The red light of a fire pierces its thick smoke, and shines upon her from the height beyond.

From this point there is an unobstructed view of the valley, black with night. Below this summit, whose grassy slope descends abruptly to a jagged, rocky wall, lies the broad, wooded basin, through which winds the zigzag footpath to the village.

In a few minutes Cilli is on the spot and, with a smiling greeting, drops her burden to the ground. A joking word about the lads so late in coming, then she loosens the string and throws the faggots on the burning pile. The girls laugh and chat, and the rising flames send bright sparks into the darkness. They hear a sound of merry voices below and Cilli springs to the edge of the rocky wall and looks eagerly down, but it is impossible to distinguish any one. At last she hears the voices again, clearer and louder, and a shadow of disappointment flies over her face, for she can distinguish but two voices and neither is Martl's. The lads arrive and there are embraces and kisses, laughing and whispering, without end. Cilli stands apart, nestles her trembling hands in her apron and stares into the fire with shining eyes. Where is Martl, her Martl? He must have forgotten to come, that is the only excuse she can think of. She would like to ask, but both pairs seem engrossed in themselves, too much so to have patience for questions and explanations. Unheeded, she leaves them and, seating herself by the fire, rests her chin in her hand and gazes out into the dark night with yearning thoughts.

A summer night on a mountain so full of secrets and indescribable magic! You seem to be shut out from all the world by a mighty wall. You scarcely see the mountains, whose peaks are indistinctly outlined against the blue sky. Deep night at your feet, while above, the glimmering stars shine out, like a thousand angels' eyes, and look down with loving care on you—on you alone. The fresh wind plays on your cheek, creeps softly over the grass, and presently you hear it sighing against the rocky wall, whispering secrets to the stunted bushes, and rustling through the tops of the tall trees in the valley below, murmuring to them in their dreams. You listen to these sighings and murmurings, rustlings and whisperings, until they mingle confusedly, vanish from your ear, and all around is deep stillness.

You forget your surroundings and look into your heart, where pictures in a shadowy train pass before you. A cry wakes you from your dreams. What was it? You do not know. Was it the wild note of a bird? Was it a stone, which, loosening itself, has taken another step on its journey to the valley? Was it a human voice, faintly echoing from the deep? Was it a ghostly whisper, trembling in air—or has old Earth sighed in her sleep?

The wind brightens the fire and catches up soft voices and tender whispers, but Cilli hears nothing.

Motionless, lost in herself, she sits there, while the changing lights and shadows play about her. Gazing towards the valley, she thinks and dreams, overcome by the witchery of the night.

A little light glimmers below like a star fallen to earth. It must be a light in the village, perhaps in her mother's window, or a window in Martl's house. Surely Martl is not there, he must be on the way to her—or—or could he, but no! She need only think of his good, true eyes to laugh at such a wicked thought.

Martl, and not true, not longing for Cilli? She actually laughs, and pictures him just as when he came to the door of her cottage for the first time. She thinks of his tall, manly figure; remembers the friendly smile on his handsome, brown face, and the astonished glance with which he had regarded her. She recalls his cordial manner, bright sayings and gay laugh, and is as much fascinated now as on that first evening. He always comes, always, only not to-night. Heaven grant that no misfortune has befallen him!

A shout comes up from the pass below. "He comes! he comes! he comes!" cries she, springing up with a stifled cry. She seizes a burning brand from the fire and runs to the edge of the cliff. Waving the faggot in the air, with an eager shout of welcome, she flings it far out into the darkness.

The circling sparks descend, but the cry dies on Cilli's lips. In her excitement, she had stepped too far, and the stones give way under her feet. She loses her footing, wavers, and with a terrified shriek falls over the rocky wall. The two girls, speechless and pale, rush past the lads—and still from below rings a clear, lusty voice.

Martl ends his song with a yodel, and as he reaches the summit, lighted by the flickering fire, swings his hat and cries, "Cilli, my darling, where are you?" But the smile forsakes him as his

question remains unanswered, and he sees the drawn faces around him.

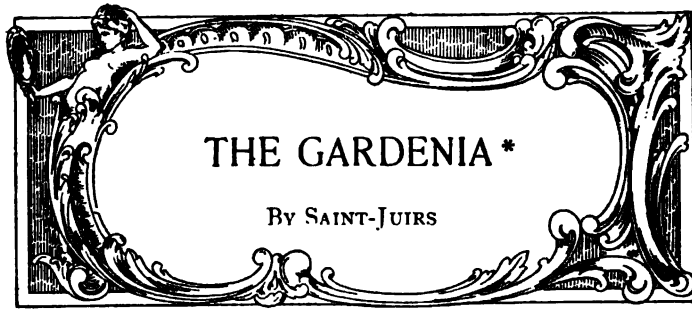
"Cilli," he shrieks, leaping to the edge of the cliff, guessing what they dare not say. His knees tremble under him, but he leans far over the edge, calling in passionate tone, "Cilli! Cilli!"

Still, all still—still and dark, except where, far below, caught between two great boulders, the brand still burns. Martl throws off hat and coat, the lads holding him back with all their force; but he wrenches himself from them and lets himself down over the rocky wall. The others hurry to the fire and bring flaming brands, which light his perilous way. Though he clings to the crags with both arms, his fearless attempt cannot succeed. It means sure death; but yet he does succeed, and sees Cilli lying motionless on a grassy plat, played over by the light from above. With a smothered cry he sinks to his knees, lifts her bleeding head to his breast and sees her eyes open. A smile trembles on her lips, which move slightly, as though she would speak; then she sighs contentedly and her head drops slowly to one side.

* * * * *

The night runs on and the gray light of morning appears above the mountain and brings help from the living. They come to the rescue with a long rope and a shroud, which Martl had requested. They lower them to him, where he sits leaning against the wall, the dead girl clasped in his arms, her motionless head on his breast. So he had waited the whole night through. Prayers move his lips and great tears roll over his cold cheeks. He presses a last kiss on her lovely mouth and then wraps her in the white shroud, an end of which he knots about his own neck. This done, he ties the rope under her arms, dashes the tears from his eyes and calls to those above—a single word—"Up!"





SCENE—A sleeping-room, elegantly furnished.

MONSIEUR (*entering*).—Oh!
(*By the light of the fire he places a gardenia, that he has just bought, on the mantel, takes some matches and tries to light them.*)

FIRST MATCH (*breaks*).—Crac!

SECOND MATCH (*breaks*).—Crueek!

THIRD MATCH (*breaks*).—Craak!

MONSIEUR.—Zounds! Such things only happen to me!

FOURTH MATCH (*it lights*).—Psitt! . . .

THE CANDLESTICK.—Monsieur has a steady hand!

THE CLOCK.—Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding.

MONSIEUR.—Nine o'clock . . . the deuce!

THE GARDENIA.—Make haste, make haste! . . . you have scarcely time to dress if you wish to see the ballet.

MONSIEUR.—If I wish to see the ballet? I should think so! The ballet . . .

THE GARDENIA.—And the third dancer on the right.

MONSIEUR.—And the third . . . ah! the third! . . . exactly.
(*He throws himself into an arm-chair.*)

THE ARM-CHAIR.—Oh!

(*Monsieur hastily makes his toilet, throwing the garments he has just taken off, to right and left.*)

THE CARPET.—What is the matter with him to-day? . . . Careless man, be off!

MONSIEUR.—That was a good idea of mine, all the same, to pretend urgent business and let my wife go alone with baby to Dijon, to see her mother!

THE GARDENIA.—An ingenious idea!

* Translated by M. I. C., from the French, for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

MONSIEUR.—Wasn't it? Furthermore, I gave my servants a vacation. Here I am free, absolutely free.

THE LONG CHAIR (*bewildered*).—What does he say?

THE OLD SOFA.—Old curiosity!

THE LONG CHAIR.—Chatterbox!

THE CANOPY OF THE BED (*voice from on high*).—Silence!

THE GARDENIA.—You are off for a holiday; it is high time!

MONSIEUR.—Married two years and a half, almost two years and three quarters . . . and not a thing to reproach myself with, not a thing!

THE ROUND TABLE.—You have much to complain of, have you not? . . . you have been very miserable.

MONSIEUR.—No, most certainly not! . . . but virtue, indeed! . . .

THE GARDENIA.—Everlasting virtue!

MONSIEUR.—Partridge and cabbage! always partridge and cabbage!

THE GARDENIA.—Menus must be varied or the stomach becomes restive.

THE BED (*annoyed*).—Oh! . . .

THE CANDLE.—Glutton!

THE EIDER-DOWN.—Presumptuous man!

A FAN.—I blush for him!

MONSIEUR.—My little dancer confidentially told me that her name was Zénobie; that's a name. . . .

THE CALENDAR.—Pshaw!

MONSIEUR.—Yes, I know, there are names that are more. . . but there are also those that are less. . . Besides, no one chooses his—or her—own name, no one is responsible for his—or her—name. . . They named this little one Zénobie, just as they could have named her Térébenthine or Euphémie. . . . What does that matter, any way?

THE CALENDAR.—There are pretty names, there are distinguished names, there are soft names that one loves to pronounce.

MONSIEUR.—My wife's name is charming. Andrée! Her name is Andrée.

THE GARDENIA.—The name Zénobie is more amusing.

MONSIEUR.—She is astonishing, this Zénobie! When Edmond presented me to her the other evening, in the greenroom, she liked me immediately. She said so. Ah, she is not backward!

THE GARDENIA.—Not timid at all.

MONSIEUR.—What do you know about it?

THE GARDENIA.—I have heard it mentioned by my brothers, but they talk so much! . . .

MONSIEUR.—Zénobie is not timid. At the Opera-house the winners of the prize themselves

A PATENT - LEATHER BOOT (*bursts out laughing*).—Pffra-a! . . .

MONSIEUR.— . . . Have free manners. The calling requires it. A dancer who would not have free manners would not be a dancer, but, to confound Zénobie with . . . Oh, no! . . . Where are my cuff-buttons?

THE JEWEL-CASE.—Those that your wife gave you?

MONSIEUR.—No, not those.

THE GARDENIA.—How long you are!

THE ATMOSPHERE.—What use to hasten! You are comfortable here. It is warm.

MONSIEUR.—Where is my vest?

THE VEST.—Here!

MONSIEUR (*putting on his vest*).—It is not that Zénobie is really very pretty, but there is something piquant, vivacious in the expression of her face.

THE EYE-GLASS.—It's because her nose aspires to reach her frizzes.

MONSIEUR.—The mouth, don't mention it.

MONSIEUR'S OPERA-GLASS.—She has small eyes. . . .

MONSIEUR.—But bright. Very bright! She is slender. . . .

A NEWSPAPER.—As a rail.

MONSIEUR (*indignant*).—Oh the "Press!" . . . Now I must put on my cravat, my handsome white cravat; it is the knot that is so difficult to tie. . . . Ah! if my wife were here!

THE CRAVAT.—Really?

MONSIEUR.—That's true. . . . I should not like to ask her to adorn me to go. . . . It would not be just right. (*He approaches the mirror.*)

THE GARDENIA.—Your eyes shine. You have grown ten years younger. You look like a conqueror. By your eye! By your smile!

THE MIRROR (*ironically*).—By your hair!

MONSIEUR (*vexed*).—I do not like to be mocked. . . . It is true I haven't much hair. . . . And I congratulate myself Hair is so badly worn now-days!

THE COMB (*wishing to retain its sinecure*).—All distinguished men are bald.

MONSIEUR.—My coat. Where is my coat? At last I have it!

THE COAT (*writhing*).—No, I will not! I am a coat that belongs to good society. I do not like rice-powder; I do not like

MONSIEUR (*drawing on a sleeve violently*).—Come, now!

THE COAT.—Brutal man, be off!

THE LINING (*tearing*).—Crack!

MONSIEUR.—My gloves! Where are my gloves? I can find nothing here.

THE GLOVE-BOX.—That is not astonishing. It is your wife who always takes the pains to arrange your things for you.

MONSIEUR (*advancing towards the box*).—In there, without a doubt.

THE KEY.—R-r-r-e!

THE LOCK.—R-r-r-a!

MONSIEUR (*taking a pair of gloves*).—How small! . . . How small! (*With pride*.) These are my wife's gloves! . . . As to mine, they are either an eight broad or a nine narrow. . . . How dainty, gloves as small as that! And the hand that slips inside—the little, dimpled hand—Andrée's hand. Ah!

MADAME'S FIRST GLOVE.—We have some success in the world.

MADAME'S SECOND GLOVE.—I wager that Zénobie wears the same number as you do.

THE RUG.—And that she wears a forty-three boot.

A PIN.—A royal foot.

MONSIEUR (*taking the gardenia*).—And, now, this flower in my button-hole!

THE GARDENIA.—Thanks; let us hasten. Why do you linger? I assure you that you look exceedingly well.

THE MIRROR.—Aye!

MONSIEUR.—Not so bad!

THE OPERA-HAT.—And do you forget me?

MONSIEUR.—No. . . . I must also have an opera-glass.

MADAME'S OPERA-GLASS.—I decline.

MONSIEUR'S OPERA-GLASS.—Scoundrel, must this commence again?

AN ANDIRON.—It is improper.

THE BED.—Who would ever have thought that of him?

THE TONGS.—O these men!

THE CLOCK.—Ding.

MONSIEUR.—Half-past. In five minutes she will appear. I shall not have time to order a bouquet.

THE PORTE-MONNAIE.—So much the better.

MONSIEUR.—Well, if I do not see her dance? . . .

THE NEWSPAPER.—You will not lose much.

MONSIEUR.—Certainly, Zénobie has not one of these consummate talents that mark an era! . . . But there is something about her, I don't know what! . . . If I miss the ballet I will wait for her at the exit. We shall most certainly meet, she knows I must come. Without flattering myself, I believe I have made a very good impression. . . .

THE GARDENIA.—You are loved for yourself alone.

MONSIEUR (*with conceit*).—Who knows?

THE POCKET-BOOK.—Then, why do you cram me so with bank-notes?

MONSIEUR.—It is prudent to have the where-with-all to foot the bills.

THE GARDENIA.—Are you coming?

MONSIEUR.—Yes. (*His foot knocks against something.*) What is that?

A SMALL SLIPPER.—It is I.

MONSIEUR (*picking it up*).—Poor little one! I did not hurt you, did I? It is bewitching. I can hold it all in my hand. . . . A noted man has said: "I have kept two souvenirs of our love: a packet of letters where she put all of her soul, and a little slipper where she put her little foot; when I open my drawer of relics, why is it that the tiny slipper touches me the more tenderly?" The woman loved by this noted man must have had Andrée's foot. . . . My wife has an exquisite foot, exquisite hands, exquisite hair, exquisite eyes, exquisite . . . She is pretty, my wife is very pretty!

THE PERFUME BOTTLE.—Do you not use any perfume?

MONSIEUR.—Certainly.

THE PERFUME BOTTLE.—New-mown hay?

MONSIEUR.—Andrée adores this odor. And I too. I believe Zénobie uses musk. That affects the head. . . Come on! all ready for war. (*He looks at himself in the mirror and smiles.*) Lovelace! . . . Don Juan!

THE MIRROR.—Gallant!

MONSIEUR.—Who can tell!

THE GARDENIA.—You are losing precious time; I am drooping.

THE BED.—Then we shall not see you again this evening?

MONSIEUR.—Probably not, my dear.

THE BED.—Villain.

MONSIEUR.—What do you wish?

THE BED-CURTAIN.—Remain.

MONSIEUR.—No. I have promised.

THE BOLSTER.—You will repent.

MONSIEUR.—Of a little lark? that amounts to nothing.

MADAME'S PILLOW.—Ungrateful wretch!

MONSIEUR.—Let us be off! . . . If I should listen to you all

MADAME'S PHOTOGRAPH.—Henri!

MONSIEUR (*uneasy*).—Yes, I know. It is naughty, but my darling, I am not going to do anything wrong. It is only a joke; I do not love this Zénobie, not at all.

MADAME'S PHOTOGRAPH.—Then it is all the more shameful.

MONSIEUR.—Dear little Andrée, do not look at me that way. Ah! why are you not the one I am to see this evening? With what pleasure I would run to the rendezvous! Do not look at me that way! (*As the photograph continues to look at him he turns it around.*)

THE GARDENIA.—Very ingenious! . . . Come now.

THE CRADLE (*holding Monsieur by his coat*).—Remain.

MONSIEUR (*menacing*).—You! . . . (*He starts to strike the importunate one who has caught him while passing, but, while looking at its little lace curtains lined with blue, its satin cover so beautifully embroidered, its dainty, embroidered pillow, the white meshes of its net, he stops, softened, before this cradle, light as a hammock and as downy as a bird's nest. Suddenly he snatches the gardenia from his button-hole and throws it in the fire.*)

THE FIRE (*to the gardenia*).—Good-day, old fellow!

MONSIEUR.—I remain.

THE FURNITURE (*joyfully*).—What happiness!

THE CLOCK.—Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding.

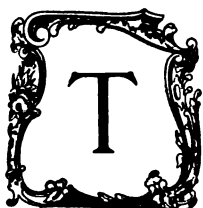
MONSIEUR.—Or, rather, no . . . I leave.

ALL (*disappointed*).—What!

MONSIEUR.—There is a train at eleven o'clock; I take it. My urgent business affairs are ended. Ah, what a happy surprise I shall give my wife and baby!

A STORY OF SANTO DOMINGO*

BY JEANIE RAYMOND BIDWELL



HE carnival, that rollicking time of wild and joyous revelry, had begun; and not until the last chime of the midnight bell on Shrove Tuesday would stillness and quiet again fall on the town.

On this bright Sunday afternoon the streets of Santiago, that old inland town of Santo Domingo, were filled with all sorts of masked forms and grotesque figures—devils, clowns and *Santos*—on horse-back and on foot, blowing great horns, shouting and screaming; while every now and then venturesome boys would throw bunches of lighted firecrackers under the horses' feet, thus adding to the general confusion.

There were flag-poles in front of many houses; and the national colors, with here and there the Spanish flag, of red and yellow, floating gayly in the breeze.

The *calle de San Miguel* was swept clean; and the house of Enrique Ricardo, *el carpentero*, had been cleared of the boards, workbench, tools and shavings which usually incumbered it. To-day the front room—with its three red-painted doors, all wide open on the street—was swept and garnished. The room ran across the whole width of the one-storey *adobe* front, zinc-



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roofed *casita*, and served as parlor, workshop and general living-room. A row of chairs was placed stiffly against the wall, facing the street; while four rocking-chairs, somewhat the worse for wear, were arranged in a line through the centre of the room. The floor, of square red bricks, had been freshly sprinkled, and the table in one corner boasted of a new red cloth cover. Over the table were photographs of various relatives and friends, framed in pressed tin and cheap wooden frames. They were tacked in rows, close together, and formed, if one could truthfully say so, the only ornamentation, barring several saddles and a guitar, on the palm-board wall.

Back of the *sálla* were three smaller rooms, two of which served as bedrooms, and the other as kitchen; in one corner of this room stood the forked-tree stump which held the water *tuiaja* (a large earthen jar). There were a couple of braziers for cooking, several iron pots, and a number of coarse earthen *ollas*, a large-sized *mahogany* table—that is the land where *pine* is costly—and a fair supply of white, blue-edged crockery dishes. As a general thing, the cooking was done in the open air in the *pátio* at the back of the house.

Leaning back in a rocking-chair just outside the door of the *sálla*, sat Altagracia, Enrique's eldest daughter, a girl of seventeen, attired in her holiday gown of pale pink muslin. A bunch of tuberose was carelessly thrust into the left side of the knot of wavy black hair which was coiled low in her neck, and from which little tendrils of hair escaped and formed tiny rings.

The girl's profile, the olive-tinted skin and charming head were thrown into relief by the dull red calico covering which was slipped over the chair-back. The carmine of the lips gave color to her face, which looked almost pathetic in repose, until the eyes were lifted; soft brown eyes, with a wealth of expression in their depths! now laughing coquettishly, then, at times, pleading and sad; true Spanish eyes.

Her brother, José-Manuel, was saddling his horse in front of the house; he had just taken the saddle, with its purple velvet seat, from its nail, and had thrown it over the gold-bordered red saddle-cloth which was laid on the white horse. He stooped to buckle the *cincha*; then, as he turned to go into the house for his spurs and revolver, he suddenly turned to his sister, and asked:

"Gracita, where is Rafael this afternoon? he promised to be here by two o'clock, and it is past that hour now."

"Only ten minutes past the hour, *Pepito mio*," answered the girl. "I have just been to look at the clock on the tower."

"It will be well for him to hurry a little, for he, Juan Sibberio, and Pedro Perillo and I, are going to ride about town with the *maskeros* this afternoon, and I wish to start."

"*No hay cuidado!* (don't worry!) he will be here directly," said Altagracia, turning her head to look up the hill towards the *castillo*, where the Moca road comes into the *calle de San Miguel*.

"You know," she continued, "that Rafael has two leagues to ride, and Yamboril is not a stone's throw from here; the sun bites to-day. Ah! but he comes now!" she exclaimed, joyfully, as a mounted horseman dashed round the corner from the *calle del Sol*, and drew rein so suddenly before the house that his horse reared.

A tall, well-formed young man drew his feet from the stirrups and sprang lightly to the ground. There was a decided tinge of yellow in his skin, and a more decided wave to his hair, but his features were strong and regular, and there was a look of character that impressed one favorably.

He called to a younger brother of Gracita's who, with freshly washed face, appeared from a room at the back of the house, where a splashing of water and frequent exclamations and scuffling could be heard with a low, running accompaniment of maternal scolding:

"Here, Panchito," tossing him a *redl*, "hold my horse a moment, that's a good boy."

Pancho sprang forward, with a broad grin, and took hold of the bridle, while Rafael turned to Gracita, who rose with a smile of welcome to greet him, and taking both her slender hands in his, he bent down and murmured a few words in her ear that caused her face to flush as she looked up at him.

Just then Enrique himself came out; he was freshly shaved and dressed in a well-fitting suit of fine black broadcloth, with immaculate linen. On his shoulder was perched Caridad, the year-old baby, a cherubic child, whose gala attire consisted simply of a pair of bright red shoes. With the mercury at 90° in the shade, she was to be envied. Enrique was a fine type of Dominican; tall, broad-shouldered, with well-shaped head, he looked equally well in workday blouse of unbleached linen or Sunday suit. He greeted Rafael with a cordial hand-shake and a "*Lue hay, compay?*" (How goes it, compadre?) put the child on Gracita's lap; then, taking the cigar proffered by Rafael, he

tilted his chair back on two legs and began asking about the tobacco crop.

Rafael was his prospective son-in-law; betrothed to Gracita three months back, during the Christmas holidays, they were to be married at Easter.

Rafael Valverde owned land in his own right; he was an only son, his father, a Dominican general, having been killed in the revolution of the past year. He had a fine tobacco plantation, ten thousand coffee trees, all bearing well; the same number of cocoa, a large *cañúco* of sugar-cane, plantains and yuca; several hundred head of cattle, a good-sized palm-board house, with land unlimited; moreover, he was honest and industrious, and was considered a *buén partido* by Enrique, who always had a sharp eye to business.

He answered Enrique's questions pleasantly, every now and then exchanging a glance with Gracita; his attention was drawn to the tuberose with which the girl's hair was studded, and whose heavy, penetrating perfume reached him.

"What pretty flowers, Gracita *mia!* who gave them to you?" he asked, with a Spanish lover's quick, instinctive jealousy; but, before the girl could answer, her younger sister, Dolores, a girl of twelve, who already gave promise of even greater beauty than Gracita's, broke in hastily:

"Oh! I can tell you, Rafael; Don Alberto, the young *Inglés* who is visiting Doña Juanita, just across the way, brought them this afternoon; he often comes now, and——"

"That's nothing," interrupted Gracita, a little too eagerly. "Doña Juanita always sends me the tuberose from her garden; she dislikes such strong perfume herself, and this morning Don Alberto brought them and sat talking awhile with papa."

"Who is this Don Alberto?" asked Rafael, a trifle impatiently. "I have not the honor of his acquaintance."

Enrique, with a swift frown at Dolores, which had the effect of making her hastily retreat into the house, interposed:



"Merely an *Inglés* up here from Puerto Plata on a little *negocio* (business). He is staying with the Americans across the street; he told me that he was waiting to see Doña Juanita's cousins, who are daily expected from La Vega. Pretty girls, too!" he added, with a sly glance at his elder daughter, who merely shrugged her shoulders in reply. "They are scarce in these parts. Besides, he has been talking with me about a cedar chest for his clothes; the moths are eating them."

At this point in the conversation a good-natured, languid voice called out:

"Good people, is there no place for me in a rocking-chair after all my labors with those children?" and the stout form of Jacinta, Enrique's wife, appeared in the doorway.

"*Que tal, Rafaelito mio?*" she asked, heartily, extending her hand to the young man, and accepting, with a few words of thanks, the chair which Rafael, with the politeness inherent in Spanish blood, rose to offer her.

She had just put on a freshly ironed muslin wrapper. One half of her heavy hair hung in a massive braid below her waist, while the other half was in process of being coiled about her shapely head; her mouth was filled with hairpins, which she removed, one by one, until the hair-dressing was completed; then, with a final pat to the braids, she settled herself back in her chair, took the baby from Gracita and, after a few preliminary puffs at the cigar which Rafael, in duty bound, had offered, remarked:

"There's *refresco* of pineapple on the table, Gracita; bring Rafael a glass; he will enjoy it after his ride. *Ay de mi!* but it's warm to-day!"

Jacinta was really a young-looking woman for her age, which might have been forty. Mother of twelve healthy, rugged children, she spent the greater part of her time in the doorway with her baby on her lap. Indeed, to the whole family, life seemed one long holiday. They took their meals in a delightfully unconventional fashion. Sitting about on chair or floor, with plate or bowl in hand, they ate their *sancocho* and *frijoles* at midday with keenest relish. Enrique alone sat at table and sustained the dignity of the house of Ricardo.

They broke their fast in the morning when the baker's boy came early to the door on his *burro* and, striking with his stick on the large, round tins, called out:

"Here's your good, fresh bread." The strongest *café negro*

(black coffee) washed it down. At night, roasted green plantain and toasted *cassava* bread made the meal; exactly such a one as the Indians ate four hundred years ago at close of day.



Gracita returned with a pitcher of the cool *refresco*, which she poured into a glass and offered, with a coquettish smile, to Rafael; then she handed the pitcher to Dolores, who was immediately surrounded by a troop of smaller brothers and sisters, among whom she distributed the drink.

Rafael, meanwhile, had drawn his chair close to Gracita's side and was talking to her in low whispers, his momentary jealousy forgotten. He was utterly oblivious of José-Manuel who, with his hand on his horse's bridle, stood waiting for him to start on the *paséo* about town; when there came a crowd of gayly-dressed, fantastic figures around the corner, all masked, and all shouting and screaming. Following them came a rabble of boys and girls. Five *maskeros* halted in front of Enrique's house, then rushed into the *sála*, and began dancing to a wild *fandango* played on the guitar by Rafael, and accompanied by the thrum-thrum of the *guira*, which José-Manuel quickly seized. One *maskera* grasped Jacinta by the waist, another took both Enrique's hands; but he, suddenly lifting the mask, planted a kiss on the girlish face revealed.

"Hi, Pepita!" he exclaimed, "you can't fool me."

The girl tore herself away and ran off, followed by her companions.

José-Manuel jumped on horseback and called to Rafael to

follow him; but the latter lingered a moment to whisper to Gracita: "Let me know you at the ball to-night, *cara mia*," then galloped off.

The wide doors of the *casa de los Ingleses*, across the way from Enrique's, were open.

Doña Juanita, her husband and child were standing on the sidewalk; as the crowd of maskers dashed by, they followed them as far as the corner, then came back and went into the house. A young man remained standing outside leaning against the brick wall of the house; he was smoking a cigarette and casting glances across the street to where Gracita sat; of medium height, slender, extremely blonde, with deep, mournful blue eyes, which he could use to the best advantage; a drooping mustache, which he continually twisted, concealed a rather weak mouth. He wore a well-cut London suit of white flannels, white silk shirt with a dark blue tie, and a sash of the same silk. A white helmet, which an Englishman always wears in a tropical climate, completed his cool and becoming costume.

He was in the employ of an English mercantile house in Hamburg and, as he had a good knowledge of Spanish, had been sent to Santo Domingo in the interests of the firm for a few months. In Santiago time had hung heavily on his hands; business could be gotten over in a couple of hours in the morning, then for another hour he knocked the billiard balls about at the Casino. He had nearly starved at the *fonda* of old Juan Julian.

Garlic he detested; *sancocho*, that national dish, a stew of pork, green plantain and every conceivable vegetable boiled together, his soul revolted against; and *frijoles*!—he never wanted to see another of those vile red beans as long as he lived!

At last Burton, an American, the husband of the before-mentioned Doña Juanita, returned to town and there discovered Lester and promptly domiciled him in his own abode. For a week he had been there. He soon discovered that there was a pretty girl across the street, so nearly all his time had been spent at Enrique's, playing the guitar, and making little sketches of Gracita.

The Yamboril road had been frightfully muddy, so that Rafael had not been to town for a week.

As *maskeros* and horses vanished in the distance, Lester, throwing down his cigarette, turned back into the *pátio*, from whence he shortly reappeared carrying a package, a white enamelled box, tied with a tiny gold cord and stamped in raised

letters, *Nougatine Français*. He strolled across the street, tossed the box into Gracita's lap, and smilingly received her exclamations of astonished delight and rapture at the *dulce* (sweets); then dropping into the chair deserted by Rafael, he said: "Why not eat it now, *carisima*, before that jealous *novio* (lover) of yours returns?"

"Perhaps I ought not to take this, Don Alberto," returned the girl, with a lingering look at the box. "Rafael might not like it."

"Don't trouble your little head about that, he need know nothing about it; that is, unless you choose to tell him. What's the harm in a simple present like that?"

"Rafael is very jealous."

"Yes, I know, I heard him talking about the tuberoses," said Lester, bending forward to take one of the flowers from the girl's hair; then, "With your permission, *señorita*," he drew the tuberose lightly across his lips and placed it in an inner pocket of his coat.

The color rose to her cheek, she glanced hastily behind her; but the doorway was deserted, the youngsters having gone with the crowd, while Jacinto had just gone in to lay the sleeping baby in the hammock in the bedroom.

"Remember, at the ball to-night, three *danzas* and two waltzes for me, *alma mia*; and leave your right hand ungloved, so that I may distinguish you," he whispered softly, for Enrique was drawing very near the door, and his expression could not be called pleasant.

"Well, Enrique," coolly remarked Lester, "I'll come over after the carnival and talk over some work I want done, and have a look at that horse of yours, also, the one you wanted to sell me yesterday."

Enrique's face grew bright at once. A horse-trade was his especial delight, and he invariably got the best of the bargain. He answered, heartily:

"Whenever you wish, *Señor mio*; I am at your disposition."

Lester, with a nod to Gracita, walked across the narrow street, through the *portón* and into the large courtyard beyond.

The dinner bell had rung and Doña Juanita was looking for her guest.

A few hours later, in her little bedroom, surrounded by admiring sisters, Gracita was putting the finishing touches to a coquettish toilet. She was dressed like a gypsy, and the Spanish colors, red

and yellow, were very effective; the dress was short enough to show the slender, well-turned ankles and pretty feet. A lace *mantilla* concealed her hair and came close enough to the



painted gauze mask to hide the outline of cheek and chin.

"Rosita and Angela are going to call for me," she said to her mother, who stood near.

"Don't notice me in any way if you see me at the ball, for I don't care to be recognized by everybody."

Just then girlish voices were heard outside, and Gracita, enveloping herself in the linen sheet which served in lieu of an opera cloak, came out into the *sála*, where a couple of candles shed a dim light.

"I'm ready," she said to the two girls who had just arrived; and off all three started to the *Baile del Primero*.

"Let us go to the ball at the Casino first," said Rosita, as the girls picked their way over the badly paved streets and narrow sidewalks; "then if we wish we can go to the others."

"*Bién*," came in chorus from the others.

The streets were full of people, nearly all going in the same direction, towards the Casino in front of the *Plaza de Armas*, where a first-class ball was to be given.

As Gracita and her friends drew near they saw a crowd of spectators already thronging about the half-dozen doors, which were wide open to the street. The one-storey building was on a corner. Inside, the billiard-tables had been removed, the floor waxed, and rows of chairs were arranged along the wall for the spectators; the dancers never sit down at a masked ball. Chinese lanterns were hung in rows on ropes stretched across the ceiling; gaudy pictures were on the wall. At the extreme end of the room a platform had been built for the musicians. Off at one side—to the left—was the *cantina*, where light wines, beer and *liqueurs* were sold.

"Here are some *maskeras*; let them in," was shouted, as Gracita, Rosita, Angela and half a dozen other girls whom they had overtaken on the way, drew near a doorway. The crowd

opened to let them pass in ; they walked with little shouts and squeals across the hall to the dressing-room.

The seats were rapidly filling ; there were mothers of families, stout and comfortable, with fringed mantillas and large fans ; they had a cigar or two on hand with which to beguile the tedium of waiting.

Knots of young men in Prince Albert coats, the regulation evening dress, stood about, talking animatedly. They were unmasked, for the president, in these times of political difficulties had forbidden all men to mask as they might have been tempted, and no one the wiser, to put an enemy out of the way with a swift thrust of the dagger. Their skins ranged from a dead white, that *blanco maté*, to *café au lait*, the really black man not venturing to a first-class ball.

Inside the *cantina* could be heard the popping of corks.

An hour later, at ten o'clock, the ball was in full force ; the room was crowded. A strong odor of *patchouli* mingled with tobacco smoke and the indescribable odor of *la raza negra* in a heated room.

The band was playing that intoxicating, sensuous *danza*, *La Lluvia de Besos*.

All sorts of strange, fantastic figures were dancing, and in the *paseos* of a dance they dragged their partners off to the *cantina* to drink *anilado* or *mareschino*.

Lester, in evening-dress, a tuberoso in his button-hole, was dancing with Gracita to the sweet, slow music, and murmuring tender nothings in her ear. As she looked over his shoulder she could see the sombre face of her lover, who seemed to know her by the fact that Lester danced so much with her.

Poor Rafael ! it was hard lines, but he was not allowed to dance ; he had sent his evening clothes ahead that afternoon in charge of a *peón*, but the man had not appeared in town to deliver them ; he was probably overcome by *aguardiente*, and was sleeping off its effects in some hut by the roadside.

And there was Rafael in his riding-suit of blue jeans ! He could get into a *Baile del Segundo*, but not into a first-class ball thus attired ; and he had found it impossible to beg, borrow or steal a suit that would fit him. He had to stand and glower in the doorway, every now and then pouring his woes into the sympathizing ear of Jacinta. His heart grew wrathful and his eyes fierce as he noted every tender glance of Lester's ; he could not see through the thin, painted mask which Gracita wore, but

he could hear the girl's merry laughter as she passed close by the door where he stood. Once she stopped and touched his coat-sleeve timidly, and said, softly :

"I'm so sorry for you, Rafaelito ; I won't dance any more, if you don't wish me to."



But he, sore and hurt, gave an impatient shrug, and made no reply. As she passed on in the throng he muttered to himself : "*Por Dios !* I'll have it out with that pig of an *Inglés* ; he will kill me or I'll kill him ;" and he nervously fingered the handle of the revolver which was strapped about his waist. "I love that girl too much to give her up. I'm not a very good Catholic, but if all comes out right for me I'll make a vow to the Virgin to climb the *Santa Cerro* on my knees, and not to look at Gracita again until Lent is over. *Caramba !* I'll speak to that fellow now."

At that moment the director of the French telegraph company, a personal friend of Lester's, forced his way through the crowd to where the young man stood, and touching him on the shoulder said :

"Pardon me, Lester, but here's a cablegram for you from England."

Lester hurriedly tore open the yellow envelope of the dispatch, and read :

"Father dying. Come. Marian Lester."

Instantly all thoughts of the ball were forgotten ; he wondered if, by starting that night, he could get to Puerto Plata in time to take the American steamer for New York, and there connect with a steamer for Liverpool. He looked up and saw Rafael looking at him with a wrathful expression in his eyes. The young Englishman walked directly towards the Dominican, held out his hand and said frankly : "Pardon me, Señor, if I have taken too much

of your sweetheart's attention to-night. I meant no harm I assure you. I only knew yesterday that you were betrothed. I have just received word that my father is dying. I must start to-night if I can find a horse in town. My own is four miles out on the plantation."

Rafael's face softened; he said generously, "I accept your apology, *caballero*, you are as brave as a Dominican. You may have my horse; he is just outside, tied to a tree; he is strong, and will put you in Puerto Plata, with steady riding, in nine hours. You may leave him there at the house of my *compadre*, Juan Gomez, who will return him to me in two days. The moon rises in an hour. *Vaya con Dios.*"

With a few words of grateful thanks Lester took the horse, and an hour later was riding out of town, across the *Sabana*. Behind him shone the wonderfully bright constellation of the Southern Cross. Off to the north lay the high mountains to be crossed ere the morrow. He struck into the pathway—the once famous *paso de los Hidalgos*.

Outside the town all was still, but farther on, through the half-open door of a *bohio* he saw a negro mother lift her wailing child from its hammock, and sitting crouched on the hard clay floor, she sang a plaintive melody: "*Duerma ti, niña, duermo ti, hija*" (Sleep, my little one, sleep), and Lester rode on.

Rafael could not resist a parting word with Gracita; with an "*Adios, false one,*" he disappeared. That night he walked the two leagues to his *estancia*, resolving not to see Gracita for a while, to punish her and to keep his vow.

All through Lent Gracita waited for some sign of Rafael. She did not miss Lester; but as the days grew into weeks, the girl's face became sad, her step languid. Her father thought it was a good lesson for her and would not say a word to comfort her; nevertheless, he had been to Yamboril to visit Rafael and had told him how the girl was pining.

Good Friday came, with its feast of *bacalao* (cod-fish). In a simple white gown, with folded kerchief on her head, Gracita, with her three little sisters, went to the *misa de la agonía* in the Church of the Carmen. She trembled when the huge brass plates were beaten to represent the earthquake; she cried with the devout *beatas* when the life-sized image of Christ crucified was taken from the cross and laid in a pink coffin strewn with flowers, then carried from the altar to the street, preceded by the *padre* and choir-boys, with the white-robed acolyte swinging the

censer, from which the smoke of incense arose; while close behind came the Virgin Mary and other images, followed by a long procession of men, women and children in holiday attire.

Gracita, sad and downcast, walked in the procession, hoping and praying that she might catch a glimpse of Rafael. Once she thought she saw him and her heart gave a bound, but it proved to be mere fancy.

On Easter morning, just before dawn, she rose, slipping on a little cotton gown, throwing a black mantilla over her head and thrusting her bare feet into sandals, she unhooked one of the big doors and crept softly out of the house to go to mass, and then to join the procession which early on Easter morning goes through the town. She slipped into church, devoutly crossing herself and murmuring an *Ave Maria*.

Mass was over and she turned to join the procession; just then some one touched her shoulder. She looked around quickly and saw the face of her lover aglow with love and tenderness.

With a happy cry she was in his arms, all doubts, all fears forgotten, while his kisses rained on eyes and lips.

The procession had moved on; they alone stood in the shadow of the church.

A week later there was a wedding at Enrique's.



A HEART UNSPOTTED*

BY JOHN STRANGE WINTER

“A heart unspotted is not easily daunted,”

SHAKESPEARE.

“MY cousin, Miss Chichester,” said Tom Langton, with a wave of his hand.

The three men to whom he thus presented the shabby little girl, whom he called “My cousin, Miss Chichester,” bowed in their several turns and in their several fashions. They were all brother officers of Tom’s, who had accompanied him to Brook House that they might share in the pick of the shooting, beginning on the immortal 12th. They were naturally all very good shots (had they been otherwise, they might have whistled, so to speak, for invitations to Brook House at that particular time of year), and last, but not least, they were all very tolerable looking.

“My cousin, Miss Chichester,” looked frightened. She was a tiny creature, pale and slim, with dark hair, blue eyes, and brows and lashes of midnight. Her features were small, and the nose had a tendency to turn upwards rather than downwards. She was very shabby and was dressed in a scanty frock of black stuff, very much the worse for wear. She looked doubtfully at Tom and at Tom’s friends, and very much as if she was not sure whether she ought to go or stay.

“Where are all the others, Pussy?” Tom asked, putting an end to her idea of flight.

“Aunt Agnes did not expect you until the seven o’clock train, Tom,” she replied, in a rather quavering voice.

“Then I suppose they are all out?” said Tom, in a matter of fact tone.

“Yes, Tom; they have gone to a garden-party at Lady Northam’s, and my uncle is on the Bench to-day.”

“Oh, well, we shall manage to exist till they come back,” said Tom, with the unfeeling tone that only a brother can assume. “They’ll be home soon enough. By the bye, couldn’t you give us some tea or something? We are all famished and thirsty.”

* A selection from “The Queen.”

"Certainly, Tom; I'll go and send it at once," she replied, eagerly, and moving towards the door as she spoke.

"Can't you ring and order it from here?" Tom asked, impatiently.

"Oh, yes"—then doubtfully—"but I think I will go; it is just the servants'—"

"Sit still," said Tom, imperiously, under his breath.

He rang the bell, a good sounding peal, as he spoke, and turned towards the door when the servant came, without waiting for his cousin to speak.

"Oh, William, bring us some tea as soon as you can," he said.

"Certainly, Mr. Tom," replied that functionary, in his most urbane tones.

When Mr. Tom was at home, his presence always had the effect of quickening the service of the house, not because he was hard to please, or not absolutely civil to his inferiors, but because there was always a ring in his voice which meant command. In an incredibly short time the stately William returned with the tea and set it in front of Miss Chichester, who had subsided on to a chair, with her little hands clasped together before her, in an attitude of patient waiting. She poured out the several cups of tea, and Tom got up and ministered to his friends in very hospitable style, finally going back to his cousin's side for his own cup.

"William has brought a cup short," he remarked and, before she could speak, went to the bell and rang it again.

"I don't want one," she stammered, nervously.

"Nonsense! Oh, William, another cup. Thanks."

They had barely finished the small meal, when the door was opened and three ladies came into the room. "Oh, my dear Tom," cried the larger and elder of these, "what made you come by so much earlier a train than you said? We would not have gone out for worlds if we had known. Why, you had not even a carriage sent to meet you."

"It did not matter, mother, thank you," said Tom, kissing her. "We are here; that is the great thing, you know. Let me introduce Captain Fox to you," taking one of the men by the arm, "and this is Mr. Griffiths, and this Mr. Ryan." Then he turned from them to scrub his cheek for a moment against the cheek of both his handsome sisters in turn.

"And you have had something to eat?" said Mrs. Langton, looking at the tray.

"Oh, yes, many thanks!" cried the three visitors in the same breath.

"Yes, Pussy looked after us splendidly," answered Tom.

Her attention thus called to her niece, Mrs. Langton turned to Pussy. "You may take my sunshade upstairs for me, Mary," she said, in a cold voice.

"Yes, Aunt Agnes," Pussy replied, looking more frightened than ever.

Tom raised his eyebrows as she disappeared, and glanced significantly at his mother, as if to ask a question of her. But Mrs. Langton either did not or would not see the look, and kept up a steady flow of conversation with the newly-arrived guests. Tom's eyebrows went up almost to the roots of his hair, but just then he could not say anything more plain than to ask the reason of the tone by a look.

But half an hour later, when the guests had all been shown to their rooms, he knocked at his mother's door, and, receiving permission to enter, went in and put a question plump and plain to her.

"What's wrong with little Pussy?" he asked, bluntly.

"I did not know that anything was wrong with little Pussy, as you call her," Mrs. Langton replied, in an icy tone. "Has Mary been complaining to you, pray?"

Tom sat down impatiently, with his hands thrust deep down into the pockets of his coat. "Complaining—no, of course not. Is it likely?"

"Yes, very likely," returned his mother, dryly.

"Well, likely or not, she did not complain in any way," Tom declared. "But I've got eyes in my head; I can see like other people."

"And what do you see?" demanded his mother, sharply.

Tom looked in some surprise at the tone—more at the tone than at the actual words. "Well, my dear mother," he answered, mildly, "I see that my cousin, my father's only niece, is very shabby for one thing."

"Beggars must not be choosers," retorted his mother, quickly.

"I don't think that the child of my father's only sister ought to be looked upon as a beggar in this house," said Tom, gravely. "And the poor child could not help her father and mother dying and leaving her as they did. Bless me, they didn't do it on purpose, did they?"

"I really cannot say," replied Mrs. Langton, in a very un-

sympathetic tone, "but, be that as it may, I have quite as much as I can do to dress myself and your sisters on my allowance, without spending a fortune on an interloper like Mary Chichester. So, pray let me hear no more of this exceedingly unpleasant topic."

She waved her hand, as if to show that she wished him to go, and Tom, with a vexed feeling that he had probably done more harm than good by his well-meant interference, went hurriedly out of the room, almost wishing that he had not said anything about his little cousin at all. He thought about her a good deal while he was dressing for dinner; yes, a good deal. Hang it, it was a shame that just because a poor little girl did not happen to have been born under the same roof, or not of the same branch of the family, she should be treated as an interloper if not actually as an outcast. He was just in the midst of wondering whether he could not manage to screw a few pounds a year out of his own allowance that she might look a little more like his sisters, when the door opened and young Ryan came in.

"I may come in, old chap?" he asked.

"Why, yes, to be sure," answered Tom, heartily.

So young Ryan, who was but little more than a boy, came in and wandered about the room, looking at the various pictures, chiefly representations of Tom at different stages of his school career. "I say, Tom, old fellow," he said after awhile, "you're a sly dog!"

"For why?" Tom asked, pausing with a brush in either hand.

"Well, you never told me a single word about the pretty cousin, and she *is* pretty, by Jove, no mistake about that."

"Look here, Ryan," said Tom, suddenly growing as grave as a Judge, "you are to let my little cousin alone, do you hear?"

"Eh?" said the other, in an inquiring tone.

"Yes, I know exactly what you mean," said Tom, steadily; "but you're wrong, quite wrong, I haven't such a thought in my head. Still, I am not going to have her played with and flirted with, so you had better understand that from the beginning. You can flirt to any extent with my sisters: they can take care of themselves far better than you can. But my cousin is to be let alone, do you see?"

"My dear fellow, no one could possibly help seeing," said Ryan, with a laugh, "you make it too devilish plain for any mistake. And what if I should get seriously hit in that quarter, eh?"

"You've got to marry money," said Tom, grimly, "you tell me so about a hundred times a day. And my cousin hasn't got any money, so the idea is no good."

"Very well; I will take care to give the young lady a wide berth," said Ryan, in much amusement, thinking that Tom was desperately hard hit in that quarter, and that he had hidden the fact very clumsily.

"There's the bell. By Jove we're late. Come along. To be late for dinner is the first and almost the only crime in this house;" and even as he uttered the words, the thought flashed across his mind that another and more awful crime in that house was to be unprotected and poor.

A fortnight soon goes over, and the two weeks that Tom Langton and his comrades spent at Brook House seemed to go by with the rapidity of magic. It was wonderful to Tom that he saw so little of his cousin, Mary Chichester. Even to him, knowing as he did his mother's indomitable resolution in carrying out any course of action that she had laid down as suitable to any particular occasion, it came as a surprise that he could live under the same roof with one of his own kin, and yet see so remarkably little of her. She never appeared at dinner, nor even in the evening afterwards. If ever he chanced to come across her before the men went off to shoot, she always told him that she had had breakfast long ago. "I can't think where you get it," he said one morning, half fretfully, "I came down the other morning ever so early, and there was not a sign of you to be seen."

