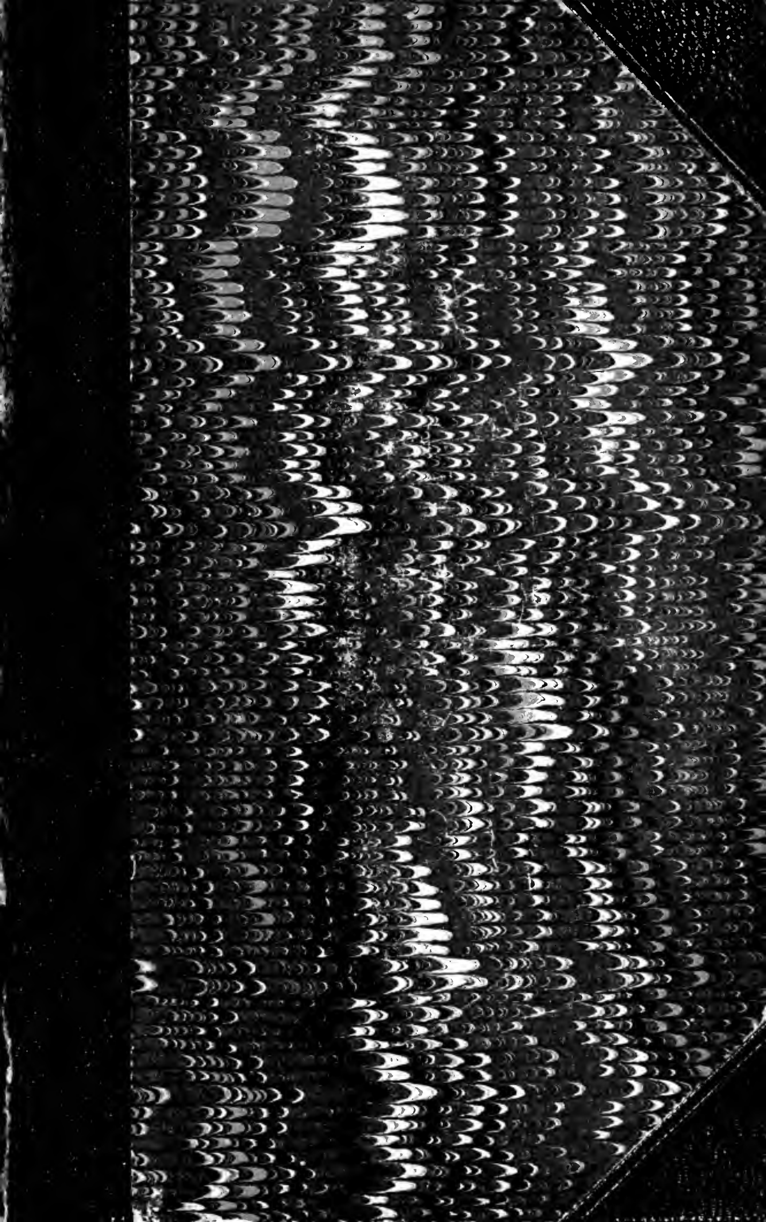

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