"Oh, but I get fed all right," cried she, laughing heartily, and holding out a plump little hand to show what good condition she was in.

"I'm not so sure about that," Tom retorted, crossly; "I don't see why you should be shoved away out of sight as you are, Pussy. It's a burning shame; that's what I think about it."

She looked at him in a strange, startled kind of way, and a vivid blush spread itself over her pale face, staining it scarlet from chin to brow. "Don't say it," she said, under her breath. "I am quite content—I am very happy here. Aunt Agnes could not take me out when she has two daughters of her own. It is out of the question. I do not expect it, not even wish it. I am more than content."

"Pussy," said Tom, in a queer, strained kind of voice, and

catching her small hands in his larger clasp, "Do you know what you are? You are——"

"Mary!" exclaimed a voice, in high staccato accents of extreme astonishment. "What are you doing here? I thought I told you——"

"Yes, Aunt Agnes," gasped the girl, and, wrenching her hands free from the clasp of Tom's, she fled away as if she was trying to catch back the five minutes that she had been talking to her cousin.

Tom stood looking after her, and Mrs. Langton stood looking at Tom.

"I think you ought to know, Tom," she said at last, very sternly, "that neither your father nor I would ever give our consent to anything of that kind, so you had best dismiss any such idea from your mind at once."

Tom looked up at his mother. "My dear mother," he said, in great amusement, "I was not making love to Pussy. Nothing was further from my thoughts—or hers—I assure you."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mrs. Langton, coldly. "But I wish you would oblige me in one thing, Tom. It cannot be necessary to call Mary by the ridiculous name of 'Pussy.' It is most unsuitable, and is very misleading."

"I always have called her Pussy," said Tom, obstinately—Tom was very like his mother in some things.

"Very absurd of you to do so; the sooner such a silly habit is forgotten the better," remarked his mother, with more acidity than the matter seemed to be worth.

Well, although Mrs. Langton did not refer to the child again and the subject was not mentioned any more between them, she had been put on her guard, and Tom had no more chances of speaking alone to his cousin during his not very long visit home. He had not the smallest notion how it was managed, but the fact remains, nevertheless, that she seemed to have been positively spirited away. He spoke to his father about it once.

"Don't you think, sir," he said, one afternoon, when they were toddling slowly around the stables together, "don't you think that little Pussy might be let to have a better time on the whole than she does?"

"Yes, I do," answered the old Squire, promptly; "but when I hinted as much, your mother and the girls really made my life such a burden to me, that I was glad to drop the subject entirely."

"Your life ought not to be made a burden," said Tom, indignantly, "not over anything. I think that the little girl is shamefully treated all round. Why doesn't she come in to dinner as the other girls do? Why doesn't she have pretty frocks and things, as the others do? It is not right to have such a difference made between girls in the same house. I wouldn't allow it, if I were you, sir."

"My dear lad," said the Squire, smiling, yet with a certain sadness, "when you have been married as many years as I have, you won't talk about allowing this or not allowing the other. No, no, my boy; you will do just what your wife decrees, and be very thankful if she gives you a good and peaceable time on the whole."

"I don't quite think so," said Tom, with conviction in his tones.

"No; I didn't *once*," returned the Squire, quizzically. "Ah, take my advice, my dear lad, and never interfere in women's affairs any more than you can help. It don't pay! Besides, in this case, I asked the little girl herself about it, and she told me she was perfectly happy, and begged me to say nothing on her account. All girls are not cracked on going to parties, you know," he added, sagely.

Tom did not attempt to argue the question further. He jerked his head back several times and said nothing. As he remarked to himself, it was no use arguing any longer with such an old fool. He was fond of his father in a way, but the dominant figure in the establishment was not the Squire, but the Squire's wife.

And at the expiration of his leave he went back to his regiment without having spoken alone with Pussy.

Many months went by ere he saw her again. His long leave he spent that year in Algiers, going there on a somewhat wild-goose expedition, along with several other men of his regiment, in search of certain curios with a fortune in them. Their especial quest was black amber—that most rare of treasures; but though they had much definite information, said to be of a most exclusive character, and spent a good deal of time and also a good deal of money, they did not light upon any black amber among the hundreds of mouthpieces brought forth for their inspection in the various bazaars. And before he was lucky enough to get any more leave, a double calamity had fallen upon the whole family of Langton; for the kind old Squire was stricken down

and died in a fit, brought on by the news that a large and very risky speculation had failed, and failed in a way that meant positive beggary for the rest of his life.

The entire family, with the exception of Tom, seemed to be stunned. For days Mrs. Langton neither could nor would understand that, instead of being mistress of Brook House, she had nothing but her settlements to live upon for the rest of her life. Her settlements amounted to about eight hundred a year; and, although that is a very substantial buffer between three ladies and the poverty of the workhouse, it did not seem a particularly large income to one who had been mistress of as many thousands.

However, at last Tom made her understand that it was useless for her to rail against fate, and that the best thing she could possibly do was to accept the inevitable with as good a grace as she could, and be thankful that things were no worse.

"My dear mother," he said, sensibly, "it isn't of the least use to tell me that last year you had eight thousand a year at your command. You never had anything like that sum, though you have lived at the rate of it, which is a vastly different thing. As a matter of fact, the estate brings in about three thousand a year now, and it will take at least ten years for me to clear off my father's liabilities. I have arranged it all with the creditors, and I shall only take four hundred a year for myself until everything else is paid. If it falls hard on you, it doesn't fall exactly lightly on me."

"And how are your sisters to get suitably settled?" Mrs. Langton cried.

"They had a pretty good spell at the eight thousand a year scale," answered Tom, unfeelingly.

"Well, at all events, I will not have Mary Chichester staying on here in idleness," Mrs. Langton exclaimed.

"Mary is not to be turned out; I won't have it," Tom cried, in a sudden access of passion.

"I cannot possibly afford to keep her," Mrs. Langton persisted.

"I will give you a hundred a year out of my income," said Tom, hurriedly. "I will never consent to her being turned out."

So it was settled, and, after a very few more days had gone by, Mrs. Langton and the three girls left Brook House with many tears and took up their abode in a small villa at Brighton—it must be confessed with an eye to the property of an old aunt of

the late Squire's who lived there, and was worth nobody knew what.

And for Mary Chichester, if life had been hard and dull in the lavish establishment at Brook House, existence was still harder for her in the villa at Brighton. She worked like a slave, without either the wages or the consideration of a servant. She had no recreations, no pleasures, no new frocks—not even second-hand ones handed down to her by her cousins; and when Tom came, which was not very often, she was kept more busily employed—out of the way of mischief, as Mrs. Langton put it—than ever. But she did contrive to see Tom, all the same—Tom, who to her was the soul of honor and chivalry, the embodiment of all the virtues. It was the only thing that made such a life worth living.

Once or twice she went, by command of that imperious old dame, to take tea with the rich old aunt, and then in her innocence and loyalty she let out far more of the real state of affairs than she herself had any notion of. For she told how good Tom had always been to her, how he had given up a hundred a year of his modest income that she might stay on with her own people, instead of going out into the world to earn her bread among strangers. And the old lady heard all these little scraps of information and pondered over them when she was alone, with a very startling result; for at last she died, and in due course was buried, and then her very affectionate relatives gathered themselves together in the handsome library of her house, that they might hear the reading of her last will and testament.

It was brief and to the point, and it left everything of which she died possessed to her great-niece, Mary Chichester.

I may as well say at once that the news burst upon the four ladies with the force of a thunderclap. Tom was not present, being, indeed, occupied on a long court-martial—which had prevented his getting leave to attend his old relative's funeral. Well, yes, possibly the plentitude of defunct relatives which abounds in Her Majesty's Service might have had something to do with it.

So, Tom being absent, only Mrs. Langton and her daughters and Mary Chichester were present at the funeral, and at the reading of the will.

Mrs. Langton had had no thought of her niece's being present, but the old lady's lawyer had requested her presence in such plain terms that there was no preventing it. And when all was over, and they were back once more in their villa, then the vials

of Mrs. Langton's long pent-up wrath burst out, and she told the girl in plain, nervous English what she thought of her. So long as the torrent of angry words lasted, Mary stood without speaking, speechless, indeed, with astonishment and dismay. But Mrs. Langton's last furious taunt stung her to the very quick.

"I hope you are satisfied," the old woman screamed. "Right well you have rewarded my boy for his foolish sacrifices—the sacrifices made to keep you here in idleness, instead of letting you go out into the world to earn your own living. You have stolen his birthright from him, and may your ill-gotten gains be a curse to you and yours for ever."

"I think you had better not say any more, mother," put in the elder Miss Langton, quietly; she had an eye to future benefits to be got out of Mary Chichester.

"*What!* are you two going to turn against me for the sake of this ingrate?" Mrs. Langton began, passionately.

But Mary heard no more. With a cry she turned and fled, never stopping till she had reached the shelter of her own tiny bedroom.

Once there, however, her resolves were soon made. She counted the money in her shabby purse, and, putting on her hat again and taking her coat over her arm, she slipped quietly out of the house, and disappeared among the crowds walking along the sea-front.

* * * * *

The time was half-past seven that same evening. Tom Langton was sitting alone in his quarters, tired out with a long day passed at the court-martial—the last, Heaven be thanked—wondering, if the truth be told, how the old aunt had disposed of her property and dreaming of what he would do if she happened to have left a good share of it to him; dreaming of how he would go down to Brighton and ask a certain little girl called Pussy to marry him and let him make up to her for the wretched years which had gone by.

"Well, what is it, Jones?" he asked, as his servant entered and stood just within the door, evidently with something to say.

"A lady to see you, surr," said Jones, stolidly.

"A lady—what does she want?"

"Must see you very partic'lar, surr," Jones replied.

"Oh, d——," groaned Tom. "Well, show her in."

Accordingly, Jones showed the lady in, and discreetly closed the door behind her.

"Tom!" she cried.

"*Pussy!*" Tom cried in turn. "What is it? What has happened? What are you doing here?"

"Oh, Tom," she said, mournfully, "I'm so unhappy. She has left everything to me—everything—hundreds of thousands of pounds. And your mother is so angry. She says I have stolen your birthright—I, who owe you everything in the world. I was obliged to come. I wanted to see you before they could write to you. I don't want it, Tom. I shouldn't know what to do with it. I'll give it all back to you, Tom; only don't let them be angry with me any more, and say such dreadful things to me."

She paused, breathless with the vehemence of her torrent of words. Tom drew a long breath, and looked at her. "*Pussy,*" he said, gently, "there is only one way in which I could take it."

"And that?" she cried, eagerly.

"Do you know what I was thinking just as you came in?" he asked.

"No; how should I?"

"Well, I was thinking that if the old lady had left me any of her money, I would go down to Brighton to-morrow, and ask you to marry me

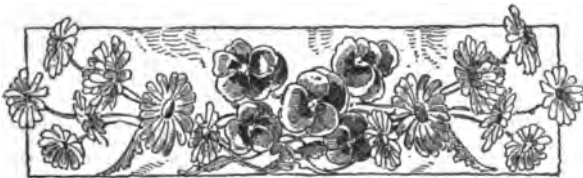
"Me!" cried *Pussy*, beginning to tremble.

"And you would have said——?" he asked.

"I should have said—Yes!" she cried, with a great flood of joy coming into her blue eyes.

"*Pussy, Pussy!*" he cried, holding out his hands to her.

"Dear Tom," answered she, softly.



THE MYSTERIOUS SKETCH*

BY ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN

Famous Story Series



OPPOSITE the chapel of Saint-Sebalt, in Nuremberg, at the corner of Trabans Street, stands a little inn, narrow and high, with notched gables, dusty shutters and a statue of the Virgin, in plaster, on the roof.

Here it was that I passed the saddest days of my life. I had gone to Nuremberg to study the old German masters; but, for want of ready money, I was obliged to resort to portrait painting—and such portraits! Great fat gossips with their pet cats on their knees; aldermen in huge wigs; burgomasters in three-cornered hats, and all colored to suit my customers' tastes in most vivid ochre and vermillion.

From portraits I went to sketches, from sketches to silhouettes.

Nothing is more pitiable than to have ever at your heels a landlord, with pinched lips, a harsh voice and an impudent air, who says to you every day: "Well! are you going to pay me soon? Do you know how much your bill amounts to now? No! well that does not worry you—Monsieur eats, drinks and sleeps peacefully. The good Lord provides food for little birds. Monsieur's bill is for two hundred florins and ten kreutzer; but that is hardly worth talking about."



He who has never heard this tune sung on every note of the gamut, can form no idea of the agony of it; love of art, imagination, the sacred enthusiasm of the beautiful, withers under the hot wind of such speeches. You become awkward, timid, you

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lose all energy, also your self-respect, and you salute from afar and respectfully Mein Herr the Burgomaster Schneegnas.

One night, being penniless, as was my usual custom, and threatened with imprisonment by this worthy Master Rap, I determined to bankrupt him by cutting my throat. In this pleasant frame of mind, seated on my truckle-bed, facing the window, I gave myself up to a thousand philosophical reflections, all more or less cheerful.

“What is man?” I asked myself, “but an omnivorous animal; his jaws, provided with dog-teeth, incisors and molars, sufficiently prove this. The dog-teeth are to tear the meat apart; the incisors are for biting into fruits, and the molars are for masticating and grinding animal and vegetable substances pleasant to the taste and smell. But when there is nothing to chew, then it is positively nonsensical in nature to give us so many different teeth, truly like unto a fifth wheel to a carriage.”

Such were my reflections. I did not dare open my razor, for fear that the invincible force of my logic would not inspire me with the courage to finish. After having argued for a long time in this way, I blew out my candle and postponed the suicide until the next day.

The abominable Rap had completely brutalized me. I saw nothing in art but silhouettes, and my sole aim in life was to get money, to rid myself of his odious presence. But that night a strange thing happened to me. After sleeping perhaps an hour, I suddenly awakened, and relighting my candle, I enveloped myself in an old gray coat and drew on paper a rapid sketch after the old Dutch school—something very strange and odd, which had no connection with my usual productions.

Picture to yourself a dark court, shut in by high walls, broken in many places—these walls covered with hooks, seven or eight feet from the floor. At the first glance, you could see it was a butcher-shop. To the left was a lattice-work of laths; in the centre of the back part of the court hung a quartered ox, suspended by immense pulleys from the ceiling. Large pools of blood



spread over the tiles, and ran towards a trench filled with shapeless debris.

The light came from above, between the chimneys, the weathercocks of which showed the sky at an angle of the heavens, about as large as your hand, and the roof of the neighboring houses threw dark shadows as they towered storey above storey.

At the back of this court was a shed, under the shed a woodpile, on the woodpile a ladder, some trusses of hay and packets of twine, a cage of poultry and an old dilapidated rabbit-hutch.

How these heterogeneous details presented themselves to my imagination, is more than I can tell. I have no remembrance of ever having seen anything similar, and yet each stroke of my pencil was too true to have been mere imagination. No detail was lacking.

But the right corner of the sketch remained untouched—I did not know what to put there. There, something moved—all at once I saw an inverted foot, separated from the earth. Notwithstanding this improbable position, I followed this impromptu inspiration. This foot finally joined a leg—over the leg a piece of dress. Briefly, the figure of an old woman, emaciated, with disordered clothing, disheveled hair, formed itself under my pencil; she was thrown backwards over a well, and was struggling against a hand that was squeezing her throat.



It was a murder scene which I had drawn. Frightened at my work, the pencil fell from my fingers.

This woman with back bent over the edge of the well, face contracted in terror, her two hands clutching the arm of the murderer, terrified me—I did not dare look at it. But the man, to whom the arm belonged, I could not see him—it was impossible for me to complete my sketch.

“I am tired,” I said to myself, my forehead bathed with perspiration, “it only remains to finish this figure, I will do that tomorrow. That will be easy.”

I went back to bed, affrighted at my vision. Five minutes later I was sound asleep.

The next day I was awake and up very early. I had just finished dressing, and I was getting ready to finish the interrupted work, when I heard two soft knocks at my door.

“Come in!” I cried.

The door opened. A man, already old, tall and thin, dressed

in black, appeared on the threshold. This man's countenance, with eyes near together, a large nose like the beak of an eagle, surmounted by a large bony forehead, was very severe-looking. He greeted me gravely :

" Mr. Christian Venius, the painter ? " he said.

" That is my name, sir."

He bowed again, saying :

" The baron, Frederick Van Spreckdal ! "

The apparition in my wretched lodging of the amateur Van Spreckdal, judge of the criminal court, impressed me greatly. I could not prevent myself from throwing a stealthy coup-d'oeil over my old worm-eaten furniture, my mouldy tapestries and dusty floor. I felt myself deeply humiliated, but Van Spreckdal did not appear to pay any attention to these details ; seating himself before my table, he said :

" Mr. Venius, I come——! "

But at that moment his eyes fixed themselves on the unfinished sketch—he did not complete his sentence. I had seated myself on the edge of my low bed, and the sudden attention which this great man gave to one of my productions made my heart beat with an indefinable apprehension.

At the end of a minute, Van Spreckdal, lifting his head, asked, looking at me attentively :

" Are you the author of this sketch ? "

" Yes, Sir."

" What is the price ? "

" I do not sell my sketches—it is the outline of a picture."

" Ah ! " he answered, lifting the paper by the tips of his long fingers.

He took an eye-glass from his waistcoat pocket, and commenced to study the drawing in silence.

The sun had come in obliquely through the mansard window. Van Spreckdal did not utter one word ; his large nose became more peaked, his heavy eyebrows contracted, and his



long, sharp chin hollowed hundreds of little wrinkles in his thin jaws.

The silence was so intense that I distinctly heard the plaintive buzzing of a fly caught in a spider's net.

"And the dimensions of this picture, Master Venius," said he, at last, without looking at me.

"Three feet by four."

"The price?"

"Fifty ducats."

Van Spreckdal put the drawing back on the table and, taking from his pocket a green silk purse, shaped like a pear, he slid out some money.

"Fifty ducats," he said; "here they are!"

I was dazzled.

The baron rose, bowed to me, and I heard his ivory-headed cane sound on each step to the bottom of the staircase. Then, waking from my stupor, I suddenly remembered that I had not thanked him. I descended the five flights like lightning. Reaching the doorway, I looked to right and left, but the street was deserted.

"That is queer!" I said to myself.

And I climbed up-stairs again, completely out of breath.

The surprising manner in which Van Spreckdal had appeared to me, threw me in a deep ecstasy. "Yesterday," I said to myself, contemplating the pile of ducats sparkling in the sun, "yesterday, I wickedly made up my mind to cut my throat for the sake of a few miserable florins, and now, to-day, a fortune has fallen from the clouds. Decidedly, I did well not to open my razor, and if ever the temptation comes to me again, I shall take great care to postpone it until the morrow."



After these wise reflections, I seated myself so as to finish the sketch; four strokes of the pencil and it was done.

But here an incomprehensible defeat awaited me. These four pencil-strokes it was impossible for me to take; I had lost the thread of my inspiration; the mysterious person would not come forth from my brain. I drew in a figure, then rubbed it out and outlined

another, but it no more matched the rest of the sketch than a figure of one of Raphael's saints would a smoking-room scene of Teniers. Huge drops of perspiration stood on my forehead.

At this moment Rap opened the door, without knocking, following his usual delightful habit; his eyes fastened on my pile of ducats, and in a shrill, penetrating voice, he cried out:



“Ah! Ha! I have caught you. Will you still maintain, Mr. Painter, that you have no money?”

And his hooked fingers advanced with that nervous trembling that the sight of money always produces in misers:

I was dumfounded for one moment, and then the remembrance of all the insults that this individual had heaped upon me, his sly look, his impudent smile, all exasperated me. With one bound I seized him, and with both hands I pushed him out of the door, which I slammed in his face.

This was done with the rapidity of a jack-in-a-box.

But once outside, the old usurer shouted:

“My money! Robber! My money!”

The neighbors put their heads out of their doors, and asked:

“What is the matter with him? What has happened to him?”

I opened the door brusquely, and giving Master Rap a good kick in the back, sent him flying down twenty or more steps.

“That is what has happened to him!” I cried to those around me, and then I shut the door in double-quick time amidst the shouts and laughter which saluted Master Rap as he passed.



I was pleased with myself; I rubbed my hands in my satisfaction. This little passage at arms had given me nerve. I took up my work and was about to finish my sketch when an unusual noise startled me.

The sound of the butt-ends of guns striking on the pavement. I looked out of my window and saw three gendarmes in their tri-cornered hats, their guns at "fatigue rest" on guard at the entrance to the house.

"I wonder if that scamp of a Rap could have broken some of his bones?" I asked myself in affright.

And now, the contrariness of human nature: I, who yesterday wanted to cut my throat, every nerve in my body trembled at the thought that they might hang me if Rap was dead.

The staircase was filled with confused noises. The sound of heavy footsteps, the clinking of arms and short speeches.

All at once some one tried to open my door, which was locked.

Then a great clamor arose.

"In the name of the law—Open!"

I arose trembling in every limb.

"Open!" replied the same voice.

The idea seized me to escape over the roofs; but hardly had I put my head out of my garret window, when I drew back seized with a vertigo. I had seen in the bright daylight all the windows below me, with their panes of glass reflecting the sunlight, their flower-pots and their bird-cages. Farther down the



balconies, farther the street lamps, still farther the signboard of the *Sonnelet Rouge*; and below all this the three shining bayonets, which awaited my fall, to spit me from the soles of my feet to the nape of my neck. On the roof of the house opposite to me was a large red cat, in ambush behind a chimney, watching a flock of sparrows scolding and fighting in the gutter.

One can never imagine to what power, to what rapidity of perfection the human eye can attain when stimulated by fear.

For the third time the voice said:

"Open the door, or we will force it open!"

Seeing that flight was impossible, I approached the door staggering, and nervously undid the lock.

Two cold steel points clasped my neck, and a little thick-set man, who smelled of wine, said to me:

“I arrest you!”

He wore a bottle-green coat, buttoned to his chin, a stove-pipe hat—he had long brown whiskers—rings on all his fingers, and was called Passauf.

He was the Chief of Police.

Five bulldog heads, with little flat caps, pug noses and receding lower jaws, gazed at me from the outside.

“What do you wish?” I asked Passauf.

“Descend!” cried he, roughly, making a sign to one of the men to seize me.

The latter dragged me away more dead than alive, whilst the other ransacked my room from top to bottom.

I descended the stairs, held up under the arms like a consumptive in the last stages—my disheveled hair hanging over my face, and trembling in every limb.

They threw me into a cab, between two vigorous scamps, who let me see their bludgeons attached to their wrists by a leather strap, and then the carriage started.

I heard the footsteps of all the gamins in the city running behind us.

“What have I done?” I asked one of my guardians.

He looked at the other in an odd fashion, and said:

“Hans, he wants to know what he has done?”

His smile froze my blood.

Soon a deep shadow enveloped the carriage, the horses' footsteps sounded as though they were going under a covered way. We had entered the Rospelhaus.

Everything is not rose-lined in this world; from Rap's claws I had fallen into a dungeon, from which very few poor devils ever come out.

Great sombre courtyards, slits of windows; not a particle of verdure, not a festoon of ivy, not even a weathercock in perspective—this was my new lodging. It was enough to make one tear his hair out by the handful.



The police agents, accompanied by the jailer, placed me temporarily in the round-house.

The jailer, as near as I remember, was called Kasper Schussel; and with his dirty gray cap, his bit of a pipe between his teeth, and his bunch of keys at his belt, produced upon me the effect of the Owl-God of the Caribs. He had large round yellow eyes, which could see just as well at night as in the day; his nose was like a comma, and his head was buried in his shoulders.

Schussel locked me up as calmly as you lock away a pair of woollen stockings in a wardrobe, your mind far away on other things. As to myself, with my hands crossed behind me, my head thrown back, I remained for more than ten minutes in the same position. At the end of that time, I made the following reflections:

“Rap in falling has cried out: ‘They have assassinated me!’ But he has not said who. I will say it is my neighbor, the old eye-glass merchant; he will be hung in my place.”

This idea soothed me and I drew a long breath. Then I started in to examine my prison. The room had just been white-washed, and its walls were perfectly bare except where, in one corner, a scaffold, very much enlarged, had been outlined by my predecessor. Daylight was admitted by bull’s-eyes, about nine or ten feet from the floor, and the furniture consisted of a truss of straw and a bucket.

I seated myself on the straw, my hands around my knees, in an agony of grief. It was as much as I could do to see clearly; but all at once, thinking that before he died Rap might have denounced me, I was seized with a tingling in my legs, and I jumped up coughing as though I could already feel the hempen cravat squeezing my throat.

Almost at the same moment I heard Schussel crossing the corridor; he opened the door of the round-house and bade me follow him. He was assisted, as formerly, by the two bearers of the bludgeons, who inspired me with so much fear that I involuntarily fell into step with them.

We traversed long galleries, lighted from time to time by interior windows. I saw behind a grating the famous Jic-Jack, who was to be executed the next day. He wore the strait-jacket and sang in a hoarse voice:

“I am the king of the mountaineers!”

Catching sight of me, he cried:

“Ah, comrade, I will keep a place for you at my right.”

The two police-officers and the Owl-God looked at him smilingly, whilst goose-flesh crept all along my back.

Schussel pushed me into a high, sombre room, filled with benches in a semicircle. The aspect of this deserted room, with its two high, grated windows, its Christ hanging on the old dark, oaken cross, his arms spread out, his head sadly inclined on his shoulders, inspired me with a religious fear, agreeing well with my critical position.

All my ideas of getting out of this scrape by falsely accusing my neighbor disappeared; my lips trembled as I uttered a murmured prayer.

For a long time I had not prayed, but misfortune always leads our thoughts to submission,—man is so small!

Before me, on an elevated seat, were two persons with their backs turned to the light, which left their faces in deep shadow. However, I recognized Van Spreckdal, his aquiline profile lighted by an oblique reflection from the window behind him. The other was fat, with full round cheeks, short hands, and was dressed in judge's robes as was Van Spreckdal.



Beneath them was seated Conrad, the clerk; he was writing on a low table, and from time to time scratched the top of his ear with his pen. Upon my arrival he stopped, and gazed at me with a curious expression on his face.

They bade me be seated, and Van Spreckdal, elevating his voice, said to me:

“Christian Venius, where did you get this drawing from?”

He showed me the nocturnal sketch then in his possession. He told them to pass it to me. After having examined it, I replied:

“I am the author of it.”

There was a long silence; the clerk, Conrad, took down my answer. I heard his pen running over the paper, and I thought to myself: “What matters these questions they have just asked me? They have no connection with the kick I gave Rap.”

“You are its author,” replied Van Spreckdal; “what is the subject?”

“It is merely a fanciful one.”

“You did not copy these details in any way?”

“No, sir; they are purely imaginary.”

“Accused, Christian Venius,” said the judge, in a severe tone of voice, “I caution you to reflect. Do not lie!”

I blushed, but in a firm tone cried out :

"I am telling the truth."

"Write, Conrad," said Van Spreckdal.

The pen began anew.

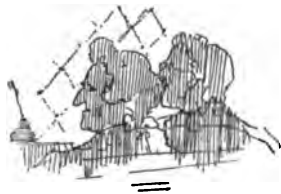
"And this woman," continued the judge ; "this woman that is being assassinated on the edge of the well—did you imagine that also ?"

"Certainly !"

"You never saw that scene enacted ?"

"Never !"

Van Spreckdal rose indignantly, then re-seating himself, he seemed to consult in a low voice with his associate.



These two black profiles, silhouetted on the luminous part of the window, and the three men standing behind me—the silence of the room—all this made me tremble.

"What do they want with me? what have I done ?" I murmured to myself.

All at once Van Spreckdal said to the officers :

"Take the prisoner back to the carriage ; we will go to the Metzgerstrasse."

Then turning to me, he exclaimed :

"Christian Venius, you are in a deplorable position. Collect your thoughts and remember that if the justice of man is inexorable, there remains to you the mercy of God ! You can be worthy of it by confessing your crime."

These words stunned me like a blow from a hammer. I threw myself backwards with outstretched arms, crying :

"What terrible dream is this ?"

Then I lost consciousness.

When I came to myself, I was in the carriage, which was going through the streets at a very slow pace ; there was another in front of us. The two policemen were still beside me. One of them offered a pinch of tobacco to his comrade ; mechanically I put out my fingers to help myself, but he drew the snuff-box away, as from contamination.

A blush of shame spread over my face and I turned my head away to hide my emotion.

"If you look out in the street like that, we will be obliged to put on the handcuffs," said the man who owned the snuff-box.

"May the devil fly away with you, impudent scoundrel !" I

thought to myself. Just then the carriage stopped, one of the men got out, while the other held me by the collar; when he saw that his comrade was ready to receive me, he pushed me roughly into his arms.

These extreme precautions to protect my person argued no good to my mind; but I was far from perceiving the gravity of the accusation against me, when a most frightful circumstance opened my eyes, and threw me into the depths of despair.

We had just entered a low alley, with broken and irregular pavements; along the wall a yellow ooze dropped, and a fetid odor assailed my nostrils. It was pitch dark, but at the end of the alley appeared the faint light coming from an inside court.

As I advanced, terror more and more intense seemed to take possession of me. It was not a natural feeling; it was a poignant anxiety, as unnatural as nightmare. I instinctively drew back at each step.

"Come!" cried one of the policemen, laying his hand on my shoulder, "hurry up! Walk more quickly!"

But who can describe my horror, when, at the end of the alley, I saw the courtyard that I had drawn the night before, its walls filled with hooks, its collection of old iron, its caged poultry and its old rabbit-hutch. Not a dormer-window, large or small, high or low, not a cracked pane of glass, not a single detail had been omitted!

I stood thunderstruck at this revelation.

Near the well stood the two judges, Van Spreckdal and Richter. At their feet lay the old woman, on her back—her long gray hair tossed about—her face blue and her eyes staring wide open.

It was a horrible sight!

"Well," said Van Spreckdal to me in a solemn voice, "what have you to say?"

My tongue refused to utter a syllable.

"Do you admit having thrown this woman, Theresa Becker, down this well, after having strangled her and robbed her of her money?"

"No," I cried, "no! I do not know this woman, I have never seen her. God be my witness!"

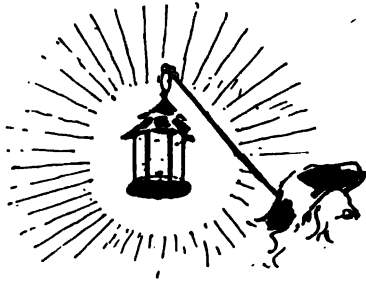
"That is sufficient," he answered, gravely.

And without another word, he went out quickly with his companion.

The policeman handcuffed me, and led me back to the Rospelhaus in a state of profound stupefaction. I no longer knew what to think—my conscience itself began to trouble me, and I asked myself doubtfully, if I might not perhaps have assassinated this woman!

In the eyes of my jailers I was condemned.

I could not describe to you the emotions of that night passed in the Rospelhaus, seated on my straw bed, the grated window in



front of me, the scaffold in perspective! I heard the watchman cry out in the stillness of the night: "Sleep, citizens of Nuremberg, the Lord watches! One o'clock!—Two o'clock!—Three o'clock strikes!"

Let each one picture to himself the horrors of such a night. It is all very well to say that it is better to be hanged innocent than guilty. For the soul, that may be all well enough, but for the body, it is altogether a different matter; this poor body kicks against fate, curses its lot and tries to escape it, knowing very well that its existence ends with the rope. Then perhaps it repents not having enjoyed life more, having listened to the voice of the soul, when it preached abstinence.

"Ah, if I had only known," this poor body cries, "you would not have led me by the nose with your elegant phrases and magnificent sermons! You would not have lured me by your fine promises! I would have enjoyed many a good time, which will never return to me now,—it is ended! You say to me: Subdue your passions! Well, I have subdued them. What is the reward? I am about to be hanged, and you, later, the world will call you—sublime soul, stoic soul—martyr to the errors of justice! There will not be even a thought given to me!"

Such were the sad reflections of my poor body.

The day began to break; at first faint, undecided, it lighted up with vague lights the bull's-eye window, the cross-bars—then it glimmered like starlight on the opposite wall. Outside, the streets began to waken up; it was Friday and market-day. I heard the vegetable wagons rolling by and the boon companions with their heavy baskets. Some poultry in cages clacked as they passed, and the butter merchants were talking among themselves.

The market opposite was opening and the marketmen were arranging their stalls.

Soon it was broad daylight and the murmur of the crowd growing louder; the housekeepers with their baskets on their arms, beginning to arrive, coming, going, haggling and buying, announced to me the fact that it was eight o'clock in the morning.

With the light, confidence came to me a little. A few of my dark thoughts disappeared, and I experienced a wish to see what was going on outdoors.

Other prisoners before me had climbed to the bull's-eye, and had dug holes in the wall to climb up more easily by. I climbed in my turn, and when seated in the oval bow of the window, with back bent and twisted neck, I could look out on the crowd beneath. Tears rolled down my cheeks. I no longer thought of suicide—I experienced an intense desire to live, to breathe, so intense as to be really extraordinary.

“Oh!” I cried to myself, “to live is to be happy! Let them even put me into trundling a wheelbarrow, let them fasten a ball and chain to my leg—only let me live!”

The old market, with its roof shaped like an extinguisher resting on heavy pillars, presented a superb sight. Old women in front of their vegetable hampers, their poultry cages, and their baskets of fresh eggs; behind them, the Jews, selling cast-off clothing, their faces the color of old wood; the butchers with bare arms cutting the meat upon their tables; the countrymen in large felt hats planted on the nape of their necks, calm and sensible, their hands behind their backs resting on their oaken sticks and tranquilly smoking their pipes—then the tumult, the noise of the crowd—their speech, shrill, noisy, grave, sharp and brief—their expressive gestures—their unstudied attitudes which betrayed even to me, so far away, whether the discussion was on



buying or selling, and depicted so perfectly the character of the individual ; briefly, all this captivated my spirit and, notwithstanding my sad position, I felt it was good to be in the world.



While I was gazing on this crowd and thinking, a man—a butcher—passed by, his back bent under the burden of an enormous quarter of beef, which was slung over his shoulders ; his arms were bare, his elbows in the air, his head turned to one side. His flowing locks, like those of Sicambre de Salvador, hid his face from me ; but in spite of this, at the first glance, I commenced to tremble.

“It is he!” I cried out aloud.

My blood seemed to overflow my heart. I descended quickly into my cell, trembling to the tips of my fingers, feeling my cheeks paling with a pallor that spread itself over my face, and stammering in a stifled voice :

“It is he ! He is there below and I was about to die for his crime ! Oh, my God ! what shall I do ? What shall I do ?”

A sudden idea, an inspiration from Heaven, took possession of me. I put my hand in the pocket of my coat and drew forth my box of crayons.

Then, rushing to the wall, I commenced to draw the murder scene with an unheard-of rapidity. No uncertainties, no hesitation. I knew the man—I had seen him—he posed before me !

At ten o'clock the jailer entered my cell. His owl-like countenance was lighted up with admiration.

“Can it be possible ?” he cried, stopping on the threshold.

“Go bring my judges,” I called to him, continuing to work with growing exaltation.

Schussel replied :

“They are waiting for you in the court-room.”

“I wish to make some revelations,” I cried, putting the last touches to this mysterious personage.

He lived, he was frightful to look at, his figure facing me, fore-

shortened on the wall, stood out in bold relief from the white background.

The jailer went out.

A few minutes afterwards the two judges appeared. They stopped, stunned.

I, my hand pointing to the picture on the wall and trembling in every limb, said to them :

“ There is the murderer ! ”

Van Spreckdal, after a few moments of silence, asked me :

“ His name ? ”

“ I do not know it ; but he is at this moment below in the market ; he is cutting up meat in the third passage to the left, coming in from Trabans Street.”

“ What do you think about it ? ” Van Spreckdal said, turning to his colleague.

“ That we send out and find this man ! ” the other answered.

Several policemen standing in the corridor obeyed this order. The judges remained in my cell, with their eyes fastened on the sketch ; as for me, I sank on the straw completely overwhelmed.

Soon steps were heard approaching from afar. To those who have not awaited the hour of deliverance and counted the minutes, which seemed as long as centuries—those who have not felt the poignant emotions of uncertainty, the terror, the hope, the doubt—these could never conceive the internal agonies which I experienced in this moment. I could distinguish the murderer's footsteps, surrounded by his guards, among a thousand others.

They were approaching ! The judges seemed excited even ! I had lifted my head and my heart felt as though it were squeezed in an iron band. I turned an anxious gaze towards the closed door. It was opened—the man came in—his cheeks seemed puffed out with blood, his massive jaws were contracted, and little eyes, restless and tricky as those of a wolf, sparkled under his thick eyebrows, of a reddish yellow tinge.

Van Spreckdal silently showed him the sketch.

Then this sanguinary man, with broad shoulders, looking at it, turned pale, then, letting forth a roar which froze us with terror, he threw out his arms and with a backward bound tried to overthrow his guards. There was a frightful struggle in the corridor ;



you could hear the panting breath of the butcher, the muttered imprecations, the disjointed words and the shuffling of feet on the flags as they struggled and fought with the half crazy man.

This lasted for more than a minute.

At last the assassin re-entered, his head lowered, his eye bleeding, his hands manacled behind his back. He once more gazed fixedly at the picture of the murder—seemed to reflect, and in a low voice, as if speaking to himself, said :

“Who could have seen me ?”

I was saved !

Many years have passed since this terrible adventure. Thanks to God, I no longer take silhouettes, nor even portraits of burgo-masters. By dint of work and perseverance, I have made a name for myself and honorably earn my living by painting works of art, the only end, according to me, to which honorable artists ought to aim. But the remembrance of the nocturnal sketch has always been a puzzle to me. Sometimes, in the midst of my work, my mind reverts to it. Then I put down my palette and dream for hours together.

How was it that a crime, committed by a man I did not know, in a house I had never seen, could have been reproduced by my pencil, even to the most minute details ?

Was it chance ? No ! And yet chance ; is it not after all the effect of a cause which puzzles us ?

Schiller was right when he said : “The immortal soul does not participate in material weakness ; during the sleep of the body, it spreads its radiant wings and goes, God knows where ! What it does then, no one can tell ; but its inspiration betrays the secret of its nocturnal peregrinations.”

Who knows ? Nature is more audacious in its realities than man's imaginations in its fantasy !



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HEIR TO HIS AFFECTION *

BY S. ELGAR BENET



HE country was flat and low, so low that it appeared to fall below the water-line, and it was a matter of conjecture how in rainy seasons the scant proportion of land escaped complete obliteration.

The river broadened to the bay; on either side innumerable creeks and streams and ditches made a silvery network. Out of green tracts grist-mills swung long arms against the sky, suggesting, with the watercourses, reminders of Holland. There was not much timber; a few well-grown oaks rose about the scattered houses; there were stretches of peach-orchards and some apple trees. Irregular patches of corn grew to the verge of the water; dwellings were built as close, the bay schooner or sailboat lying so near that it was almost possible for the owner to step from his door aboard.

All day a storm had lowered in the West, it veered, shifted,

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dissipated for a moment and gathered again. The reflection of a purple cloud lay upon the water; beyond it, miles away, a line of sand and a stretch of undergrowth shone unnaturally yellow and green in the stormy light.

The village of Tygart's owned to six houses, two stores, and a place of public worship; it had besides, a wharf-house of modest size and a long pier. Steamers touched at Tygart's once a week.

A motley assortment of vehicles, ox-carts, gigs, farm wagons, carryalls, stood along the fences and around the tall cluster of poplars in the rear of the meeting-house. A fleet of boats, from a schooner to a rowboat with a temporary sail, lay moored at the pier; their broken reflections colored the water.

The pier was full of people in holiday finery. Only a camp-meeting would have exceeded in importance the wedding of Jane Jamison and Eben Ranger. Jane was large, strong, and five-and-twenty, rather mature for a bride in her country, where early marriages are still the rule. She would have looked better in anything than her wedding-gown; her bonnet was unbecoming; the coarse white gloves prescribed by custom looked out of place on her hands. She was of a serious nature—the Jamisons had always been piously inclined—and deprecated vanities. An orphan and poor, Providence was considered to have regarded her with special favor in that Ranger had waited for her seven years.

Ranger was a man of influence; he owned a barren stretch of sand, down towards the mouth of the bay, and the Jane J., which was an oyster-boat in winter and a fruit-boat in summer.



He was taking his bride home to Ranger's; his sailboat, with the wind in the sail, lay at the end of the pier.

"I would n't give much fo' you, Ranger," called a man in the crowd, "if Saint Bevis 'd happen to turn up."

"If you see Saint Bevis, you send him along to me. I'll give him the heartiest welcome an' the best dinner he 'll get on East'n Sho' from one end to the other, an' Jane, she 'll back me up; won't yo', Jane?"

A girl caught the bride around the neck and drew her head down.

"Oh, Jane, I want to ask yo' something! Jane, do this, won't

yo' ? When I was up to Baltimore, at my Cousin Susie Mills' weddin'—her that married the young man from out West—they went away to the depot in a hack, an' the depot was on'y jus' a little way aroun' the corner, an' Susie she stood up in the hack an' pitched her bouquet at the crowd, an' the one that caught it 'll be married next. I didn't. Won't yo', Jane, stan' up in Eben's boat an' pitch out yo' bouquet in the water, an' we-all an' the boys 'll foller in rowboats an' see who 'll get it ?”

“Well,” said Jane, slowly, “I don' know as they's any harm in it, I reckon.”

They began with haste to get out the small boats ; everybody laughed and shouted and talked at once.

Two or three women spoke to Jane in mournful tones, as if she were going to execution.

“Are yo' sure yo' got yo' shawl, Jane ? 'Cause the wind's a-springin' up fresher and I wouldn't be surprised if it 'd blow right sharp before long.”

“It's in the locker.”

“Yo' been a good girl, Jane ; I don't want yo' never to forget that I'm yo' friend.”

“I won't.”

“An' yo' must come up when yo' can, though that won't be often, less'n Eben 'll bring yo' in the cutter, an' I don't reckon he will, as he's mos' in general busy ; but mebbe, as yo're jes' married he'll put himself out a little at first. Lor, child, it do seem's if yo'r goin' clean out o' the world—straight to the jumpin'-off place.”

“Storm's goin' to ketch yo',” shouted a man, pointing to the reflection of the cloud.

Ranger looked at the cloud critically.

“That's been hangin' around all day ; won't come to nothin' till to-morrow, or say by the day after. If this wind holds out we'll get to the island about ten or 'leven, an' they's a late moon.”

“An' if the wind gets up fresher,” called a woman, “yo'll wish yo' had somebody besides yo'self to help to tackle that sail.”

“That's all right.”

He got down into the boat and waited for Jane ; she followed, after many kisses, embraces and a few tears.

“Good-by—good-by,” called the women, hysterically. “Don' forget yo' always got a friend in me, Jane. If yo' need help, yo' know where to turn to.”

They waved their hands and kerchiefs; the men shouted and waved their hats.

The wind filled the sail; the boat stood out upon the shining water. Jane sat in the stern; beyond the small boats she rose and threw her bouquet. Another shout went up from the pier; the boys bent to the oars and twenty eager hands reached for the flowers.

On the bay the wind was stronger; at times the boat lay over until the water hissed across her bow. Through stormy clouds sunset shone and disappeared; islands were purple shadows in the distance. Near the mouth of a river they looked over a darkening country cut by streams that glittered like silver between level, sedgy reaches. A gray mill whirled its arms against the sky.



Jane removed her gloves and the unbecoming bonnet; she put them carefully away and took her place at the tiller. Ranger made the sail fast and sat down by her. He motioned with his hand toward Tygart's.

"I'm mortal glad to get away from 'em all; ain't you?"

"No," she said, "I ain't; they was good an' kind to me; I ain't glad to get away from 'em. 'Tain't one man, woman or child in the lot but what's done me some good turn. I can't say I'm glad to be rid of 'em."

"I didn't so much mean that as the goin's on an' the to-do."

"It was worryin.' I'd a-liked it better if we could a gone to the preacher's an' been married quiet, but when I spoke of it they took it so to heart that——"

She ceased speaking and looked across the water toward a speck of light that glimmered redly and disappeared.

"It's a ocean steamer," said Ranger, "goin' up to port. I reckon if yo' ain't glad to get away, yo' ain't glad to be here along with me."

"I didn't say so."

"Yo' didn't *say so*."

Jane laughed indulgently; she had a pleasant laugh, soft, like her voice in speaking.

"Yo' oughtn't to need tellin', seein' I'm here is some reason to believe that I'd sooner be with you than the others; words oughtn't to make it truer—they couldn't to me; but I reckon it's like a man, he won't believe yo're glad to go with him

less'n yo' can say yo're overpowered with joy to get away from the rest."

"No—no, Jane——"

"An' I reckon men don' believe a woman takes to 'em very much less'n she can say she hates everybody else on their account."

"No—no, Jane," he said again, and laughed; "that's a woman's way. Every girl likes her sweetheart to hate every other girl on her account."

"It never was my way."

"Not even with Saint Bevis?"

The light was dim, he bent nearer to look into her face.

"Not even with him," she repeated. "Eben, yo're not in earnest. I couldn't tell God no truer 'n I told you about Saint Bevis. If they's more to tell, I don't know it."

"I know—I know," he said, foolishly; "if Saint Bevis 'd a lived or come back some five or six years ago, I'd had to look elsewheres for a wife."

"I reckon."

"An' seein' 'at he 's dead or jes' the same, yo' been good enough to take me fo' next best——"

"Very best; Saint Bevis he don't make no odds to me to-day. They can't be nothin' misunderstood between you an' me now, Eben; we ain't left nothin' untold."

"That's a fact."

"We're startin' jus' the same as if we never had lived before."

A blast of wind struck the sail; a sheet of water drenched Jane's wedding finery.

"Go below!" shouted Ranger.

There was a tiny cabin built in the hold; a well-grown man could not have stood upright in it.

"I'll stay here," said Jane.

For the next two hours he had hard work to keep before the wind. In the darkness, which fell suddenly, and rain and storm, he scarcely knew whither they were driving or how far the night had gone. In a lull of the storm he called:

"If I'd a knowed I was a-bringin' yo' to this, Jane——"

She answered deliberately:

"I was willin' to come."

A splitting of timbers sounded above the noise of the wind.

"They's a weak place in the mast," cried Ranger.

The mast crashed shuddering upon the cabin ; Ranger staggered and fell across Jane's knees.

She had kept her thoughts away from the danger of their position, had clung to the tiller and imagined she saw the sky



lightening and a line of shore darker in the gloom. The horror of the situation seized her ; she began to pray, but conventionally. Never had she spoken from her soul to God, not even in the years of extreme youth when she prayed for Saint Bevis's return. Her prayers were fragments of meeting-house petitions, familiar from frequent hearing :

" Lord, Thou seest that we are in great danger and peril," she said, " that the waters have well-nigh gone over us, that we are like to be swallowed up into a pit. If so be that this is Thy will, good Lord, help us that are Thy poor creatures an' don' deserve nothin' better, to say amen ; but seein' Thou canst do all things, we beg an' beseech 'at Thou 'lt fetch us safe to shore."

She heard the sound of a keel cutting the waves ; a vessel loomed out of the darkness, a blacker shadow than the night.

It was so close that it threatened to capsize her dismantled boat. A light streamed from the side and lay in broken reflections on the water.

Jane lifted up her voice and cried aloud :

“ Help—help ! ”

She told herself that it was a fruit-schooner, on its way up the bay ; it might have been blown from its course ; perhaps it was making for some cove along the shore ; at this season the bay was white with the fruit-fleet. She began to pray again, keeping the tiller hard down with one strong hand ; the other held Ranger where he had fallen.

Through rifts in the ragged cloud she saw a glimmer of light that told where the moon was rising. Some one spoke to her out of the darkness :

“ Jane, is that you ? ”

“ Oh, help us ! ” she answered.

Three men in a rowboat came alongside and made fast. Jane's courage deserted her ; she was like a woman in a dream. They lifted the hurt man from her lap ; a rough voice said :

“ Man's dead.”

Another :

“ It's Ranger hisself. They was talk of his marryin' when I was last at Tygart's, an' fetchin' his wife home to that God-forsaken place of his.”

“ Ranger's ? ”

“ Ay ; if yo' could see yo' hand before yo' yo'd see it a little to the east'ard. Nothin' but sand an' sedge-grass, with a house an' a tree or two.”

Ranger's was, as the man described it, a God-forsaken place of sand and sedge-grass. The mainland lay to the east, the magnificent width of the bay to the west. In earlier times it had figured as an island of some importance. The bay had gradually claimed its acreage, until not more than a couple of miles remained, chiefly useful as a rabbit-warren. Weeds which spring from sand grew rankly ; a weather-beaten house stood on the southern end, three tall poplars rose above it. There was a round spot where an attempt at a garden had been made. By the narrow path from the shore a rose-tree grew ; it had bloomed in the spring, its brown leaves fell from their stems. Some woman of long ago had planted it.

Except the flutter of breath there was no sign of life in Ranger's great frame. Saint Bevis fetched a medical man, the sor-

riest specimen of the country doctor; he would have set a broken leg by the administration of quinine. He brought with him a student who was down on a vacation. These gentlemen differed in their diagnosis; they forgot professional courtesy so far that the elder wrote the younger down an ass, which compliment was duly returned in kind.

Jane gave an indifferent assent when the student in an excess of enthusiasm proposed to remain and watch the case; she scarcely heard when he related scores of incidents which had come under his observation in hospital practice. The falling



mast, he said, had glanced across the skull; there was undue pressure upon the brain; some nerves had been displaced. When Ranger opened his eyes and looked, with a total lack of consciousness, into the faces around him, the embryo doctor was triumphant. He regarded humanity rather as a field for the demonstration of cunning theories and experiments, than as existing to be bettered by them. It was the easiest thing in the world: perception by the senses had become suspended: under present conditions this death in life might go on for years; the man was physically strong. He did not know how far mental consciousness was affected—so little is known about the brain—there was the case of Smart. Here, while he would not swear to it, the man had one chance, possibly three in a hundred—trepanning would do it. Jane had all the unlettered's fear of surgery; she cried and said she would be satisfied with the sign of physical

life. The would-be surgeon departed in disgust. He told Saint Bevis it was a beautiful case; if at any time they concluded to follow his advice, he'd be happy to recommend them to the best surgeon in Bellevue. He wrote his name and address upon a slip of paper. Saint Bevis put it in his pocket; said he was 'bliged to him; he'd think about it.

St. Bevis was a handsome man, noticeably so in a community where the men were undersized and below the average in personal appearance. He was tall and straight, well-featured; his eyes were bold and blue, and his yellow beard fell over a chest both broad and deep. His hard life had bronzed him and sealed a magnificent strength. He was equally capable of boundless self-abnegation and of reckless indulgence; his nature, generous by impulse, was thoroughly undisciplined; he regarded his limited world as subject to the might of his arm.

He came often to Ranger's, the days were few when his boat was not drawn up on the sand. At first many others came, men and women from the mainland. At Tygart's they made up Sunday parties in large numbers. Ranger's affliction awed them; they talked in sympathetic tones to Jane, pitied her and asked what she intended to do, if Eben had anything laid by, or if she thought of selling off. Jane said the bugeye was out on shares, she wished it warn't, she saw where she could do better. Job Pumphrey had sent her word that she needed overhauling and that a mast had fallen and stove in the cabin and that everything made by the late trips had been used for repairs. She didn't know yet, but she reckoned she'd get on. Curiosity was sated by September; it was a long way to Ranger's. The friends at Tygart's contented themselves with wishing Jane well and asking after her repeatedly. They said it must be all right, it was the will o' Providence or it wouldn't a happened, but—it did seem a pity 'at Saint Bevis hadn't a got home sooner.

By October Saint Bevis, Jane and the hurt man had the world to themselves. He and she sat for hours with Ranger's presence, an awful restraint, between them. They spoke in undertones of the winter's work. The partnership with Pumphrey expired in November; they could make better terms for the Jane J. They discussed the comparative merits of dredging and tonging, the possibility of new legislation upon the former, the advisability of carrying the catch invariably to the Baltimore market, etc.

Though they spoke to each other they looked at Ranger, whose restless eyes roved constantly from face to face. Most of

all they dreaded the frequent silences, when thought spoke more unmistakably than words.

Jane protested insincerely against his presence and as passionately resented his absence; every hour of the day she looked out over the water for his sail. She accused herself of deceiving Ranger when she had assured him that Saint Bevis was no longer anything to her; it did not help her to feel that she had deceived herself as well. Each office she rendered his helplessness hurt her like a reproach; she felt herself unworthy to stand before him. She clung to the consolation that she had not injured him in deed, she told herself she never would.

Saint Bevis came upon her unaware one day as she delved in her sandy garden. The air was warm and scented with a breeze from the mainland, which was hidden by the blue haze that left only the island and some breadths of gleaming water visible; there was the sound of a slow tide breaking on the sand.

"What's going to become of us, Jane?" Saint Bevis's soft voice asked.

She rose and held out her hands against him.

"Don' say anything!" she begged.

He broke down her cherished barrier and overwhelmed her with a torrent of words. Jane sat in the sand and hid her face in her arms.

"Oh, go away—go away for ever."

"I'll go," he answered.

He did not move; he demanded bitterly:

"What's the good of it all? What's the use of it? Here's me an' you—when you was seventeen and I was twenty-five we loved each other so we thought they warn't goin' to be no more trouble in the world—not to touch us—jes' on that account. Ain't it true?"

"Oh, I reckon—I reckon. What makes yo' say such things; what makes yo' call 'em up? It didn't seem half so sinful long's we left 'em unsaid. Somehow I could deny 'em to myself, but now——"

"An', then, what should I do but go clean mad on account of jealousy—anger—whatever yo' please to call it, an' take myself off to spite yo' an' stay away till year followed year, till I a'most forgot yo'—or remembered yo' on'y as if yo' was dead—an' they warn't no chance o' seein' yo' again. An', then, that night in the bay, when it seemed like the storm flung yo' at me, without no will o' mine, an' I heard yo' callin' in the dark——"

She interrupted him without raising her head from her arms :

“ I wish I hadn't called—I wish yo' hadn't heard.”

He laughed incredulously and repeated her words :

“ Hadn't heard, yo' say ? I couldn't help it. I knowed it war you from the first. I could a walked on the water to yo'.”

“ I wish yo'd left us to go down together ; it wouldn't a made no difference to him, seein' he is as he is now.”

“ It seems to me as if devils have had to do with it,” said Saint Bevis ; “ so long as yo' was free, half o' the world laid between us, but afterward nothin' couldn't keep us apart—an' him neither livin' nor dead.”

Jane stood up and confronted him stormily :

“ He is livin'—he is livin' ! God knows I'm doin' my best. I pray night an' mornin' for him to come to hisself. I won't keep nothin' hid—I'll tell him all. Oh, I wish yo'd go away.”

“ How can I go for good ? Can I leave you here to starve—how'd you get on alone ?”

“ Something might happen ; somebody 'd come over.”

“ Who 'd come ? What friends have yo' got 'at 'd take the trouble to come reg'lar to Ranger's now they know all about Eben, an' they ain't no new thing to tell ? Ranger's is a good piece out of everybody's way. Who's goin' to look out for yo' if I don't ?”

“ Something might happen,” she repeated.

“ Say it again—shall I go for good ?”

“ Yes,” she said, but he knew she did not mean it. As she left him she thought with mingled reproach and thankfulness that he would come again.

Always she prayed in her set conventional forms for Ranger, never for Saint Bevis or herself. Once she said aloud as she looked into Ranger's impassive face :

“ I thought I tol' yo' all the truth ; I was as honest as I knew—then.”

His eyes rested a moment on hers ; there was no effort of expression in them, no sign of returning consciousness, yet Jane fell upon her knees and covered her face with her hands.

“ I'll do it—I'll do it,” she cried.

She went to the window and knelt, with her arms upon the sill. It was night, but the world was far from dark ; the moon shone upon a mist and illuminated it, it was like a half-transparent veil over the water. She pushed up the sash and listened ; there was the sound of a boat's keel on the sand. She sprang to her feet

and ran from the house. Half-way down the path she met Saint Bevis.

"Is it you, Jane?"

"Don' come no further," she called, "stay where yo' are—don't never come near me again. What's past an' done can't be helped, but I tell yo' now an' I tell you true, to leave us for good."

He dropped the load he carried, took off his hat and passed his hand across his forehead.

"Leave us to starve if need be," she cried, desperately, stretching her hands, palms outward, against him. "I been a sinful woman in that I kept yo' here, in that I wanted to keep yo'. I ain't no blame for you, not one word—but oh, I didn't know until to-day. To-day"—she leaned toward him, her voice fell to a whisper,—"*God* looked at me out of his eyes."

Each held the other's gaze in silence. Jane spoke first; she said:

"Yo' know how near wicked we've been."

Saint Bevis knew; he turned from her without lifting his eyes to her shamed, impassioned face and went away.

When she heard the dip of the oars she began to sob and to wring her hands. She made as though she would run after him and retraced her steps. There followed a bad half-hour, during which this unimaginative creature was tortured by relentless memory.

It was years ago, eight or nine, and past twilight of an August evening; the sky, full of pale stars, held all the light, except that which the gleaming water reflected; the shores were black. There was no sound but the voices of the tired pleasure-seekers on their way home. A boat glided across their bow; the fishermen were putting out the seine, four were only masses of shadow, but the figure of the rower was distinct; his large-featured face was ruddy, his eyes were bold and blue, his bare head was yellow with thick hair; a yellow beard flowed over his breast. The boat leaped forward under his powerful strokes.

"That's the new man from Kent," said one; "the Swede's son. His name's Saint Bevis."

"*Saint* Bevis!"

They shouted with laughter and fell to telling tales of his might, his length of limb and girth of muscle.

Saint Bevis advertised along the Shore that he had taken the bugeye on shares. He shipped a crew and set out to dredge off the islands. An energy seized him that drove him to lawlessness;

he had no mercy on his men, night and day he worked with a success beyond desert.

A fever of penitence took possession of him. He thought not so much of Jane as of Ranger. His impulses were naturally generous, and his treachery to the helpless man goaded him. In storm and darkness Ranger's expressionless eyes looked at him; they held for him the same significance which they held for Jane. He began to repeat her words, "God looked at me out of his eyes."

He had a plan which he intended to carry out. When he went again to Ranger's it was in goodly company, to urge Jane to send her husband to the hospital. He had kept carefully the address which the student gave him.

Jane cried and said it would be a sin; if it was the Lord's will to have things this way, nobody hadn't a right to interfere. If prayin' would do anything now——

They showed her how the great gaunt frame had gradually weakened, told her that death was inevitable and that there was but this one chance left. Her tears flowed faster; she said she never, never would, yet yielded. Later, she went with her charge northward.

Saint Bevis worked during the winter with the strength and daring of ten men. In January a storm swept the bay that brought destruction to many a craft. The Jane J. was disabled. While repairs were making, her master shipped as captain of a schooner and forwarded his earnings to Ranger. He was making amends according to his nature. He would never be able to acknowledge his wrong in words.

Ranger came back in early spring, weak and white, but a sound man; the displacement of those delicate nerves had been corrected, the surgeons had wrought a cure.

He ran his boat up on the sand and looked over the barren acres beginning to bud into gold and green within the circle of the water.

"It's good to be home again," he said.

"Yes," Jane answered, absently. She was busy, with a housewife's care, arranging her packages out of reach of the waves.

He shaded his eyes with his hand and searched the water from the blue line of the shore to the purple mist which meant the ocean.

"They's somebody comin'."

Over the shining reaches a sail rose and fell, dipping to the water as a stronger breeze filled it.

"They won't be long gettin' here with that wind behind 'em. Whose boat is it?"

Jane flushed as she answered:

"It's Saint Bevis's. He warn't at Millstown to-day, yo' know; I reckon he's come to see how yo' are."



They stood watching the sail; it was so near that the water as it flew over the bow in white spray could be seen. She spoke quickly, under her breath: "Eben, they's something I been tryin' to say to yo' this long while—somethin' I been a prayin' to tell yo'; I can't feel honest till I do. It's about——" She stopped. He looked from the water to her downcast face, to her large brown hands clasped closely, then answered quietly:

"You don' need to say nothin'. I know—I knew all the time."

"Then yo' know——"

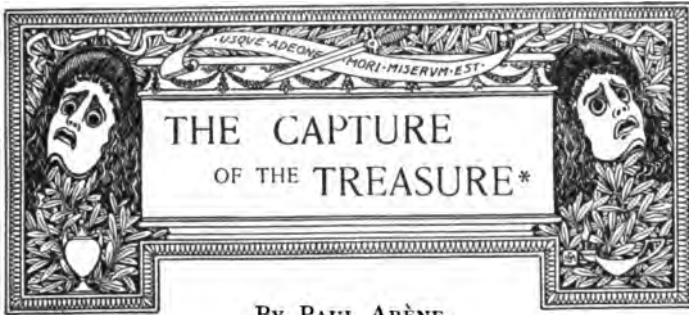
"You don' need to tell me nothin'," he repeated. "It's all come right."

"An'—an' Saint Bevis—I don' want you for to think——"

Ranger put his hands to his lips and shouted; he was glad to get away from these confessions. He shook hands heartily with Saint Bevis and made him welcome.

Saint Bevis stood on the gunwale of his boat. He said he had come to say good-by, he was going to ship on a twelve-month's voyage; he had no time to stop.

Jane bade him good-speed as he stood out from shore. She called a hearty farewell above her husband's gruff tones. Saint Bevis neither looked back nor answered; he thought, with mingled gratitude and resentment, how easily women forget.



"YOU don't recognize Brame-Faim?" said old Estève.

I should never have known Estève's stony farm—whose barrenness was proverbial—while beholding, instead of the meagre fields of wheat and barley, half lost among the scanty copses, long rows of vines, and between them the wheat growing green under the almond trees.

"Cadet made all these changes. Before his time the plateau produced very little, there were too many stones! The grass was thin and sparse. We cleared the ground thoroughly from time to time, but what could be done with the pebbles? We were obliged to heap them in the middle of the fields in the old-fashioned way, and the piles, annually increasing, continually rising and spreading, at last swallowed up the soil. Brame-Faim had half a dozen enormous ones, dating from the time of Queen Jeanne. These *clapas* were our destruction. But Cadet came home from college with ideas of his own, and hit upon the right plan, as you will see. The public highway was being mended, and the Commissioners of Roads and Bridges were bringing their materials from a long distance at great expense. Cadet saddled our gray mare and went to headquarters, carrying a bag of the round pebbles, hard as steel, which fairly blunted the mattocks. He saw the prefect and the engineer, and showed his stones, saying that we would give them gratis, they need only carry them away. In short, one fine morning the government rubbish carts came up and, in a twinkling, without my spending a penny, everything was removed, the field was made as clear as the palm of my hand, and your carriage is now rolling over the very stones on which, when a school-boy, you wore out so many breeches."

Old Estève spoke the truth. I looked in vain amid the

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sea of wheat rippling in the breeze for the huge *clapas* which had been the delight of my childhood.

Only one remained, the smallest, near the farm-house.

"Did you keep that one for seed, Papa Estève?"

"That," he answered, with a shade of embarrassment. "Yes, I kept it—— I didn't want—— It serves for a fence to the garden and protects the plants from the mistral."

Then, no doubt reading in my eyes that this explanation was not sufficient, he added :

"And a Christian is buried there."

"A Christian, Papa Estève!"

Papa Estève did not wish me to believe that a recent drama had stained the farm with blood, so he said, hurriedly :

"Oh, don't be afraid; the death didn't occur yesterday; it dates from the capture of the treasure in the days of the old Republic."

I was familiar with the story of that capture of the treasure, of which, after the lapse of sixty years, people spoke with bated breath, the best families of our little town having been compromised by it.

There were traditions connected with the incident.

When a little fellow, playing near the wash-house, I was terribly frightened one day by the sight of a majestic, spare old woman, named tall Eponine, who rushed in like a fury, tearing off caps and ribbons and shaking her gray locks amid the beetles like a Eumenides, because the washerwomen, in quarrelling over the best places, had asked her—ominous question—how many five-sous pieces would make five hundred francs.

Eponine, it seems, had been implicated in the capture, and received for her share, like the others, five hundred francs in five-sous pieces. That evening, while the matter was under discussion, the following story was told :

"A young lass at Vilhosc, who had been present after the capture, while the robbers were eating a ham omelette in a farm-house, had gone out to service in the town. One day, pointing to a rich citizen who was passing, she said :

"'There goes one of the men who eat the omelette.'

"Her master, being informed, sent her as soon as night closed in, to fill a pitcher at the fountain. She never came back. Men, stationed there for the purpose, had seized, gagged, bound her, tied her up in a sack, and flung her into the very middle of the Durance."

This was in the time of the Republic, and these tales inspired us with an equal horror of this Republic, whose name was always associated with crime, and of the fatal fountain, around which we always made a wide circuit when on coming home from school at dusk we heard it gurgling and pouring jets of water from its four mouths in the dark corner of the square.

Afterwards I learned that the capture and the bloody deeds connected with it must be charged to the account of the royalists.

It was in the year VI. or VII. that the event occurred. The coup d'etat of the 18th Fructidor had just terrified the white cockades; Bernadotte was in command at Marseilles; the followers of Juhu, hunted and scattered, allowed Provence to breathe again. A few remnants of their bands, which had taken refuge in the Lower Alps, under cover of the rocks and torrents, only ventured to show themselves from time to time by a secret murder, the pillage of a stage, or an attack on the government mail coaches. But they were obliged to deal their blows in the dark, smeared with powder and masked. The example of Allier, who was guillotined as an assassin, though he had used a dagger marked with fleur de lis, counselled prudence.

So it was not without some little hesitation that the royalists of Cauteperdrix resolved this time to tempt fortune. The *treasure*, on its way from Gap to Digne and thence to the army in Italy, was to pass the following day. Besides the regular escort of gendarmes, a company of soldiers was to attend the wagon. These soldiers inspired some degree of fear. But, on the other hand, the unusual number of guards showed that there was a very large sum in their charge. Rumor asserted that it amounted to more than a hundred thousand francs. A hundred thousand francs means many crowns. It was agreed that an attempt to seize it should be made. Besides, Monsieur Blase, a citizen of the town, a cautious, taciturn man, promised that at the right time the soldiers should be scattered and the assailants have to contend only with the gendarmes.

The location of the road was singularly favorable to the plan. As soon as the train had left the city, passed the gate of the Gardette, and crossed the old bridge, it was compelled to follow for two leagues, until it reached the hill of St. Pierre, a dangerous road between the mountain and the water, cut through the limestone rock, which falls sheer to the channel of the Durance, twenty feet below. No need of weapons there. A few rocks rolled down the hillside would suffice to overthrow the escort.

But the town lay in full view on the opposite side, an alarm could be given and the assailants recognized.

Farther on, the road left the river and reached the height through the woods by the hill of St. Pierre. An excellent place; but here the vicinity of two farms and the broad lands of the château of Vallée, recently parcelled out, made the attack hazardous.

Afterwards, for a league, the highway followed the plateau, then covered with copses of white oaks, which extends below the village of Salignac; then passed in front of the Borné farm and began to descend the Rion and the Vançon to the shore of the Durance.

This was the spot on which the conspirators had agreed.

The two streams are separated, just before they mingle, by a sort of wooded promontory, where it was easy to arrange an ambushade. Fired upon, they knew not whence, the escort would offer little resistance; and, another advantage, hampered by its heavy wheels in the loose shingle, the cart could not get away.

The people of Borné might be troublesome, somebody said; but Monsieur Blase winked, and everyone left the decision of the matter to his wisdom.

So, when evening came, they set out, not in a party, which would have aroused suspicion, but separately, with their guns hidden in sacks or under the loads piled upon donkeys. Some went the usual way; others skirted the mountain, passing through the ravine of Pierre-Écrite and across Vilhosc, while others took the right bank, the latter forded the Durance.

At dawn all reached the meeting-place in a ruined building. The weapons were ready, the station of each person was appointed, and so, too, was the spot where the prize was to be divided. All waited silently for the shot which, between ten and eleven o'clock, would announce that the escort was approaching the Borné farm, and that the time for action had arrived.

"I," continued old Estève, after the previous details, part of which I already knew, "I was to give the signal. At that time I was only fourteen, but for six months I had been a herdsman on the farm, spending my nights in the woods, fearing neither wolves nor robbers, armed with a huge pistol which a gentleman had given me. My father answered for my loyalty. As there were no men to spare, I was stationed on the rock you see yonder to watch, and it was agreed that I should fire into the

air as soon as the head of the column appeared at the top of the hill. I remember it as well as though it had happened to-day—it was toward the end of September or early in October, for I heard in the distance the men stripping hemp on the farms. Weary of watching the white road, I flung myself face downward on the ground and, as I began to feel hungry, amused myself by sucking honey through a straw from the nests of the wild bees, with which the rocks were plastered. It tasted very nice. Suddenly, raising my head, I saw soldiers at the gate of Borné. Their guns were leaning against the wall, and they were wiping their faces with their handkerchiefs, as if exhausted by the noon-tide heat. The servants were handing them jugs of water. Meanwhile the cart, accompanied only by the gendarmes, moved on up the hill and vanished under the oaks.

“I gave the signal, our men sprang up, shots rattled from the ambush. The postillion lashed his horses, but was flung off, three bluecoats lay stretched on the ground, the cart was plundered, the strong-box was carried off and the men vanished in the copses before the soldiers who were drinking had had time to ask what the firing meant.”

Here old Estève stopped, as if afraid that he had said too much.

“The end is the most horrible! I determined never to speak of it to any one. But those who took part are dead and I, the only witness, shall soon follow them.

“This was the spot appointed for the division of the spoils,” he added. “There was nothing to fear, the farm was then surrounded by woods. I hurriedly climbed down from the rock and ran like the rest.

“When I arrived, nearly all the men had gathered around a large table, and were eating and drinking. My aunts were waiting on the party, which numbered citizens of the town, members of the old nobility, mechanics carrying guns, peasants with the iron forks used to stir the dung-heaps.

“‘Sit down and eat,’ said my father.

“From time to time a man entered, for each had taken a different way. Then the first-comers made room for him, and all continued to eat in silence, listening to the chink of silver which came from a room on the second floor, where the coins were being arranged in piles.

“Monsieur Blase was making the distribution—the sum was evidently large, for he had been counting half an hour already.

“ Finally a man from the town, a peasant nicknamed ‘ The Prior,’ grew impatient. They had food and drink, what were the men waiting for, everybody had come.

“ ‘ My brother is not here,’ said a youth seventeen or eighteen years old, who had been anxiously watching the door.

“ ‘ That’s true; Monsieur César hasn’t come.’

“ I knew Monsieur César well, a young noble, a rebel who was hiding in our woods. He had given me a sip of brandy more than once.

“ ‘ Pooh!’ said the Prior, ‘ he’s a young gallant. He has stopped to pinch the cheek of some pretty shepherdess.’

“ ‘ Monsieur César must be here soon,’ I added. ‘ I saw him at a distance in the valley, after the fray, washing his face and hands in a pool of water.’

“ ‘ Very well, we’ll begin then; we can put his share aside.’

“ Just at that moment Monsieur Blase appeared on the staircase, followed by two men, carrying a heavy iron chest. The sight roused general enthusiasm. *Vive lou rey*. What good fellows those soldiers were to stop to drink! The Prior answered winking:

“ ‘ That reminds me that we ought to keep a share for my cousin, Pierre du Borné; it’s fair that the worthy man should be paid for his wine.’

“ Everybody began to laugh.

“ M. Blase did not join in the merriment. He had the contents emptied out upon the table, and every one was surprised to see that the money was all in silver coins.

“ ‘ And the gold? Is there no gold?’

“ ‘ My friends,’ replied M. Blase calmly, ‘ we have ten thousand francs to divide.’

“ ‘ Ten thousand francs! Damnation!’ It was the Prior who spoke and, in his wrath, he struck the floor so violent a blow with his dung-fork that it stuck fast there.

“ This Prior was a terrible fellow. He was *boutassî-des-tregneyré*; that is, he had the right to press the crushed grapes a second time after the vintage and to carry the wine on his back in a leather bottle from one cellar to another. I don’t know whether these *boutassîs-des-tregneyrés* are still in existence, but in those days they formed a powerful corporation, and whoever could bequeath to his son the goat-skin bottle and its privilege, or to his daughter a *corne* or a *demi-corne*, that is, one half or one quarter of the ownership of a wine-press, was considered a

rich man at Bourg Reynaud, from the peasants' standpoint. Besides, like all his fellows, before the Revolution had closed the holy places, he was Prior of the Assumption, wearing the costume of penitential blue, with a seat at the main door of the church, the right to sell oil-cakes blessed at the altar and to superintend for six farthings the children who passed under the flower and fruit-decked litter of the Holy Virgin in the processions, in the belief that it would make them grow. This was profitable, and the suppression of this revenue had roused the most furious wrath against the Republic.

"But this time the Republic was not in fault.

"'Ten thousand francs!' he fairly howled, making the table tremble under the violent blows of his fist. 'Ten thousand francs, when we expected a hundred thousand. The leaders sell and rob us; I'll turn Jacobin to-morrow. But we know the game now. The treasurer of Gap is your accomplice, Monsieur Blase. You wrote to him to keep the big pile at home and not risk it on the high-roads. Ten thousand francs! Ten thousand francs in five-sous pieces would be enough. The chest captured, the government would believe that a hundred thousand francs had been stolen. We will divide the rest, and the fools who did the work, even if they are not satisfied, will take good care not to complain.'

"The house fairly shook. Monsieur Blase turned pale.

"'Well,' said the Prior, 'we'll settle this account later; let us pocket the money. The main thing now is to get off before the gendarmes catch us.'

"'Five hundred francs apiece,' said M. Blase in his listless voice.

"'Five hundred francs!'

"The Prior was about to fly into a passion again, but restrained himself. Everybody perceived that he was right, and the first excitement being over, gazed at the little heap of silver, for which they had reddened the pebbles of Vançon and killed several men, thought of the wives and children left behind, the gendarmes perhaps already in ambush at the gate of the town, regretted the adventure, and felt seriously anxious.

"So when, after the division was made and each was silently taking his portion, a knock was heard at the outer door, everyone turned pale. Young as I was, the same idea entered my mind, and I said: 'Here are the soldiers!'

"But it was only an old woman. She told us that, while

gathering litter, she had just seen a young man bleeding profusely, sitting on the ground, who said that his name was M. César. In truth, we found M. César lying by the side of one of the long trenches made in the woods for the autumn winds to fill with withered leaves. His thigh-bone had been shattered by a bullet, and blood from a sabre cut was trickling into his eyes.

“‘Quick, a litter!’ cried M. César’s brother, but the Prior answered:

“‘It is not worth while.’

“Then they all looked at one another, and I realized that something terrible was going to happen.

“‘Go away, lad.’

“I hid behind a bush and heard the whole dispute.

“‘Blood enough has been shed, let him live; he can be hidden,’ said M. Blase; and the Prior, still angry, secretly resenting his portion of five hundred francs, answered:

“‘Hidden? A wounded man, when those who are sound can scarcely conceal themselves. Carry a wounded man along the roads when an armed force is searching everywhere; when a word, a single word may bring us all to the guillotine for five hundred wretched francs. No, only the dead tell no tales.’

“Then, M. Blase persisting:

“‘Enough,’ he cried sullenly. ‘I bear M. César no ill-will, but one man’s life is as good as another’s, and people didn’t waste much ceremony last year in putting an end to my old friend, Peyré Toni at the attack on the bridge of Trebaste.’ Then, throwing down his fork to snatch a gun from the hands of a man who stood near him, he added:

“‘Let us do what we have sworn.’

“What had been sworn was the oath almost always taken before these highway assaults: namely, to consider every wounded man as dead, and deal him a final blow in order not to risk betrayal by leaving him behind.

“M. César saw that there was no hope for him.

“‘One last embrace, brother. Tell them at home that I was killed by the Blues.’ Then, hearing the noise of moving the muskets, he said, ‘I would rather stand.’

“So, taking him by the arms, they propped him against a tree.

“He gazed around him for a moment at the woods, the fields, the sky, as though fain to take the memory of the things of this world into the other.

"Seeing me, he called me, gave me his flask and said, 'Let the lad have my share.'

"Then, throwing aside the bit of sweet marjoram which he was chewing :

"'Come,' he cried, 'fire !'

"I darted off as fast as I could go.

"'Kill me, too ; kill me !' exclaimed his brother, whom the men were holding, while the women, standing at the windows, wrung their hands.

"Many of those present undoubtedly liked M. César ; but at the moment everybody thought only of his own life.

"'Aim ! Long live the king ! Fire !'

"When I went back they had all gone ; dung-forks and muskets were vanishing swiftly down the hillside, and I found my father bending over the body of M. César, who had fallen forward, with arms outstretched, on his face.

"He was left in the bottom of the trench, hidden among the leaves. Not until the third day after did we venture to go at night, with lanterns, to find his body and bury it under this *clapas*. Now you have the whole story."

The speaker paused.

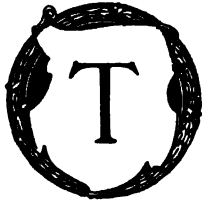
Deeply impressed by the savage tale, I gazed at the heap of brown stones, stained with blood-red ochre, towering in the sunset light like a frightful tumulus.

Old Estève, picking up with his aged hands a clod to throw at the sheep, which were about to stray among the green wheat, repeated, "Fallen forward, with arms outstretched, on his face." After a pause he added : "Revolutions are terrible things, and fear makes men worse than wolves."



THE NEIGHIN' O' THE HAWSES*

BY ROBERT SHACKLETON, JR.



HE man's face wore a strangely troubled look. "Et war certingly near hyar——," he said, hesitatingly.

"Et must hev ben," encouragingly agreed his companion.

"Me an' my comp'ny war hyarabouts, a-guardin' o' the dam, but now the dam don't seem to be nowhars!" And his voice quivered with pitiful discouragement.

His companion brightened cheerily. "The dam! Why didn't you-uns say that thar word sooner! Thar et is—all that's left uv et—down thar in the water! Can't you-uns see that line thar acrost the creek bottom?"

In a moment the man was down on his knees at the edge of the stream. He was strongly agitated. His eyes sparkled. He seemed suddenly endowed with new life.

"Yes! This hyar's the place! I remember jest how et all war. We-uns war hyar, an' the water flooded back an' filled the valley, an' we war jest more 'n ready to pepper the Yanks ef they 'd 'a' come! They didn't get through *hyar!*"

"No. Couldn't 'a' got through, unless they 'd 'a' swum!"

"An' warn't ole Johnsing jest the general, though!"

"That air's a true word!"

They were standing by the remains of the Mill Creek Dam that Johnston so successfully constructed as part of his line of defense along Rocky Face Ridge, and they silently shook hands in confirmation of their mutually expressed opinion. Soon, however, the first speaker began to look about him with vague restlessness.

"Sherman destroyed a heap, *he* did—didn't do that job by halves—nor," he added, with a desire to be just, even to an enemy, "he didn't run his army by halves nuther—but jest think o' his havin' bruk this hyar dam so eternally to smash!"

His eyes shone with an unnatural light, and his companion looked at him compassionately.

* Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

"Can't you-uns re'ly b'leeve thet the war wuz over nigh onto thirty year ago?"

There was a start of surprise—an evident struggle for comprehension—and then a hopeless shake of the head.

"No, stranger. You tell me so, an' so I know et *must* be so, but to me et 'pears like ez ef et war last year ez I war a-fightin' for Johnsing. My feelin's air sot that-a-way so powerful strong ez et ain't no use to tell me ez I'm wrong. No. Et's all clar to me, an' plain, ez ef et war jest last year."

Then came again that pitifully helpless look, and his eyes wandered feebly about, and he seemed to forget all that had just been said.

"This hyar's certingly the place whar we wuz at. An' we wuz sent out fur some hawses—an' Claribelly she said——" Tears stood in the veteran's eyes. "'T war only last year, but it seems a long time sence I've seen Claribelly."

"And who war this Claribelly?" said the other veteran, kindly.

"Why, comrade, et war this-a-way. We wuz sent out fur some hawses, an' we went whar the mountings begun to show up big an' high, an' the mounting ez we fust come to riz right up sudden like, an' we went up in et, an' we reckoned we war a-goin' to find them thar hawses—an' she sez, sez Claribelly—an' she sez et low an' feers like—'Jim Brown, ef you-uns 'll find them thar hawses, then ye kin come an' see we-uns again.' Y' see, I'd ben all struck of a heap by her, an' she knowed et—an'—an'——"

It was clearly useless to think of any further explanation from him just then, and his companion, who lived in a cabin not far from the old dam, led him away to spend the night at his home.

"I reckon, ye pore critter, ez I know jest which mountings them be!"

Suddenly Brown spoke again. "I know I'm teched in the head," he said, humbly, "but I feel ez ef, ef I could find them thar hawses, an' get alongside o' Claribelly again, I'd be a heap better. An' et war only last year," he went on, eagerly, "so don't ye think ez I can find 'em yet?"

In the cabin, the two men talked together far into the night. Except for his wanderings with regard to Claribel and the horses, and the time that had elapsed since the war, Brown was quite fairly clear-headed and intelligent. It seemed plain enough what had happened to him. He had approached too near the

hiding-place of the horses, and had been wounded in the head by some one who was guarding them, and had never afterward recovered his mental balance. Perhaps, too, it was true that he would be benefited by finding the exact spot where the catastrophe had happened, and his entertainer thought that he understood, from his description, just about where it was.

The next morning he led him for several miles on his way, and left him in charge of another veteran, to whom he fully explained Brown's case as he understood it. By easy stages, and under several successive kindly guides, the shattered veteran was conducted to the foot of the Cohuttas. As the beautiful mountains were neared, it was a pleasant thing to watch the glow of excitement on the poor fellow's face.

"This hyar's the place. This hyar's the place." Thus he would mutter to himself, time after time, and then he would hold himself more erect, and smile happily, and perhaps even hum some simple song. "Yes. This hyar's the place whar Claribelly an' the hawuses be, an' if I find 'em it seems ez ef my head won't be teched no more!"

He was hospitably welcomed by the mountain folks. His strange story was told from one to another, and mountaineer after mountaineer came to him and offered to assist him in his search. With each one in turn he went hopefully forth, and even though he returned without having found that for which he was seeking, he did not give way to despair. He was sure that Claribel and the horses were somewhere among the mountains.

"Et war only last year! Ef she'd 'a' went away somebody'd be sure to know *whar* she's went! So she's in these mountings yet!"

For about a week he went from house to house, the guest of various mountaineers in turn. All liked him. All made him welcome. From each he received sympathy and encouragement. It may be added, too, that although everybody understood that Claribel had quite evidently been in league with those who were hiding the horses, and that her words to him meant anything but that she ever wanted to see him again, there was not one who would hurt his feelings by telling him so. They all agreed with him that Claribel must be anxiously expecting his return.

Among those lofty heights and in those valleys of delicious beauty his troubled mind seemed to grow more restful and his eyes lost their unsettled light. Perchance, indeed, after some day of fruitless search, he would wake up in the night and cry out

that he heard Claribel's voice, or, perhaps in the midst of pleasant fireside talk he would suddenly start to his feet, exclaiming:

"The hawses! The hawses! They're a-neighin'! Don't ye hear them?" But he was always easily quieted, and such fancies gradually grew less frequent.

It was about a week after his reaching the Cohuttas that he was one day led by a friendly young mountaineer to the home of Job Quantry. The location was beautiful in the extreme. It was at the head of a deep and narrow valley, and on three sides cliffs, covered with trees and trailing vines, rose abruptly, while mosses and ferns grew everywhere in rich profusion. On the fourth side the valley stretched out in royal splendor, and for miles the eye could follow a magnificent panorama of trees and gentle slopes, with here and there the silvery glisten of some mountain stream. The cliffs, which hemmed in the end of the valley where the log home stood, were inaccessible, except in a few places, and those places could scarcely be found by a stranger except after the most careful search. Great caverns led back into the very heart of the cliffs, and their dark entrances frowned inhospitably.

With a sigh of restful happiness Brown sank into the chair that Joe hospitably tendered him. Then he looked about him eagerly.

"D'ye think, stranger, ez I'll find them thar hawses—them as war hyar last year?"

"We'll try to," replied Quantry, in that restful drawl that is such a striking characteristic of the Georgia mountaineers. And then Brown suddenly sprang to his feet with a great cry: "Claribelly!"

And great tears stood in his eyes, and he tremblingly stretched out his arms, as the daughter of Quantry entered the room. She was almost frightened for a moment, and then, realizing what it all meant, smiled cheerfully at him, and said:

"Oh, but I'm not Claribelly, you know! I'm only Sophy! But mebbe I can help you-uns find her, though!"

Poor Brown trembled, and sank again into his seat. His lips twitched inaudibly. He covered his face with his hands. Thus he sat for a long time silent, and then he arose quietly and walked out into the valley. He looked up at the towering cliffs. He gazed into the mouths of the caverns. He sat down upon a rock and looked about him with wistful dreaminess, until, catching sight of Sophia, his eyes brightened again and he seemed almost happy.

"No. 'Tain't Claribelly. An' I don't see nary hawses. But et's a purty place to rest, an' I'll stay till I find 'em."

It really seemed as if a change came over Brown almost from the moment of his entrance into the valley. He became more alert, more hopeful, more active. The valley so much resembled the place for which he had been looking, that the effect was almost as if it had been the same, and Quantry and his daughter often spoke together of him and agreed that perhaps, under their roof, and in that peaceful valley, his clouded mind might before long become entirely clear.

It was interesting to notice how easily he made himself at home there. He was one of those happily constituted men who find no difficulty in making friends of all they meet, and the fact of his hopeless quest made people the more ready to respond to his simple advances.

Quantry heartily urged him to remain with them indefinitely, and Brown contentedly accepted the invitation, only stipulating that he might be allowed to help at whatever work there might be to be done. He assisted at the simple tillage of the little patches of land that Quantry cultivated. He chopped the wood. He took care of the two horses. He was, too, a splendid horseman himself, and was never happier than when, accompanied by Quantry, he rode off among the mountains, by unfrequented roads that wound hither and thither among the heights.

We say that he was never happier. There were, however, times that were exceptions, and those were when Quantry's daughter, instead of Quantry himself, accompanied him.

Once, on such an excursion, they were met by Ned Watkins (the young man who had first led Brown into the valley), and such a frown overcast Ned's face as made Sophia look at him in tantalizing surprise. For Ned had for some time past been trying to ingratiate himself with her, and he could not but feel seriously annoyed to see her riding about the country under any escort but his own.

"Even ef he is a zany," he would contemptuously add.

He broached the subject of these rides, as tactfully as he could, to Quantry, but the father failed to see in them anything that was out of the way. His girl was trying what she could to bring back reason to the mind of the good-hearted veteran, and he was glad that she was doing it.

"An' he's e'ena'most all right now, 'ceptin' thet he kyant get over wakin' in the night an' furgettin' whar he be. Las' night,

long 'bout midnight, I woke up, an' he war a-callin' out, 'The hawses! The hawses! Don't you-uns hear 'em a-neighin'.'

But Ned only scowled and walked moodily away. He tried expostulation with Sophia herself, but she airily and almost contemptuously refused to acknowledge that he had the slightest right to superintend her actions.

"Ned Watkins, ye'd orter be 'shamed o' yerself! Yer jelluser 'n a turkey o' thet ole man!"

"He ain't so awful old nuther," was the sullen response.

"No, yer right," she replied, candidly, and as if with the express purpose of further irritating him. "No. Fur he went inter the war when he war jest a boy—looked a right smart like you-uns do now, I reckon,—an', in course, he ain't ole now. A'most fifty, mebbe, but he don't look ez ef he be more'n forty. What's that?—(for at this Ned made an angry muttering)—

"Wal, an' so he's raly young yet, an' he's strong, an'——"

"An' good-lookin'," put in Ned, scornfully.

"Yes. He be certingly good-lookin'."

"An' smooth-spoken."

"He certingly talks like a gentleman."

Something in the accent of these words made Ned flush hotly, but he controlled himself and walked quietly away.

"She's in love with a plumb idjit!" he muttered in amazement.

Nor was he the only one who thought this. Others of the mountain folk, when they happened to drop into Quantry's home, and noticed the deferential manner of Brown towards the daughter, and how pleased she was to receive little attentions from him, and to talk with him, nodded their heads sagaciously, and afterwards told their neighbors that when Brown fully recovered, he would have a wife to be proud of. "An' better 'n his Claribelly!" Quantry himself was perhaps the only one who had no suspicions as to whither the matter was tending.

It was discovered that Brown was a fine violin player, and he at once became in great demand. Not only was he called upon to be present at every mountain gathering, but gatherings were arranged on propose to have him there. And his playing was really a gift, as even Ned himself was compelled to unwillingly admit.

The young man went to the valley home one day, and was right at the open door without his approach being noticed. It was a happy picture upon which he looked. Sophia was at the

great spinning-wheel, deftly drawing off the snow-white wool in shining silver threads. Her eyes were suffused with tears, for Brown was gently, oh, so gently, playing a pathetic love-tune, and as the wailingly entreative notes ceased, the musical whirl of the great wheel filled out the strain with rich melody.

Ned ground his teeth and was about to walk away, but at that moment Sophia noticed him, and with a conscious flush she ceased from her work and set out a chair. Brown looked at him with vague recognition, and as if still under the influence of his own music.

"'Pears ter me ez ef Claribelly mus' be nigh hyar. An' ef I could jest see her et 'pears ez ef my head 'd be all right."

His eyes wandered nervously about until they rested again on Sophia, and then they grew contentedly calm.

"In love with a plumb idjit!" Thus did Ned again mutter to himself as he strode away. He climbed, with angry haste, far up the heights overlooking the valley, and then, as he gazed off over illimitable stretches of beauty, he said aloud, and as if trying to force the grotesque idea into his own comprehension:

"In love with a plumb idjit! An' she'd ruther hev him 'n me!"

Still he did not cease from calling at the valley home, although he was rather coldly received, and did not exert himself to be entertaining or bright.

He was a famous hunter and began to spend more and more of his time in prowling over the mountains. Once in a while, on such expeditions, he met Brown, who also loved to wander over the heights and to play upon the violin in solitary places. Whenever they thus met Ned was kind and pleasant. It was only when Brown was actually with Sophia that Ned allowed himself to be at all curt or ill-tempered.

Time passes slowly among those attractive heights. No one hurries and, indeed, there is no need of haste. Oddly enough, though, the progress of Brown's influence over the mountaineers was rapid in the extreme. Everybody liked him and everybody knew him familiarly before he had been three weeks among the mountains, and in that brief time he had been able to make Ned wildly jealous. It may be added, too, that the mountain people themselves had an indefinable notion that they had known Jim Brown for a very long time.

One night, just after darkness set in, a heavy wind-storm arose. It blew straight up the hollow of the valley and the trees moaned

and rocked, and the log-house shook; and the whirling eddies, where the mighty blasts hurled themselves against the walls of rock and then returned and met ensuing blasts midway, made strange and dismal sounds.

The winds, too, entered the caverns and there were such groans and shrieks and muffled cries as made Sophia tremble as she listened.

There came a sharper blast. "'Pears ez ef thet be the neighin' o' hawses!" exclaimed Brown, starting from his seat, and, indeed, the sound was weirdly like it. Qantry and Sophia got him to sit down quietly again, and soon he was induced to take up his violin. But the spirit of unrest was upon them all, and each one nervously listened as if the mighty wind had some message for himself.

There came a knock at the door, and Qantry sprang to open it. It was Ned Watkins.

"I'm plumb glad to see ye," said Qantry, "fur this hyar wind hev ben makin' we-uns sort o' narvous."

He would have said more, but he noticed such a peculiar look upon the young man's face as made him pause and stare at him apprehensively. Sophia had noticed it the moment he entered, and was busily speculating as to the cause. Was he drunk? His eyes were unnaturally bright and he seemed laboring under suppressed excitement. But no. There was no liquor in the mountains but moonshine, and she well knew that he could not be affected by that. Sometimes, though, the mountaineers, when at the nearest town, obtained wine and were overcome by it. Was this the case with Ned? Looking still more closely, she saw that it was not. All sat silent, waiting for him to speak.

"I've jest come frum Ellijay——" He paused. His voice, strangely low and distinct, he scarcely recognized as his own. There was a wilder burst of the wind, and as it swirled in and out of the caverns Brown whispered: "Them's hawses! And thet's Claribelly!"

He grew silent again as he caught Ned's eye. Neither Qantry nor Sophia said a word. By Ned's peculiar look of suppressed power they were completely controlled.

"An' et Ellijay thar wuz eight men a-startin' out to raid the Cohuttys."

Qantry rose to his feet with a half-articulate cry of rage, but under the young man's glance he again sat down.

"They reckoned ez how they wuz goin' ter make the biggest

haul ez hed ever ben made, ez they was goin' ter take the leadin' moonshiner in the mountings, an' some other men, too."

Quantry again sprang up. "When be they a-comin'?" he demanded, fiercely. Ned Watkins also rose. As he did so there was a sound that to all of them sounded like the neighing of a horse. Sophia's cheeks blanched. The face of Brown showed a new firmness.

"Them air's hawses! I reckon ez how ef they be the ones I lost——"

Ned sternly interrupted him. "Now, Jim Brown, or whatever's the name ye go by when ye be ter hum, jest don't ye say no more 'bout'n them hawses!" As he spoke he suddenly drew two pistols and pointed them full at the cowering man. "Don't ye move nur make a sound ur I'll shoot! An' your friends couldn't get me nuther, fur I know every foot o' these hyar caves an' cliffs. They be a-comin' nigh the door—jest put yer head out'n thet shutter an' tell 'em ter go back ter Ellijay!"

Brown hesitated, and muttered a curse. Watkins spoke more sharply. "Quick! Or yer a dead man!"

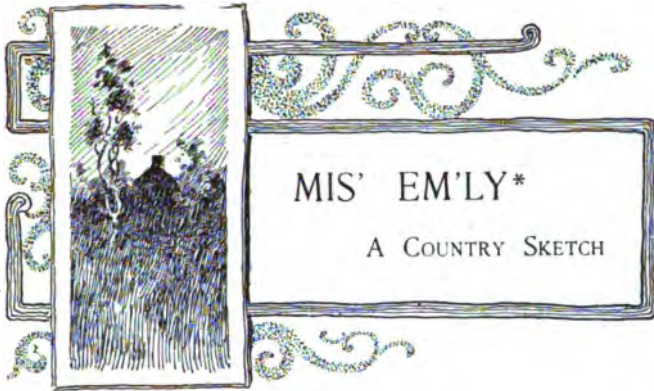
Brown looked at the desperate face of the mountaineer, and at the pistols. Then, thoroughly cowed, he opened the wooden shutter that covered the square hole that served as the only window in the room, and called out to the men to go home, as the moonshiners had found out about the raid and there was no use in trying it that night. Those in the cabin then heard the party slowly returning, in the darkness, down the valley.

"An' now, Quantry, sence I've plumb showed you-uns what a carkuss this hyar Brown be, what do you-uns think we'd orter do with him? He's jest ez strong in the head ez we-uns be, an' he never knowed no Claribelly, an' he war never in the war. He's jest an ornary, low-down moonshine detective."

"Ez ef I hain't got the right ter market my corn wet ur dry!" exclaimed Quantry, fiercely.

Sophia, with a very pale face, approached Ned timidly. "I'd like you-uns ter know——" she began. But Ned checked her.

"Never mind about thet now, Sophy. Mebbe we-uns 'll talk it over when we be alone."



BY FRANCES OVIATT-LEWIS



HE had loved him long, and now she was no longer young.

But she carried with her the perennial spring which abides in the hearts of all virgins.

Age was as the ripple in the brook. It passed and left no trace on her heart. She still wore her hair in little curls, as of the fashion decades back. The curls were thinner, but the light brown hair had dropped so gradually, she did not notice it. She believed that a woman should be won. That an unsought glance was a stab at true maidenhood, and while the bloom was on her delicate cheek she had been so shy with these same fleeting looks that she had repelled many a suitor.

Now she was fifty, with a heart still fluttering, and a mind slightly inclined to sentimentalize.

She had a scrap-book, whose sacred pages were visited only by her gentle eye, in which she had copied, in a faint and cramped hand, lines of her own composing: An "Ode to November," "A Maiden's Love Song," a "Sonnet to a Withered Rose," and verses appropriate to the seasons.

She lived in the smallest house in the village and the cleanest, and in summer embowered herself in trailing vines and sweet-scented blossoms.

She wore a deep, slatted sunbonnet, in which her small face could be faintly seen, like a dim moon immersed in cloud.

* Written for Short Stories, with illustrations by George Drewry.—
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As I have said, she loved him, and why should I say more of him?

He might have been to you a commonplace man with a retiring disposition.

Words further you would not have wasted.

That he had been unfortunate in some ways might have been added. In youth he was tied to the bedside of a fond, selfish, invalid mother, who beseeched him often in her paroxysms of pain never to leave her: "It won't be for long, Reuben, and I can't live without ye."

He had waited with the patience that characterized his life in after years, and she had lived, as the weak often do, to the allotted age of man, and had died, leaving him middle-aged, with two maiden sisters who had grown into the thought of him as part and parcel of their lives—tyrannizing over him in the gentle but all-powerful way in which frail femininity balances the scales with her ofttime tyrant, man, ruling severely the gentler spirits amongst them. "Reuben must do this," and "Reuben certainly ought to weed that flower-plot to-day," and "Reuben will take the plate of doughnuts over to old Miss Tompkins." Reuben—still feeling, mentally, his knee-pants and short-sleeved waists of years ago—went at their bidding.

Once he had gently hinted that he had thought, when younger, of bringing a wife home to the old place: "Mebbe it 'd be sorter company fer ye, neow," he had insinuated. Celia, the oldest, had settled it emphatically: "Wal' Reuben, 'there is no fool like an old fool.' What do you want to get married for? You 're too old, and who d'ye ever court; besides, what 's to be done with us?"

But Ellen, the younger and most tender-hearted, had retired behind her spotless apron and cried quietly.

The last argument was the most powerful. Big as he was, he had a child's heart. A woman's tears won the severest battle.

Besides, how did he know she loved him? She had never looked at him. But for years there had lingered a vision with his dreams. He could see it yet.

A long dewy lane. At the farthest end a slender figure with downcast eyes coming down the narrow cow-path.

She had golden-brown curls each side of her small head, and the color in her cheeks was like the heart of the blush-rose by his mother's gate. She had a bouquet in her hands, which he

conjectured she was carrying to old Mrs. Pemberton, across the far meadow.

He, big ungainly fellow, was almost inclined to turn back as he saw her approaching.

She was almost inclined to fly as she saw his broad shoulders growing more distinct, as distance was outwitted.

But neither fled, and they met under the widest tree in the lane.

"How de do, Miss Emily?" he faltered, wondering why he couldn't tell her how sweet she looked, standing there in the clear



light in her blue gingham dress, her big straw hat hanging by its strings on her neck.

"How do ye do, Mr. Reuben?" she had timidly responded, and even then felt that womanliness pointed to her moving on.

"Pleasant day," was his next original venture, snatching at the time-worn subject as a pretext for a longer look at her pretty cheek's curve. And as he saw her departing—"What pretty flowers. Oh, give me one," he ejaculated in true lover's despair.

She had lifted those sweet eyes to his, then, with the loveliest look he had ever seen, had handed him the homely motherwort, and they had separated.

She, with keen shame at her "avowal," as her prim little heart had named her surprising act—for did not motherwort mean "concealed love?" How could she have done it? How could she, could she! And that night she had written a poem which was in a high degree plaintive, commencing:

"Oh, maiden, steel that heart of thine," and ending:

"For if he love thee, thee he 'll tell," over which she shed many a pensive tear.

He, of course, manlike, with the primitive simplicity which belongs only to that period and that mode of life, saw in the flower no hidden meaning. With his equally shy nature, saw instead a rough, unscented blossom, given by a hand which pulled it from its place beside a fragrant rose, the color of her cheek.

What could have betokened more plainly her feelings?

He, too, had passed a sleepless night. He had made no "poetry," but had put aside in the long hours what might have been the poetry of his future life.

Now they were elderly but they did not feel it.

Life flowed so gently in those inland towns that days and weeks glided by, only noted by the dropping out of some aged landmark, or by a new arrival from the land of Nowhere.

Still Miss Emily jotted down her bits of poetry, and still Reuben "tended" the farm, and went to the store for provisions.

If he passed the house while she worked among her flowers, she kept the huge bonnet drawn over her face, or rose primly and withdrew to the kitchen, for had she not once given him a glimpse of her heart,—the privacy of "That sacred dwelling-place of love" as she termed it, should not again be disclosed.

He naturally attributed her action to dislike or indifference, and the gulf seemed widening with years.

It was now approaching Valentine's day.

Miss Emily kept accurate notes of all births, deaths, anniversaries and holidays in her long-time friend and companion, the scrap-book.

As was natural with a maiden of a life-long attachment, St. Valentine's day carried for her a peculiar charm. She had written numerous valentines, the high flush not leaving her cheek until she heard them go puff! up the kitchen chimney; but on this particular day she had been more than usually poetical. She had, as if moved by a compelling power outside her own, carefully written the following, afterwards reading it aloud in a soft, nasal voice:

TO MY VALENTINE.

The snow-drop shows its head in snow,
The roses wait till June,
To me the snow-drops colder blow
Speaks in a deeper tune.

For when all life is singing gay,
And the whole world is bright,
It's easier far to bloom that day
Than to wait till winter's night.

But love lives through the coldest day,
It shines through winter's chinks,
And when the head is turning gray,
It's stronger still methinks.

She would have preferred not to have said "blow" for "bloom," but how then would it have rhymed? She felt calmly serene, however, in the truly poetical sound of the last verse. "Winter's chinks," she flattered her modest soul, sounded well, and rhymed beautifully with "methinks."

After it was laboriously copied, she had a sudden revulsion of feeling. What was it all for? Here she had thought "beautiful thoughts," and written them down year after year, with no one to tell her they were good; and then her fancy turned towards what might have been. If there could have been a familiar figure sitting in the arm-chair opposite. Here she picked up an envelope, lying with her writing materials, and carefully addressed it.

"For one moment I will see that name on paper," she exclaimed with a fierce little motion. "What if this was going to him. It would look just like this if I were engaged to him," and she, blushing nervously, folded the little billet carefully, and placed it in the envelope.

Some starved chord in her heart twanged dolorously.

"I'll leave it there a little while," she murmured, as she rose to place the immaculate china on her small table, for she mustn't forget she was to have her little Sunday-school scholar, Lucretia, to tea.

Her table was a more poetical expression of herself than her lame poetry. Her spotless linen, her thin china, her crusty loaf of fruit-cake of a recipe handed down by her grandmother, the golden butter—all formed an appetizing picture to the little tow-headed girl, in whose honor the feast was spread.

One incident only marked this visit with interest.

While Miss Emily was neatly clearing up the table after Lucretia's small stomach had been satisfied, the demure maiden with the smooth hair,—as she sat with her copper-toed shoes close together, and her small eyes roving,—noticed a narrow, white envelope lying addressed on the slim-legged writing table. Being

the eldest of a large brood, and in consequence never without a strong feeling of responsibility, she murmured to herself: "Now Miss Emily has forgotten to mail her letter. I'll surprise her and mail it myself." So saying, she slipped it in the capacious pocket of her Sunday gown, and smiled with complacent shrewdness at the thought of Miss Emily's glad surprise when she discovered her "thoughtfulness."

And Miss Emily was surprised.

A passer-by in the small hours of the morning—if there ever were passers-by at that hour in this quiet, country town—might have seen a spark of light like an eerie and restless spirit shining



here and there in the little house. It was Miss Emily and her tallow dip searching for the lost valentine, which she "must have misplaced" she kept repeating in her precise fashion.

It was the day after St. Valentine's, and the winter sun shone frostily through the bespangled panes of Reuben White's chamber window. It beheld a man in all the throes of unaccustomed letter writing. A "Ready Letter-Writer" lay open before him,

and he alternated between bursts of natural feeling and recourse to the R. L.-W. He emerged at "chore" time, exhausted and triumphant.

His wondering sisters discussed his unusual decision of manner in his choice of a spot whereon to lay his kindling-wood and



divers other time-worn customs, in which they were wont to have full sway. This sway was broken.

THE LETTER.

Esteemed Friend:—It is with feelings of profound emotion that I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well, hoping you are the same.

I got your valentine. It was too long a-coming. I've allers loved ye and allers shall.

I aint much on letter writing, but may I come and see you and explain things.

Yours till deth,

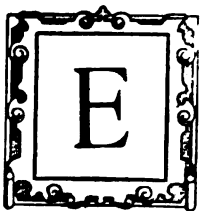
REUBEN WHITE.

There were those in the village that laughed at this antiquated love affair, but two hearts were content.

It was "the new mune wi' the auld mune in her aims."

A THREE-BOTTLE COMEDY *

BY W. E. NORRIS



EARLY one afternoon in midwinter a very pretty and accurately attired little lady, followed by a porter who carried her furlined rug, her travelling-bag, and other paraphernalia, excited the respectful admiration of the guard in charge of the express train which was about to leave St. Pancras. He touched his cap as she advanced along the platform, and said :

“ Beg pardon, ma'am,—Mrs. Alston ? ”

Upon receiving an intimation from the little lady that that was her name, he proceeded to unlock the door of one of the compartments, remarking : “ Reserved, by Mr. Longworth's request, for you and the rest of the party, if you please, ma'am. Shall I get you a foot-warmer ? ”

“ Yes, of course,” Mrs. Alston replied, rather impatiently, “ and will you be so good as to look out for my maid ? She will be here presently ; she is bringing me something that I forgot. Mind you tell her where I am as soon as she comes.”

Mrs. Alston was not much given to frowning—which, indeed, is a dangerous habit for those who are no longer quite in their first youth to contract—but her usually smooth forehead was now puckered up into anxious lines, and it was evident that she had forgotten something of importance. After she had taken her seat and had tucked herself up in her rug, she craned her neck out of window, alternately scrutinizing the clock and the throng of hurrying passengers, amongst whom the missing maid was nowhere to be seen. But she had to stop frowning and assume an air of pleased surprise when an acquaintance of hers stepped briskly up to the carriage-door and took off his hat to her.

“ You of all people ! ” she exclaimed. “ Are you, by any lucky chance, going down to Newton Longworth ? If you are, we shall be fellow-travellers.”

* A selection from “ Longman's Magazine.”

"Of course I am," Sir Thomas Clutterbuck replied. "Didn't you know? Mrs. Longworth said in her letter that she had told you; and, to confess the truth, I shouldn't have cared about sending a couple of horses all that distance unless she had had some rather stronger inducement to offer me than the prospect of a country ball and three or four days' hunting."

This spruce gentleman, whose hair and mustache were quite gray, seemed, indeed, to have reached a time of life at which balls usually cease to be fascinating, while the risks attendant upon despatching horses by rail in chilly weather have been learnt by experience. Nevertheless, Sir Thomas Clutterbuck had retained the health and vigor besides a few other of the attributes of youth. Being a childless widower and very well off, he was naturally an interesting personage to a childless widow who was by no means as rich as she would have liked to be, and Mrs. Alston had good reasons for believing that she herself was an object of some interest to the hard-riding baronet. She, on her side, had latterly developed an extreme ardor for the chase; still, since she was an indifferent horsewoman and had lost her nerve, it may safely be assumed that she would not now have been journeying down to Leicestershire had she been as ignorant as she affected to be of the composition of the house-party which had been invited to meet her.

Nothing, however, can be more certain than that she had been left uninformed with regard to two of its members, for her countenance clouded over when she caught sight of them approaching across the platform, and it was in accents of undisguised annoyance that she ejaculated:

"Oh, bother! here comes Lord Arthur Fulton, with that horrid Naylor woman, and the guard is bringing them to our carriage. How like Adela Longworth to have asked them to travel down with us!—How do you do, dear Mrs. Naylor? Are we bound for the same destination? Yes? So glad!"

The tall, dark, beetle-browed and rather handsome woman whom she addressed responded gruffly:

"Oh, is that you? How are you? Lord Arthur, I wish you wouldn't mind going back and catching hold of my maid for me. Tell her I want that bottle of physic that she was to call for; she'll understand."

Lord Arthur Fulton, a stalwart young man, with a commission in the 4th Life Guards, and a foolish, good-humored face, was only too willing to execute any orders which would remove him

from the immediate neighborhood of Mrs. Alston, whose recognition of his salute had been a curt, microscopic nod. The fact was that, only a few months previously, he had been Mrs. Alston's devoted slave; but had been unceremoniously dismissed by her on the advent of a more eligible, albeit more elderly, suitor; whereupon he had taken up in his wrath with Mrs. Naylor, who at any rate did not labor under the disadvantage of being a widow. There was a Mr. Naylor somewhere or other; but he was a person of retiring habits, whereas his loud-voiced, sporting spouse was very decidedly the reverse. Hence the virtuous Mrs. Alston disapproved of Lord Arthur, and there had been certain passages of arms between them, and it was rather a nuisance to be condemned to spend a couple of hours in a railway-carriage with her.

But if this young man had the corner of his perfidious eye upon a smoking-compartment, the half-formed design had to be abandoned, for, being rather slow in his movements, he was forestalled by the alert little baronet before he could depart on his mission.

"I'll collar your maid for you, Mrs. Naylor," Sir Thomas said obligingly; "I must be off after my man, who also was to meet me here with a bottle of physic which is simply indispensable."

And off he went at a run, failing to catch, in his haste, a faint entreaty from Mrs. Alston.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed that forlorn lady inwardly, "are we *all* a bottle to the bad? If only the other two stand as much in need of theirs as I do of mine, we are, indeed, a happy trio!"

She stood in terrible need of hers, poor woman; nor can words convey any idea of her relief when at the last moment, after she had almost abandoned hope and the train was about to start, Sir Thomas was thrust into the carriage by the impatient guard.

"It's all right," the breathless emissary announced; "I've got my stuff, thank goodness!—and I've seen your maids, and here's a bottle apiece for you two ladies."

Each of them promptly clutched her property, and each proceeded to stow the same away in her travelling-bag with great celerity. To judge by the relaxation of their respective features, both of them felt that all was well that ended well, and both were more disposed to be amiable to their neighbors than they had been a few minutes earlier.

This, to be sure, does not mean that they were at all more disposed to be friendly to one another; but then they were only neighbors in a large and metaphorical sense of the term. Strictly speaking, young Fulton was Mrs. Naylor's neighbor, while Sir Thomas Clutterbuck had, as a matter of course, seated himself opposite to Mrs. Alston, and between the two couples arose a barricade of rugs, wraps and umbrellas. Sir Thomas, for his part, would have been just as well pleased if the intervening barrier had been a higher and denser one. He had conceived an immense admiration for his charming *vis-à-vis*, and, had he been spared the presence of third persons, there is no telling what he might not have been imprudent enough to say to her between London and the Midlands. As it was, he had to content himself with subdued whisperings and ardent glances.

What provoked him a little was that, although he was so close to the object of his earthly affections, she had taken such precautions against catching cold as to be almost invisible. Her sparkling blue eyes, her lovely complexion (untouched, he was prepared to swear, by any of the appliances which are too frequently made use of by women who would look far better without their aid), the really wonderful golden-brown hair, which was perhaps her crowning charm—all these were enveloped in a voluminous white gauze veil, and when he made some complaining remark upon the subject, she said:

"Oh, I know they are hideous things, and nobody wears them nowadays, but I really can't help it. As sure as ever I venture upon a railway journey without wrapping my head up, I get such a cold that I have to go to bed for a week."

Sir Thomas gallantly declared that he would submit to any temporary deprivation rather than be the means of bringing about such a catastrophe as that; but after a time he felt impelled to put forward a further mild remonstrance. Mrs. Alston was certainly not herself that afternoon; her customary vivacity seemed to have deserted her; more than once he suspected that she was not even listening to him; so at length he bent forward and said:

"What is the matter? I am sure something is troubling you."

"Troubling me?" she repeated; "oh dear no; nothing in the world! Except, of course——" Here she jerked up one of her shoulders slightly and threw a significant glance over it in the direction of Lord Arthur, whose attentions to Mrs. Naylor

were of a somewhat needlessly demonstrative order. "I hate that sort of thing; it's so silly and vulgar!" she said.

If she had told the truth (but that was quite out of the question), she would have had to own that she was much more seriously uncomfortable than the spectacle of any flirtation, legitimate or otherwise, could have rendered her. For while Sir Thomas was gently insinuating that his life of late had been a complete blank without her, she had been furtively feeling in her bag, and had arrived at the truly appalling conviction that she had got hold of the wrong bottle. There could be no doubt about it; shape and size were alike unfamiliar, and it was as certain as anything could be that her hair-dye—that inimitable, unapproachable preparation, of which she had already been bereft longer than was safe, and without having recourse to which she dared not exhibit herself in a strong light—was even now in the possession of an unscrupulous foe. She might, no doubt, boldly tell Mrs. Naylor that she believed there had been a mistake and effect the requisite exchange; but this would be a dreadfully hazardous measure.

"She would smell a rat at once, and tear off the paper before I could stop her," the unhappy lady reflected. "No; I must get hold of that bag of hers somehow or other, if I have to kick her legs from under her, as she is leaving the carriage, to do it."

The Fates were not cruel enough to drive Mrs. Alston to the employment of such desperate methods. When the train stopped at Northampton, Sir Thomas jumped out, and, to her great joy, he was at once followed by Mrs. Naylor, who remarked that she wanted to speak to her maid. An opportunity like that was not to be thrown away out of pique or mere reluctance to address a young man who merited snubbing. Mrs. Alston immediately bent over towards the remaining occupant of the compartment, thrust the bottle which was not hers into his hand, and said:

"Lord Arthur, put this into Mrs. Naylor's bag, and fish out the one which Sir Thomas was stupid enough to give her; it belongs to me."

Now, Lord Arthur had a grudge against Mrs. Alston, and her agitation was evident. "Oh, well, I don't know about opening other people's travelling-bags," said he, with provoking deliberation. "Hadn't we better wait until she comes back?"

"Certainly not! It's—it's medicine, and she is quite suffi-

ciently ill-bred to examine it before she hands it over. One doesn't want everybody to know what medicine one takes. Please make haste!"

"H'm! I'm not sure that I am justified in doing this," the young man observed slowly; "still, to oblige you, I might, perhaps, stretch a point. Only I shall expect my services to be recognized. What should you say they were worth, Mrs. Alston? A couple of dances at the ball, for instance?"

"Oh, ten dances—twenty dances, if you like! Good gracious, here she comes! Do be quick!"

Alas! it was not in the nature of that leisurely Lifeguardsman to do things quickly. He did, indeed, just contrive to slip the bottle that Mrs. Alston had given him into Mrs. Naylor's bag, and to withdraw the other; but there was not time—or else he pretended that there was not—to restore the latter to its owner. He popped it behind his back, as Mrs. Naylor stepped in, and immediately afterwards the train resumed its northward course. At the expiration of five minutes or so, Mrs. Alston saw him drop a newspaper over her property, and transfer both articles to his own bag. While carrying out this manoeuvre, he gave her a slight, reassuring nod, by which she was but partially reassured.

"If only I had had the sense to keep upon good terms with him!" she reflected with tardy remorse. "It could have been done so easily, too!"

Well, at all events, he was not a woman; so that the hair-dye was surely safer in his possession than it would have been in that of Mrs. Naylor. If he did not find an opportunity of delivering it up honorably when the travellers quitted the train—and unfortunately he did not—he would doubtless manage to do so as they descended from the omnibus which had been sent to meet them at the station.

But the luckless lady was doomed to a prolongation of suspense, for when she reached her destination those officious, over-hospitable Longworths must needs come tearing down the steps to welcome their guests. There they all were—tall, ruddy Mr. Longworth, with two huge hands outstretched, his comely, middle-aged spouse, who was far too fond of alluding to the circumstance that she had been at school with Mrs. Alston, and their yellow-haired slip of a daughter Annie, and goodness only knows how many grinning children and hobbledehos in the background!

"You 're just in time," Mrs. Longworth announced cheerfully.

"We are having tea in the hall ; so that you can refresh yourselves while your things are being unpacked."

The servants, of course, had seized the handbags, and had made off with them ; the only thing to be done was to practice the patience recommended by Panurge, and be thankful that tea may be partaken of without the removal of a gauze veil. Mrs. Alston pushed hers up, so as to conceal her fringe, took possession of an arm-chair close to the blazing wood fire, by which the great entrance hall was barely warmed, and kept an anxious eye upon Lord Arthur, who did not appear to think that any apology or explanation was due to her in respect of his remissness.

Some measure of consolation was, in the meantime, to be derived from watching the assiduity with which he placed himself at the orders of Annie Longworth, who was pouring out the tea. Annie was a mere child, and in the character of a rival would have been beneath contempt ; but Mrs. Alston had ceased to be a competitor for Lord Arthur's affections, and it was amusing to note the displeasure of Mrs. Naylor, a jealous and exacting woman, whose flirtations were always conducted upon the crudest and most inartistic principles. It was, however, a matter of comparatively trifling consequence whether that lady was pleased or displeased. Mrs. Alston had much more important things to think about, and when Lord Arthur approached her, with a cup of tea in one hand and a plate of small cakes in the other, she took occasion to whisper to him, under cover of the loud conversation which was going on all around her :

"What have you done with my bottle ? I want it at once, please."

"Your bottle ?" he returned, composedly. "By George ! I forgot all about it. It's in my bag, unless my fellow has taken it out by this time. Shall I go and get it ?"

"Yes ; fetch it immediately. Or, rather, no ; don't bring it here ; it isn't a cordial to be handed round for everybody to taste. I'll tell you what you must do, if you really want me to give you those two dances that you spoke of—only I thought you had quite given up caring to dance with me. You must slip upstairs as soon as you can and join me presently in the library, bringing the bottle with you. You know the geography of the house, I suppose ?"

Lord Arthur signified that he did, and in a few minutes she had the satisfaction of seeing him make his way up the broad, shallow staircase. She herself contrived to edge adroitly away from her hostess, and was soon in the library, a vast, dimly lighted

chamber which, as she knew, was seldom invaded by any member of the household.

She was kept waiting a long time—so long that she had worked herself up into a fever of alarm and apprehension before at last the door was opened and the other party to the assignation advanced towards her with leisurely steps.

“Where ’s the bottle?” was her first question; for indeed that was the first thing to be ascertained, and the rebuke which he had earned could wait.

Instead of producing her property or replying to her query, that exasperating young man raised his forefinger and shook it at her with arch reprobation. “Oh, Mrs. Alston,” said he, “this is too bad of you! You shouldn’t go in for that sort of thing—you shouldn’t really, you know!”

“You wretch!” cried the justly incensed lady; “how dared you examine what doesn’t belong to you? No gentleman would have behaved in that way, and the very least you can do now is to keep what you have found out to yourself.”

“Oh, I’ll keep it to myself,” answered Lord Arthur, coolly; “in fact, I may say that I *have* kept it to myself, and, of course, I shan’t split. As for examining the bottle, that I couldn’t help, because my man had taken it out of the paper, and there it was upon my dressing-table, as plain as a pikestaff. But I didn’t think it would be right to hand the stuff over to you. You may take my word for it, Mrs. Alston, that all those expedients are a snare and a delusion.”

Mrs. Alston was too infuriated to argue with him. “Go and get that bottle instantly!” said she. “When I want to be favored with your advice, I will not fail to let you know.”

He remained calm and immovable. He made some remarks, which seemed to her irrelevant, about “Dutch courage” and the folly of imagining that anything save a clear head can enable man or woman to ride straight to hounds; but she was not concerned to dispute with him. When commands and entreaties alike failed, she had recourse to tears.

“Dear Lord Arthur,” she sobbed, “I know I haven’t treated you very well, but you can’t wish to punish me so cruelly as this. Only give me my bottle, and I will do anything—anything for you that you like to ask of me!”

Lord Arthur shook his head solemnly. “I foresaw this,” he remarked, “and being a very soft-hearted fellow, I was afraid I should yield. So I determined to put temptation out of your

way and my own. I can give you your bottle, Mrs. Alston, but I can't give you the liquor, because I've drunk every drop of it."

"Good Lord!" gasped Mrs. Alston, sinking back into a chair, "you never did that!"

"I did, though; and I'm bound to say that it was excellent—a little sweet, perhaps."

"But it's deadly poison!—at least, I should think it was. What in the world did you imagine that you were drinking?"

"It—it tasted like curaçoa," the young man answered, looking a little staggered. "I supposed that you had taken to nipping on the sly to keep your courage up."

"Mercy upon us!—tasted like curaçoa!" shrieked Mrs. Alston, starting to her feet. "Why, you raving lunatic, do you know that you have swallowed a whole bottle of Wyllie's Matchless Hair-Renewer! Send for a doctor—send for a stomach-pump—take mustard and hot water, and then get somebody to hang you up by your heels! I don't want to be a constructive murderess, or an accessory before the fact, or whatever they call it. Be off this instant; you have no time to lose!"

Lord Arthur waited for no second bidding, but took to his heels, while Mrs. Alston dropped into her chair once more, and covered her face with her hands.

"Was there ever such luck as mine?" she groaned. "Never before, since the world began, can any woman have met with a man capable of pouring her hair-dye down his throat! I suppose, if he recovers, he won't dare to tell; but what is the use of that? It's simply impossible for me to face Sir Thomas with my hair all gray at the roots and rusty half an inch higher up. Oh, I must be ill and take to my bed, and telegraph for another bottle at once; there's absolutely no alternative!"

Meanwhile Lord Arthur had rushed off to the stables to consult the stud-groom, in whose veterinary skill he had the utmost confidence, and who, he hoped, might be able to provide him with some rough-and-ready remedy, in the absence of a duly qualified medical man.

"Jenkinson," he gasped, "have you got such a thing as a powerful emetic that you could give me? I believe I've taken poison by mistake."

The portly little spindle-shanked man whistled. "Come along with me, my lord," he answered, promptly. "I'll give you a dose that I keep for the lads when I want to give 'em a lesson they won't forget. That'll do the trick for you, you may depend.

It's that searching that in about five minutes from now your lordship 'll be able to feel the jints in your backbone by on'y merely pressing your 'and upon your watch-chain."

Lord Arthur was conducted into the saddle-room, whence he presently emerged, walking unsteadily and rolling his eyes, while Mr. Jenkinson returned to the stable-yard with a bland smile upon his rubicund countenance. At the same moment Sir Thomas Clutterbuck hurried towards him from the direction of the house, and said :

"How are you, Jenkinson ?—how are you? That fool of a groom of mine has made some idiotic mistake and brought me a bottle of filthy scent, or something of that kind, instead of the red lotion that I wanted for the mare's back. Unless I can get hold of some, I'm bound to gall her to-morrow. I dare say you know, Jenkinson, that there are horses whom the very best of riders can't help galling, in the absence of special precautions."

"Certainly, Sir Thomas," answered the stud-groom; "we can let you have as much red lotion as you like."

"Ah, but is it the right kind? I wish you would just allow me to look at it."

A bottle was produced for Sir Thomas's inspection. He examined it, shook his head, and grumbled under his breath, but said he supposed it would have to do. "How such a stupid blunder can have been made is more than I can understand," he remarked. "My man swears he gave me the lotion all right; but I travelled down with a couple of ladies, and it so happened that I had to deliver a bottle to each of them from their respective maids. I wonder if I could possibly have misdealt!"

Jenkinson slapped his leg, and burst into a roar of laughter. "That's what you've done, Sir Thomas, you may be sure," he chuckled. "Lord Harthur Fulton came out here, not ten minutes ago, in a pretty stew. Said he believed he'd swallowed pison by haccident, and arst me to give him an emetic—which I done. Now, I'd lay odds one o' them ladies has been offering him a pull at your red lotion, sir, thinking 'twas her own private supply o' cherry brandy. Dear, dear! what a most extrordinary start!"

Sir Thomas was too angry to see the joke. "Man alive!" he exclaimed, "it isn't possible to swallow red lotion! Why, half a mouthful of it would set him on fire! Where is he?—what have you done with him?"

Lord Arthur staggered into the yard to answer the question in person. He seated himself upon an inverted bucket, dropped

his head on his hands, and moaned out feebly: "Jenkinson, you have more than half killed me!"

"And serve you jolly well right, too!" cried the irate baronet. "Teach you to go taking surreptitious nips out of ladies' flasks at odd hours! Be thankful that you are not quite killed. Meanwhile, I'll trouble you for the remainder of my red lotion!"

"Your what?" asked the other, lifting a pallid face. "It wasn't red lotion, it was hair—at least, I don't know what it was. Anyhow, I drained it to the dregs."

"The devil you did!" ejaculated Sir Thomas, aghast. "This only shows what the young men of the present day have brought themselves to by their perpetual swilling. Drained a bottle of red lotion to the dregs, and never imagined that there was anything amiss until it was all down! Why, what an inside you must have!"

"I have no inside," Lord Arthur replied, in a lamentable voice; "Jenkinson has deprived me of every vestige of it. I'm not at all sure that I shouldn't have done better to take my chance with the red lotion—if it was red lotion."

"Oh *you're* all right, my lord," said Jenkinson, reassuringly. "A bit squeamish you must expect to feel just at first, but you'll have a fine *happetite* for dinner, you'll find."

Sir Thomas was perplexed, and began to ask questions; but he obtained no intelligible answers, the young man feeling that, whatever the truth might be, his first duty was to shield Mrs. Alston. After a time, therefore, they went their several ways, Sir Thomas remarking, by way of moral: "Well, this will be a lesson to me not to meddle with women's perfumery again, and I hope it will be a lesson to you to be a little more careful about your liquor in future."

Lord Arthur made no audible response, but, like Galileo, he reserved the last word for himself. "I believe it *was* *curaçoa* all the same!" he muttered.

Sir Thomas Clutterbuck ascended pensively to his bedroom to get ready for dinner, for there were circumstances connected with this imbroglio which seemed to him to demand elucidation. Could it be that Mrs. Alston was in the habit of carrying cherry brandy about with her when she visited her friends? If so—but he was confident that it was not so.

"Oh no, it must be t'other woman," he assured himself, "and the scent—which ought to be taken to her, by the way—is hers."

But the bottle which stood upon Sir Thomas's dressing-table, and upon which he had as yet bestowed only a hasty glance, did not contain scent. He picked it up now, and the label upon its surface told him in unequivocal terms what it did contain. This discovery gave him what Lord Arthur would have called "a nasty jar." He whistled and walked away towards the fire, shaking his head ruefully, and murmuring: "I couldn't have believed it of her! I've often enough heard people say that the color was unnatural, but I set that down to envy and jealousy. Ah, well! there's an end of my little romance, and it's lucky for me that I've found her out in time. Because, mind you," added Sir Thomas, addressing space impressively, "a woman who will deceive you in one way will deceive you in another."

At Sir Thomas's time of life the dissipation of a fond illusion is more apt to excite wrath than despair, and when he remembered the many occasions upon which Mrs. Alston had complacently suffered him to tell her how greatly he admired her wonderful hair, the desire to pay her out grew strong within him. "She deserves to be publicly exposed," he said to himself; "but I suppose it would be almost too cruel to take the bottle downstairs and hand it to her before them all."

Then, on a sudden, a brilliant idea occurred to him. "By Jove, I will!" he exclaimed aloud. "The others won't like to make any remark, even if they understand; but *she'll* understand fast enough, and I flatter myself that she won't enjoy her dinner this evening."

Mrs. Alston did not at all expect to enjoy her dinner, inasmuch as she had made up her mind to partake of that meal, or some poor substitute for it, in her own room. Already she had telegraphed to London for a further supply of the incomparable dye, and had sent a message to Mrs. Longworth to the effect that an excruciating attack of neuralgia would prevent her from seeing anybody that night or hunting on the morrow. But what went near to making her ill in good earnest was a dreadful piece of news which reached her from Lord Arthur Fulton, in answer to the inquiries which common humanity had prompted her to make as to his condition.

"I am yet alive, thank you," ran the note delivered to her by her maid, "notwithstanding the desperate remedies which I have had to employ. The provoking part of it is that I am now almost sure there was no occasion for them. What I drank must have been Mrs. Naylor's curaçoa; Mrs. Naylor, I expect, has been

awarded a bottle of veterinary lotion, belonging to Sir Thomas Clutterbuck; and Sir Thomas has got your hair-dye. I am awfully sorry; but I am sure you will see that I have nothing to reproach myself with, as I only carried out your instructions to the best of my ability—and made myself disastrously sick into the bargain.”

When Mrs. Alston had perused this terrible missive, she thought for a moment of dropping down dead; but reflecting that her demise would distress nobody in particular, while it would be productive of doubtful benefit to herself, she determined upon less heroic measures.

“Pinfold,” said she to her maid, “you can pack up again. We shall return to London to-morrow.”

There was, indeed, nothing else to be done. Sir Thomas, she knew, was old-fashioned in his ideas, abhorred artificiality, and would never forgive an innocent deception which had been practised upon him, in common with the rest of the world. The feelings of a gentleman would, she trusted, prevent him from divulging her secret; but she had no wish to face his reproaches or listen to his renunciation. The game, so far as Sir Thomas Clutterbuck was concerned, was up, and it only remained to draw fresh coverts.

Thus it was that Sir Thomas failed to bring about a dramatic situation which he had designed with much forethought and self-sacrifice. He was purposely the last to enter the drawing-room before dinner, but the swift glances which he threw to right and left of him made him aware that Mrs. Alston was not among the twenty or thirty persons there assembled. It was *Hamlet* with the title-rôle omitted, and he was soon to learn that his own part in the play had been undertaken to no purpose.

Upon the rest of the company the effect produced by his appearance was, to be sure, all that could have been desired, and even a little more. A sudden pause in the conversation, followed by a general gasp, greeted the entrance of this dapper little gentleman, whose face exhibited the lines that belonged to his years, while his hair, eyebrows, and mustache had the golden beauty of early youth.

“Has he gone mad?” whispered the awestruck Mrs. Longworth to her neighbor. “Why, he was as gray as a badger two hours ago!”

But Sir Thomas, having been prepared to create a sensation, advanced imperturbably to his hostess, who, recovering her self-

possession with an effort, proceeded to tell him how very sorry she was that poor Mrs. Alston was suffering agonies from neuralgia.

"She sent some time ago to say that she wouldn't be able to appear this evening, and now I have just had a second message, asking for a carriage to take her to the station to meet the twelve o'clock train to-morrow. She declares that she must be at home when these fits of neuralgia seize her, and that they always last a week."

Sir Thomas's jaw fell. "But you won't let her go!" he expostulated. "Don't—don't let her go until she has seen me!"

Mrs. Longworth was a kind-hearted woman. She surveyed her eager suppliant with good-natured compassion, and then, bending forward, "Do you know, Sir Thomas," she answered, in a low voice, "I think it would be better for her *not* to see you—as you are at present. Much better not!"

Sir Thomas fell back, with unspoken maledictions. The eyes of his fellow-guests were fixed upon him, and their countenances expressed neither admiration nor respect. In the background, Lord Arthur Fulton, the only person present who possessed the key to the enigma, was doubled up with convulsions of merriment.

"Oh, it's all very fine for you to laugh, you young jackanapes!" muttered Sir Thomas, vindictively; "but, thank God! I'm not the only one who has made a fool of himself. It will take you all your time to stick to your saddle to-morrow, I suspect."

Lord Arthur, it was true, was feeling rather queer and rather feeble; but he was young, he had a vigorous constitution, and, as Jenkinson had foretold would be the case, he was already able to look forward to his dinner with pleasurable anticipation. As a matter of fact, he did enjoy his dinner very much indeed, and one reason for his doing so was that nearly the whole length of the table separated him from the fascinating Mrs. Naylor. He was a simple, innocent creature; he had still a great deal to learn; but he was assimilating knowledge by slow degrees (which is much the best way of growing wise), and he began to perceive that neither the Mrs. Naylor nor the Mrs. Alstons of this world are worth a tenth part of the agitation which they manage to stir up. It was perhaps a little ridiculous of him to be shocked because one lady dyed her hair, while another was given to indulging in private sips of curaçoa; still, if he had not been shocked, he might easily have become even more ridiculous; so

that he had at least as good cause for self-congratulation as the rejuvenated Sir Thomas, who had quite superfluously converted himself into an object of ridicule.

Miss Longworth, who, as it happened, had been placed on Lord Arthur's left hand, put an abrupt and somewhat embarrassing question to her neighbor presently. "Why did you laugh at the poor old fellow in that undisguised way?" she asked. "He saw you, and he didn't like it."

"I'm sorry if he saw me," the young man replied; "but I really couldn't help myself. Isn't it enough to make anybody laugh?"

"I don't think so; I think it is painful and disgusting. What could have made him do such a thing? However, I am thankful, for his sake, that Mrs. Alston hasn't come down, and that she is leaving to-morrow."

"Well, yes. But it would have been rather a joke if Mrs. Alston *had* come down, and I'm not sure that the laugh would have been upon her side then."

"Lord Arthur," said the girl, making a half-turn, so as to face the speaker, "I believe some horrid practical joke has been played, and I believe you are at the bottom of it. What does it all mean?"

Lord Arthur pulled himself together. He could not possibly tell her what it meant; but he saw that she was displeased at the idea of his having played practical jokes upon her parent's guests, and he was unwilling to displease her. Therefore he felt entitled to exonerate himself by answering:

"I give you my word of honor that I am guiltless. I do know something, but I musn't explain, and I dare say you will hear the truth some day. Indeed, you are almost sure to hear it; for Sir Thomas is too infuriated to hold his tongue. For the present, it would be very kind of you if you wouldn't mind talking about anything else."

The readiness with which she accepted his word and started a different subject won his heart. So, at any rate, he subsequently averred, adding, by way of explanation, that it showed Annie Longworth's vast superiority to the rest of her sex. Lord Arthur Fulton, it may be mentioned, has now increased in wisdom to such a remarkable extent that he knows what women are. At least, he is fond of declaring solemnly that he does, and there is no denying that he has enjoyed opportunities of acquiring the knowledge to which he lays claim. Possibly, however, he might

have failed to appreciate Miss Longworth at her true value, had she not been an extremely pretty, fresh and natural girl, or had she not chosen the pursuit of the fox as the topic most likely to interest him.

As it was, she was so completely successful in interesting him that he neither did his duty to the elderly lady whom he had taken in to dinner, nor noticed that Mrs. Naylor was scowling menacingly at him across an intervening space of glass and silver and exotics. The discreditable fact is that he had temporarily forgotten Mrs. Naylor's very existence.

He was reminded of it when he entered the drawing-room with the other men, after spending a merry twenty minutes over coffee and cigarettes, during which Sir Thomas had not been spared by Mr. Longworth and other old friends. Sir Thomas had behaved very well; he had submitted to chaff good-humoredly enough, and had declared that it was no fault of his if his tradesmen were such idiots as to supply him with hair-dye instead of hair-wash. Only on leaving the room, he had whispered, "Now, look here, Fulton; if you don't tell on me, I won't tell on you. Is that a bargain? And, I say—is there any known means of getting the confounded stuff off?"

Lord Arthur was still chuckling over the memory of this pathetic appeal when he was sobered by an imperative gesture on Mrs. Naylor's part. He obeyed the summons with a sinking heart; for he was a good deal afraid of Mrs. Naylor, and it was forcibly borne in upon him that there was going to be trouble.

"May I ask," the irate lady began, with ominous calmness, "why you were so pressing in your entreaties to me to come down here with you?"

"Well, I thought you would enjoy a day with these hounds," he answered deprecatingly, "and—it's a jolly house to stay in, you know. And then there will be the ball."

"Oh!—because those were not the reasons you gave at the time. I dare say I may enjoy a day with the hounds, if we get a run, but I can't say that I am much impressed with the jollity of the company, so far, and as for the ball—well, I really didn't come here for the pleasure of seeing you dance a dozen times with that stick of a girl."

"She isn't very likely to give me a dozen dances," Lord Arthur returned; "and I don't know what you mean by a stick."

Mrs. Naylor looked as if she would like very well to tell him one of the meanings of the word "stick," and even to show him

one of the purposes to which that implement may be applied; but she only remarked: "I don't admire your taste. For the matter of that, I never did admire it very much, and I certainly never admired the outrageous color of Mrs. Alston's hair. I presume you are now convinced that I didn't traduce her when I told you that she dyed it. Sir Thomas Clutterbuck is convinced, at all events, though he was an old goose to imagine that his little *coup de théâtre* had a chance of coming off. Of course she wasn't going to show from the moment she realized those three bottles had gone wrong."

"Oh, you know, then?"

"I know there is a bottle of embrocation, or some other nasty-smelling stuff, in my room, to which he is very welcome as soon as he likes to send for it. Perhaps he will then restore me my own bottle of physic, which seems to have gone astray through his stupidity."

"Hadn't you better apply to Mrs. Alston? Your property ought to be in her hands, ought it not?"

"I suppose so; but I don't particularly care about holding any communication with her. She is a nasty, ill-natured little cat, and she would be only too glad of some excuse for spreading false reports about me. I was thinking you might send her a message to say that the bottle was yours, and that you would thank her to give it up."

"Oh, but then she might spread ill-natured reports about me, you see. That is, if the contents of your bottle are such as to give an air of probability to ill-natured reports."

"Nonsense! who cares what reports are spread about a man? Now, mind; I ask this of you as a favor, and I think, after the way in which you have behaved since you have been here, the least you can do is to oblige me in such a trifle."

"And suppose I decline?"

"If you do," answered Mrs. Naylor, making a mistake which, in view of certain previous passages between her and her interlocutor, was not wholly without excuse, "you may be very sure that I shall never ask another favor of you—or grant you one either."

She did not, to be sure, know that he had first appropriated her liquor and then deprived himself of it by methods of which the memory still rankled in his mind; still less could she have believed that the discovery of so venial a weakness on her part as a liking for curaçoa had inspired him with a holy horror of her.

She was, therefore, completely taken aback when he jumped to his feet with alacrity, saying:

"So be it, then! I'm sorry to appear disobliging, but really I have enough sins of my own upon my conscience, without undertaking to bear the burden of other people's. I'm afraid I must decline to interfere, whatever the consequences may be."

With that, he hastily withdrew, and Mrs. Naylor had the mortification of observing that he made straight for Annie Longworth. Perhaps she was not far wrong when she muttered despairingly, "Horrid young humbug!—he only wanted a pretext." And without doubt she was right in concluding that she would merely be throwing away valuable time by devoting any further ingenuity to the enslavement of Lord Arthur Fulton.

Sir Thomas sent the remainder of Mrs. Alston's incomparable hair-dye to her that evening, with a note upon the composition of which he expended much labor, and which would have been more telling if it had not been quite so tremendously sarcastic. He himself received his red lotion from Mrs. Naylor, unaccompanied by any note or message, and thus he learnt, with a certain unholy joy, that young Fulton had reduced his weight and diminished his staying powers quite needlessly. Thus, also, he was enabled to distinguish himself in the hunting-field without fear of calamitous results to the mare, and to forget for the time being the alteration in his appearance which was dreadfully conspicuous by daylight.

Mrs. Naylor, on the other hand, did not distinguish herself that day. Whether owing to the lack of her accustomed modicum of stimulant, or to the absence of any special motive for showing what she could do, certain it is that she allowed herself to be "stopped" at a brook by Miss Longworth, who rode with far less skill and judgment, but who had the courage of youth and ignorance; and shortly after that public humiliation she disappeared from view. Possibly, being a shrewd woman, she may have realised that there are contests in which it is useless to struggle against youth. Ignorance, too, is not without its advantages.

Now, Mrs. Naylor might, had she considered it worth her while to be malicious, have enlightened Annie Longworth's ignorance with respect to Lord Arthur's career and its episodes; but, upon the whole, it seemed equally easy and more sensible to rest satisfied with the discomfiture of Mrs. Alston and accept her own less conspicuous defeat philosophically. Returning early to Newton Longworth, she sought an interview with her hostess,

and stated, with much apparent regret, that she had just received a telegram which would necessitate her departure before the ball.

"Oh, *must* you go?" exclaimed good-natured Mrs. Longworth, in honest distress. "This is really becoming a *sauve qui peut!* First Mrs. Alston, and now you! I suppose the next thing I shall hear will be that Sir Thomas Clutterbuck has decided to desert us."

"I shouldn't be surprised," said Mrs. Naylor, dryly.

And, indeed, before the day was over Sir Thomas justified anticipation by following suit. He came in half an hour before dinner, smothered in mud and quietly triumphant, having demonstrated to his juniors that he could still ride as straight as any man of half his age; but he was not eager to compete with the young people in a field where gray hair is heavily handicapped, and where hair which has been obviously robbed of that respectable hue places its owner under a double disadvantage. He wished, moreover, to get up to London as soon as he could, and consult experts, with a view to the recovery of his normal aspect.

So, of the four travellers who had journeyed down to Newton Longworth together, only one remained in the house thirty-six hours after their arrival; and if he did not consider himself an uncommonly lucky fellow, that was only because no one ever does appreciate unmerited luck. To have been set free at a blow from the entanglements of two formidable ladies—for both Mrs. Alston and Mrs. Naylor were very formidable, and he was no match for either of them—might in truth have prompted him to return thanks to his guardian angel; but he was, for the moment, too much overcome with admiration for Annie Longworth's pluck—not to speak of her other attractions—to have any room left in his mind for reflection upon the perils which he had escaped. This was the third brush that she had won that season, she told him, and he obtained leave to have it mounted for her.

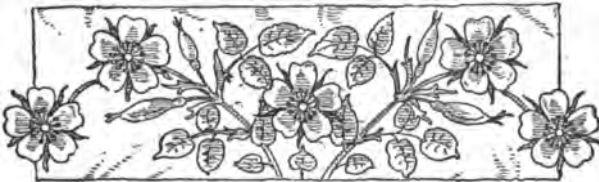
It was some months after these events that Lord Arthur, turning out of his club in Pall Mall, ran against Sir Thomas Clutterbuck, who said:

"So you're to be congratulated, I hear. Well, she's a nice girl, and if a man must needs marry, I don't know that he could do better than choose a girl of that sort. For my part, I've come to the conclusion that the less one has to do with women the more likely one is to enjoy life. It's possible to get along quite comfortably without 'em, I can assure you. Been consulting any more amateur vets lately?"

Lord Arthur made a retrospective grimace. "I haven't had occasion to do so, I'm thankful to say," he replied. "Have you been making any more experiments in the hair-restoring line?"

"My dear fellow, you wouldn't believe what a job I had to get rid of that infernal stuff! The end of it was that I was obliged to have my head shaved and go off on a sea-voyage for three weeks. However, I'm my own master now, anyhow, which is more than can be said for you. I think, Fulton, we may as well draw a decent veil over the episodes of our visit to your future wife's family. It makes a good story, I admit, but one isn't justified in telling tales about ladies, you know."

"I suppose not," answered the other, guiltily conscious of having already told his future wife all about it. "Good-bye!"





ELSIE*

A Virginia Aquarelle

By GEORGIANA PEEL

FAR down in the Valley of Virginia lies an old town. The Blue Ridge and the Allegheny Mountains encircle it, and the Roanoke River flows at its foot, in the fields where the Indian corn waves its green banners in the breeze. The streets are long and straggling, and the houses are white and old-fashioned, with pointed roofs and green shutters. Big sycamores and poplars cast grateful shadows on red brick pavements. Beulah, as the town was called, had very few shops, and the post-office was a great point of interest, as it was a matter of duty for every one to come in search of letters on the arrival of every mail. Outside, the negroes of all sizes and ages sunned themselves like flies against the warm brickwork.

Nothing ever happened in Beulah, and its inhabitants were quite contented that such was the case. But the pride and glory of the town was its college. An actual college, with an endowment and a faculty. Here the young men of the town and State were supposed to receive all that could be desired in the way of an education. We may smile now at its long brick buildings, which rejoiced in the classical titles of the Halls of Socrates and Apollo.

We took great pride in these Halls, and they were gorgeous with most unæsthetic carpets and large plush arm-chairs.

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A work of unqualified beauty adorned the Hall of Apollo, of whose chapter I was a member. It represented a smiling valley, in which a youth, dressed in a species of white robe, is listening to the entreaties of three damsels attired in pink, blue and green, who offer him roses, wine cups and crowns of gold. The young man appears to be in a sad state of indecision, as an old and very forbidding female is holding out for his inspection a laurel-wreath and an hour-glass. This masterpiece had been given to the college by one of its patrons, executed by himself, and represented: "The Victorious Struggle of a Young Man over Pleasure in the Pursuit of Duty."

But the college itself, with its brick walls mellowed by long years of rain and sunshine, with its façade of curious white pillars, made a pretty picture in the hazy autumn sunlight.

Autumn in Virginia has always a particular charm for me, for it was at that time of year I first entered as a student in Beulah College, and very proud was I of my position; and it was in the autumn, too, that I first saw Elsie, about whom this little story centres, and the memory of a boyish love that time has failed to obliterate.

I met Elsie for the first time at a "candy-stew." This form of entertainment was very popular in Beulah, as they generally included a sumptuous repast. We were always eager for an invitation, as the college boarding-houses inclined to a monkish fare of pulse-like character. Corn-bread, rice and beans preponderating, with beans, rice and corn-bread for a change, as my room-mate, David Jones, wittily put it.

David's married brother was the giver of this particular feast, and I, as David's friend, was specially invited. As the brother was the pastor of the Episcopal church, the entertainment bid fair to be very select and very delightful. How well I remember the merry party that assembled in the little rectory drawing-room, where I stood talking rather bashfully to our pleasant hostess, when Elsie came in. She was quite a little girl then, not more than fourteen, but wonderfully beautiful. She had a very straight little nose, like those of the faces on old cameo bracelets, and her soft black hair was knotted behind. Her eyes were very black and had such a gentle, winning expression, as they lay under the delicately pencilled brows. She wore a dress of some brilliant red stuff, and there was something in the attitude of the little figure that made me think of the picture of Helen in my Greek mythology. Mrs. Jones made me take her

in to supper, and I was so overcome with pleasure that the delights of roast turkey, Sally Lunn, sweet pickles and waffles seemed pale by comparison.

David was in no way affected by anything of this sort, and made hay while the sun shone. After supper we played such



old-fashioned games as forfeits, and clap in and clap out, while we were waiting for the boiling molasses to arrive at the right consistency for moulding into wreaths and sticks of golden-brown candy. By the time the candy was ready, my little friend and I were very good friends indeed, and if the classical little face was beautiful in repose, it was much more so when the dark eyes sparkled and the pretty lips laughed. We were all very merry, as, with hands covered with flour, we twisted the dark, sticky masses of candy

into golden bands and chains, and with much applause the more skillful ones fashioned swans, baskets and braids.

At the end of the evening, according to Beulah custom, I asked Elsie if I might see her home.

"Yes," she said. "Aunt Elvira is coming for me, but I would like it very much."

So, accompanied by her negro mammy, and with a bountiful supply of candy wrapped in paper, I went with Elsie to her home.

She lived in High Street, and was the only child of our respected Judge. I had often seen her parents, and Aunt Elvira, the old negress, before, but Elsie had never happened to be with them. The Judge and his wife were quite old people and adored this one child of their old age.

After this, Elsie and I often met at entertainments, and our friendship increased so rapidly that soon I would meet Elsie about nine o'clock and walk with her down the shady street to the old white house with green shutters, where the three Misses Lafayette conducted their "Institute for Young Ladies."

I used to walk up and down the pavement on the opposite

side of the street, just to watch the shapely little head bending over a book, and to smile when I saw it gravely shaken as she discovered my whereabouts. It all comes so clearly to me now even after many years: the high blue peaks of the Alleghenies in the distance, the old white house nestling amongst the pink apple-blossoms, and the sunlight making chequer-work on the pavement through the aspen boughs.

The next year Elsie's father and mother made no objection to my coming to see her every Friday evening, when we were both supposed to have finished our week's studies. I would often help her with her Latin or arithmetic, in which she got sadly muddled.

In return, with wonderful patience, she listened to the long speeches I prepared for the different debating societies.

Sometimes we went out riding. Elsie had a charming Kentucky horse of her own, but I was limited to a very ugly steed. There was only one livery stable in Beulah, so I had to be content with a gaunt, raw-boned horse, which its owner described as an "elegant riding animal," and hired out for a dollar an hour. But we were intensely happy notwithstanding, as we galloped down the hills in the spring evenings, when the dogwood was all veiled in snowy white, and the tree-frogs sang loud and shrilly in the maples.

In the third year of our friendship my mind was filled with one wish, and she as fervently desired this object as I did. Every year a great oratorical contest took place in Beulah College, and each student burned to distinguish himself amongst the orators. It was *the* event of the season, and high and low, great and small, flocked to the contest when it took place. In the debates of the year I had rather distinguished myself, and now the great hope that I might win the gold medal, which was awarded to the triumphant orator, became mine. Of course Elsie shared in these hopes, and was my most cheering little confidante, and her clear mind and quick appreciation helped me greatly.



The subject for the contest was our great theme of discussion, and again and again we selected and discarded topics. David was also to take part in the contest, to please his father, and having selected as his subject "Our

Great Dea," covered himself with ink and misery during the rest of the term. He always seemed to have the same dingy little note-book, with several pencilled lines thereon. He would lift his ruddy face and say, "I am just waiting for an idea, you know; but they don't come. I think I will walk down the street to start them, you see." And away he would go.

I was a long time before I could decide on my subject. Back, as if yesterday, comes the picture of the little figure in a blue lawn dress, sitting in the big rocking-chair with Chips, that was Elsie's little spaniel, by her side, her cheek resting against his soft, brown coat, her dark eyes bright with interest as we talked the matter over.

"Don't you know, Horace," she said one evening, "I would choose something you really care for, not 'Liberty' or 'George Washington' or 'Our Country,' something you truly understand."

As I walked home a sudden idea came to me—what did I care for as much as sport in all its forms? And the idea grew apace, as I truly loved the subject and felt at home in it. So, evening after evening, Elsie and I hawked with the Normans, hunted boar in the forests of Germany, chased lions with the Assyrian kings, and went merrily through the green woods with horn and hound in the goodly company of William Rufus.

It was a boyish essay, crude in many ways, but the true ring was there, nevertheless. For I knew each dark fir-wood where the partridge drums, and the fields with brown, dry grass where the quail and her brood hide. I knew just where the teal would rest in rainy weather, down by the islands in the river, edged with sycamore and willow. The essay considered sport in many forms, and old Izaak Walton, a dear friend of mine, furnished me with many good quotations. I read my work when it was done to Elsie, before I set to work to learn it by heart, as we had to speak entirely from memory.

She sat quite silent while I read it, and then turned her sweet eyes on me with a quick color coming and going in her cheeks:

"Horace, it is really and truly splendid. Oh! I think, yes, I think you will get the medal. All that part about the deer on the mountains, with the trees all scarlet and gold, and the clear, bright look of autumn—I can see it all! It is true, and that is what people like."

Chips, who had listened to all this essay, gave several barks when rabbits, his sworn foes, were mentioned.

The *Contest* took place the third week in June, and for several

weeks beforehand a good deal of excitement made itself felt in Beulah. Hospitable matrons prepared their guest-chambers, and filled their larders for the reception of the fathers, mothers, sisters, cousins and friends of the students. Every house had its quota of merry young people, and the dressmaker's hands were filled to overflowing with the garments, wonderful and beautiful, that were to do honor to the occasion. Hats of the most ornate description were to be seen in the *one* milliner's shop, and a feeling of festivity so pervaded the town, that even Mr. Catt, the butcher, painted his shop a brilliant green for the better display of his red and yellow joints.

David, after having been in a most desperate state of mind for several weeks, brightened up.

"I have finished my subject," he said, "and what's the use of worrying. I have got an elegant new suit of clothes for the Contest, and Miss Betty Fairfax has painted me a really beautiful necktie, apple-blossoms on a sea-green ground."

David brought out the tie for my inspection, and his genial face glowed at its satiny expanse.

The Contest was to take place on a Tuesday evening, and on the preceding Friday I saw Elsie; I had been so busy with



examinations and committees that I had scarcely seen her of late. But on Friday morning I walked up High Street, quite longing to see her, and found her in the old garden. She was very busy,

and did not notice my approach. She had a great straw hat on, and in company with a very tiny mulatto boy and Chips, was watering and clipping a beautiful rose-tree. She turned round with a look of great delight and clasped her mouldy little hands behind her.

"Oh, Horace!" she said, "the roses will be beautiful for Tuesday night; I am going to make you a lovely wreath."

"But suppose, Elsie, I don't get the medal; you will be so disappointed," I said to her.

"Never mind, Horace, you shall have the wreath all the same, you dear, old thing; and, Horace, I have been praying so hard for you to get the medal; it is not any harm, and I do think you will get it."

She said this with so much assurance that I felt very much inspirited.

"Well, I must go; the Greek examination is at twelve. Be sure to be there on Tuesday," I said.

"Why, Horace, do you think I would miss it for anything," she said, resting her chin on the top of the gate; "and, oh, Horace, I have got such a beautiful dress."

"What is it like?" I asked, for the mere pleasure of looking at the sweet little face all flushed with exertion.

"Well, you will see it; you would not understand; men never do," she said, with her merry smile. "Good-bye, and here is a flower for your botton-hole."

And she picked a great sun-flower and gave it to me with a laugh. I carried the big, yellow thing off in my hand and turned from time to time to see Elsie leaning over the fence, and Chips sitting wagging his tail in the sunshine and snapping at the locust flowers that fell like golden rain.

On Tuesday evening, in good time, David and I repaired to our room to dress for the contest and to share very amicably our one small looking-glass and gaze at ourselves by the dim light of a kerosene lamp. David fairly shone; his hair, his face, his green silk tie seemed really to glow. His clothes were the glossiest and smoothest broad-cloth, his shoes creaked with newness. He added, as a finishing touch of beauty, a large silk handkerchief heavily scented with "Only Pansy Blossom" cologne.

"How about 'Our Great Dead,' Davie?" I asked.

"Oh! they are all right," said David. "I can't do any more to the old things, and father will be so pleased that I got through at all with the other examinations, he won't pay much attention

to them anyway." With this consoling view of the matter we started off together to the Town Hall. We were a little late, and passed through a side entrance into the building.

Beulah Town Hall was a most dreary place at most times, but on these occasions the crowd made it quite cheerful. It was densely, closely packed. The very windows were wide open and filled with those who could not find place within. At every window, too, was an outer circle of negroes, who, with glistening teeth and round eyes, enjoyed the entertainment immensely, and gave vent to such comments as:

"Whoop-ee, ain't dat fine now?" or "You bet, boss; dat's an elegant speech, sure."

The platform, where the expectant orators were seated, was covered with a cheap and gorgeous carpet. Twelve horse-hair covered chairs were provided for our comfort, while twenty-four more were placed behind for the faculty and other prominent friends of the college.

The background of the stage was draped with bright and curious calico, in many fanciful folds, and further adorned with portraits of Patrick Henry, Stonewall Jackson and George Washington, and a terrible chromo of "Autumn," a chaos of red and green paint. A table bearing an imposing ice-water pitcher and goblets, for the refreshment of thirsty or nervous speakers, stood in the centre of the stage.

Just in the front of the hall sat the judges. These were all Beulah ministers of various denominations, and two strangers, who were the editors of papers in the large towns of the State. A great feature of these occasions were the ushers. Some of the students, resplendent in frock-coats, undertook the office. They were responsible for the comfort of the guests, and were further provided with large palm-leaf fans, decked with white ribbon, on which were presented such tributes as wreaths, bouquets, notes and even cakes to the favored orators.

When the judges entered in a body a deep hush spread through the hall. David and I sat near each other. His ruddy cheeks were pale with fright, and the glory of his tie no longer comforted him.

It was intensely hot, and I remember hearing the click of the great beetles as they flew in the window and knocked themselves against the walls or lamp. But all this while I was searching for Elsie among the sea of faces, but nowhere could I see the soft, dark head, or clear-cut little profile. Doubtless

she was somewhere in the crowd, but I was disappointed ; those quick, sympathetic eyes would have been an inspiration to me.

Our first orator, Julio Santiago, arose. He was a dreamy, dark-eyed youth from Cuba, and his subject was Music. The fellow really liked his subject, and grew much excited as he spoke of the soft notes of the guitar, that accompanied the sweet lullabies and tender serenades under tropical stars, where the fire-flies darted through palms and orange groves. His speech was so enthusiastic, that I recognized a powerful rival. Julio got many tokens in the shape of flowers, candy and wreaths, as his foreign ways and Spanish looks made him a great favorite among the Beulah girls.

Then came good old David, his round, jolly face quite pale, but he regained his courage and got on famously, and even quoted a verse of a hymn, but with so much gusto that the audience thought it was all right, and cheered him heartily. He ended with a beaming, placid smile and a few impromptu words which rather astonished us :

“Well, now I am done with the ‘Great Dead,’ and I hope we will all meet them, every one”—and he sat down so joyfully that there was a perfect roar of laughter and applause, as David was as great a favorite as Julio, and much beloved by all.

All this time I kept wondering about Elsie, and I scarcely heard David at first when he whispered :

“There’s a little colored boy who wants to speak to you at the back of the stage.”



As another fellow was speaking I slipped out into the hot, dusty passage where the boy was. It was Pip, Elsie’s little negro servant. He must have come in a great hurry, for he was panting dreadfully and his round eyes were almost darting out of his sooty little face, and big salt tears were rolling down his fat black cheeks. He could scarcely speak for sobbing.

“Oh, Marse Horace, come right quick ! Miss Elsie most at the doah ob death, she done fell off her hoss and he kicked powerful. De doctor say she can’t live till de mawning, and de Judge say come right quick, please sah !” he gasped out.

Just then I heard our President’s calm, faculty-meeting voice say :

“Mr. Horace Dewlap, of Augusta, will now speak to us of the ‘Pleasures of Sport.’”

I whispered rapidly to Pip, “I’ll be right along in ten minutes; tell the Judge so.”

It was all so like a terrible dream that I made up my mind I would do my best, my very best for Elsie. So I left the little pitiful, sobbing figure in blue cotton clothes and went forward on the platform. The sea of faces floated before me; the smell of flowers stifled me. Before me always I saw one little face with cheeks flushed with pleasure. I missed no line; I did not forget one inflection. The lines of poetry from the “Lady of the Lake” she liked so well, and the quotations from Izaak Walton told greatly; and when I described the joys of wood and field, I almost lost myself for a little. I spoke of her and for her alone, and the end came with the words of a



grand old English hunting song. The judges had risen in a body, and as I whispered a few words to the warden of our college, I heard my name rise with almost deafening hurrahs and applause. I never stopped one minute, but disappeared through the little side-door. The night was very still and sultry. There was a great crowd pushing up to the very windows. Outside one could distinctly hear the hum of the crowd within, and again and again I heard my name, followed by the sharp sounds of clapping and stamping. The sycamore trees whispered and cast black shadows on the ground; the streets were deserted and the brick pavement echoed to my footsteps. In the drug-stores at the corners of the streets, I heard the cool hissing sound of the soda-water fountains, which were the chief attractions of these places. A few men, smoking cigarettes, were lingering by their brightly lit windows.

High Street was empty and very silent; an eternity seemed to pass before I got to the Judge’s door. It was wide open, and I passed into the dim, old-fashioned hall. Mrs. Lee, who had no

doubt been listening for me, came down the stairs, the light from the lamp in her hand shining on her disordered hair and loose white wrapper. She was very pale and had a curious, set look about her mouth. She said not a word, but beckoned me to follow her, and we went up the little narrow wooden stairs together. We went into the big upper room. It was low, with great rafters and a curious, old, carved wainscot. The floor was polished, and the empty fire-place was filled with fragrant lilac boughs. The windows were wide open, and the aspens whispered and rustled in the moonlight outside, while the fire-flies winged their way in their depths or floated into the room.

On a little bed drawn to the centre of the room lay Elsie. The white curtains fluttered to and fro, and the lamp on the mantelpiece flickered uncertainly in the night-breeze.

Elsie was supported by pillows, and on each cheek was a brilliant red spot. Her whole face lit up with a smile, when she saw me, that brought back for a little while the old Elsie I had seen among the flowers a few days ago. She stretched out her arms to me; somehow it seemed quite natural to come and



kneel beside her, and feel her two little hands clasp themselves about my neck, although I had never even kissed her before. Chips jumped from the foot of the bed and sniffed about me in an inquiring manner, and now and then gave a little whine.

“Horace, Horace! I wanted you; tell me, dear, how did all go?”

Something had been mounting up, up in my throat, but I managed to say:

"It's all right, Elsie; yes, I really have got the medal; it will be yours."

A look of deep pleasure came into her face, and she said with a glad ring in the voice that seemed so weak:

"I knew it would be all right. And, Horace, dear, you have been so good to me, and I want to—want to"—her voice broke a little, but she went on—"to thank you before, before——"

A smothered moan came from Elsie's old mammy, who was seated at the foot of the bed with a palm-leaf fan in her hand, looking with yearning eyes on her little mistress, who had been her baby for sixteen years.

"Oh, Lawd! Oh, Lawd! come quick!" she moaned, while the tears trickled swiftly down her withered black cheeks

"Mammy, mammy, don't cry," said Elsie, tenderly, putting one hand on the poor old head, whose white woolly hair showed under the spotless head-handkerchief.

"La, honey, my heart's done broke sure," said the old negress, sobbing pitifully—"if you goes, de light ob our eyes is plumb gone out."

Elsie's father and mother stood silent at the head of the bed. Mrs. Lee, with firm folded hands and bowed head, seemed to be repeating something to herself.

Old Dr. Robins was seated at the window, looking into the street, which echoed from time to time to the steps of the people, who had now left the Town Hall and were going to their homes. Scattered words and merry laughs floated into the quiet room.

"Elsie, Elsie," I said, while the sobs I had been trying to repress broke forth, "my little Elsie."

The dear little hands clasped themselves more tightly about my neck.

"Lift me up a little, Horace, I can not breathe quite. You know I have always loved you best, Horace, and I was afraid at first to go out into the dark all by myself, but I am not now. It will be beautiful instead. Come to see my father and mother, and take care of Chips—but Horace, Horace, darling, I feel sure I can love you always, yes always."

What could I do but hold the dear little form nearer to me, and pray in my poor way for strength to help her now.

"Good-bye, Horace," she whispered, "give me to my mother."

Mrs. Lee, with infinite tenderness, laid the little head, with

its soft tangled hair, upon her breast, and the Judge with trembling steps came forward too. Old Dr. Robins moved from his place at the window, with his big, gold watch in his hand. In the sacred parting between father and mother I felt I had no part. In a dazed way I crept down to the dim drawing-room. The light of its one neglected lamp showed a strange untidiness in everything. The flowers were quite faded in the vases, and the piano was open and covered with dust. The "Bird Waltz," with all its pencil marks, was being blown about by the night breeze that came in gusts from the window. Chips had followed me down-stairs and lay on the floor, watching me with his round, brown eyes, and gently beating the floor with his feathery tail.

With loving care I put all the leaves of the "Bird Waltz" together, and wiping the dust from the keys with my handkerchief, put the piano lid quietly down. At that minute Dr. Robins came in; he did not say one word, but raised his hand and pointed—upward. The last thing I heard, as I left the house, was Chips pattering softly up the stairs to her room.

I went to my boarding-house, past the Town Hall, now silent and deserted. When I got to our room Davy was waiting for me. The room was just in the disorder in which we had left it, and on the table were piled all the bouquets and wreaths that had been given me; and a great white cake, with wonderful decorations, crowned the wooden chest of drawers.

"It's glorious," David began, his ruddy face beaming with joy. "You were applauded by everyone, and the judges said it was years since such a speech had been——"

But he got no farther when I burst forth with those terrible, strange words—

"Oh! Davy, Davy, Elsie is dead."

Then, in his kind, honest way, he did his best for me. He sat by me for a long time, with his grand satin tie all rumpled, till I begged him to go to bed. Then I was alone with my grief till the sun rose in the glorious June morning, filling the room with brilliant light, and shining on the now fast fading wreaths and bunches of flowers, and the orioles and cardinals called to each other in the tall elms outside.

The beautiful medal, that she would never see, was sent to me on the day they buried her. I did not go to see her as others did, for I wanted to think of her as she was in life, not as anything strange or different.

I felt like one in a dream as I went toward the Presbyterian church on that sunny June day. It was so quiet and still inside. I remember it all; the great white wooden pillars and the high walls covered with yellow marbled paper. I sat and waited while the church began to fill with so many of Elsie's friends. The pretty girlish faces were strangely grave as they sat quietly with their flowers heaped upon their laps.

Soon it was all over, and one felt that Mr. and Mrs. Lee in their grief would need no intruder in their silent house; they were better alone. But I stayed behind a little while, she might be lonely, and David said something to the other fellows, and they went down the hill bareheaded, carrying their caps in their hands. I stood quite still looking at the terribly new grave, with its mounds of flowers, and I started as little pattering steps came behind me. There was Chips! And he stood beside me, wagging his feathery tail and looking at me with eager brown eyes.



"No; she is not here, Chips."

And I looked far away across the mountains, where the sun was setting in a sea of golden light, and the dear little voice sounded once more and I could almost hear the words again:

"It will be beautiful instead. And I shall love you always, always Horace, always." And the touch of the little hands was still about my neck.

"Life for evermore, life for evermore." Where had I heard those words? Strange they should come to me now. Yes, in the Cathedral in New York, where the words of "Nazareth" had seemed to float and rise far into the vaulted roof, followed and echoed by the great organ, seemingly unable to give expression to the joy of the words in its deep harmonies. Yes, life for evermore, ever, evermore—and here, in this quiet spot, was a good waiting-place.

I knew how it all would be. In the vivid days of autumn the purple shadows would chase each other over the hill, while the fresh breeze scattered the golden and bronze leaves along the paths and among the gray stones. By the fences, the golden-rod and the little purple daisies, that come when the grass begins to turn brown, would bloom in the sunlight, all veiled with the blue smoke of brush-fires.

Then in winter how silent it would be, with the dead, curled leaves slipping across the snow, and each leafless tree standing

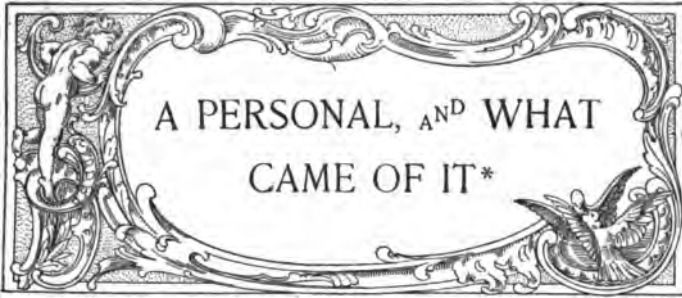
like an etching against the sky, with now and then the "caw" of a crow to break the silence.

Spring would come, with the indescribable odors of earth and growing things; the Lent lilies would shake their golden cups in the breeze, and the bluebirds, with soft whisperings, would hop from twig to twig in the cedars, while at evening the robins going north would fill the air with their flute-like song.

But in summer, radiant summer, how beautiful it would be! When the mountains lay in the golden glory of sunset and all the valley glowed with its amber light; when the swallows would dart towards earth to rest their white breasts against the green grass and the big ox-eye daisies, with golden hearts and snowy petals, would bend and sway in the soft evening air.

Yes, I knew it all. "Chips, Chips," I called softly; and Chips, with pleading brown eyes, resting his cold nose in my hand for a minute, shook his plummy tail and trotted merrily along the road, while the iron gates clicked behind us.





YOU may smile, if you like, but I always read my morning paper from A to Z. I begin with the top of the first column on the first page, and finish with the end of the column on the last page. In that way I lose no possible scrap of information, and, besides, the habit often leads to important consequences, as the following narrative will show.

For a whole week I had found in the column of my paper devoted to "Personals," the following touching appeal:

My Theodore :—Why have you not answered my last two letters? Are you angry with me, or are you ill? Oh, my Theodore, have pity on me and relieve the anxiety of your suffering
CLEOPATRA.

The first time I read it, it made no particular impression upon me. So with the second and third times—for I remembered that all advertisements are generally inserted three times,—but when I opened my paper on the fourth morning, and saw it still there, it set me to thinking seriously. Cleopatra began to interest me. The advertisement had already cost her two dollars.

The fifth morning came, and with it the same heart-breaking appeal. It began to affect not only my nerves, but to arouse my indignation. Cleopatra had evidently written two letters to this unknown person, who had obstinately refused to answer them. Courtesy alone would have demanded some acknowledgment of them, however formal. He was angry with her, unquestionably, for in the last advertisement was the added line—"Are you still angry with me?"

But even had she done something to make him angry, he might have taken some sort of notice of her appeal. And it was touching, too, the way in which she asked if he were sick.

The next morning I departed from my usual habit; I looked at the "Personal" column first.

* Translated from the Danish, for Short Stories, by Charles E. Hurd.—Copyrighted.

There it was again!

Unhappy Cleopatra! Had she taken space in the advertising columns of the paper for a year?

That sort of thing could not go on longer.

My resolution was taken. I sat down to my writing-desk at once, hastily scrawled a few lines, inclosed the price of one insertion, and sent it by a boy to the office of the newspaper.

The next morning I tore open the paper. There stood my advertisement in large letters just after that of Cleopatra:

Dear Mr. Theodore:—Will you not show some pity on Cleopatra, and not leave her to suffer longer? Your conduct is both unbecoming and reprehensible.

MICHAEL.

Now we shall see, I thought, if he will still keep silence.

There was no sign from him in the next day's paper, but from her there was this line:

Michael:—Thanks, oh thanks, you good soul!

CLEOPATRA.

It is very flattering to be considered a good man, but there is something about the expression, "good soul," that I don't exactly like. Its application by Cleopatra rather displeased me. An old woman, who is rheumatic and who reads the Bible a great deal, is a "good soul"; but a man of forty, who dresses well and has ambitions—well! However, when I came to read it over, I could see that it was not ill-meant. It was unquestionably a genuine outburst of feeling. In any case, it was handsome of her to make an acknowledgment of my interest in her affairs.

I could hardly wait until the next morning to come. The moment the paper arrived I turned to the advertising page. It was there! Theodore had been aroused to answer. This was the token of his existence:

Michael:—Do not meddle with what does not concern you. It strikes me, from your note, that you are like your namesake, who killed himself in running after the comet. Will you, in the future, be so good as to mind your own business?

THEODORE.

On the instant I sat down and wrote the following, which I dispatched for the next day's issue:

Theodore:—Your rudeness does not at all surprise me. I was perfectly prepared for it after the brutal manner in which you have treated the prayers of a lady. The Chinese have a custom of never answering a letter until a month after it is received. I take the liberty of supposing you to be a Chinese. MICHAEL.

That soothed me a little.

The next issue contained my rejoinder, but just below it was the following note by the editor :

Messrs. Michael and Theodore are notified that with the above we must consider their correspondence closed. We cannot allow our paper to become the vehicle of messages of a threatening character.

There was something in that. And, as I had had the last word I was satisfied.

I looked upon the whole affair as dead and buried, when some days later the name Michael caught my eye in the advertising columns. Was it intended for me, or for some other Michael? A second glance assured me. It ran :

Michael is earnestly entreated to send his address to

CLEOPATRA.

Hem! That was something to be thought about. Might it not be a trap which was set for me? To judge of him by his advertisement, this Theodore was a surly, cantankerous fellow, who might want to find my address to make a personal attack upon me, or perhaps send me a challenge for a duel.

I am opposed to duelling on principle. I prefer any time a dozen oysters to a shot in the leg or a thrust with a small sword.

What should I do?

The advertisement was certainly signed "Cleopatra," and courtesy demanded some kind of answer. I would not follow the Chinese method and wait a month, so I answered that my address might be obtained of the editor.

A morning or two later, while sitting at breakfast, my old housekeeper informed me that a lady wished to see me.

"Is she young?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Pretty?"

"Yes."

"Clear the table, then, and let her come in." I hurried into my sleeping-room to brush the hair over the bald place on the top of my head, slipped on a black coat—in which I am assured I look tolerably well—and hurried back again. When I re-entered the room, a ravishingly beautiful young lady, whom I had never before seen, stood before me.

"Sir," she began, in a soft voice, in which there was an anxious sound, "forgive this intrusion on the part of a stranger, but——"

Here she made a slight pause. I pushed forward an arm-chair.

"Please be seated. There is not the slightest need of an apology. I am charmed, I'm sure."

Her eyes until now had been cast down. Now she raised them and looked me full in the face. What eyes! Black, with blonde hair. Is there any combination more magnificent?

"Mr. Michael," she began, "I am not altogether unknown to you."

"No; certainly not," I stammered, "certainly not. I—I believe I have had the pleasure——"

I looked at her closely. I was lying. I had never seen her before.

"You meant to do me a good turn, even if you failed."

To whom had I attempted to do a good turn? I could think of no one. I only bowed.

"Yes, Mr. Michael, you have certainly shown that you are a man with a heart."

She looked at me with trustful eyes. Such eyes! they burned to the very marrow of my soul.

"Why, my dear young lady," I burst forth. "I should be worse than a barbarian if I did not place my heart and myself at your disposal. Yes, I would even, to please you, set sail for Tonquin, and set the Chinese——"

"Chinese!" she interrupted. "That brings me to the business I came upon. Calling him that was the very thing that made him so angry. He insists that the whole matter was a conspiracy between you and me. He is so dreadfully jealous!"

Conspiracy! he! what and whom could she be talking about? And a Chinese! could it be possible that this charming young creature had a Chinese lover? Women have all sorts of tastes, however. But, then, what had I to do with it? Why should she confide in me? But I put a bold face upon it.

"Jealous! that is too ridiculous! You must convince him that he is mistaken."

"But I cannot. Mr. Michael, you are the only one that can bring him to his senses. You must call on him and explain. Perhaps he will then listen to reason."

Cold chills ran over me at the thought. To put myself into the hands of this Chinese Othello! To risk my head between the jaws of the lion! To explain a matter of which I was thoroughly ignorant to a heathen foreigner mad with jealousy! No. My willingness to become a martyr did not extend so far as that.

"My dear madam," I stammered, "nothing would give me greater pleasure, but my professional duties occupy every moment of my time from morning until night."

"But you cannot refuse me," she pleaded. "You can take time enough for that, dear, good Mr. Michael!"

And she caught my hand and patted it like a child. I could resist no longer. I declared myself ready.

"Thanks, oh! thanks."

"Where does he live?" I asked, firmly. I felt that moment like one of the old knights who was about to go out to fight dragons.

"In Powderhouse Street, number 17. You can't mistake it. It is on the right-hand side of the street, and the first door to the left as you enter."

Powderhouse Street. The name sounded ominous.

At ten o'clock the next morning I prepared myself for the fight. After a long walk I reached the street. My heart beat so it could be heard when I stepped into the hall of the house where the monster dwelt.

The first door to the left. This was it. At the further end of the passage was a servant with a dustpan and brush.

"Here!" I called to him in a loud voice, "can you tell me if the Chinese is at home?"

I was standing just in front of the door, and, as I spoke, it flew violently open and the dragon stood before me. I raised both hands mechanically to keep him from springing at my throat. It was the instinct of self-preservation. Then I looked him in the eye. My hands dropped.

"What, Damian!"

"Michael!"

For five long years I had neither heard from nor seen my old schoolfellow, and here he had dropped upon me, or rather I had dropped upon him from the clouds. We shook each others hands till they ached.

"But what in all the world are you doing here, and where have you been all these years, Damian?"

"That is a long story to tell, Michael. I have been in America."

"In America? Truly? You must tell me all about it. Isn't there a café near here where we can have a chat?"

Suddenly I remembered my mission.

"But not just yet," I cried. "I have a disagreeable task to

perform first. It was a lucky mistake my going to the wrong door first, for I found you. I was told the first door to the left. I say, old fellow, do you know whether there is a Chinese living in the building?"

"A Chinese? Why, what should a Chinese do here?"

"Well, that's what I really don't know myself. All is, I have promised to find him, and I expect to have my throat cut for my good nature. I haven't the slightest idea what I have to say to him. It is to oblige a young woman whose name I don't know, and whom I never saw but once."

Damian shook his head and looked at me with a curious glance.

"Terrible to die so young, isn't it?" with a weak attempt to encourage myself by a joke.

My friend paid no attention to what I was saying. He was looking over my shoulder towards the door.

"Are you convinced now?" said a voice behind me. "Do you believe now I have told the truth, Theodore?"

Theodore! And that voice! It was that of my unknown visitor of the day before. Theodore! Where had I heard that name before?

"I have not the slightest idea what you mean," replied my friend, coldly. "All I know is that I have just accidentally met an old school comrade."

"That is splendid!" She clapped her hands joyously. "But why are you staring at me so strangely, Mr. Michael?"

"Because I really don't know what to say. I haven't yet found your Chinese."

"The Chinese!" and my unknown laughed heartily. "Why, the Chinese stands before you—Theodore!"

"Cleopatra!"

Ah, ha! Theodore! Cleopatra! The light began to break in upon me.

"That infernally impudent Michael in the advertisement was you then?" said my friend.

"And you, Damian, were——"

"For heaven's sake, don't call me Damian again. I dropped that name in America years ago. I am Theodore now."

"Well, Theodore. I take back the Chinese, but you must acknowledge your mistake in saying that it was Michael who ran after the comet."

"If it will be of any comfort to you, certainly. It was very likely Timothy."

"Well, in any case, let us forgive and forget. And now for a couple of bottles of Rudesheimer."

The champagne was brought, and we sat down to it around the little table in Theodore's room. The whole matter was, little by little, cleared up.

"I am curious to know one thing, Theodore," said I. "Why did you let the charming Cleopatra beg in vain for an answer for a whole week? That wasn't at all like you."

Theodore hesitated.

"You are forcing my hand, Michael, but I will tell you. All this whole long week I have been held by the police on the charge of disturbing the peace. You see, I was going home one night after a late supper, where I had drunk too much, and that was because of our little quarrel." Here he nodded at Cleopatra. "I wasn't in the best humor, and, for the matter of that, neither was the watchman, whom I met on the way home. He insisted on my going along quietly, and I insisted on singing, and the end of it was that he took me to the watchhouse. For seven long days I sat there, determined not to pay my fine, growling to myself and thinking of Cleopatra, who is to blame for the whole of it. I might have been sitting there now if a third party had not thrust his nose into the business and made me jealous."

"Then I really have you to thank for his coming back after all, you dear, good Mr. Michael."

And Cleopatra rose from her chair and came round to my side of the table.

"Shall I?" she asked, looking at Theodore.

"Certainly," said he, laughing, and a kiss from her soft lips burned on my cheek.

The wedding came off three weeks later, and to keep up the joke that had brought us together I sent them for a present an elegant Chinese pagoda for the mantel.

Since that time I have never mixed myself up in newspaper correspondence.

THE YELLOW ENVELOPE *

BY FRED. L. COWLES

IT was in what the picturesque, gray-haired clerks now, too often term "the good old spoils' days," in the departmental service at Washington. He was not much more than a boy when he came to us, and was assigned to a desk next to mine. He had come from some impossible place away out west, "just to knock off the corners a little," he said to me in a burst of confidence, truly western, warranted by our one-hour acquaintance. "Got tired of being hemmed in by the old mountains, you know, not seeing the sun more than four hours a day, when it's directly overhead—always lived out west, never east of the Missouri river before; just wanted to see what it's like to live in the east awhile; going back next spring to develop the General Grant mine that I've an interest in; wouldn't live here longer than six months for the White House."

He was a frank, winning boy—a little wild at times, but we liked him none the less for that, for he was always so repentant in the abatement of the next day's headache. He *did* chatter a good deal, it's true; told slangy stories, and I am afraid our "efficiency record" suffered, both in "amount of work done" and "correctness," from listening to them—but, then, his stories were always breezy and had point, that is more than I could say for the army stories of Colonel Mixsell, whose desk was on my right; he, the Colonel, was apt to be a little prosy at times from mixing humor with pessimistic philosophy.

The two rows of desks in which ours were located, had been dubbed "intellectual row" by envious clerks on the other side of the room, because in our leisure moments we had chiefly discussed and speculated upon impersonal subjects, but with the advent of our young friend, John Bradford, or, as he preferred to be called, Jack Bradford, intellectual row soon degenerated into "fresh alley."

"They are always going back next spring, or next fall," the Colonel remarked, musingly, as he saw Jack rushing out at luncheon time to find "that place where you can get a bully

* Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

plate of raws for ten cents, better than we get out home for six bits!" "They all say that, but they don't go; it's a to-morrow that never comes; they're like the lotus-eaters, gradually they lose the inclination, finally the strength. They stay here, on and on, until they die—or get the yellow envelope that contains their dismissal. He won't go back in the spring, the next spring or the spring after that; his influence is too good; he'll stay here as long as he can, see if he don't!" I made no reply. He was not talking to me, besides I did not half like it; someway I had faith in the boy.

There is no doubt that for some time after Jack came among us the "grind" didn't seem so hard, his optimism seemed infectious; he worked as fast as he talked, and seemed to regard it as pastime; never got tired or blue.

I soon learned from him a great many things that I had only thought of in a vague way before; how mines were located, the working of silver mills, that "Noble Red Men" would lie, steal and beg, and were very, *very* dirty. I became deeply interested in the Rough and Ready hook and ladder team of Goldburg, of which Jack had been foreman when they won the silver champion belt at the territorial tournament in the unparalleled time of twenty-six and a half seconds. Think of it; they ran five hundred yards, or five hundred feet,—I am not sure which he said, but it was a long way,—with a heavy truck, from which they snatched a thirty-foot ladder, stood it up in the middle of the road, started a man from the ground and his hand touched the top rung in twenty-six and a half seconds; magnificent, wasn't it? Yes, Jack would go back and tell the "boys" just how far behind the times the effete East was. Colonel Mixsell doubted it, but I was sure of it, and I was glad that he had come, it would prove an interesting experience to him; besides, yes he was a little rough in places, as he had said, and a little rounding and polishing might do him good in Mamie's eyes. Mamie—I had come to know her too from him. She was a good little girl, with big brown eyes, and played the organ in the Presbyterian church at Goldburg. She would be pleased when Jack came home, looking so handsome, in the nobby suit of clothes made for him by Washington's most fashionable tailor. Jack was to keep straight for two years; he promised her that a year ago; "and, by George," he had done so, barring, shamefacedly, a few little lapses that, like Rip Van Winkle's, didn't count.

In a short time he had to "do" Society—"just to write her about it you know. She's read a good deal about receptions and the like, but my letters make them seem different somehow. Not so wicked as she imagined? *Wicked!* well I should say they ain't. They are nothing but church sociables at a masquerade. I wouldn't go to the blamed things if it wasn't for the pretty girls—and the punch. They generally have a whole raft of nice looking girls; but I haven't seen any as pretty as Mamie, excepting, maybe Miss Rignold." Then there was an exception. I was sorry to hear that. But she helped to make Jack's only winter in Washington gay and happy, that was something. It would please Mamie when Jack told her about it next spring; at least I thought it would, and said as much to Jack. He replied, "Quien sabe?" with a most expressive shrug of the shoulders. I do not know what he meant exactly, as I never studied foreign languages, and we turn foreign letters over to the translator's desk; but I suppose he agreed with that view of it.

It was in June, when I straightened up my desk,—by locking up penholders, pencils, paper-weights and other portable articles, preparatory to going away on my annual leave,—that I mentioned to Jack how sorry I would be to find another man at his desk when I came back, and how much I would miss him. He laughed, a little constrainedly I thought, and said, "Well, old man, I guess I won't say good-bye just yet; the fact is, I have concluded to stay and take a course at law-school."

I am afraid that was the moment when my confidence in him was first shaken—yes, it was a distinct shock, and I could not help murmuring, "But, Jack—Mamie—what does she think of that? does she consent to have you stay away so long?" Perhaps I should not have said so much, but I could not help thinking of her disappointment, and feeling sorry for her. He evaded the question, and gave me less of his confidence after that.

Well, he went through law-school, but it was a drag upon him, any one could see that; he did not take an honor, and I must own that I did not expect him to.

I was at the Commencement exercises the night he graduated, and for a moment I was again proud of him when he stepped forth to receive his diploma; surely he will go back to Mamie and his old home now, I thought. But he did not.

He was at his desk the next morning, looking a little seedy, which he explained was from celebrating his freedom.

"Fresh alley" had now lost its title, for there was nothing

distinctive about it, as Jack had become much the same as the rest of us. At times he would be depressed, then we knew he was in debt; again he was facetious and happy, and then we knew he was in love.

Six times had the sweet magnolia in Lafayette park bloomed and shed its fragrance since Jack first announced that he was going home in the spring; but he had seen each blooming, and put off going, as he said, that he might see it bloom just once more. Rather a sorry joke, I thought, as I stopped under it on my way home from his wedding, at the residence of the bride, Miss Rignold, on 16th street.

Although it had been a pretty wedding, the bride and presents unexceptional, I felt as I stood under the old tree, it would have been better had Jack gone home that spring, back to Goldburg, where they were glad to see young men succeed, back to the little Presbyterian church and its pretty organist.

After he returned from his wedding-trip, Jack worked harder, and seemed more as he did when he first came to us. He was going to buy a home, and by and by he was going "to get out of this grind," and work for himself. Together, we went over many plans for his new house; I was to board with him and have a room for myself, just as I had always wanted one.

Helen, Jack's wife, was a very likeable little woman I found, though to my mind, a bit too frivolous to be a good balance for a man like Jack; not serious and helpful as Mamie would have been, I was sure, though, of course, I did not say so to Jack. Then the baby came—and a fine boy he was, too—but he postponed the building of the house, so they kept on renting.

I don't know how it came about,—for I am an old bachelor with no one to look after but myself, and my salary, same as Jack's, gives me every comfort and ten dollars every Christmas for my not too numerous nephews and nieces—but they could not make their income and expenses meet. Perhaps it started with the two hundred dollars he borrowed, at five per cent. a month, when he went upon his wedding-journey, or he may have had responsibilities that none of us knew about,—that is very often the case,—anyway, they were sadly in debt always, and just as if they were not, within the year after baby Frank came, Jack joined an expensive club, and spent most of his time there after office. It was none of my business, but I knew that he could not afford it, and I remonstrated with him upon the extravagance. He replied, with that Mexican shrug that I was begin-

ning to hate, "Why not? must enjoy myself sometime—somewhere. At home I am not in it with Helen's baby; and see here, old man, don't pay any attention to us for awhile, things are not running very smooth just now."

Of course it led to the old story: the butcher, the grocery-man, the what-not clamorous; a neglected wife, strangely making herself less attractive by fault-finding and sharp words; finally she went home to her mother. Then Jack took to drinking and became a chronic borrower. His friends fell off one by one, until he had not an associate in the office.

All last week he did not come to the office, and all last week a large yellow envelope lay upon his desk. I tried several times to hide it behind his unfinished work, but as often as I did so, some officious person would resurrect it and place it in full view. We all knew that it contained his dismissal, and it's hard to say whether we were glad or sorry.

Last night I thought it best to look him up, and save him the humiliation of coming to the office only to receive that letter.

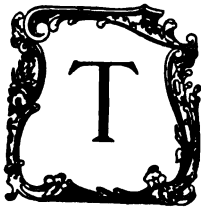
Yes, he was there, the old German saloon-keeper, over whose place Jack now roomed, said; "Peen trinkin' again, I guesch, don't it? vos cryin' and dakin' on pretty padt a vile ago. I reckon he was haf dos yimyams; petter you gone on up. I peen dere directly of you vas need me."

I went up a pair of dark stairs to Jack's door; I knocked on it several times without a response. Finally, I pushed it open, and saw Jack leaning forward over the rough deal table, his face buried in his hands, apparently asleep. I went up to waken him. But as I did so, a second glance told me he would never waken in this world, for in his right temple there was a small powder-stained hole, from which the blood was slowly trickling, and still clutched in his hand, a pistol. Upon the table lay a small photograph, in one corner of which was written the word "Mamie," and near it a large yellow envelope.



BARBARA
GOLDING*

BY GILBERT PARKER



HE last time Field Osgood saw Miss Barbara Golding was on a certain summer afternoon at the lonely Post, Telegraph and Customs Station known as Rahway on the Queensland coast. It was at Rahway also that he first and last saw Mr. Louis Bachelor. He had had excellent opportunities for knowing Barbara Golding, since through many years she had been governess (and something more) to his sisters Janet, Agnes and Lorna. She had been engaged in Sydney as governess simply, but Wandenong cattle station was far up country, and she gradually came to perform the functions of milliner and dressmaker, encouraged thereto by the family for her unerring taste and skill. Her salary, however, was proportionately increased, and it did not decline when her office as a governess became practically a sinecure as her pupils passed beyond the sphere of the school-room. Perhaps George Osgood, the owner of Wandenong, did not make an allowance to Barbara Golding for her services as counsellor and confidante of his family; but neither did he subtract anything from her earnings in those infrequent years when she journeyed alone to Sydney on those mysterious visits which so mightily puzzled the good people of Wandenong. The boldest, however, and most off-hand of them could never discover what Barbara Golding did not choose to tell. She was slight, almost frail in form, and very gentle of manner; but she also possessed that rare species of courtesy which, never declining at any moment into fastidiousness nor lapsing into

* A selection from "Macmillan's Magazine."

familiarity, checked all curious intrusion, was it never so insinuating; and the milliner and dressmaker was not less self-poised and compelling of respect than the governess and confidante.

In some particulars the case of Louis Bachelor was similar; for besides being the Post, Telegraph and Customs Officer, and Justice of the Peace at Rahway, he was available and valuable to the Government as a meteorologist. The Administration recognized this after a few years of voluntary and earnest labor on Louis Bachelor's part; it was not his predictions concerning floods or droughts that roused this official appreciation, but the fulfillment of those predictions. At length a yearly *honorarium* was sent to him, and then again, after a dignified procrastination, there was forwarded to him a suggestion from the Cabinet that he should come to Brisbane and take a more important position. It was when this patronage was declined that the Premier (dropping for a moment into that bushman's jargon which, in truth, came naturally to him), said irritably that Louis Bachelor was a "—— old fossil who didn't know when he'd got his dover in the dough," which, being interpreted into the slang of the old world, means, his knife in the official loaf. But the fossil went on as before, known by name to the merest handful of people in the colony, though they all profited, directly or indirectly, by his scientific services; and as unknown to the dwellers at Wandenong as they were to him, and he again to the citizens of the moon.

It was the custom for Janet and Agnes Osgood to say that Barbara Golding had a history; and they said it with little mannerisms peculiar to young ladies of modern promise. Janet declared to her sister Agnes that the Maid of Honor (so they called her) might, if all were known about her, be translated into a novel; and Agnes in appropriate season had, with slight variations, said the same to Janet. On every occasion the sentiment was uttered with that fresh conviction in tone which made it appear to be born again. The occasion when it seemed to have had the most pregnant origin, was one evening after Janet had been consulting Miss Barbara on the mysteries of the garment in which she was to be married to Druce Gallant, part owner of Boodal Station. "Aggie," remarked this coming bride, "her face flushed up ever so pink when I said to her that she seemed to know exactly how a *trousseau* ought to be. I'm afraid, dear, I said it with a faint suggestion in my voice,—unpardonable with her, she always is so considerate—but it had its effect. I wonder! She

is well-bred enough to have been anybody; and you know it was the Bishop who recommended her."

It was not long after this that Druce Gallant arrived at Wandenong and occupied the attention of Janet until supper-time, when he electrified the company by the narration of his adventures on the previous evening with Roadmaster, the mysterious bush-ranger, whose name was now in every man's mouth, and who apparently worked with no confederates, a somewhat perilous proceeding, though it reduced the chances of betrayal. Druce Gallant was about to camp on the plains for the night, in preference to riding on to a miserable bush-tavern a few miles away, when he was suddenly accosted in the scrub by a gentlemanly-looking fellow on horseback, who, from behind his mask, asked him to give up what money he had about him, together with his watch and ring. The request was emphasized by the presence of a revolver held at an easy but suggestive angle from the pommel of the saddle. The disadvantage to Druce Gallant was obvious; he merely requested that he should be permitted to keep the ring, since it had many associations, remarking at the same time that he would be pleased to give an equivalent for it if the bushranger would accompany him to Wandenong. At the mention of Wandenong the highwayman asked his name. On being told, he handed back the money, the watch, and the ring, and politely requested a cigar, saying that the Osgoods deserved consideration at his hands, and that their friends were safe from molestation. Then he added, with some grim humor, that, if Druce Gallant had no objection to spending an hour with Roadmaster over a fire and billy of tea, he would be glad of his company; for bushranging, according to his system, was but dull work. Struck with the unusual character of the man, the young squatter consented, and together they sat for two hours, the highwayman, however, never removing the mask from his eyes. They talked of many things and at last Gallant ventured to ask his companion about the death of Blood Finchley, the owner of Tarawan sheep run. At this Roadmaster became moody, and rose to leave; but, as if on second thoughts, he said that Finchley's companion, whom he allowed to go unrobbed and untouched, was both a coward and a liar; that the slain man had fired thrice needlessly, and had wounded him in the neck (the scar of which he showed) before he drew trigger. Gallant then told him that besides the posse of police, a number of squatters and bushmen had banded to hunt him down, and advised

him to make for the coast if he could, give up his present business and leave the country. At this Roadmaster laughed and said that his fancy was not seaward yet, though that might come; and then, with a courteous wave of his hand, he jumped on his horse and rode away.

The Osgoods speculated long and curiously on Roadmaster's identity, as did indeed the whole colony; and at length the father concluded that it might be a well-bred scoundrel named Calthorpe whom he had saved from prison at Brisbane a couple of years before. He could not think of any other likely person.

And here it may be said, that people of any observation (though, of necessity, they were few, since Rahway attracted only busy sugar-planters and their workmen) were used to speak of Louis Bachelor as one who must certainly have a history if he could but be persuaded to tell it. The person most likely to have the power of inquisition into his affairs was his faithful aboriginal servant Gongi. But records and history were only understood by Gongi when they were restricted to the number of heads taken in tribal battle. At the same time he was a devoted slave to the man who, at the risk of his own life, had rescued him from the murderous spears of his aboriginal foes. That was a kind of archive within Gongi's comprehension, from the contemplation of which he turned to speak of Louis Bachelor as "That fellow budgery marmi b'longin' to me," which, in civilized language, means "my good master." Gongi frequently dilated on this rescue, and he would, for purposes of illustration, take down from his master's wall an artillery-officer's sabre and show how his assailants were dispersed.

From the presence of this sword it was not unreasonably assumed that Louis Bachelor had at some time been in the army. He was not, however, communicative on this point, though he shrewdly commented on European wars and rumors of wars, when they occurred. He also held strenuous opinions on the conduct of government and the suppression of public evils, based obviously upon a military conception of things. For bushrangers he would have a modern Tyburn, but this and other tragic suggestions lacked conviction when confronted with his verdicts given as Justice of the Peace. He pronounced anathemas in a grand and airy fashion, but as if he were speaking by the card, a Don Quixote whose mercy would be vaster than his wrath. This was the impression he gave to Field Osgood on the day when the young squatter introduced himself to Rahway, where he had come on

a mission to its one official. The young man's father had a taste for many things; astronomy was his latest, and he had bought from the Government a telescope which, excellent in its day, had been superseded by others of later official purchase. He had brought it to Wandenong, had built a home for it, and had got it into trouble. He had then sent to Brisbane for assistance, and the astronomer of the Government had referred him to the postmaster at Rahway, "prognosticator" of the meteorological column in *The Courier*, who would be instructed to give Mr. Osgood every help, especially as the occultation of Venus was near. Men do not send letters by post in a new country when personal communication is possible, and Field Osgood was asked by his father to go to Rahway. When Field wished for the name of this rare official, the astronomer's letter was handed over with a sarcastic request that the name might be deciphered; but the son was not more of an antiquary than his father, and he had to leave without it. He rode to the coast, and there took a passing steamer to Rahway.

From the sea Rahway looked a tropical paradise. The bright green palisades of mangrove on the right crowded down to the water's edge; on the left was the luxuriance of a tropical jungle; in the centre was an arc of opal shore fringed with cocoa-palms, and beyond these a handful of white dwellings. Behind was a sweeping monotony of verdure stretching back into the great valley of the Popri, and over all the heavy languor of the South.

But the beauty was a delusion. When Field Osgood's small boat swept up the sands on the white crest of a league-long roller, how different was the scene! He saw a group of dilapidated huts, a tavern called *The Angel's Rest*, a blackfellow's hut, and the bareness of three government offices, all built on piles, that the white ants should not humble them suddenly to the dust; a fever-making mangrove swamp, black at the base as the filthiest moat, and tenanted by reptiles, feeble palms, and a sickly breath creeping from the jungle to mingle with the heavy scent of the last consignment of sugar from the Popri valley. It brought him to a melancholy standstill, disturbed at last by Gongi touching him on the arm and pointing towards the post-office. His language to Gongi was strong; he called the place by names that were not polite; and even on the threshold of the official domain said that the Devil would have his last big muster there. But from that instant his glibness declined. The squatters are the aristocracy of Australia, and rural postmasters are not always con-

sidered eligible for a dinner-party at Government House; but when Louis Bachelor come forward to meet his visitor, the young fellow's fingers quickly caught his hat from his head, and an off-hand greeting became a respectful salute.

At first the young man was awed by the presence of the grizzled gentleman, and he struggled with his language to bring it up to the classic level of this old Huguenot's speech. "Huguenot" is used figuratively, though the young squatter came to know subsequently that Louis Bachelor was descended from a family part Irish, part French. But there was something more than Celt and Gaul in the man, a steadying quality of race or discipline that made him, even in this humble position, a little grand and more than a little grave. Before they had spoken a dozen words Field Osgood said to himself, "What a quaint team he and the Maid of Honor would make! It's the same kind of thing in both, with the difference of sex and circumstance." The nature of his visitor's business pleased the old man, and infused his courtesy with warmth. Yes, he would go to Wandenong with pleasure; the Government had communicated with him about it; a substitute had been offered; he was quite willing to take his first leave in four years; astronomy was a great subject; he had a very good and obedient telescope of his own, though not nearly so large as that at Wandenong; he would telegraph at once to Brisbane for the substitute to be sent on the following day, and would be ready to start in twenty-four hours; after visiting Wandenong he would go to Brisbane for some scientific necessities—and so on through smooth parentheses of conversation. Under all the bluntness of the Bush young Osgood had a refinement which now found expression in an attempt to make himself agreeable, not a difficult task, since, thanks to his father's tastes and a year or two at college, he had a smattering of physical science. He soon won his way to the old man's heart and laboratory, which in this desolate spot had been developed through years of patience and ingenious toil.

Left alone that evening in Louis Bachelor's sitting-room, Field Osgood's eyes were caught by a portrait on the wall, the likeness of a beautiful girl. Something about the face puzzled him. Where had he seen it? More than a little of an artist, he began to reproduce the head on paper. He put it in different poses; he added to it; he took away from it; he gave it a child's face, preserving the one striking expression; he made it that of a woman—of an elderly, grave woman. Why, what was this? Barbara

Golding! Yes; the same expression and contour of features, only many years older. He then carefully and quickly made from memory an excellent head of Barbara Golding, being careful to retain *that* expression. Then he tore up the other pieces of paper and waited, seeing in his hand the possibility of a romance. He would not spoil the development of the drama, of which he now held the fluttering prologue, by any blunt treatment; he would touch this and that nerve gently to see what past connection there was between

These dim blown birds beneath an alien sky.

He mooned along in this fashion, a fashion in which his bushmen friends would not have recognized him, until his host entered. Then, in that auspicious moment when his own pipe and his companion's cigarette were being lighted, he said: "I've been amusing myself with drawing since you left, sir, and I've produced this," handing over the paper.

Louis Bachelor took the sketch and walking to the window for better light, said: "Believe me, I have a profound respect for the artistic talent. I myself once had—ah!" He had sharply paused as he saw the pencilled head, and he now stood looking fixedly at it. He turned slowly, came to the portrait on the wall, and compared it with that in his hand. Then, with a troubled face, he said: "You have much talent, but it is—it is too old—much too old—and very sorrowful."

"I intended the face to show age and sorrow, Mr. Bachelor. Would not the original of that have both?"

"She had sorrow—she had sorrow—but," and he looked sadly at the sketch again, "it is too old for her. Her face was very young, always very young."

"But has she not sorrow *now*, sir?" the other persisted, gently.

The gray head was shaken sadly, and the unsteady voice meditatively murmured, "Such beauty, such presence! I was but five-and-thirty then." There was a slight pause, and then, with his hand touching the young man's shoulder, Louis Bachelor continued: "You are young; you have a good heart; I know men. You have the sympathy of the artist—why should I not speak to you? I have been silent about it so long. You have brought the past back, I know not how, so vividly! I dream here, I work here; men come with merchandise and go again; they only bind my tongue; I am not of them; but you are different, as it seems to me, and young. God gave me a happy youth. My eyes were bright as yours; my heart as fond. You

love—is it not so? Ah, you smile and blush like an honest man. Well, so much the more I can speak now! God gave me then strength and honor and love—blessed be His name! And then He visited me with sorrow, and if I still mourn I have peace, too, and a busy life." Here he looked at the sketch again. "Then I was a soldier. *She* was my world. Ah, true love is a great thing, a great thing! She had a brother. They two, with their mother, were alone in the world, and we were to be married. One day at Gibraltar I received a letter from her saying that our marriage could not be, that she was going away from England, that those lines were her farewell, and that she commended me to the love of Heaven. Such a letter it was—so saintly, so unhappy, so mysterious! When I could get leave I went to England. She—they—had gone and none knew whither; or, if any of her friends knew, none would speak. I searched for her everywhere. At last I came to Australia, and am here now, no longer searching, but waiting; for there is that above us!" His lips moved as if in prayer. "And this is all I have left of her," fondling the portrait, "except memory."

The young man rejoined warmly, yet with discreet sympathy: "Sir, I respect, and I hope I understand, your confidence." Then a little nervously, "Might I ask her name?"

The reply was spoken to the portrait: "Barbara—Barbara Golding."

With Louis Bachelor the young squatter approached Wandenong homestead in some excitement. He had said no word to his companion about that Barbara Golding who played such a gracious part in the home of the Osgoods. He had arranged the movement of the story to his fancy, but would it occur in all as he hoped? With an amiability that was almost malicious in its adroit suggestiveness, though, to be sure, it was honest, he had induced the soldier to talk of his past. His words naturally, and always, radiated to the sun, whose image was now hidden, but for whose memory no superscription on monument or cenotaph was needed. Now it was a scrap of song, then a tale, and again a verse, by which the old soldier was delicately worked upon; until, at last, as they entered the paddocks of Wandenong, stars and telescopes and even governments had been completely forgotten in the personal literature of sentiment.

Yet Field Osgood was not quite at his ease. Now that it was at hand he rather shrank from the renewal of these ancient loves. There was Barbara Golding's story not yet fathomed; yes, his

plot had some flying threads which he had not yet gathered. Apart from everything else he knew that no woman's nerves are to be trusted. He hoped fortune would so favor him that he could arrange for the meeting of these two alone, or, at least, in his presence only. He had so far fostered this possibility by arriving at the station at nightfall. What next? He turned and looked at the soldier, a figure out of Hogarth, which even dust and travel left unspoiled. It was certain that the two should meet where Field Osgood, squatter and romancer, should be prompter, orchestra, and audience, and he alone. Vain lad! When they drew rein the young man took his companion at once to his own detached quarters known as the Barracks, and then proceeded to the house. After greetings with his family he sought Barbara Golding, who was in the school-room, piously employed, Agnes said, in putting the final touches to Janet's *trousseau*. He went across the square to the school-room, and, looking through the window, saw that she was quite alone. A few moments later he stood at the school-room door with Louis Bachelor. With his hand on the latch he hesitated. Was it not fairer to give some warning to either? Too late! He opened the door and they entered. She was sewing, and a book lay open beside her, a faded, but stately little figure, whose very garments had an air. She rose, seeing at first only Field Osgood, who greeted her and then said: "Miss Barbara, I wish to introduce to you an old friend." Then he stepped back and the two were face to face. Barbara Golding's cheeks became pale but she did not stir; the soldier with an exclamation of surprise half joyful, half pathetic, took a step forward, and then became motionless also. Their eyes met and stayed intent. This was not quite what the young man had expected. At length the soldier bowed low and the woman responded gravely. At this point Field withdrew to stand guard at the door, that the action in his strange little play should not be interrupted.

Barbara Golding's eyes were dim with tears. The soldier gently said: "I received,—" and then paused. She raised her eyes to his. "I received a letter from you,—five-and-twenty years ago."

"Yes, five-and-twenty years ago."

"I hope you cannot guess what pain it gave me."

"Sir," she answered faintly, "I can conceive it, from the pain it gave to me."

There was a pause, and then he stepped forward and holding

out his hand, said: "Will you permit me?" He kissed her fingers courteously, and she blushed. "I have waited," he added, "for God to bring this to pass." She shook her head sadly, and her eyes sought his beseechingly, as though he should spare her; but perhaps he could not see that. "You spoke of a great obstacle then; has it been removed?"

"It is still between us."

"Is it likely ever to vanish?"

"I—I do not know."

"You cannot tell me what it is?"

"Oh, you will not ask me," she pleaded.

He bowed again: "Might I dare to hope, Barbara, that you still regard me with——" he hesitated.

The fires of a modest valor fluttered in her cheeks, and she pieced out his sentence: "With all my life's esteem." Still she was a woman and she added, "But I am not young now, and I am very poor."

"Barbara," he said; "I am not rich and I am old; but you, you have not changed; you are beautiful, as you always were."

The moment was crucial. He stepped towards her, but her eyes held him back. He hoped that she would speak, but she only smiled sadly. He waited, but in the waiting hope faded and he only said, at last, in a voice of new resolve grown out of dead expectancy: "Your brother,—is he well?"

"I hope so," she somewhat painfully replied.

"Is he in Australia?"

"Yes. I have not seen him for years, but he is here."

As if a thought had suddenly come to him he stepped nearer, and made as if he would speak, but the words halted on his lips, and he turned away again. She glided to his side and touched his arm. "I am glad that you trust me," she faltered.

"There is no more that need be said," he answered.

And now, woman-like denying, she pitied too. "If I ever can, shall,—shall I send for you to tell you all?" she murmured.

"You remember I told you that the world had but one place for me, and that was by your side; that where you are, Barbara——"

"Hush, oh hush!" she interrupted gently. "Yes, I remember everything."

"There is no power can alter what is come of Heaven," he said, smiling faintly.

She looked with limpid eyes upon him as he bowed over her

hand, and she spoke with a sweet calm, "God be with you, Louis!"

Strange as it may seem, Field Osgood did not tell his sisters and his family of this romance which he had brought to the vivid close of a first act. He felt,—the more so because Louis Bachelor had said no word about it, but had only pressed his hand again and again—that he was somehow put upon his honor, and he thought it a fine thing to stand on a platform of unspoken compact with this gentleman of a social school unfamiliar to him; from which it may be seen that cattle-breeding and bullock-driving need not make a man a boor. What his sisters guessed when they found that Barbara Golding and the visitor were old friends is another matter; but they could not pierce their brother's reserve on the point.

No one at Wandenong saw the parting between the two when Louis Bachelor, his task with the telescope ended, left again for the coast; but indeed it might have been seen by all men, so outwardly formal was it, even as their brief conversations had been since they met again. But is it not known by those who look closely upon the world that there is nothing so tragic as the formal?

Field Osgood accompanied his friend to the sea, but the name of Barbara Golding was not mentioned, nor was any reference made to her until the moment of parting. Then the elder man said: "Sir, your consideration and delicacy of feeling have moved me, and touched *her*. We have not been blind to your singular kindness of heart and courtesy, and,—God bless you, my friend!"

On his way back to Wandenong, Osgood heard exciting news of Roadmaster. The word had been passed among the squatters, who had united to avenge Finchley's death, that the bushranger was to be shot on sight, that he should not be left to the uncertainty of the law. The latest exploit of the daring freebooter had been to stop on the plains, two members of a Royal Commission of Inquiry. He had relieved them of such money as was in their pockets, and then had caused them to write sumptuous cheques on their banks, payable to bearer. These he had cashed in the very teeth of the law, and actually paused in the street to read a description of himself posted on a telegraph-pole. "Inaccurate, quite inaccurate," he said to a bystander as he drew his riding-whip slowly along it, and then mounting his horse rode leisurely away into the plains. Had he been followed

it would have been seen that he directed his course to that point in the horizon where Wandenong lay, and held to it.

It would not perhaps have been pleasant to Agnes Osgood had she known that, as she hummed a song under a she-oak a mile away from the homestead, a man was watching her from a clump of scrub near by; a man who, however gentlemanly his bearing, had a face where the devil of despair had set his foot, and who carried in his pocket more than one weapon of inhospitable suggestion. But the man intended no harm to her, for while she sang something seemed to have smoothed away the active evil of his countenance, and to have dispelled a threatening alertness that marked the whole personality.

Three hours later this same man crouched by the drawing-room window of the Wandenong homestead and looked in, listening to the same voice and sighing once or twice as he listened, until Barbara Golding entered the room and took a seat near the piano with her face turned full towards him. Then he forgot the music and looked long at the face, and at last rose, and stole silently away to where his horse was tied in the scrub. He mounted, and turning towards the house muttered: "A little more of this, and good-bye to my nerves! But it's pleasant to have the taste of it in my mouth for a minute! How would it look in Roadmaster's biography, that a girl just out of school brought the rain to his eyes!" He laughed a little bitterly, and then went on: "Poor Barbara! She mustn't know while I'm alive. Stretch out, my nag; we've a long road to travel to-night."

Yes, this was Edward Golding, the brother whom Barbara thought was still in prison at Sydney under another name, serving a term of fifteen years for manslaughter. If she had read the papers carefully she would have known that he had been released two years before his time was up. It was eight years since she had seen him. Twice since then she had gone to visit him, but he would not see her. Bad as he had been, his desire was still strong that the family name should not be publicly reviled. At his trial his real name had not been made known, and at his request his sister sent him no letters. She had spoken to him but thrice in fifteen years. He had always persisted in his innocence, and it appeared to be established that he had not struck the fatal blow at the gambling brawl, but he was considered an accessory, and condemned as such. Going into gaol a reckless man, he came out a constitutional criminal; that is,

with the natural instinct for crime greater than the instinct for morality. He turned bushranger for one day, as he vowed to himself, to get money to take him out of the country; but having once entered the lists he left them no more, and, playing at deadly joust with the law, soon became known as Roadmaster, the most noted bushranger since the days of Captain Moonlight.

It was forgery on the name of his father's oldest friend that drove him and his from England. He had the choice of leaving his native land for ever or going to prison, and he chose the former. The sorrow of the crime killed his mother. From Adelaide, where they had made their new home, he wandered to the far interior and afterwards to Sydney; then came his imprisonment, and now he was free—but what a freedom!

With the name of Roadmaster often heard at Wandenong, Barbara Golding's heart had no warning instinct of who the bushranger was. She thought only and continuously of the day when he should be released, to begin the race of life again with her. She had yet to learn in what manner they come to the finish who make a false start.

Louis Bachelor, again in his place at Rahway, tried to drive away his guesses at the truth by his beloved science. When sleep would not come at night he rose and worked in his laboratory; and the sailors of many a passing vessel saw the light of his lamp in the dim hours before the dawn and spoke of fever in the port of Rahway. Nor did they speak without reason; fever *was* preparing a victim for the sacrifice at Rahway, and Louis Bachelor was fed with its poison till he grew haggard and weak.

One night at this time he was sending his weather prognostications to Brisbane when a stranger entered from the shore. The old man did not at first look up, and the other leisurely studied him as the sounder clicked its message. When the key was closed the new-comer said, "Can you send a message to Brisbane for me?" "It is after hours; I cannot," was the reply. "But you were just sending one." "That was official, sir," and the elder man passed his hand wearily along his forehead. He was very pale. The other drew the telegraph-forms towards him and wrote on one, saying as he did so, "My business is important;" then handing over what he had written, and smiling ironically, added, "Perhaps you will consider that official."

Louis Bachelor took the paper and read as follows: "*To the*

Colonial Secretary, Brisbane. I am here to-night ; to-morrow find me. Roadmaster, the Bushranger." He read it twice before he fully comprehended it. Then he said, as if awaking from a dream, "You are——." "I am Roadmaster," was the complement to the unfinished sentence.

But now the soldier and official in the other were awake. He drew himself up, and appeared to measure his visitor as a swordsman would his enemy. "What is your object in coming here?" he asked. "For you to send that message, if you choose; there is your telegraphic instrument. That *you* may arrest me peaceably if you wish; or otherwise, there are men at The Angel's Rest and a Chinaman or two here who might care for active service against Roadmaster." And he laughed carelessly. "Am I to understand that you give yourself up to me?" "Yes, to you, Louis Bachelor, Justice of the Peace, to do what you will with for this night," was the reply.

The soldier's hands trembled but it was from imminent illness, not from fear or excitement. He came slowly towards the bushranger who, smiling, said as he advanced, "Yes, arrest me!" Louis Bachelor raised his hand as if to lay it on the shoulder of the other, but something in the eyes of the highwayman stayed his hand. "Proceed! Proceed, *Captain Louis Bachelor*," said Roadmaster, in a changed tone. The hand fell to the old man's side. "Who are you?" he faintly exclaimed. "I know you, yet I cannot quite remember."

More and more the voice and manner of the outlaw altered as he replied, with mocking bitterness, "I *was* Edward Golding, gentleman; I *became* Edward Golding, forger; I *am* Roadmaster, ex-convict and bushranger."

The old man's state was painful to see. More than fever was making him haggard now. "You—you—*that!* Edward?" he uttered brokenly. "Yes, all *that*. Will you arrest me now, sir?"—"I—cannot."

And now the bushranger threw aside all bravado and irony, and said: "Captain Bachelor, I *knew* you could not. Why did I come? Listen! But first, will you shelter me here to-night?"

The soldier's honorable soul rose up against this thing, but he said slowly at last, "If it is to save you from peril, yes!"

Roadmaster laughed a little and rejoined: "By ——, sir, you're a *man!* I only wanted to know if you *would* do it. But it isn't likely that I'd accept it of you, is it, Captain Bachelor?"

You've had it rough enough without my putting a rock in your swag that would spoil you for the rest of the tramp! You see I've even forgotten how to talk like a gentleman. And now, sir, I want to show you, for Barbara's sake, my dirty log-book." Here he told the tale of his early sin and all that came of it, and then went on. "She didn't want to disgrace you, you understand. You were at Wandenong; I know that, never mind how. She'd marry you if I were out of the way. Well, I'm going to be out of the way. I'm going to leave this country, and she's to think I'm dead, you see."

At this point Louis Bachelor swayed and would have fallen, but that the bushranger's arms were thrown round him and helped him to a chair. "I'm afraid that I am ill," he said; "call Gongi. No, no, you cannot do that. Ah!" He had fainted.

The bushranger carried him to a bed and summoned Gongi and the woman from the tavern, and in another hour was riding away through the valley of the Popri. Before thirty-six hours had passed a note was delivered at Wandenong addressed to Barbara Golding and signed by the woman from The Angel's Rest. And within another two days Barbara Golding was at the bedside of Captain Louis Bachelor, battling with an enemy that is so often stronger than love and always kinder than shame.

In his wanderings the sick man was always with his youth and early manhood, and again and again he uttered Barbara's name in caressing or entreaty; though it was the Barbara of far-off days that he invoked; the present one he did not know.

It was on this day that Roadmaster found himself at bay in the mangrove swamp not far from the port of Rahway, where he had expected to find a schooner to take him to the New Hebrides. It had been arranged for by a well-paid colleague in crime; but the storm had delayed the schooner, and the avenging squatters and bushmen were closing in on him at last. There was a flood behind him in the valley, a foodless swamp on the left of him, open shore and jungle on the right, the swollen sea before him; and the only avenue of escape closed by Blood Finchley's friends. He had been eluding his pursurers for days with little food and worse than no sleep. He knew that he had played his last card and lost; but he had one thing yet to do; that which even the vilest do, if they can, before they pay their final penalty—to creep back for a moment into their honest past however dim and far away it may be. With incredible skill he

had passed under the very rifles of his hunters, and now stood almost within the stream of light which came from the window of the sick man's room, where his sister was. There was to be no more hiding, no more strategy. He told Gongi and another that he was Roadmaster, and bid them say to his pursuers, should they appear, that he would come to them upon the shore when his visit to Louis Bachelor, whom he had known in other days, was over, indicating the place at some distance from the house where they would find him. He knew that these men would not make a breach of this invited contract, that they would give even a bushranger that moment of shrift.

He entered the house. The noise of the opening door brought his sister to the room. One need not tell of that meeting, nor of what it might have been had Barbara Golding known all.

At last she said, "Oh, Edward, you are free at last!"

"Yes, I am free at last," he quietly replied.

"I have always prayed for you, Edward, and for this."

"I know that, Barbara ; but prayer cannot do everything, can it? You see, though I was born a gentleman, I had a bad strain in me. I wonder if, somewhere, generations back, there was a pirate or a gypsy in our family." He had been going to say highwayman, but paused in time. "I always intended to be good and always ended by being bad. I wanted to be of the angels and play with the devils also. I liked saints,—you are a saint, Barbara—but I loved all sinners to. I hope when—when I die, that the little bit of good that's in me will go where you are ; for the rest of me, it must be as it may."

"Don't speak like that, Edward, please, dear. Yes, you have been wicked, but you have been punished, oh, these long years!"

"I've lost a great slice of life by both the stolen waters and the rod, but I'm going to reform now, Barbara."

"You are going to reform! Oh, I knew you would! God has answered my prayer." How her eyes lighted!

He did not immediately speak again, for his ears, keener than hers, were listening to a confused sound of voices coming from the shore. At length he spoke firmly: "Yes, I'm going to reform, but it's on one condition."

Her eyes mutely asked a question, and he replied, "That you marry him," pointing to the inner room, "if he lives."

"He will live but I,—I cannot tell him, Edward," she said.

"He knows."

"He knows! Did you dare to tell him?" It was the lover, not the sister, who spoke then.

"Yes. And he knows also that I'm going to reform,—that I'm going away."

Her face was hid in her hand. "And I kept it from him five-and-twenty years!—Where are you going, Edward?"

"To the Farewell Islands," he slowly replied.

And she, thinking he meant some group in the Pacific, tearfully inquired, "Are they far away?"

"Yes, very far away, my girl."

"But you will write to me or come to see me again,—you will come to see me again, sometimes, Edward?"

He paused. He knew not at first what to reply, but at length he said, with a strangely determined flash of his dark eyes, "Yes, Barbara, I will come to see you again,—if I can." He stooped and kissed her. "Good-bye, Barbara."

"But, Edward, must you go to-night?"

"Yes, I must go now. They are waiting for me. Good-bye."

She would have stayed him but he put her gently back, and she said plaintively, "God keep you, Edward. Remember you said that you would come again to me."

"I shall remember," he said quietly, and he was gone.

Standing in the light from the window of the sick man's room he wrote a line in Latin on a slip of paper, (a remembered scrap of his boyhood's studies) begging of Louis Bachelor the mercy of silence, and gave it to Gongi, who whispered that he was surrounded. This he knew; he had not studied sounds in prison through the best years of his life for nothing. He asked Gongi to give the note to his master when he was better, and when it could be done unseen of any one. Then he turned and walked coolly towards the shore.

Two hours after he lay upon a heap of magnolia branches breathing his life away. And at the same moment of time that a rough but kindly hand closed the eyes of the bushranger, the woman from The Angel's Rest and Louis Bachelor saw the pale face of Roadmaster peer through the bedroom window at Barbara Golding sitting in a chair asleep; and she started and said through her half-wakefulness, looking at the window, "Where are you going, Edward?"

A STUDY IN BLACK *

BY EVA PETTY

THE day was very warm and the sunshine intensely bright. The temperature was just right to make the colored population, which was all astir in a little Southern town, feel good through and through. It was a big day for them, for it was the celebration of Emancipation Day, and the Odd Fellows and the Sisters of Brotherly Love were to have a grand parade at high noon.

Hercules Manning, a darkey,—“whut fo' de wah b'long'd ter qual'ty”—leaned with a dejected air over his employer's front gate. A fat, black, greasy-looking negro woman came waddling along the pavement and accosted him :

“How cum you ain' gwine ter be in de p'rade, Huculus? Doan chu b'long ter de Odd Fellers?”

“You kno's I b'longs ter de Odd Fellers, M'lindy Hampton. You nigger winches kin ax de all-firedest questchuns dat I ebber hearn ax'd.”

“Huculus, dat ain' no ans'er ter my questchun. De questchun dat I ax'd you wus, how cum you ain' gwine be in de p'rade? An' ef you doan tell me how cum you ain' gwine be in dat p'rade, den I's gwine tell dat 'oman whut you is keepin' cump'ny wid 'bout de time you——”

“Fur de Lord's sake, M'lindy, jes gim me time ter git my bref an' I'll tell you how cum I ain' gwine be in de p'rade. You kno's Sa' Ann Ellyut, whut b'long'd ter Marse Willyun Henry Ellyut? Well, dat nigger say as how she wus settin' down on de side uv de road, an' how she dun tuk off 'n her shoes, case de hu'ts her foots so bad, an' she 'low as how I cum 'long an' tuk her shoes an' tuk 'em clean off. Well, dat nigger sut'nly tole whut is not so, case dis is de ve'y way hit wus, fo' my Gord. Sa' Ann was settin' on de side uv de road, sho 'nuff, and I cum 'long by. She look at me sorter sweet lac, an' 'low: ‘Mister Mannin’, ef you ain' gwine 'scort no one ter de chu'ch ter night,

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I'd be so pleas'd ter go in yo' cump'y.' I say, 'G'way frum heah, nigger; I ain' got no time ter be er foolin' wid de lac uv you.' Wid dat I pic'd up one uv her shoes an' car'ed hit er leetle piece down de road an' hid hit in some bushes. I nuver meant no harm. I jus' dun dat fur fun. Den I wint on 'bout my biznes an' nuver thunk no mo' 'bout dat gal tell I got er note f'um de sec'eta'y uv de lodge, and hit say:

Brether Huculus Mannin'—Wharas, you has bin pleas'd yosef ter tak' Sister Sa' Ann Ellyutt's, uv de Sist'ren uv Bretherly Luv, shoe, whin dat mos' wuthy Sister ain' doin' nuthin' 'cep' settin' on de side uv de road an' res'in' her po' werry foots. We sees fit ter spell you fur de tu'm uv Six Weeks fum dis mos' honerbul Lodge an' Body, which same 'spulshun lets you out 'n de p'rade on June Fust, 'mancipashun Day.

Mos' Respectiv'ly Signed,

JEEMS HASKELL.

"Ef you b'lieve me, M'lindy, dat nigger dun wint an' tol' de pres'dint uv de Odd Fellows dat I stole dat shoe, an', 'fo my Gord, dat 'oman sut'nly lied. Now, dat's how cum I ain' in de p'rade. Is you sat'sfi'd? Yon dey cum now wid de brass ban' 'n de goat 'n de——; but, shucks, I ain' gwine be tellin' you lodge secruts, nigger; all dem things whut dem darkeys is got is lodge secruts, de is, 'oman. I ain' gwine ter be stannin' heah nudder, an' let dem niggers see me lac I wan' ter be in dat p'rade, case I don' wan' ter be in it. I wus n't gwine be in it nohow ef de had n' 'spelled me. Dis bright sunshine dun gon' 'n meck my eyes jes run water. 'By M'lindy. I's got wuck ter do 'roun' de back side uv de big house, I is."



LA POBRECITA *

BY JAMES BANNATYUR

"*SI SEÑOR; entre Vd., aquí,*" puffed out a very corpulent old Spanish gentleman who, with unusual energy, had been guiding through a labyrinthine *corale* his much-honored guest.

He was just emerging from that quarter of the domain where



lived, was fed and cared for, like spoiled children, his greatest pride—his horses. His heart's treasures, next to an only

* Written for Short Stories, and illustrated by H. M. Walcott.—Copyrighted.

daughter, who now sat, half reclined, on a long low bench under the shade of a mass of vines; the crispest and brightest of tender green vines, all powdered with soft yellow blooms, and hanging in huge bunches from juttings in the wall of the *pátio* he has just bidden Señor Lopez enter. The same sparkle of good-nature that kindled in his small black eyes when stroking the mane of his favorite mare, again lit up the fleshy brown face. He had always intended that Señor Lopez should meet his daughter; in fact Lopez had long understood that he was expected to ask some day for the daughter's hand. Now the moment had arrived for this critical connoisseur to decide whether he would pay the debt of friendship he had so long owed to Señor Martinez by asking for his daughter, and dutifully make her happy; or, if his fastidious blood rose in rebellion against his friend and godfather's wishes, he must invent some means for a graceful withdrawal from the scene. Several times before this eventful day, Lopez had caught very unsatisfactory glimpses of the dark, dainty little creature now lounging on a rickety, old bench, lazily swinging one restless little foot. Deeply absorbed in one of Calderon's dramas, she remained gracefully, blissfully unconscious of the visitor's presence.

The pleasant sparkle in the old Spaniard's eye developed into a knowing little twinkle as he turned to fasten the apparently refractory bolt of the door by which he had entered, giving most indulgently, to the prospective lover, an opportunity to study, and, of course, admire the exquisite picture before him. One little hand pressed against a dimpled face, her head half rested against the gray wall, that formed such an excellent background for the picture. A large cluster of the delicate yellow flowers fell lightly upon her glossy jet-black hair, half framing the face on one side, and beautifully contrasting with its soft cream-brown.

Lopez stood quietly contemplating the pretty little creature, all the while revolving in his mind the great question, "Will she quite do? Charming! luscious! delicious, and all that—but——" Before the thought was quite finished, Señor Martinez, puffing up behind him, slapped him good-humoredly on the shoulder, and peering around his arm, called to Natalia to drop her ideal hero and learn something of a real one.

A faint little "Oh!" and a deep wave of crimson sweeping over her face, gave a strong evidence of Natalia's confusion at finding herself in the presence of a stranger. Only a stranger in presence, however, since his name and qualities (as her father knew them) had become a household topic, common and time-

worn. Hastily getting up and making a shy, graceful bow to Señor Lopez, whom her father was introducing, Natalia would have fled from the courtyard, but for being detained by the Señor's inquiry about her book and a meaning look from the well-pleased papa, which she plainly understood to say, "remain." Coily gliding away from Lopez, after surrendering the book, she returned to the bench, feeling instinctively an aversion to the man. His bold compliments and bolder looks; his too familiar manner, and the cynical, upward curve, that seemed so well to fit the thin, cruel lips; the half-mocking smile that constantly played about the small bright eyes, almost frightened her when she thought, "This is the man papa wishes me to marry."

Setting her heart into a desperate little flutter, she might have burst out crying, but that the soft, sweet voice of Señor Lopez recalled her to herself, and his evident determination to make love to her, now the opportunity had been afforded by Señor Martinez being called back to the *corale* by Amoso, who wished to know about the changing of a horse's stall. Perhaps it was her evident fear of him that annoyed him into taking a petty revenge. After several futile attempts at winning a smile, he launched boldly into a vital subject; perhaps it was only an attempt to arouse her.

"Señorita Martinez has not been by any means forgotten since El Gobernador's ball, and rumor has it that Señor Garcia sings only to Natalia now;" there was a little laugh in his voice as he continued. She did not know that he had noticed the gasp she had tried to stifle or the sudden pallor rapidly giving way to hot blushes. Grimly relishing this evidence of feeling, he added: "How I wish I had his gift of song that I might show sweet Natalia what she inspires; but you will have charity for small talent, and believe that the lack of poetry in expression is amply compensated for by the depth and sincerity of my feeling." He had bent over her, and was holding out a soft, white hand for one of the little ones she had clenched tightly against the bench. It stung his pride to acknowledge a repulse, so he excused as shyness that which made her shrink from him with loathing.

"I am sure Señor Lopez does not lack talent—at least, papa says so," she stammered, not quite knowing what she said, or should say. It had quite terrified her to hear him speak so knowingly of Rafael Garcia's verses to her. She had kept her secret so well, and Rafael would certainly not tell—and papa would be so

angry—she was wildly thinking, when the indulgent papa appeared, smiling and puffing a little harder than usual.

Seating himself at the table just placed in the *pátio*, and inviting his guest to a cup of coffee and a *chelado*, his satisfaction was supreme when he discovered that Natalia did not leave the *pátio*,



but remained close by, busying herself with the flowers, and softly humming to a young *periquito*. Of course, the only cause for her remaining was plain enough to him, and Martinez talked gayly of a certain *rancho*, well stocked and yielding a nice profit; though the property of Lopez, it had been under his management for twenty years and more—ever since the death of his best friend, who had intrusted it to him, for the little boy he was leaving alone in the world, and who would need, most of all, the friendship his father was bequeathing him. That friendship had yielded a steadier and more profitable income than the estate; but neither the man in his great generosity, nor the boy in his supreme selfishness, realized its actual worth. And now, the boy grown to manhood, and selfishness grown to deceit and ingratitude, they sat, the best of friends, chatting good-humoredly of plans and prospects, occasionally glancing at the young girl slowly moving about amongst the flowers, each thinking his own peculiar thought as he chatted, one mean and base as the other was generous and noble.

Poor Natalia! How many foolish women have waited to hear, as you are doing, to lessen suspense by immediate certainty if a secret is told or not told, or perhaps to prevent by simply your presence its being told. Foolish child! It is not Paoblo Lopez's purpose to inform your devoted papa that this Rafael Garcia, the artist and poet, is paying you devoted court—that you have tucked away in hidden corners many of the daintiest of verses dedicated to your own sweet self; that each night, when all is



still, when only papa's snoring occasionally breaks in upon the quiet, when the stars, always constant, twinkle brightly down into the *patio* and light your way to the dark *sala*, where, bruising your dainty, bare toes against table-legs and chairs, you grope your way to the wide, low window, and cautiously unfasten the heavy bolt, and, as nearly as the iron bars will permit, fall into the arms of this dark, solemn-eyed artist; this poet with long curls on his forehead; this melancholy, love-sick fellow, who thinks it worth while to be earnest in love; this womanly *cortéjo*. No; he will tell nothing of the kind; in fact he does not know it. Your imagination is supplying most of this; he really knows less than he intimated. It is his habit to guess what he can't find out. He will say nothing to papa, so rest content.

A reflection of Lopez's mind would have shown a true picture of the fine fury of his worthy *Padrino* could he but know, even, that Garcia had dared to love his daughter; not because he was so unworthy; but was she not promised in his own heart from her childhood to his godson, and could anyone dare to cross his wishes? Lopez could not suppress a chuckle; and since it gurgled out at the end of one of the *Padrino's* jokes, it

was not questioned. The coffee was finished, and Natalia's uneasiness was evident from her furtive glancing around to see if he were not almost ready to take his leave. It would be strange if a spirit of mercy prompted him to take up his hat at last, better attribute it to something if not more attractive, at least more interesting. Daintily taking the tips of her little fingers, he coolly said: "Adios, Señorita"; then turning to his host, took him by the hand in a way some of his intimates would have known indicated that something yet was to be obtained from the generous old man.

Lopez's departure was a signal to Natalia to join her father in his second tour through the *corale*. Having lost his wife at Natalia's birth, Señor Martinez had tried in man's blundering way to make up for the loss by cultivating in her an interest in all his undertakings, thinking it would make her his more wholly. Dutifully and patiently the young girl humored his whims and, without seeking to please, simply sought to avoid causing him irritation. Since he had shown her his great desire, that she should marry his godson, and had discouraged all other suitors, her feeling for him was not quite the same. It had seemed to her his consideration for her happiness was small, and in the face of his wish she could not muster sufficient courage to tell him of Garcia, nor would she allow *him* to go to her father yet, fearing, of course, a closer surveillance, and an end to the small freedom that allowed her to see him for a few moments each night, sufficiently long after all the city had been asleep to make her feel quite guilty about stealing out of bed to go to the window—the window before which he walked up and down until the grating of the bolt told him she was coming. How could it be wrong, though, when she loved him so? And do not all Spanish girls meet their lovers so?

When evening came, Lopez, to the astonishment of even himself and a few friends who passed him by, sat quite alone in a corner of the main plaza watching the ripple of the water as it fell from the fountain, and calculating he could not yet say what; his chagrin at Natalia's repulse was not yet cooled, and in the shallow water of his soul there still remained—aggravatingly remained—a reflection of the girl he had stopped to ask himself if he really wanted. The music from the plaza band irritated him. Rafael Garcia constantly stood before him. He would not acknowledge himself jealous, but he had a curiosity. It had been rumored

that Garcia wrote verses to Natalia; but much as he made of it to her, he was loath to believe it himself. There was a way to find out, however, and quickly getting up, as if impatient to be doing, he briskly strode off, muttering to himself: "I'll do it! I'll do it!"

The night was warm as only Mexican nights can be, and Natalia, throwing herself upon a broad, high bed, cried herself to sleep listening to the mournful gurgle of the little fountain in the *pátio* and thinking of Rafael.

Presently she awakened with a start. What time could it be? Was it too late? The clock was just striking four. Would Rafael wait so long? And she had so much to say, too! Hastily throwing a scarf about her shoulders, and gliding like a wraith across the courtyard, beneath the paling stars, fast as the darkness would permit, she made her way noiselessly to the window. With heart beating almost to suffocation, she listened a moment at the blind. Yes; the well-known footstep kept time to her own heart's beat.

Quickly undoing the fastening, she appeared before the tall iron bars to the enamored poet, who had paced before them for hours, like a spirit of the night conjured by his own wild fancy. He had thought she was not coming, and now, he could only take her little hand between the bars and kiss it passionately. Softly she murmured his name, "Rafael"; her quivering, low, musical voice dwelling on it endearingly. Finally, he told her how his heart ached with the presentiment of coming evil; how he had despaired of seeing her that night; how he loved the dainty little hands resting in his; the long tress of raven black hair falling upon her shoulders, which he caught through the bars and kissed rapturously. He listened eagerly to the account of Lopez's visit; but there was another listener, too. The stars were fast paling, and each moment the dawn grew lighter—and, they must part. Sadly and with bowed head he turned from the window, after a sweet farewell, and slowly walked away; Natalie, clinging to the cold iron bars as usual, until he should disappear in the blur of walls and windows at the end of the street. Suddenly—she almost screamed—a hand clutched hers upon the bars and held them in a vice-like grip. She could only distinguish the figure of a man wrapped in a dark cloak and soft hat pulled over his eyes, a dark handkerchief tied around his neck so as to cover the lower part of his face, but his hands were soft and white. Quickly he whipped out a cord and passed it around the bar; terror seized the poor girl made so suddenly a

prisoner. She dared not call out—rather face present possibilities than her father's wrath.

The cord was passing around her wrist—"A Dios! Rafael!" she faintly called, and, half swooning, hung by the little hands so cruelly made fast to the bars.

What a strange revenge, Lopez!

Rafael Garcia had walked slowly on, but thinking he heard himself called, laughed first at his fancy and then walked back to the window just to be once more near Natalia. Walking with bent head, stumbling only made him conscious of an impediment to his progress. Quickly looking up, he met the frowning, pale face of Lopez, half disguised by his unusual dress. He could not quite understand. Turning to the window, the form of the fainting Natalia—from whom the scarf had fallen, baring her slender white arms and heaving bosom to the kiss of Night—half reclining in the window seat, half hanging upon the bars, mystified him more still.

Without time to give one word utterance, a handful of dust was thrown into his eyes, a piercing pain darted under his left



shoulder, heavily he fell to the ground. His moan was so low it could not have been heard ten steps away, and the half blind old beggar, slowly making his way to his usual morning stand by the window, heard nothing. Dawn was fast approaching. Lopez

quickly took up his dirk again, and wiping it off with the handkerchief from around his neck, he pocketed the glistening blade. Then walking nonchalantly from the window, Lopez appeased his conscience by throwing a coin into the beggar's hat and pointing out for his feeble gaze the girl still hanging by her hands in the window.

"Ah, Pobrecita?" croaked the old man, and slowly he crawled to the window and loosened the knot.



THE PHILOSOPHER IN THE APPLE-ORCHARD*

BY ANTHONY HOPE

IT was a charmingly mild and balmy day. The sun shone beyond the orchard, and the shade was cool inside. A light breeze stirred the boughs of the old apple tree, under which the philosopher sat. None of these things did the philosopher notice, unless it might be when the wind blew about the leaves of the large volume on his knees, and he had to find his place again. Then he would exclaim against the wind, shuffle the leaves till he got the right page, and settle to his reading. The book was a treatise on ontology; it was written by another philosopher, a friend of this philosopher's; it bristled with fallacies, and this philosopher was discovering them all, and noting them on the fly-leaf at the end. He was not going to review the book (as some might have thought from his behavior), or even to answer it in a work of his own. It was just that he found a pleasure in stripping any poor fallacy naked and crucifying it.

Presently a girl in a white frock came into the orchard. She picked up an apple, bit it, and found it ripe. Holding it in her hand she walked up to where the philosopher sat, and looked at him. He did not stir. She took a bite out of the apple, munched it, and swallowed it. The philosopher crucified a fallacy on the fly-leaf. The girl flung the apple away.

"Mr. Jerningham," said she, "are you very busy?"

The philosopher, pencil in hand, looked up.

"No, Miss May," said he, "not very."

"Because I want your opinion."

"In one moment," said the philosopher, apologetically.

He turned back to the fly-leaf and began to nail the last fallacy a little tighter to the cross. The girl regarded him, first with amused impatience, then with a vexed frown, finally with a wistful regret. He was so very old for his age, she thought; he could not be much beyond thirty; his hair was thick and full of

* A selection from "The English Illustrated Magazine."

waves, his eyes bright and clear, his complexion not yet divested of all youth's relics.

"Now, Miss May, I'm at your service," said the philosopher, with a lingering look at his impaled fallacy. And he closed the book, keeping it, however, on his knee.

The girl sat down just opposite to him.

"It's a very important thing I want to ask you," she began, tugging at a tuft of grass, "and it's very—difficult, and you mustn't tell any one I asked you; at least, I'd rather you didn't."

"I shall not speak of it; indeed, I shall probably not remember it," said the philosopher.

"And you mustn't look at me, please, while I'm asking you."

"I don't think I was looking at you, but if I was I beg your pardon," said the philosopher, apologetically.

She pulled the tuft of grass right out of the ground and flung it from her with all her force.

"Suppose a man——" she began. "No, that's not right."

"You can take any hypothesis you please," observed the philosopher, "but you must verify it afterwards, of course."

"Oh, do let me go on. Suppose a girl, Mr. Jerningham—I wish you wouldn't nod."

"It was only to show that I followed you."

"Oh, of course you 'follow me,' as you call it. Suppose a girl had two lovers—you're nodding again!—or, I ought to say, suppose there were two men who might be in love with a girl."

"Only two?" asked the philosopher. "You see, any number of men *might* be in love with——"

"Oh, we can leave the rest out," said Miss May, with a sudden dimple; "they don't matter."

"Very well," said the philosopher. "If they are irrelevant, we will put them aside."

"Suppose then that one of these men was, oh, *awfully* in love with the girl, and—and proposed, you know——"

"A moment!" said the philosopher, opening a note-book. "Let me take down his proposition. What was it?"

"Why, proposed to her—asked her to marry him," said the girl, with a stare.

"Dear me! How stupid of me! I forgot that special use of the word. Yes?"

"The girl likes him pretty well, and her people approve of him and all that, you know."

"That simplifies the problem," said the philosopher, nodding again.

"But she's not in—in love with him, you know. She doesn't *really* care for him—*much*. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly. It is a most natural state of mind."

"Well, then, suppose that there's another man—what are you writing?"

"I only put down (B)—like that," pleaded the philosopher, meekly exhibiting his note-book.

She looked at him in a sort of helpless exasperation, with just a smile somewhere in the background of it.

"Oh, you really are——" she exclaimed. "But let me go on. The other man is a friend of the girl's: he's very clever—oh, fearfully clever; and he's rather handsome. You needn't put that down."

"It is certainly not very material," admitted the philosopher, and he crossed out "handsome." "Clever" he left.

"And the girl is most awfully—she admires him tremendously; she thinks him just the greatest man that ever lived, you know. And she—she——" The girl paused.

"I'm following," said the philosopher, with pencil poised.

"She'd think it better than the whole world if—if she could be anything to him, you know."

"You mean become his wife?"

"Well, of course I do—at least, I suppose I do."

"You spoke rather vaguely, you know."

The girl cast one glance at the philosopher as she replied:

"Well, yes. I did mean become his wife."

"Yes. Well?"

"But," continued the girl, starting on another tuft of grass, "he doesn't think much about those things. He likes her. I think he likes her——"

"Well, doesn't dislike her?" suggested the philosopher. "Shall we call him indifferent?"

"I don't know. Yes, rather indifferent. I don't think he thinks about it, you know. But she—she's pretty. You needn't put that down."

"I was not about to do so," observed the philosopher.

"She thinks life with him would be just heaven; and—and she thinks she would make him awfully happy. She would—would be so proud of him, you see."

"I see. Yes?"

"And—I don't know how to put it, quite—she thinks that if he ever thought about it at all, he might care for her; because he doesn't care for anybody else; and she's pretty——"

"You said that before."

"Oh, dear, I dare say I did. And most men care for somebody, don't they? some girl, I mean."

"Most men, no doubt," conceded the philosopher.

"Well, then, what ought she to do? It's not a real thing, you know, Mr. Jerningham. It's in—in a novel I was reading." She said this hastily, and blushed as she spoke.

"Dear me! And it's quite an interesting case! Yes, I see. The question is, Will she act most wisely in accepting the offer of the man who loves her exceedingly, but for whom she entertains only a moderate affection——?"

"Yes. Just a liking. He's just a friend."

"Exactly. Or in marrying the other whom she loves ex——"

"That's not it. How can she marry him? He hasn't—he hasn't asked her, you see."

"True. I forgot. Let us assume, though, for the moment, that he has asked her. She would then have to consider which marriage would probably be productive of the greater sum total of——"

"Oh, but you needn't consider that."

"But it seems the best logical order. We can afterwards make allowance for the element of uncertainty caused by——"

"Oh, no. I don't want it like that. I know perfectly well which she'd do if he—the other man, you know—asked her."

"You apprehend that——"

"Never mind what I 'apprehend.' Take it just as I told you."

"Very good. A has asked her hand, B has not."

"Yes."

"May I take it that, but for the disturbing influence of B, A would be a satisfactory—er—candidate?"

"Ye—es. I think so."

"She, therefore, enjoys a certainty of considerable happiness if she marries A?"

"Ye—es. Not perfect, because of—B, you know."

"Quite so, quite so; but still a fair amount of happiness. Is it not so?"

"I don't—well, perhaps."

"On the other hand, if B did ask her, we are to postulate a higher degree of happiness for her?"

"Yes, please, Mr. Jerningham—much higher."

"For both of them?"

"For her. Never mind him."

"Very well. That again simplifies the problem. But his asking her is a contingency only?"

"Yes, that's all."

The philosopher spread out his hands.

"My dear young lady," he said, "it becomes a question of degree. How probable or improbable is it?"

"I don't know. Not very probable—unless——"

"Well?"

"Unless he did happen to notice, you know."

"Ah, yes. We supposed that, if he thought of it, he would probably take the desired step—at least, that he might be led to do so. Could she not—er—indicate her preference?"

"She might try—no, she couldn't do much. You see, he—he doesn't think about such things."

"I understand precisely. And it seems to me, Miss May, that in that very fact we find our solution."

"Do we?" she asked.

"I think so. He has evidently no natural inclination towards her—perhaps not towards marriage at all. Any feeling aroused in him would be necessarily shallow and, in a measure, artificial—and in all likelihood purely temporary. Moreover, if she took steps to arouse his attention, one of two things would be likely to happen. Are you following me?"

"Yes, Mr. Jerningham."

"Either he would be repelled by her overtures—which you must admit is not improbable—and then the position would be unpleasant, and even degrading, for her. Or, on the other hand, he might, through a misplaced feeling of gallantry——"

"Through what?"

"Through a mistaken idea of politeness, or a mistaken view of what was kind, allow himself to be drawn into a connection for which he had no genuine liking. You agree with me that one or other of these things would be likely?"

"Yes, I suppose they would, unless he did come to care for her."

"Ah, you return to that hypothesis. I think it's an extremely fanciful one. No. She needn't marry A, but she must let B alone."

The philosopher closed his book, took off his glasses, wiped

them, replaced them, and leaned back against the trunk of the apple tree. The girl picked a dandelion in pieces. After a long pause she asked :

“ You think B’s feelings wouldn’t be at all likely to—to change ? ”

“ That depends on the sort of man he is. But if he is an able man, with intellectual interests which engross him—a man who has chosen his path in life—a man to whom women’s society is not a necessity——”

“ He’s just like that,” said the girl, and she bit the head off a daisy.

“ Then,” said the philosopher, “ I see not the least reason for supposing that his feelings will change.”

“ And would you advise her to marry the other—A ? ”

“ Well, on the whole, I should. A is a good fellow (I think we made A a good fellow): he is a suitable match, his love for her is true and genuine——”

“ It’s tremendous ! ”

“ Yes—and—er—extreme. She likes him. There is every reason to hope that her liking will develop into a sufficiently deep and stable affection. She will get rid of her folly about B and make A a good wife. Yes, Miss May, if I were the author of your novel, I should make her marry A, and I should call that a happy ending.”

A silence followed. It was broken by the philosopher.

“ Is that all you wanted my opinion about, Miss May ? ” he asked, with his finger between the leaves of the treatise on ontology.

“ Yes, I think so. I hope I haven’t bored you ? ”

“ I’ve enjoyed the discussion extremely. I had no idea that novels raised points of such psychological interest. I must find time to read one.”

The girl had shifted her position till, instead of her full face, her profile was turned towards him. Looking away towards the paddock that lay brilliant in sunshine on the skirts of the apple-orchard, she asked, in low slow tones, twisting her hands in her lap :

“ Don’t you think that perhaps if B found out afterwards—when she had married A, you know—that she had cared for him so very, very much, he might be a little sorry ? ”

“ If he were a gentleman, he would regret it deeply.”

“ I mean—sorry on his own account; that—that he had thrown away all that, you know ? ”

The Professor looked meditative.

"I think," he pronounced, "that it is very possible he would. I can well imagine it."

"He might never find anybody to love him like that again," she said, gazing on the gleaming paddock.

"He probably would not," agreed the philosopher.

"And—and most people like being loved, don't they?"

"To crave for love is an almost universal instinct, Miss May."

"Yes, almost," she said, with a dreary little smile. "You see, he'll get old and—and have no one to look after him."

"He will."

"And no home."

"Well, in a sense, none," corrected the philosopher, smiling. "But really you'll frighten me. I'm a bachelor myself, you know, Miss May."

"Yes," she whispered, just audibly.

"And all your terrors are before me."

"Well, unless——"

"Oh, we needn't have that 'unless,'" laughed the philosopher, cheerfully. "There's no 'unless' about it, Miss May."

The girl jumped to her feet; for an instant she looked at the philosopher. She opened her lips as if to speak, and, at the thought of what lay at her tongue's tip, her face grew red. But the philosopher was gazing past her, and his eyes rested in calm contemplation on the gleaming paddock.

"A beautiful thing, sunshine, to be sure," said he.

Her blush faded away into paleness; her lips closed. Without speaking she turned and walked slowly away, her head drooping. The philosopher heard the rustle of her skirt in the long grass of the orchard; he watched her for a few moments.

"A pretty, graceful creature," said he, with a smile. Then he opened his book, took his pencil in his hand, and slipped in a careful forefinger to mark the fly-leaf.

The sun had passed midheaven, and began to decline westwards before he finished the book. Then he stretched himself and looked at his watch.

"Good gracious, two o'clock! I shall be late for lunch!" and he hurried to his feet.

He was very late for lunch.

"Everything's cold," wailed his hostess. "Where have you been, Mr. Jerningham?"

"Only in the orchard—reading."

"And you've missed May!"

"Missed Miss May? How do you mean? I had a long talk with her this morning—a most interesting talk."

"But you weren't here to say good-bye. Now, you don't mean to say that you forgot that she was leaving by the two o'clock train? What a man you are!"

"Dear me! To think of my forgetting it!" said the philosopher, shamefacedly.

"She told me to say good-bye to you for her."

"She's very kind. I can't forgive myself."

His hostess looked at him for a moment; then she sighed, and smiled, and sighed again.

"Have you everything you want?" she asked.

"Everything, thank you," said he, sitting down opposite the cheese, and propping his book (he thought he would just run through the last chapter again) against the loaf; "everything in the world that I want, thanks."

His hostess did not tell him that the girl had come in from the apple-orchard, and run hastily upstairs, lest her friend should see what her friend did see in her eyes. So that he had no suspicion at all that he had received an offer of marriage—and refused it. And he did not refer to anything of that sort when he paused once in his reading and exclaimed:

"I'm really sorry I missed Miss May. That was an interesting case of hers. But I gave the right answer. The girl ought to marry A."

And so the girl did.

A CONVENT HOLIDAY *

BY L. CLEVELAND



IT is very still in the convent corridors this warm May afternoon. Very still in the gardens where the ripening sun is flushing the cheeks of the little blossoms, and bidding the birds build. May-time and Mary's month; and the little leaves gambol in the light breeze, and flutter like little faces around a sun-herth of home.

There is a tall vine that reaches up to the open casement of the convent's cloister. The leaves quiver. Echoes of the nun's footsteps that passed slowly away into the gray silence beyond that iron grating a good ten minutes ago? No. *La Sœur Dévote* steps so lightly. Surely she could not have shaken a sound from the shadows that cling to the convent wall.

But the leaves tremble again.

It is recreation in the convent of the Sacred Heart. The nuns are scattered hither and thither over the wide acres of woodland, a green gloom of beauty, whose perspective is a very fine wall, beyond whose mocking masonry you must not even think. For that would be a sin for your next confession. Recreation in the cloister—but *La Sœur Dévote* is so pious, she has gone to her cell to finish the sweet little dress for the dear Infant Jesus for to-morrow's mass.

Close to the window, where the light burns and the breeze woos, sits the pale nun, *Dévote*. There is a tall figure, richly carved and splendidly appavelled opposite to her: the image of Madonna Mary holding the Infant Christ. The child holds a sacred heart in His right hand. The Two—the Mother and her Child—are crowned with aureoles of gold.

The pale nun, *Dévote*, bends over the little dress upon her knee. But her hand trembles. Sister *Dévote* sang the great solos in the mass yesterday, when my lord and lady and their noble heir were pleased to come from the city. Sister *Dévote* must

* Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

be weary to-day. She is so pale. And her pallor deepens as she folds down the little hem on the new dress, *couleur de rose*, which she will fit to the dear Sacred Child in a moment.

She glances up where He dwells in His mother's arms in untightened caress.

What pretty pearls along the tiny hem!

God of the Sacred Heart! Not pearls, but tears that stud—and stud—and stud again thy fashioning robe! A woman's tears, a woman's agony, that clutches with unwedded finger a heart that is hidden beneath the pale and proper nun-robe and its laundried bosom.

The vine outside the window trembles.

"*Ma Sœur*, may Léon come in?"

Up—up over the cold stone sill, up through the gnarled vine-branch a child's face presses—my lord's heir. Up—scattering on the floor the *nouvelle robe couleur de rose* for the dear Infant Jesus, up—to the little face warm in its sweet fleshhood the pale nun springs, up—to the clamorous eyes and the mouth that is her own.

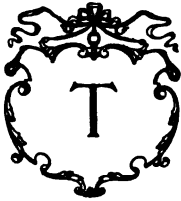
The pious Sister *Dévote* has caught the face, has lifted the child over the mocking wall.

The sacred two—the mother and her child—are crowned with the aureoles of the shadow's sorrow.



CECCA'S LOVER*

BY GRANT ALLEN



HEY'RE a queer lot, these Italians. After twenty years spent among them I don't yet understand them. Italy itself I love—every artist must. I love the very dirt. I love the squalid towns. I love the crumbling walls; I love every stone of them. When I came to the country first I dropped into it like one to the manner born. I said on the mere threshold, by the slope of the Alps, stretching out my hands to the soil of Italy, *Ecco la mia patria!* But the Italians!—ah, there!—that's quite another question. I like them, understand well; I don't say a word against them; but comprehend them?—no, no; they're at once too simple and too complex, by far, for our Northern intelligence.

There was Cecca's case, for example; what a very queer history! You must have noticed Cecca—that black-haired, flashing-eyed Neapolitan maid of ours who goes out with my little ones. Have I never told you the story about Cecca's strange courtship? Well, well; sit down here under the shade of the stone-pine, and light your cigarette while I tell you all about it. Be careful of your match, though; don't throw it away lighted in the midst of the rosemary bushes; the-myrtles and lentisks on these dry hillsides flare up like tinder; the white heath crackles and fizzes in a second; before you know where you are, the flame runs up the junipers and pine trees, corkscrew-wise; and *hi presto!* in rather less time than it takes to say so the forest's ablaze from Santa Croce to the Roya.

It was before we settled down here at Bordighera that the thing began; indeed, it was Cecca, indirectly speaking, that brought us to the coast here. We were living at Naples then, or, rather, near Castellamare. Cecca was our housemaid. Her full name's Francesca. She's handsome still, but she was beauti-

* A selection from "Longman's Magazine."

ful then; the prettiest fisher-girl from Sorrento to Pozzuoli. Fanny took her from her parents when she was twelve years old, and trained her up in the house like an English servant. But the hot Neapolitan nature burnt strong in her still; nobody could ever really tame Cecca.

Well, she had a lover, of course; every girl has a lover—especially in Italy. He was a fisherman, like her own people; for the fishermen are a caste, and no well-bred fisher-girl ever dreams of marrying any man outside it. The fellow's name was Giuseppe. Our children loved him. He used to bring them dried sea-horses with long curled tails, and queer shells with wings to them, and creepy great octopuses with staring goggle eyes, that they loved to see and yet shrank from in terror. He was a mighty hunter of sea-eggs and cuttle-fish. Cecca pretended not to care for him, Neapolitan fashion, for they are a crooked folk; but we could see very well she was madly in love with him for all that. If we sent her on the hills to take the children for a walk, we always found, in the end, she'd gone on the beach instead, if Giuseppe was hauling the seine, or mending his nets, or tarring and towing the gaping chinks in the hull of the *Sant' Elmo*.

One morning I was sitting under the shadow of a boat, on the shingle by the sea, doing a little water-color; the children were close by, playing with stranded jelly-fish, and Cecca was there to look after them, basking in the sun like a lizard. Presently on the shore, Giuseppe's boat drove in, and he hauled her up close by, with the aid of his brown-legged mates, never noticing us so near him. Cecca noted him stealthily, glancing askance at me to keep silence. The young man began sorting his fish—you know the kind of thing—strange *frutti di mare* that they make *frittura* of. All's fish that comes to their net—mussels, squids, or sea-spiders. As he was doing it, another pretty fisher-girl strolled up that way, brown-skinned like himself, and with a bright red handkerchief twisted carelessly round that glossy black head of hers. Cecca crept closer, under shelter of the boat, her eyes like coals of fire, and listened to the talk of them. I heard it all, too; frank fisher-folk chaff, with frank fisher-folk words, in the frank fisher-folk dialect. A good part of it, don't you see, would be totally unfit for publication in English.

“Hey, my Lady, what a catch!” says the girl, holding her head on one side, and looking down at the boat-load. “Crabs,

sardines, and sea-wolf! You've fifty lire's worth there if you've got ten soldi. You'll be making your fortune soon, Giuseppe!"

Giuseppe glanced up at her as she stood there so saucy, with one hand on her hip, and one, coquettish, by the corner of her rich red mouth, and he shrugged his shoulders.

"Pretty well," he says, opening his hands, just so, in front of him—you know their way. "A fair catch for the season!"

The girl sidled nearer. Her name was Bianca (though she was brown as a berry), and I knew her well by sight.

"You'll be marrying Cecca before long," she said. "You'll need it all then! *She'll* want red shoes and silk stockings, your Cecca will."

"Who said I was going to marry Cecca?" Giuseppe answers, quite short, out of pure contrariety. That's the Neapolitan way. Talking to one pretty girl, in the heat of the moment, he couldn't bear she should think he cared for another one. Your Neapolitan would like to make love to them all at once, or rather each in turn, and pretend to every one of them he didn't care a pin for any of the others.

Well, there they fell straight into an Italian chaffing-match, half fun, half earnest, Bianca pretending Giuseppe was head over ears in love with Cecca, to her certain knowledge, while Giuseppe pretended he never cared for the mincing thing at all, and was immensely devoted to no one but Bianca. It was pure Neapolitan devilry on his part, of course; he couldn't help saying sweet things to whatever pretty girl with a pair of black eyes was nearest him at the moment, and depreciating by comparison every other she spoke of.

But Cecca sat hard by, her hand curved round her ear, shell-wise, so, to listen, and her brow like thunder. I dared not say a word lest she should rise and rush at him.

"And you've chosen so well, too!" says Bianca, half satirically, don't you see? "She's so sweet! so pretty! such lips for a kiss! Such fine eyes to flirt with! Not a girl on the beach with eyes like Cecca's!"

"Eyes!" Giuseppe answers, coming closer and ogling her. "You call her eyes *fine*? Why, I say she squints with them."

"Not squints," says Bianca, condescendingly. "Just a very slight cast."

And, indeed, as you may have noticed, though Cecca's so handsome, they're *not* quite straight in her head, when you come to look hard at them.

"*You* may call it a cast," Giuseppe continues, counting over his dories, "but *I* call it squinting. Whereas *your* eyes, Bianca——"

Bianca pouted her lips at him.

"That's the way of you men," she says, mightily pleased all the same. "Always flattering us to our faces, while behind our backs——"

"And then her temper!" says Giuseppe.

"Well, she *has* a temper, I admit," Bianca goes on with angelic candor. And so for twenty minutes such a game between them, pulling poor Cecca to pieces, turn about, till, morally and physically, she hadn't the ghost of a leg left to stand upon.

But Cecca! You should have seen her meanwhile. There she sat, under the boat, drinking in every word, herself unseen, with the eye and the face of a tigress just ready to spring, straining forward to listen. It was awful to look at her; she seemed one whirlwind of suppressed passion. Little fists clenched hard, neck stretched out to the utmost, frowning brow, puckered eyes, nostrils wide and quivering. I'd have given anything to paint her as she sat there that minute. I tried it from memory afterwards—you remember the piece, my "Italian Idyll," in the '84 Academy.

By and by she rose and faced them. Then came the tug of war. If it was tragedy to see Cecca with her heart on fire, like the pine-woods in summer, it was comedy to see those two disappear into their shoes when Cecca fronted them. The Three Furies were nothing to it. Bianca dodged and vanished. Giuseppe stood sheepish, jaw dropped and eye staring, anxious at first to find out whether she'd heard them or not; then pretending he'd known all the time she was there, and just did it to tease her; lastly, throwing himself on her mercy, and settling it all down, as was really the case, to the time-pleasing, fickle, Neapolitan temperament that was common to both of them. "You'd have done it yourself, Cecca," he said, "with any other man, you know, if he'd begun to chaff you about your fellow, Giuseppe."

Cecca knew she would in her heart, I dare say, but she wouldn't acknowledge it; having *heard* it all, you see, made all the difference. It's the way of men, Giuseppe told her, craning eagerly forward, to disparage even the girl they love best, when they want to make themselves momentarily agreeable to another one. It's the way of men, all the world over, I'm afraid, but, as far as I've observed, the woman they love never lets them off one penny the easier on account of its universality.

Well, they parted bad friends; Giuseppe went off in a huff, and Cecca, proud and cold, with the mien of a duchess, stalked home by the children's side in silence. For a day or two we heard nothing more at all about the matter. Giuseppe didn't come round in the evenings, as usual, to the villa gate; and Cecca's eyes in the morning were red with crying. Not that she minded a bit, she told Fanny, with a toss of her pretty head; for her own part, indeed, she was rather glad than otherwise it was off altogether, for Guiseppe, she always knew, wasn't half good enough for her. In a moment of weakness she had encouraged his suit—a mere common fisherman's, when the head-waiter at the "Victoria," that distinguished looking gentleman in a swallow-tail coat and a spotless white tie, was dying of love for her. For Cecca had been raised one degree in the social scale by taking service in a foreign family, and, whenever she wanted to give herself airs, used to pretend that nowadays she looked down upon mere fishermen.

Towards the end of the week, however, old Catarina, our cook, brought in evil tidings. She had no business to tell it, of course, but, being a Neapolitan, she told it on purpose, in order to stir up a little domestic tragedy between Cecca and her lover. Guiseppe was paying his court to Bianca. They had been seen walking out in the evening together! He had given her a lace scarf, and it was even said—and so forth, and so forth! Well, *we* knew very well, Fanny and I, what Guiseppe was driving at. He only wanted to make Cecca as jealous as an owl, and so bring her back to him. I don't pretend to understand Italians, as I told you; but I know this much, that they always go to work the crooked way, if they can, to attain their ends, by a sort of racial instinct. So I wasn't astonished when Catarina told us this. But Cecca—she was furious. She went straight out of the house like a wild-cat on the prowl, and walked along the shore in the direction of Naples.

At ten o'clock she came back. I never saw her look so proud or so beautiful before. There was a disdainful smile upon her thin, curled lips. Her eyes were terrible. She had a knife in her hand. "Well, I've done it!" she cried to Fanny, flinging the knife on the ground, so that it stuck by its point in the floor and quivered. "I done it at last! I've finished the thing! I've stabbed him!"

Fanny was so aghast she hardly knew what to do. "Not Guiseppe!" she cried, all horror-struck. "Oh, Cecca, don't say so."

"Yes, I do say so," says Cecca, flinging herself down in a chair. And with that what does she do but bury her face in her hands, and rock herself up and down, like a creature distraught, and burst into floods of tears, and moan through her sobs, "Oh, I loved him so! I loved him!"

Queer sort of way of showing you love a man, to go sticking a knife into him: but that's the manner of these Italians. Fanny and I had got used to them, you see, so we didn't make much of it. Fanny tried to comfort the poor child, for we were really fond of her. "Perhaps he won't die," she said, bending over her; "you mayn't have stabbed him badly."

"Oh, yes, he will," Cecca sobbed out, her eyes flashing fire. "He'll die, I'm sure of it. I drove the knife home well, so that he shouldn't recover and let that nasty Bianca have him."

"Go out and see about it, Tom," says my wife, turning round to me quite frightened; "for if Giuseppe dies of it, then, of course, it'll be murder."

Well, out I went, and soon heard all the news from the people at the corner. Giuseppe had been found, lying stabbed upon the road, and been carried at once to the civic hospital. Nobody seemed to think very much of the stabbing; some woman, no doubt, or else a quarrel about a woman with some fisherman of his acquaintance. But they considered it very probable that Giuseppe would die. He was stabbed twice badly in two dangerous places.

There was no time to be lost. Fanny and I made up our minds at once. We were Italianate enough ourselves to think a great deal less of the crime than of poor Cecca's danger. You know the proverb, *Inglese Italianato è diavolo incarnato*; I hope it's not *quite* true, but, at any rate, Fanny's Italianate, and she was determined poor Cecca's head shouldn't fall off her neck if *she* could prevent it. Fanny had always a conscientious objection to the guillotine. So we saw at a glance Cecca must disappear—disappear mysteriously. Before she began to be suspected she must be smuggled out of the way, of course without our seeming to know anything about it.

No sooner thought than done. 'Twas the moment for action. We called up Cecca, and held a council of war over her. Just at first the poor child absolutely refused to leave Naples on any account, while Giuseppe was in such danger; why, he might die, she said, at any moment—crying over him, you must know, as if it was somebody else, not herself, who had stabbed him. That

dear man might die—the blessed Madonna save him!—and she not there to comfort him in his last hour, or to burn a candle for the repose of his soul after he'd gone to purgatory. No, no, till Giuseppe was healed or dead, she should stop at Castellamare!

But after a time Fanny talked her over. Fanny's so rational. Everything would be done at the hospital for Giuseppe, she said, and, supposing he died, why, we'd promise to waste our substance riotously in hiring a reckless profusion of priests to sing masses for his soul, if only Cecca'd take our advice and save herself. The end of it all was, Cecca consented at last. She even volunteered a suggestion on her own account. There was a Bordighera coasting-vessel in the port that night, she said, whose skipper, Paolo Bolognini, was a very good man and a friend of her father's. The vessel was bound out to-morrow morning for Bordighera direct, with a cargo of white Capri and country figs. If Cecca could only go on board to-night, disguised as a boy, she might get clear away beyond sea undetected. She seemed to think, poor soul, that if that once happened there could be no more question of arresting her at all; she was too childish to be aware that the law of Italy runs even as far from her native Naples as this unknown coast here.

Well, it's no use being seriously angry and taking the high moral standpoint with a naughty girl like that. You might as well preach the Decalogue at a three-year-old baby. So we cut all Cecca's hair short—she cried over its loss quite as bitterly at the time as she had cried over Giuseppe—and we dressed her up in a suit of her brother's clothes, and a very pretty fisher-boy she made, after all, with a red cap on her head and a crimson sash round her waist for girdle. She laughed for three good minutes when she saw herself in the glass. Then we started her off, alone, for the Bordighera sloop, along the dim, dark shore, while Fanny and I walked after, at a discreet distance, to observe what happened.

At the very last moment, to be sure, Fanny had qualms of conscience about letting a pretty girl like Cecca go alone on board a ship among all those noisy Italian sailors. The British matron within her still wondered whether the girl ought to be allowed to go off without a chaperon. But I soon put a stopper on all that:—revolutions and rosewater—you can't stick at trifles when you're escaping from an impending charge of murder; and, besides, Cecca could take care of herself (with a knife, if necessary) among a hundred sailors. A boatman of

our acquaintance rowed her out to the sloop, which was anchored in the bay. She went on board at once, and signified to us, by a preconcerted signal with a light, that she was well received and would be taken to Bordighera.

As soon as she was gone we expected every hour the police would come up and make full inquiries. If they did come (having lost all moral sense by this time), I was prepared to aid them in searching the house through, with the most innocent face for that missing Cecca. But they never came at all. We learned why afterwards. Giuseppe had been staunch; true as steel to the girl. In his bed at the hospital, half dead with the wound, he never said for a moment it was Cecca who had done it. That was partly his pride, I believe; he didn't like to confess he'd been stabbed by a woman; and partly his desire to avenge himself personally. He even concocted a cock-and-bull story about a mysterious-looking fellow in a brigand-like cloak and a slouch hat who attacked him unawares on the high road, without the slightest provocation. The police didn't believe *that*, of course, but they never suspected Cecca. They set it down to a quarrel with some other man over a girl, and thought he refused out of motives of honor to betray his opponent.

For a week the poor fellow hovered between life and death. We waited eagerly for news of him, which old Catarina brought us. Of course we were afraid to inquire ourselves, lest suspicion should fall upon us; but Fanny had promised Cecca that a letter should be awaiting her when she reached Bordighera with a full, true, and particular account of how the patient was progressing. The letter contained a couple of hundred francs as well; for Fanny was wild about that girl, and really talked as if stabbing one's lover was the most natural thing in the world—an accident that might happen to any lady any day. That's the sort of feeling that comes of living too long at a stretch in Italy.

By-and-by, to everybody's immense astonishment, in spite of his wounds, Giuseppe began to mend. It was really quite a miracle. If you doubt it, you can look at the *ex voto* in the chapel on the hill over yonder, where you may see Giuseppe with a dagger through his heart, and a very wooden Madonna, with a simpering smile, descending in a halo of golden light, from most material clouds, to pluck the thing out for him. He prayed hard that he might live—to stick a knife into Cecca—and our Lady heard him. At any rate, miracle or no miracle,

the man recovered. Meanwhile, we had heard from Cecca of her safe arrival at Bordighera. But that was not all; the girl was foolish enough to write to her people as well: who confided the fact to their dearest friend; who told it under the utmost pledge of secrecy to a dozen of her cronies; who retailed it to the marketwomen; who noised it abroad with similar precautions to all Castellamare. In a week it was known to all and sundry (except the police) that Giuseppe had really been stabbed by Cecca, who had fled for her life to a place beyond sea called Bordighera.

Presently old Catarina brought us worse news still. Giuseppe was up and out, breathing forth fire and slaughter against the girl who stabbed him. He meant to follow her to the world's end, he said, and return blow for blow, exact vengeance for vengeance. The next thing we heard was that he had sailed in a ship bound for Genoa direct, and we doubted not he knew now Cecca was at Bordighera.

Well, nothing would satisfy poor Fanny after that but off we must all pack, bag and baggage, to the north, to look after Cecca. Not that she put it on that ground, of course; British matronhood forbid! It was getting too hot for the neighborhood of Naples, she said, and time for our annual *villeggiatura* in the mountains. We could take Bordighera on the way to the Lakes, and carry Cecca with us to Lugano or Cadenabbia. For now that Giuseppe hadn't died after all, there was no murder in the case, and we might proceed more openly.

So off we started, children, nursemaid, and all, and came round here by rail, post haste to Bordighera. We settled in for a few days at the Belvedere while we looked about us. Fanny hunted up Cecca at once in her lodgings in the town, and took her back as head nurse. "How do you know," I said, "she won't stick a knife one day into one of the children?" But Fanny treated my remark with deserved contempt, and observed with asperity, we men had no feeling. Italianate, you see! completely Italianate!

We hadn't been in Bordighera but a week and day, as the old song says, and I was walking along the Strada Romana one morning, looking out on the blue sea through the branches of the olives, when who should I perceive coming gayly towards me but my friend Giuseppe. He had a red sash round his waist, with a knife stuck in it ostentatiously. He was fingering the haft as he went. When he saw me he smiled and showed

all his white teeth; but 'twas an ugly smile. I didn't like the look of it.

"*Buon giorno, Giuseppe,*" says I, trying to look unconcerned, as if I'd expected to meet him. "Glad to see you so well again."

"*Buon giorno, signor,*" he answered, in his politest tone. Then he tapped his knife gayly: "I've come to look for Cecca!"

I hurried home in hot haste, as fast as my legs would carry me. At the Belvedere I saw Fanny sitting out, sunning herself near the stunted palm-tree in the front garden.

"Fanny, Fanny," I cried, "where's Cecca? Keep her out of the way, for Heaven's sake! Here's Giuseppe at Bordighera, with a knife at his side, going about like a roaring lion to devour her."

Fanny clapped her hands to her ears.

"Oh, Tom," she cried, "what shall we do? She's down on the beach somewhere, playing with the children."

Of course, this was serious. If Giuseppe came upon her unwarned, I didn't doubt for a moment he'd carry out in real earnest his threat of stabbing her. So off I sent the porter to find her, if possible, and set her on her guard, telling him to bring her home, if he could, by the back way over the hillside. Then Fanny and I sat out, under the Japanese medlar on the terrace, where we could command a good view of the road either way, and watch if the girl was coming. Meanwhile Giuseppe kept prowling under the olives on the plain, and bandying chaff now and again with the Bordighera cabmen.

Presently, to our horror, Cecca hove suddenly in sight, round the corner by the Angst, with the children beside her. She was carrying a great bunch of anemones and asphodel. Evidently the porter had failed to warn and find her. My heart stood still within me with suspense. I rushed to the edge of the terrace. But quicker than I could rush, Cecca had seen Giuseppe, and Giuseppe Cecca. With a wild cry of joy, she flung down the flowers and darted upon him like a maniac. She threw her arms around him in a transport of delight. She covered him with kisses. I never saw a woman give any man such a welcome. One would think they were lovers on the eve of marriage. And not three weeks before, mind you, she had tried her level best with a knife in his breast to murder him at Naples!

"Giuseppe!" she cried, "Giuseppe! Oh, *carissimo!* How I love you!"

Giuseppe shook her off and glared at her angrily. He drew the dagger from his belt, and held it, irresolute, in his hand for a moment.

But Cecca laughed when she saw it. She laughed a merry laugh of amusement and astonishment. "No, no, *caro mio*," she cried, seizing his arm, quite unconcerned, with her pretty fingers. "Not now, when I rejoice to see you again, my own, are you going to stab me!" She wrenched the knife from his grasp and flung it, all glittering, far away among the olive groves. It gleamed in the air and fell. Giuseppe watched her do it, and followed its flight with his eyes. Then he stood there, sheepish. He didn't know what to do next. He just stared and looked glum, in spite of all her endearments.

Cecca was more than a match for him, however. It was a picture to see her. She began with her blandishments, making such heartfelt love to him that no man in England, let alone in Italy, could possibly have resisted her. In just about two minutes by the watch he gave way. "But what did you stab me for, little one?" he asked, rather sullenly.

Cecca stood back a pace and looked at him in amazement. She surveyed him from head to foot like some strange wild animal. "What did I stab you for?" she repeated. "And he asks me that! Oh, Giuseppe, because I loved you! I loved you! I loved you! I loved you so much I couldn't bear you out of my sight. And you to go and walk with that thing Bianca!"

"I won't do it again," Giuseppe answered, all penitence.

Cecca fell upon him once more, kisses, tears, and tenderness. "Oh, Giuseppe," she cried, "you can't think what I've suffered all these days without you! I was longing for you to come. I was praying to our Lady every hour of the night: and now you're here, that horrid Bianca shall never again get hold of you."

We left them alone for half an hour, with half a flask of Chianti to compose their minds upon. At the end of that time Cecca came back to us smiling, and Giuseppe, looking more sheepish than ever, beside her.

"Well, *signora*," she said, overjoyed, "it's all arranged now. As soon as we can get the announcement published, Giuseppe and I are going to get married."

That settled our fate. Willy-nilly, we were tied to Bordighera. Cecca declared she would never go back to Naples again, to let that horrid Bianca practice her wiles and her evil eye on Giuseppe. Fanny declared she could never get on without Cecca

for the children. Giuseppe declared he would never leave us. I shrugged my shoulders.

The upshot of it all was that we took our present villa, on the slope of the Cima, and Giuseppe forswore the sea, turned gardener on the spot, and married Cecca. Married her, fair and square, at church, and before the Sindaco.

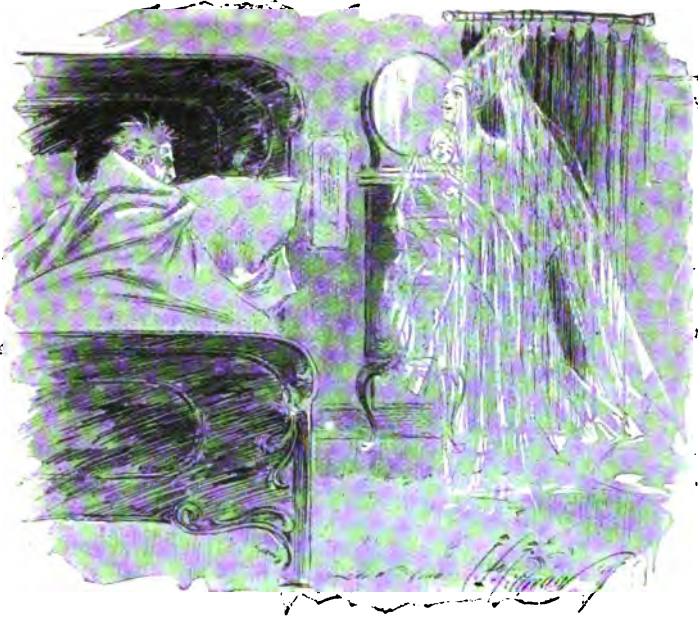
He lives in our cottage. That's him you see down yonder there uncovering the artichokes.

And now I dare say you'll perceive what I mean when I say I never *can* understand these Italians.

But the worst of it is, they make us in the end almost as bad as they are.

Have another cigarette? And be careful with your match, please.





THE GHOST BABY*

Famous Story Series

SOME years ago business took me down to the little town of Temsbury, and as I expected to have to stay some time, my uncle John offered to lend me his house there, as it was standing empty.

Everybody who has ever been at Temsbury—and that means almost everybody—knows the Old House, though they may not know its name. It is the large red-brick building with a pediment and a white porch, standing a little back from the road on your left-hand side as you go down to the bridge. It is a fine old place, believed to have been built by Sir Christopher Wren, and contains carvings by Grinling Gibbons and all kinds of treasures for those who can appreciate them—has a garden, with a little terrace on the river, and a ghost. The possession of the last-mentioned curiosity, however, was not generally appreciated.

Of course, the great, old house was much too large for a solitary, unprotected male. Accordingly, only one or two rooms

* A selection from "Blackwood's Magazine." Illustrated for Short Stories by Frank L. Fithian.

had been prepared for me—the dining-room, a pleasant little morning-room to serve for sitting and working in, and a splendid bedroom on the first floor looking out on the river. I was shown over it all by an old woman of pleasant appearance, who had



been put in there, with her daughter, by my uncle, to look after the house when he was away. I think she was an old nurse of his or something of that kind. My own impression is that my uncle's early upbringing must have been a work of considerable difficulty; he seemed to have such a number of pensioners who had acted in some capacity connected with it.

The old woman was inclined to be apologetic about the

bedroom she had prepared for me, saying she had had so little notice, and that none of the other rooms were fit to sleep in; to be sure, it was the best room in the house, and she didn't believe there was any truth in the stories that were told about it.

"Why," I asked, "is this the haunted room?"

"Well, Sir, it is the one where the people says the noises are; but, of course, a gentleman like yourself don't care for none of them stories."

I was not so sure about that. I had no great anxiety to be introduced to a ghost, supposing such things to exist. I made an attempt at an incredulous laugh and assured Mrs. Creed that it didn't matter; but I was somewhat uncomfortable all the same.

However, I got a very good dinner, which restored my spirits, and turned to afterwards at a bit of work I had to do, till all thoughts of the haunted room went out of my head. After going

through a series of very abstruse calculations, I tried to refresh myself with a novel and fell fast asleep in my chair.

Some people say that a short sleep in your chair refreshes you; but, for my part, I always find that I wake up sleepier than before. At any rate, all I was good for when I woke up this time was to tumble up-stairs and into bed as soon as possible, and there I fell fast asleep again. When I awoke next, which I suppose must have been between one and two o'clock, it was with the consciousness that I was no longer alone.



The doors of what I had supposed to be a great press at the other end of the room stood wide open, disclosing a small secret room built in the thickness of the wall.

Out of this room now came forth a figure—a lady dressed in a strange, antiquated fashion, a long, loose, blue dress of the kind which, I believe, is called a *sacque*, and with a great tower of a headdress, carrying a baby in her arms and singing softly to it as she walked to and fro, without taking the least notice of me.

After the first minutes of utter bewilderment I began to be conscious that this must be the ghost that people spoke of; certainly it was not a substantial living creature. I cannot deny that I felt a curious kind of thrill at the idea that I was actually face to face with a disembodied spirit, even going so far as a general tendency to shivering and chattering of teeth; but these feelings I succeeded in repressing. One thing which conduced greatly to strengthen my resolution was the moral impossibility of getting out of bed to run away. I have always been brought up in the strictest principles of propriety, and I could not take a step which would be an outrage to the feelings of a lady, even of a ghost lady. Obviously it was my duty as a gentleman to remain quietly in bed.

The sense of duty is encouraging, and I began to feel quite composed, even with a soothing tendency to grumble; for, as I

put it to myself, while my conduct at the present juncture is in the highest degree creditable, it serves to show, at the same time, how entirely unjustifiable is the conduct of a lady ghost in haunting a gentleman's bedroom. Comforted as I was with these reflections, it was somewhat disturbing to find, on looking up again, that the lady's eyes were fixed upon mine, though with no particularly terrible or malevolent expression. I returned her gaze as steadily as I could, and the lady, after a while, broke into a smile, and said in a pleasant but somewhat affected voice, "You are not afraid of me?"

"N—no, Madam. I don't think I am," I said, rather hesitatingly.

"You are not quite sure?" said the apparition, kindly. "But I ask you the question with a serious purpose, and you must answer truthfully. Are you really not afraid of me?"

This was rather an awkward question, as the truth is that I was still rather uncomfortable; but I felt it must be answered in the affirmative. I had read ghost stories and I saw that the time was coming when the ghost would confide in me respecting the family papers behind the wainscoting or the treasure buried in the garden. Under these circumstances I determined that I would not be afraid.

After all, I said to myself, what is there to be afraid of? The lady, who was anxiously awaiting my answer, evidently meant me no harm; her appearance was in no way terrible—indeed, her face, though sadly thin and worn, showed traces of great beauty. There was nothing but the irrational horror of something that has died and yet lives—a condition of existence, by the way, in which we formally express our belief every Sunday. So I firmly and confidently replied, "I am not afraid of you."

"Are you quite, quite certain?" repeated the lady, anxiously. "Remember to whom you are speaking, and do not say so unless you are perfectly sure. I am a ghost, you know, a spirit. I have been dead and buried these hundred and fifty years. Are you still quite sure you are not afraid?"

Repressing what I felt to be an absurd inclination to shudder, I replied, "I am perfectly sure."

The lady gave a sigh of relief.

"You speak confidently, Sir," she said, "and I believe truly. Heaven knows there is little enough to fear in me, yet you are the first that I have seen since I have haunted this apartment

who could say so much. Your courage shall not go unrewarded. To you I feel that I can deliver the precious charge which I can no longer retain. Are you willing to receive it?"

"Madam," I replied, "you do me too much honor. I shall be proud to render you any assistance in my power."

The lady looked at me very seriously.

"It is a very great trust that I am about to impose upon you; and though it cannot fail to bring you great joy and happiness, it is one not to be lightly undertaken. Yet I cannot think I have chosen badly. You are young and inexperienced, but you seem to be kind and honest. You are sure that you are ready to receive this charge?"

I bowed in assent as well as in acknowledgment of the compliment, which only my duty as a faithful historian induces me to transcribe. At the same time, I may mention that it is an extremely difficult thing, when one is in bed, to bow to a lady with any degree of propriety, not to say grace. As for the trust, I decided it must be treasure, which I was probably intended to apply to some particular purpose.

"A hundred and fifty years ago," continued the apparition, "this poor child," meaning the baby she carried, "died here in my arms of privation and misery when I was hiding her from those who would have been her ruthless murderers. For that long term she has, according to our laws, remained such as she was in life, but now that the hundred and fifty years are gone, she will begin to grow older and bigger as if she were still a child of this world. Such is our law. It is not in my power to watch over her in the future; other duties call me elsewhere. Already I have often been compelled to absent myself, and now I can only hope to be able to visit her at long intervals. To you then, generous young man, I intrust my dearest hopes, the care of my beloved daughter. It will be your duty and your pleasure alike to watch her grow in strength and in beauty——"

"But good heavens, Madam," I cried in alarm, "you don't mean that——"

"To your kind and watchful guardianship—for kind and watchful I am sure that you will be—I hereby resign her. Under your care she will thrive better than exposed to all the trouble and hardship that must fall to my lot."

"But pardon me," I interposed. "I really cannot for a moment——"

"Give me no thanks," said the phantom, in a stately manner;

"they are not needed. The task that is before you is no light one, and the obligation is not on your side alone."

"I should think it wasn't," I replied, indignantly. "I had no intention of thanking you. I cannot entertain the idea of such a thing for a moment. I——"

"You have passed your word," said the lady, coldly (she had now replaced the baby in a cradle in the secret room and was hushing it to sleep), "and it cannot be retracted. Fear not! she will bring happiness and prosperity to you. In after years she will be the joy and pride of her guardian."

"But I won't be her guardian," I shouted, in desperation. "I can't—I don't know how; it is quite out of my power."

"She is called Euphemia," continued the lady, without noticing my words—"the Lady Euphemia Crancelin. I am the Countess of Ruetown, born a Mailcote, you know," and she stepped back to the door of the secret room to take what was evidently intended to be a farewell look at the baby. I could only look on helplessly; I think if I had not been in bed I might have argued the point; but it was this very circumstance which put me at such a disadvantage all the time.

"Farewell, my child," she continued. "Farewell, kind friend. Be assured that my daughter will well reward your care; but remember, also, that the gravest consequences may follow any remissness or neglect. Once more, farewell!"

And she disappeared.

I don't know what happened next; I was left in a kind of dazed condition, and I think I must have gone to sleep because I didn't know what else to do. Anyhow, the next thing I was conscious of was waking up in the morning cheerful and comfortable, and utterly oblivious of ghosts and babies. The sun was shining brightly into the room, and I felt the kind of exhilaration that a fine morning naturally brings to a young and healthy man untroubled by duns, in good training, and with a fair but not excessive day's work before him. I got up and dressed quickly, and, having nearly finished my toilet, was looking out of the window at the river below, when I heard a slight sound behind me, and on turning round saw the doors of the secret room fly open of their own accord. In a moment the whole thing came back to my memory—the ghost and the baby and the whole scene of the night before. The cheery, hopeful prospects of a moment before were replaced by a sickening feel-

ing of discouragement and disgust. The sun went out like a candle; the river was muddy and smelled nasty; the temperature of the room fell at least ten degrees. I daresay this will be considered a very disagreeable way of regarding the matter; but it is not easy to realize the feelings of a man who suddenly finds himself placed in the supremely absurd and embarrassing position of guardian to a baby ghost.

There was the little room exactly as I had seen it the night before, and the cradle in the middle of it. After some hesitation I determined to go and see with my own eyes, in broad daylight, whether there really was a baby there or not. After all, perhaps it had all been a dream; perhaps I had not really received the extraordinary charge that I fancied the ghost had intrusted to me. Alas! my illusions on this point were soon dispelled. As I reached the door of the secret room a curious, inarticulate sound reached my ears—something between a crow and a chuckle, but indubitably proceeding from the throat of that blessed baby. While I was yet hesitating whether I should relieve my mind by substituting a different participle, I heard the old housekeeper's footstep in the passage outside, and at the same moment the folding-doors banged to again within an inch of my nose.



“Breakfast is ready, Sir,” said Mrs. Creed, and glad of any interruption I hastily followed her down-stairs.

Later on, when I went about my work, I mentally carried that baby about with me everywhere. What was I to do? All my hopes of advancement and success in life seemed irremediably blighted. What career can be open to a man who has always to be dragging a fine young ghost about with him? Who will give him employment? People don't bargain for that kind of thing. Besides, what was I expected to do in my capacity of guardian? For, after all, I was guardian to the blessed little nuisance, and

I should have to behave myself as such. I am a conscientious man, I believe, and not at all given to shirking my obligations, but really the task of bringing up a ghost baby was rather too much for me. I caught myself wondering whether the Foundling Hospital would take it in, setting aside the difficulty of carriage—and I knew that I should be perfectly unable to transfer the Baby to any place where it didn't want to go. I felt it to be my duty to watch over its infancy myself. It was to me that the mother had confided her child. I tried to persuade myself that I had a noble task before me—to bring up a ghost in the way it should go; but, in any case, it was very difficult to know how to set about it.

While I revolved these schemes about the Baby's future I had made little progress in personal acquaintance with it. When the folding-doors flew open—and they always did in the morning, and often at night—I would go up to the cradle and look into it. At first I could only see something very shadowy and indistinct, but it gradually became clearer, and after the first week I could make out its little features plainly enough.

I don't know whether it was pretty. All the babies I have seen yet appear to me to be very much alike in that respect; but it seemed a nice baby enough. It crowed and chuckled, and held out its little arms to me when I came in, though it was a good fortnight before I mustered up courage to say "Good-morning, Baby," which I felt politeness required of me. Then I used to stand for a few minutes, not exactly knowing what to do next, while the Baby crowed away like a little bantam, and then I would say, "Well, good-bye for the present, Baby," and go out, locking the doors after me and taking away the key—an entirely useless precaution, by the way. It generally appeared quite satisfied, and, at all events, it very rarely cried, which was what I was most afraid of. On the whole, I judged it to be a good-natured, easy-going sort of infant, whom it would not be difficult to get on with—if it was a necessity of fate that I was to be saddled with a baby of one kind or another.

Later on, indeed, we got to be very good friends, Euphemia and I. I felt it to be a great advance the day I first addressed it as Euphemia, and it was greatly delighted itself. It was always pleased to see me. I couldn't go and see it very often on account of my work, and also to keep the servants from finding out anything about it.

Mrs. Creed and her daughter had already spoken several times about the noises that were heard in the cupboard; but fortunately, though they could hear it cry—or, rather, crow, for it hardly ever did cry—it was quite invisible to them. I knew this, because Mrs. Creed once came into my room when I had carried the cradle out on to the hearthrug in my own room—for the Baby always enjoyed seeing the fire, and I was afraid of trying to carry it alone, as it looked so very unsubstantial. Mrs. Creed came in suddenly—which she had no business to do—and though she was startled at the sight of the cradle, she certainly saw nothing in it. The cradle, I said, I had found in the lumber-room, and brought downstairs to examine it, and, indeed, it was a very curious piece of old carved-oak work, and very well worth examining.

As I have said, we got on very well for the present, but I was very uneasy in my mind about the future. In the first place, I could not stay in Tisbury for ever, and what was the Baby to do when I had to go away? It is true that my difficulties upon this point were soon removed, when, being suddenly called away to London one day, I found, on going to my chambers in the evening, the Baby calmly reposing upon the chest of drawers in my bedroom. It seemed a rather uncomfortable resting-place, so I managed to improvise a kind of cradle out of my portmanteau, after turning all the things out. To this the Baby managed to transport itself somehow, and, on all future occasions when I had to leave Tisbury, this portmanteau served as its resting-place, and it seemed very comfortable. While, however, some of my uneasiness was removed by this discovery, it increased my anxieties for the future in another direction. A bachelor who is invariably accompanied by a baby, of which he is absolutely incapable of giving what would be considered a satisfactory account, is, undoubtedly, a suspicious character. It is true that the Baby was invisible to Mrs. Creed; but would it be the same thing with Alice Raynsley? I don't remember, by the way, whether I mentioned our engagement. She is Alice Morrison now, I am happy to say (my name is Robert Morrison). What would Alice think of my being in possession of an unnecessary infant like this? It was a very serious question.

At one time I thought of consulting the Society of Psychical Research; but I was afraid that if they could actually lay their hands on a real ghost, they would want to dissect it, or put it under a microscope, or something of that kind. On the other

hand, they might not be able even to see it. Clearly, there was little help to be expected in my strange task from living man.

Under these circumstances I began to consider whether I might not seek for aid among those who were not living. Ours is a country which simply teems with haunted houses, and it would be a reproach, indeed, if, in our civilized United Kingdom, there could not be found one ghost ready to hold out his hand to succor a helpless child. One of my oldest friends was at that time secretary to a society occupied in researches into the supernatural, and through his agency I determined to put forth such an appeal to the ghosts of Great Britain and Ireland as, I felt sure, would meet with a ready response. All I had to do was to find out some respectable old ghost who would either take charge of the Baby himself or seek out the mother and oblige her to take it back.

With this idea, I represented myself as an inquirer desirous of throwing more light on such subjects and not afraid of carrying out my researches in person. The society accepted my proposals with eagerness and pointed out to me a glorious enterprise which was waiting ready to my hand. A daring man was wanted to watch for the ghost in Grimleight Manor, a fine old house belonging to the Duke of Birmingham, which had not been inhabited for some time, owing to the general terror caused by the apparition.

I closed with this offer at once. The Duke, who was to pay all expenses, drew out the programme of my operations, and one of his gamekeepers was appointed to be the companion of my watch.

I will not trouble my readers with all the negotiations and arrangements to be gone through before the eventful evening when Giles, the keeper, and I crept in as secretly as possible by the back door of the manor to begin our adventure. It was a fine autumn night, with a bright moon shining, so that there was no necessity for artificial light, of which I was very glad, for I am not sure that I should have liked to face the ghost in the dark, and yet I was required to observe the strictest secrecy.

The Grimleight ghost was an armed knight, presumably some early member of the Duke's family, who haunted a long gallery, with a little room at the end of it, through which he used to walk. This room I had selected as my point of observation. In a dark corner I posted myself a little after eleven o'clock, the apparition

being usually seen at about midnight, and gave my companion instructions to remain at the bottom of the staircase, and on no account to come up one step unless I called him—a course which seemed to be in perfect accordance with honest Giles' own inclination.

I don't suppose I waited more than an hour or so; but it seemed about five times as much. The thought of what the Baby would be doing was what principally occupied me, though naturally, when my thoughts were a-wandering, they often reverted to Alice Raynsley, and I wished that Baby had never been born. But what was the good of wishing? The Baby was there, and I couldn't get rid of it. Anyhow, it would not be in my way that night.

At last I heard a heavy footstep coming along the gallery, and I cannot say that I was comfortable when I first heard it. The door was open; but from my corner I could not see anything of the ghost till it came into the room. I had been

sure that it would be conscious of my presence; but it was not. An armed figure, such as had been described to me, merely came into the room, walked to the opposite wall and then back again, without heeding me or giving me a chance of speaking. It occurred to me that the figure was unusually heavy and awkward; its armor was very substantial and its demeanor by no means awe-inspiring.

I rushed forward as it stalked out again, and in the long gallery, lighted up as it was by the moon, I saw, to my utter amazement, the form of Euphemia apparently hanging in mid-air in some extraordinary



fashion of its own—I never professed to really understand that Baby. I was not the only one who saw it. With a yell of terror the ghost dropped the lance and shield it carried and turned to rush back to the room, but, at sight of me, made a bolt for the staircase.

“Stop that man!” I shouted, and Giles came up quickly at the call; but the ghost no sooner saw him than it gave another scream, and fell down apparently insensible. We dragged the apparition into the hall, and on taking off its helmet and armor discovered as common and dull-looking a young boor as one would wish to see, now just coming to himself, but still evidently in a state of frantic terror.

“Mark Tester, that is,” said Giles, coolly, as he tied the ghost’s hands and feet. “Well, Sir, this is a go!”

It was. We got the police over from the neighboring town, and instituted a thorough search. The house had been taken possession of by a fraternity of bad characters, living chiefly on burglary and poaching, with an occasional spice of highway robbery. Two or three of them were caught returning to their rendezvous before the discovery got wind. A number more were indicated in the statement of Mark Tester, who turned Queen’s evidence, but only about six were brought to trial in all. The secrecy we had observed proved extremely fortunate, as the gang were perfectly unsuspecting, and that night had left only their greenest hand to look after the stolen property stored there and personate the harmless, necessary ghost, who had been their surest defense. I was kept down there for some time to help in the investigations, and had a room prepared for me in the house, when the Baby turned up again at once, evidently much satisfied with itself, and in the best of tempers. She was always that, though, poor Euphemia! How she came to Grimleigh that night, how she knew what to do, and how or where she spent the night when she was not suspended in mid-air like Mohammed’s coffin, are questions that I do not feel called upon to solve.

“The Grimleigh Ghost” was the heading of many an article in the newspapers of that time, as I dare say many of my readers will remember. For a time I heard of nothing but praises of my own courage and sagacity—praises which I felt I did not deserve, as it was the Baby who had done it all. Commissions to examine into other apparitions poured in from various quarters, and I felt that I could not keep up my reputation without accepting some of them. If I had been in my sober senses, probably I should

have remained satisfied with the laurels I had already gained, but I was certainly a little intoxicated with all the praises that were showered upon me. Besides, the Duke of Birmingham had forced upon me a very handsome check in return for my services, which I had not felt justified in refusing. I had done him a great service,—Grimleigh Manor is his favorite residence now—or rather the Baby and I had; and if I could not have managed it without the Baby, no more would the Baby have ever taken any steps in the matter without me. Moreover, as I had all the inconveniences of being Euphemia's guardian, it was only right that I should get what good I could out of it.

These considerations, joined to a fresh success in discovering a really transparent imposture which had frightened some innocent rustics in an out-of-the-way Buckinghamshire village, led me, after long reflection and hesitation, to set up in business as a professional ghost-seeker. I announced myself as possessing exceptional capacities for discovering imposture in the case of supposed apparitions. I did not say that I relied upon Euphemia's assistance, because I felt that any mention of her would merely serve to disturb the public mind. My scale of fees was extremely moderate; expenses were of course to be paid, and board and lodging free during investigation. The other charges varied; so much was charged for the satisfactory exposure of a fraud, so much less for formally testifying to the existence of a ghost, and in cases where I was unable to make a decisive statement one way or another, nothing at all. The plan succeeded wonderfully; fresh orders arrived in shoals, and in a month's time I was in full career of business, with really more commissions than I could execute.

Of course, I exercised a certain discretion. I could do nothing without the Baby, and I never could think of taking that guileless infant into objectionable company. "Fullest references given and required" was on all my prospectuses, and I was quite as careful about the respectability of the ghost in question as of the family who owned it. Thus, for instance, I refused a very liberal offer from the Earl of Finsbury, who wished me to visit his country seat in Essex, where an ancestor of his lived very freely two hundred years ago, and is believed to keep it up still with his old boon companions in the old banqueting hall at Frimstead. Nor was I willing to inconvenience Euphemia by the exposure to cold, and often to storm, consequent on watching for such spectres as disport themselves in the open air. This led me

to reject such cases as that of the Bleeding Nun who haunts the ruined cloister of Harminster, the Wild Huntsman of Gresleyford Chase, or Captain Crackhemp, the highwayman, who is still to be seen on bad nights riding about Banningham Heath.

The Baby took to the business at once, and I must say that its sagacity was unerring. I was often troubled at the idea that the money ought really to belong to it, and I used to cudgel my brains in search of some way of laying the profits out for its advantage. But Euphemia did not seem to care. Of course I was looking out the whole time for some ghost of good character and charitable disposition who would help me to restore her to her mother's care, or otherwise provide for her future in a more suitable manner than I ever should be able to do. All my efforts in this direction failed. I saw a great number of ghosts whose appearance and general reputation inclined me to speak to them on the subject, but I could not get any of them to discuss the matter with me. There was the old Abbot of Greyford, the most venerable-looking old ghost I ever saw, who showed great favor to Euphemia, and gave her his blessing in the most paternal manner, but when I said "Amen!" he vanished at once. There was old Lady Dorothy Snailing at Webleyhurst, who kissed the baby and almost cried over it, but only shook her stick at me and was gone before I could think what I should say to her. The White Lady of Darkleton, the Prioress of Nonnan-court, the Grey Priest of Wrangley Grange, and many others, showed a distinct partiality to the Baby, but none of them would listen to what I had to say.

Absorbed as I was in my new profession, I had had little time left to see anything of the old friends of a quieter and less successful time. I am naturally a sociable fellow, and I felt this considerably. Even Alice Raynsley I only saw now and then, and she, too, said I was changed, but not as the others did. She spoke of the worn, worried look she had never seen in me before, and begged me to tell her what it was that lay so heavily on my mind. Sometimes I had thoughts of telling her all about it, but what would have been the good? Besides, I was doubtful whether I was at liberty to speak about the Baby to any one; doubtful, too, I dare say, whether she would believe such an improbable story. Something she must be told soon; for I had practically lost all hope of getting rid of the Baby, and, in that case, our engagement must be at an end, and I must devote

myself in solitude to the duties of my guardianship. Some time, perhaps, when the Baby came of age—but that was a long time to look forward to.

It was a real pleasure to me, in this condition of affairs, to get an invitation to go down and spend a week with my old friend George Kirby, at his place in Cumberland. There was a party of some ten or twelve people in the house, besides the host and hostess, all very friendly and merry, as far as I could make out. To make matters more cheerful, Kirby called me aside shortly after I arrived, and informed me that his wife was expecting Alice Raynsley down in a few days. I communicated this fact to Euphemia; but she seemed to care very little about it, and was altogether in a curious dreamy state I had never observed in her before.

The party at dinner that evening was a very jovial one, and there was a great deal of chaffing about my ghost-seeking experiences; but that I was accustomed to.

"Of course, we have put you in the haunted room," said Kirby; "I know that's the sort of company you like, and you're in luck, I can tell you. One of the maids saw the ghost less than a fortnight ago, and it's probably still about."

"I didn't know you had a ghost here," I answered.

"Oh, yes; we have—not of our own, you know—not a family ghost; they don't make those things at Leeds. It belongs to the old family who lived here ages ago—for this is really a very old house, though my father gave it a new outside—a great Cumberland family, the Mailcotes. What's the matter, Morrison? Find your orange too sour? Take some sugar with it."

"No, no, never mind; it's sweet enough," I said, hurriedly. "You said the Mailcotes?" I remembered that Euphemia's mother had told me she was a Mailcote.

"Yes, the Mailcotes of Birkenholme—great people in the old days. Birkenholme's the real name of this place, you know."

"And what is the ghost, Mr. Kirby?" asked one of the guests, laughing.

"Well, I can't say exactly," said our host; "it's a lady, I know—the Blue Lady, we call her, because, I believe, she wears a blue sacque—do take some sugar, Morrison; there's no good in making a martyr of yourself—but I have never seen her myself. I daresay Morrison will tell you all about her to-morrow."

There was a good deal more laughing and joking about the ghosts and much merry anticipation of the wonderful story I

should have to tell in the morning. I myself was much excited by the little that Kirby had said about the ghost, all of which seemed so perfectly applicable to the apparition I had seen at Temsbury—the mother of Euphemia. Could it really be she? I wondered.

I got away to my room as early as I could, and waited anxiously for the appearance of the ghost. I had some idea of telling Euphemia about it, in case she might be able to exercise some kind of occult influence over her mother's spirit, and at least oblige her to appear and speak to me. But I decided against this plan. Though the Baby had practically been deserted by its mother, it might not be conscious of the fact, and, at any rate, I was not going to try to set any division between them, if such did not exist already. Respect of parents is one of the first Christian principles, and I am satisfied that if this was properly impressed upon all little ghosts, they would, in many cases, turn out much more creditable members of society than they are at present. Besides, the Baby was still in the same dreamy, quiescent kind of state, and I did not like to disturb it. Perhaps it was not well—and then came over me the dreadful thought, what on earth I should do if it fell ill. It was a contingency I had never thought of before, and the conviction that I should, in such a case, be wholly unable to do anything to relieve its sufferings was extremely painful. Clearly I was not fitted to be the Baby's guardian, and I looked forward anxiously to what seemed to be the only chance of getting her off my hands.

Absorbed in these considerations, it was some time before I observed that the phantom I wished to speak with had already appeared in the room. Chancing to look towards the cradle, I now saw the same figure that I had seen before at Temsbury, bending over the cradle and fondly caressing the Baby, who seemed equally delighted at the meeting. As I gazed at the pair, the lady looked up and smiled, and I bowed, but otherwise she took no notice of me. Not knowing exactly what to do, I coughed once or twice in the hope of attracting her attention again; but as she took no notice, I determined to speak out boldly without waiting for her to address me.

"Madam," I began, "I—a—I—ahem—I believe I have the honor to address the Countess of Ruetown?" I said at last, in despair of finding something else to say.

The lady bowed slightly, with some appearance of astonishment at my audacity.

"I desire to speak to your ladyship concerning your daughter. I—I am not at all easy in my mind about her. I do not think——"

"Why, she is not ill?" said the Countess, anxiously interrupting me.

"N—no, not ill," I said—"not that I know of, at least—I am not sure—I believe not. But, Madam, I see how the mere suggestion of Euphemia——"

"Of the Lady Euphemia, you were saying," said the Countess, severely.

"The Lady Euphemia—exactly," I acquiesced, while thinking it was rather hard that one might not speak of one's own ward by her Christian name alone; "how the mere suggestion of her falling ill affects you. May I represent to you, Madam, how utterly unable I should be in such a case to give your daughter the care she required?"

"Do you mean to say," broke in the lady, indignantly, "that you would not do everything in your power——"

"In my power—certainly," said I, venturing to interrupt in my turn; "but that is just the point. The attentions which would be required in such a case, would be beyond my power to give. In fact, Madam, I regret that experience has convinced me that there are many points in which it is quite impossible for a living man like myself to discharge the duties of the guardianship which you have been good enough to confer upon me."

"In other words, you wish to renounce the sacred charge I intrusted to you," said the Countess, sternly. "Is it not so?"

"Well—I—a—in fact, I must say I do think that that course would be the most satisfactory for all concerned."

"Strange," muttered the Countess, musingly—"unaccountable indeed;" then she cried suddenly, in a tone that rather frightened me: "Why do you say this? Is it not a great honor to you to be intrusted with the custody of my child? Has she not, even in this short time, brought happiness and prosperity to her guardian?"

"Well, yes," I admitted—"prosperity certainly, of a kind; but as to happiness, I am not quite so sure about that."

"Could any one be anything but happy with that sweet child?" said the lady, indignantly.

"She is a nice child," I agreed, for I wasn't going to be unjust to the Baby—"an uncommonly nice child—and certainly one ought to be very happy with her; but the fact is, I had hoped

to be happy with somebody else. You see, Madam, I had already formed other ties, even at the time when I first had the honor of seeing you——”

“And when you accepted the guardianship of my child,” said the lady, severely.

“If you will excuse me, I did nothing of the kind. I had not the remotest idea what the charge was you were going to commit to me. If you had allowed me to explain then, I should have told you that I am engaged to be married, and I should have strongly protested against your proposal to make me the guardian of your child.”

“You wish, then, to be relieved from the guardianship of my child? It is well, Sir. Such as I do not require to thrust their favors upon those who are unwilling to receive them. But remember, the prosperity which this charge would have brought you is lost to you forever.”

“I care little for that,” I said—I was quite bold, now that there seemed some chance of success—“I only hope, Madam, that you are not thinking of taking this charge from me merely in order to impose it upon some other unfortunate man.”

“You are mistaken, Sir,” said the Countess, proudly; “I have only once asked a favor from mortal man, and assuredly I will never do so again. From henceforth my child remains with me, to share in all the miseries of my wandering, unhappy existence. It will be a pleasant thought for you,” she added, with a flash of anger in her eyes, “in the happiness you have prepared for yourself, to think that from these dangers you might have saved her—and would not.”

This was horrible. I began to feel that I must be acting like an absolute ruffian. The Countess had taken the Baby into her arms now, and stood looking defiantly at me. I felt that she might vanish any moment and take the Baby with her; and though her doing so would relieve me of my personal difficulties, still it was my duty to try and do something for Euphemia.

“Madam,” I said at last, “I hope you will reflect before taking so serious a step. The Baby—I mean the Lady Euphemia—appears to me to be a young lady of great promise, and I think something better could be done for her. If you will allow me to say so, I doubt whether the profession of a ghost is one that a conscientious mother should bring up her child to.”

“It is all that is left to us,” said the lady, sadly; “what else can we do?”

“Of that, Madam, you must be a much better judge than I can be. Surely if you had power to put the Baby under my care, you must also be capable of disposing of it—I should say her—in some other more convenient manner. You yourself say that the life of a ghost is not a happy one, and I am sure it can only in very exceptional cases be considered useful. Do you not think, if representations were made in the proper quarters, it might be possible to relieve her, at least, from the life you are speaking of?”

“It is a strange proposal,” said the lady, meditatively. “I had never thought that such a thing could be possible, but—yes, Sir, yes, perhaps you are right. In any case, it is worth trying. I will do anything to save my poor child from such a life, and if she can be free, what matters it what becomes of me?”

“Let me hope, Madam,” said I, delighted at having carried my point, “that you also will obtain your freedom. And while we are upon this subject,” I continued, thinking the opportunity a good one for laying down certain moral reflections which had occurred to me during my ghost-seeking career, “let me endeavor to explain to you, Lady Ruetown, the ideas which have been suggested to me by my own personal experiences, and which may prove of great value to yourself and your—a—companions in misfortune. Judging from what I have seen and heard, it is—a—my deliberate opinion that——”

I broke off abruptly, as I became suddenly conscious that my audience was gone, vanished in a moment, without even taking any leave of me, their benefactor, as I felt myself to be. I did, for a moment, see the Baby waving its little hand to me, but it did not show the least desire to stay. It is a pity, for I think I could have drawn attention to some facts which would have been of value to the ghost world, but it was not my fault.

When I come to think of it, I very much doubt whether the Baby was ever satisfied with the arrangement by which she was put under my care. I think she must have seen the absurdity of the position from the very beginning, but, being a Baby of strong character, she determined to adapt herself to the circumstances, and certainly she succeeded wonderfully well. Poor Euphemia! I sometimes think I should like to see her again, but never from that time to this have I—or any other person, I believe—set eyes upon either mother or daughter.

There is hardly anything more to tell. Though the great obstacle to our happiness was removed by the Baby's disappear-

ance, it was only a very short time ago that Alice Raynsley and I were married.

I have told her the story, and I am bound to admit that she does not believe it.

She thinks, however, that other people may, perhaps ; at any rate, whether they do or not, I can assure them that the above is a true and faithful account of the circumstances which attended my extraordinary and probably unique position as guardian to a ghost baby.



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He entered the room hurriedly, says the *Detroit Free Press*. The young woman standing by the open fire greeted him with a smile. He strode up to her in frenzied haste. She was frightened, for he had never acted so before. The smile faded from her face, and she grew pale.

"Hist!" he said, between his shut teeth.

"What is it, dear?" she asked, tremulously.

He glanced over his shoulder furtively; he peered into the corners of the great drawing-room like a hunted animal.

"Are we alone?" he whispered, hoarsely.

Then it was that the woman's character in that fair young girl grew to its full maturity in an instant. All her life she had lived in Boston, yet no crucial test had ever come to her as this had done.

"No, dear, we are not," she answered, simply, yet firmly.

The young man started nervously and gazed about him. He was from Chicago, and had been in many hairbreadth escapes.

"Who's here?" he questioned

"You are," she replied.

"I know; I know;" he said, impatiently. "But who else?"

"I am," she answered low.

"No one else?"

"No one."

He laughed harshly. "Why do you mock me?" he asked. "We are alone."

"We are not," she insisted. "Oh, George," and her voice took on a tender, pleading tone, "can't you see we are not alone?"

He looked at her, bewildered. "No, I cannot," he said.

The girl led him out into the light.

"George," she said, slowly, "are you here alone?"

"No," he replied, "you are with me."

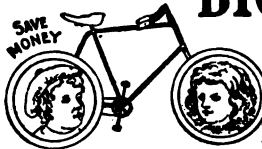
"Am I here alone?"

"No, I am with you."

"Then, George," she exclaimed, triumphantly, "how is it possible when neither of us is alone that both of us is alone? Is not the integer that same as its fractional parts? Is the sum of two pigs and two pigs four beans?" and, in the swirl of this Bostonian logic, George forgot why he had so hurriedly entered the room.

THE NAME TO REMEMBER when buying a BICYCLE

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A. W. GUMP & CO.,

Dayton, Ohio.

\$30.00 to \$50.00 saved on many new and second-hand Bicycles. Lists free. Over 2,000 in stock. Cash or time.

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AGENTS \$50 to \$100—A—

WEEK. Ladies or Gents. Best seller known. Needed at every house, place of business or farm the year round. "Home" Electric Motor runs all kinds of light machinery. Cheap—easy power on earth. Connected instantly to wash or sewing machine, corn sheller, pumps, fans, lathes, jewelers' or dentists' machinery, &c. Clean, noiseless, lasts a life-time. No experience needed. To show in operation means a sale. Guaranteed. Profits immense. Circulars free.

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READINGS, RECITATIONS, CATALOGUES FREE!!!

PLAYS

DRAMAS for Dramatic Clubs. Comedies, Farces and other entertainments for church and school exhibitions. Wigs and beards, paper scenery, minstrel goods, etc. Send for descriptive list No. 6. **HAROLD ROORBACH, 132 Nassau Street, New York.**

FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH, ITALIAN.

Part I., either language, sent free on receipt 2c. stamp.

MEISTERSCHAFT PUB. CO., BOSTON, MASS.

AGENTS MAKE \$5 a Day Greatest Kitchen Utensil invented. Retail 35 cts. 2 to 6 sold in a house. Sample postage paid, five cents. **FORSHEE & CO. Cincinnati, O.**

OPIUM Morphine Habit Cured in 10 to 30 days. No pay till cured. **DR. J. STEPHENS, Lebanon, Ohio.**

HEALTHY FLESH

is a storehouse of latent vital strength which comes to the rescue in time of need. Losing flesh shows that there is a demand made for vital energy. Something is wrong.

Scott's Emulsion

the Cream of Cod-liver Oil and Hypophosphites, gives the system the nourishment it requires, and thus restores a normal condition. Thin, angular women need it. *Physicians*, the world over, endorse it.

Coughs and Colds,

Throat and Lung Troubles, Blood Diseases and Emaciation—all give way to Scott's Emulsion.

Don't be Deceived by Substitutes!

Prepared by SCOTT & BOWNE, Chemists, New-York City. Druggists sell it.



DECAY OF THE TEETH

arises from various causes, but principally it may be attributed to early neglect or the indiscriminate use of tooth powders and pastes, which give a momentary whiteness to the teeth while they corrode the enamel. The timely use of that delicate aromatic tooth-wash,

FRAGRANT

SOZODONT

will speedily arrest the progress of decay, harden the gums and impart a delightful fragrance to the breath. The formula of **Sozodont** includes only botanic ingredients, and it contains only the purest and most salutary of these.

"The French are a wise people," said Hicks. "They perceive a situation at once, and recognize it. They were the first to see that cooks ruled our homes; and for that reason they named them chefs, or chiefs.—*Puck*.

Crusty Old Gentleman: "Your singing, Miss Taylor, is like attar of roses."—Miss Taylor (with a gratified smile): "Oh, you are too flattering." Old Gentleman (continuing): "A little of it goes a very long way."—*Tid-Bits*.

"I hope you will be lenient with me, your Lordship," said the thief, as he stood up to be sentenced: "I have a good many dependents upon me for their support." "Children?" asked the Judge. "No. Police detectives."—*Tid-Bits*.

"Beautiful," answered the fair Pittsburg girl, when asked whether the World's Fair was attractive—"beautiful? Well, I should just say it is. The buildings look as though they were carved out of solid ice cream."—*Chicago Record*.

The celebrated Church historian, Neander, when Professor in the University of Berlin, was noted for his absent-mindedness. On one occasion he was overtaken by a thunderstorm, jumped into a cab, but could not give either the number or the name of the street. The driver thought the man was mad, and was about to tell him to get out, when the Professor, espying a student, called out to him and said: "Just tell the man where I live." Neander's sister, who kept house for him, took fresh apartments nearer the university, as she thought the distance too great for her brother. A few days after their removal, he complained of the long and tiring walk, and then it turned out he had always gone first to the old lodgings, and so round to the university.—*Exchange*.



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 \$85.00 Calligraphs for \$50.00
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 \$35.00 and up. Odells for \$35.00.
 Others in proportion.
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Mall 2c. stamp for sealed instructions how to enlarge your bust 5 inches, by using the "Emma" Bust Developer. Guaranteed. 24 page illustrated catalogue for 6 cents. Address **EMMA TOILET BAZAR**. Mention this paper. 224 Tremont Street, BOSTON, MASS.



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OPIUM

Morphine Habit Cured in 10 to 20 days. No pay till cured. **DR. J. STEPHENS, Lebanon, Ohio.**

COUGHS AND COLDS

are only the beginning. Lungs are weakened next, the body becomes emaciated, and then the dreaded Consumption Germ appears.

Scott's Emulsion

the Cream of Cod-liver Oil and Hypophosphites, overcomes Coughs and Colds, strengthens the Lungs, and supplies vital energy. *Physicians,* the world over, endorse it.

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and Weak Mothers respond readily to the nourishing powers of Scott's Emulsion. They like the taste of it, too.

Don't be Deceived by Substitutes!

Prepared by SCOTT & BOWNE, Chemists, New-York City. Druggists sell it.

Smiles are becoming only when the Lips Display Pretty Teeth.



The shells of the ocean yield no pearl, that can exceed in beauty, teeth whitened and cleaned with that incomparable Dentifrice, Fragrant

SOZODONT

which hardens and invigorates the GUMS, purifies and perfumes the BREATH, beautifies and preserves the TEETH, from youth to old age.

By those who have used it, it is regarded as an indispensable adjunct of the toilet. It thoroughly removes tartar from the teeth, without injuring the enamel.

Persons afraid to laugh lest they should disclose the discoloration of their teeth, have only to brush them every day with fragrant

SOZODONT,

in order to remove the blemish. No article for the toilet, possesses a greater claim to public confidence, and to few are accorded such a large share of public favor.

Sold by Druggists and Fancy Goods Dealers.

A Good Broth is Half a Dinner!



EVERY ONE can afford to use Clam Bouillon for Lunch, Dinner and Tea at 20 cents a quart. Enough for a whole family. Prepared in five minutes from a bottle of

Burnham's Clam Bouillon.

Quality improved, price reduced, larger bottles. All Grocers sell it.

E. S. BURNHAM CO.,

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Sample Bottle, 10 cents; makes a pint.



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PURIFIES AS WELL AS BEAUTIFIES the Skin
No other cosmetic will do it.



Removes Tan, Pimples, Freckles, Moth Patches, Rash, and Skin diseases, and every blemish on beauty, and defies detection. It has stood the test of 43 years, and is so harmless, we taste it to be sure it is properly made. Accept no counterfeit of similar name. Dr. L. A. Seyre said to a lady of the haiton (a patient): "As you ladies will use them, I recommend 'Gouraud's Cream' as the least harmful of all the Skin preparations." For sale by all Druggists and Fancy-Goods Dealers in the U. S., Canada, and Europe.

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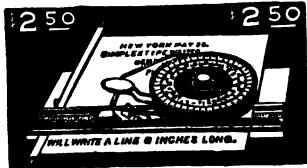
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Daily at 9.00 p. m. from Chicago. New and elegant equipment, built expressly for this service. Train lighted throughout by gas. Tickets and further information of your local ticket agent, or by addressing **A. H. Hanson, G.P.A., Ill. Cent. R.R. Chicago, Ill**

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Established 1824.

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My Annual PRICED CATALOGUE is now ready, and mailed free to all applicants. It contains all the leading and most popular sorts of

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Besides all the desirable novelties of last season, and nearly everything else in my line of business.

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37 East 19th Street, New York City.



\$5 to \$15 per day, at home, selling LIGHTNING PLATER and plating jewelry, watches, tableware, &c. Plates the finest of jewelry good as new, on all kinds of metal with gold, silver or nickel. No experience. No capital. Every house has goods needing plating. Wholesale to agents \$5. Write for circular. **H. E. DELNO & Co., Columbus, O.**

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\$75 Buggy \$37. Buy of factory, save Middle-
\$10 Harness \$4.75 man's profit. Catalogue Free.
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METROPOLITAN INFORMATION CONCERN ANSWERS ANY QUESTION. EXECUTES COMMISSIONS. SEND FOR PLAN & REFERENCES 30c.

157 Eldie House, New York.

ORIGIN OF THE DOLLAR MARK

Half a dozen theories, each having a reason behind it

Not less than a score of theories have been advanced as to the origin of the dollar mark (\$). Of these the *St. Louis Republic* believes the following to be the most plausible:

First—That it is a combination of the "U. S.," the initials of the United States.

Second—That it is a modification of the figure 8, the dollar being formerly called a "piece of eight."

Third—That it is derived from a representation of the pillars of Hercules, consisting of two needle-like towers or pillars connected with a scroll. The old Spanish coins marked with the pillar device were frequently referred to as "pillar dollars."

Fourth—That it is a combination of "H. S.," the ancient Roman mark of money unit.

Fifth—That it is a combination of P. and S., from *peso duro*, signifying "hard dollar." In Spanish accounts *peso* is contracted by writing the S. over the P. and placing it after the sum.

The editor of the *London Whitehall Review*, a very able writer, in giving his opinion of "Reason No. 3," as given above, says: "The American symbol for dollar is taken from the Spanish dollar, and the origin of the sign, of course, must be looked for in associations of Spanish coins. On the reverse side of the Spanish dollar is a representation of the pillars of Hercules, and around each pillar is a scroll with the inscription, 'Plus ultra.' This device in course of time has degenerated into the sign which at present stands for American as well as Spanish dollars—'\$.' The scroll around the pillars represents the two serpents sent by Juno to destroy Hercules in his cradle."

"Your neighbor appears to have failed a good many times."

"Just twenty-four times. The next one will be his silver bankruptcy."—*Fliegende Blätter*.

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BICYCLE



\$30.00 to \$50.00 saved on many new and second-hand Bicycles. Lists free. Over 2,000 in stock. Cash or time. AGENTS WANTED.



The Rocker Washer

is warranted to wash 100 PIECES IN ONE HOUR, as clean as can be washed on the washboard. Write for prices and description. **ROCKER WASHER CO.** Liberal Inducements to live agents. Ft. Wayne, Ind.

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OPIUM Morphine Habit Cured in 10 to 20 days. No pay till cured. **DR. J. STEPHENS, Lebanon, Ohio.**

AVOID CONSUMPTION.

Don't wait until the hacking Cough has weakened the system and strained the Lungs. Take

Scott's Emulsion

the Cream of Cod-liver Oil and Hypophosphites, to supply the nourishment your system craves. *Physicians, the world over, endorse it.*

Anæmic Women

have depleted blood—blood with no nourishment in it. They need **Scott's Emulsion** to enrich their blood and build up solid, healthy flesh.

*Why should you go contrary to your physician's advice by allowing some inferior preparation to be substituted for **SCOTT'S EMULSION**?*

1894 COLUMBIAS ARE BEYOND CRITICISM

No bicycle ever made at all approaches them in beauty and style joined to excellence of construction; none so strongly appeals to the experienced rider as meeting every requirement of a perfect mount.

The need of repairs for Columbias will be infrequent under our new system of inspection, which now begins with a scientific analysis of the raw material by a metallurgist, and only ends when thorough tests have been made of the complete machine and all its parts.

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Everything in Cut Glass for the table.

Beautiful and artistic pieces for wedding and holiday gifts.

No piece genuine without our trade mark label.

*C. Dorflinger & Sons,
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FOR MEN ONLY.

Men who have worshipped at the shrine of Bacchus until the small hours and need a clear head for business the next day, will find **Burnham's Clam Bouillon** a paragon. From one to two cups will clear the cobwebs and fancies of a bewildered brain like magic, far more effectually than soda, vichy or bromides. A trial will convince the skeptical. Take half an hour before breakfast. It will tone up the system and you will enjoy your meal without fear of headache later on.

**BURNHAM'S
CLAM
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Never buy Clam Bouillon for the sick except in Glass Bottles.

Grocers and Druggists, 25c., 50c. and \$1.00 sizes.

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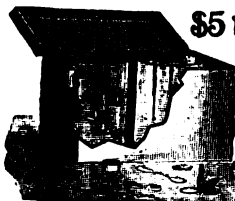
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Besides all the desirable novelties of last season, and nearly everything else in my line of business.

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Bright's Disease

and all other stubborn complaints of the Kidneys, Liver, and Stomach, can be cured by the great mineral specific,

**Bedford
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Bottled just as it flows from the spring, absolutely pure and unadulterated. Prescribed by the eminent physicians of the day, and every day growing more popular. Sold by druggists.

A beautiful book of interesting facts mailed free.

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152 Franklin St., New York City.**

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The great problem of the day is how to make money—one way, a *sure* way is to *save* it; this you can do whenever you take a trip to Ireland by buying a few suits of Clothes from McALERY, The Leading Merchant Tailor, of Belfast.

At the "Irish Tweed House," 21 Royal Avenue, Belfast, you can procure the finest Irish, Scotch and English goods, made at less than half what poorer materials cost you in the States.

Why pay \$75 for an Evening Dress Suit when you can have the very finest material, stylishly made at McAlery's "Irish Tweed House" for \$25? Why pay from \$30 to \$70 for an Ulster when McAlery will make you an "Irish Frieze" Ulster, to order, of the best material, a protection against any blizzard for \$21? Such a coat would cost you \$70 in America. Why pay \$30 or \$40 for a business suit of ordinary goods, when you can have the best material for \$15? Such a suit would cost you from \$80 to \$40 in America.

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Have been planted by the most critical growers for over half a century. They are sure to grow, true to name, and will save you money and disappointment if sown in the Garden, Farm, or Greenhouse. This is the year for

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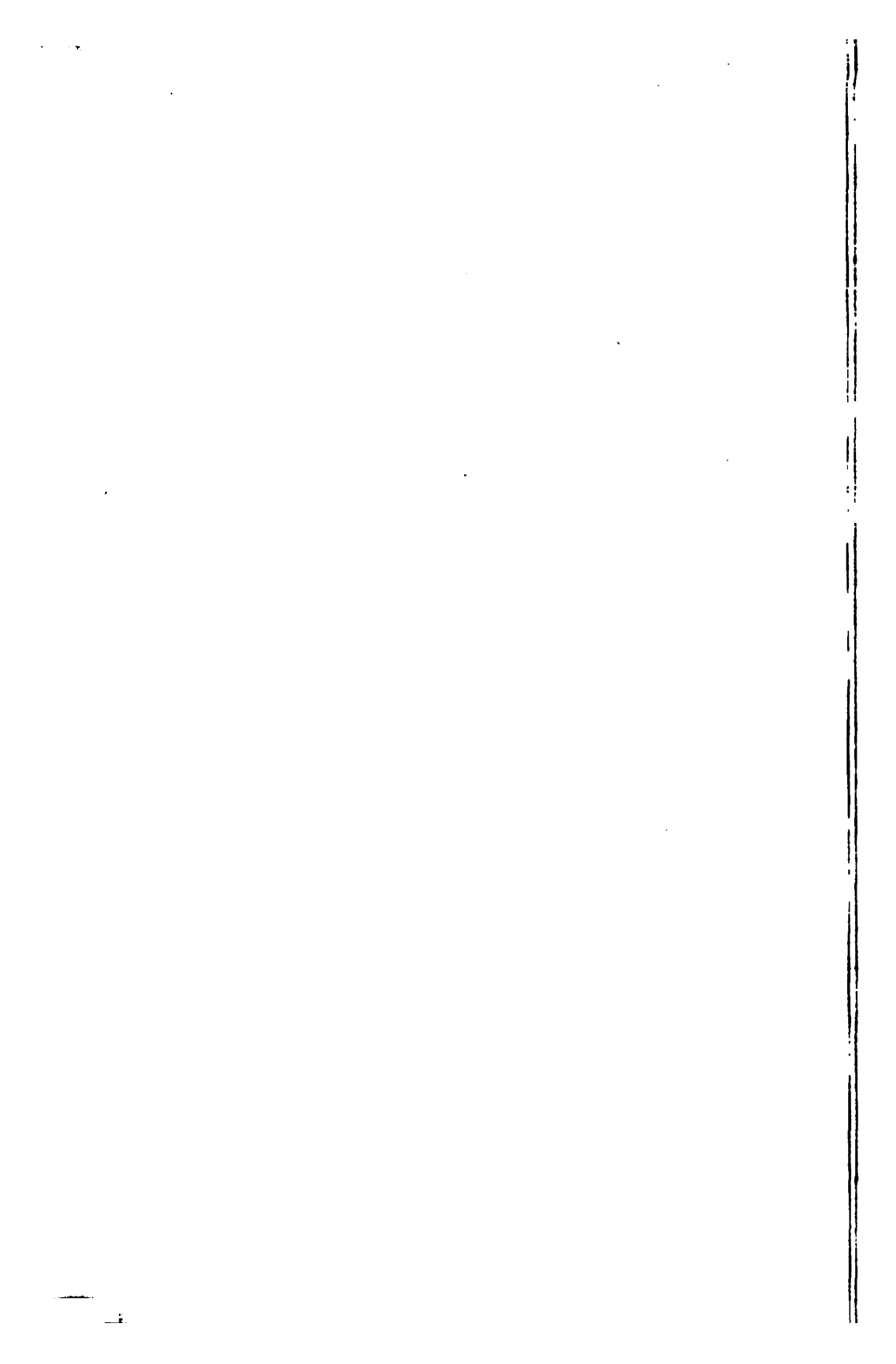
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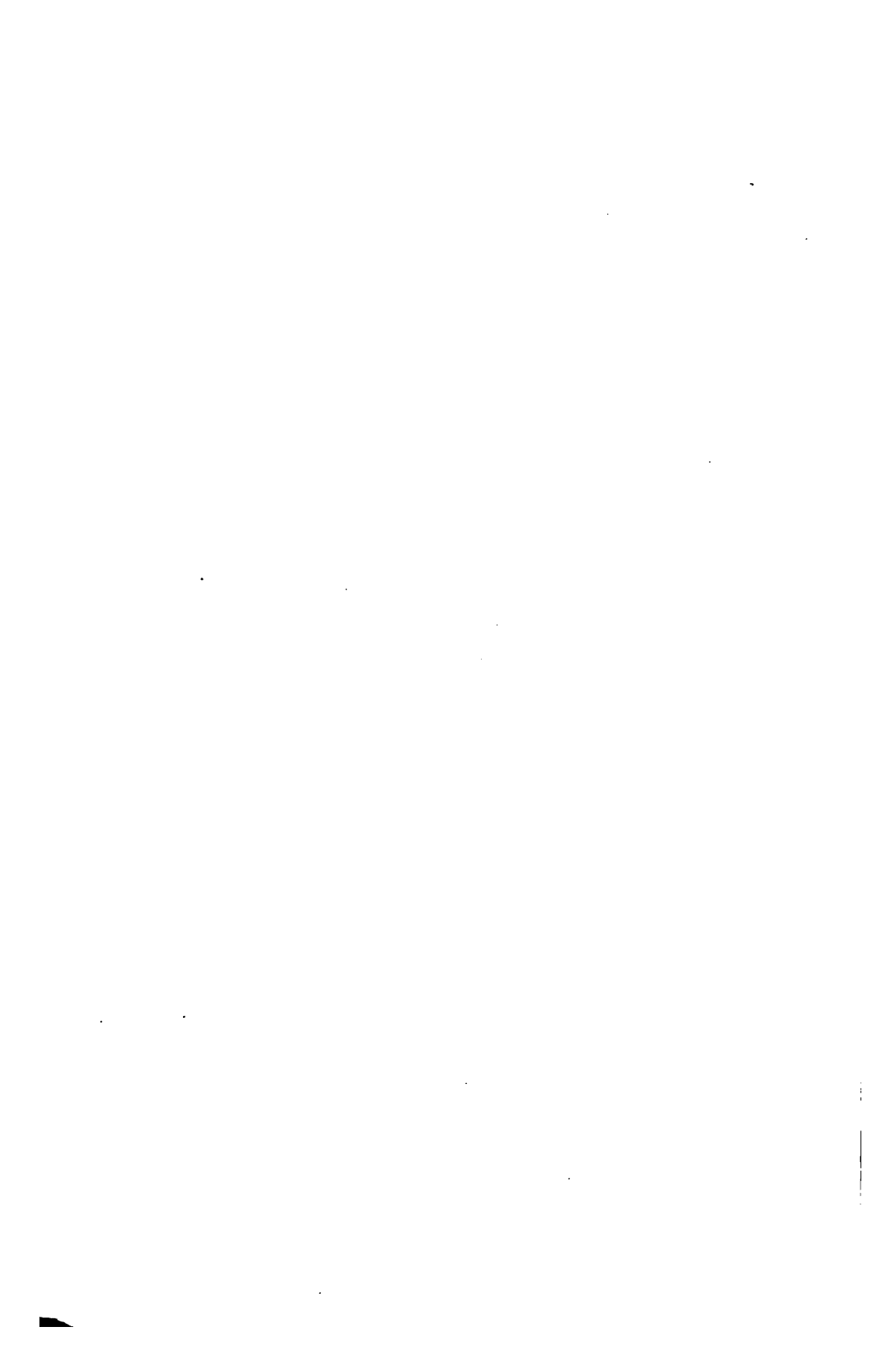
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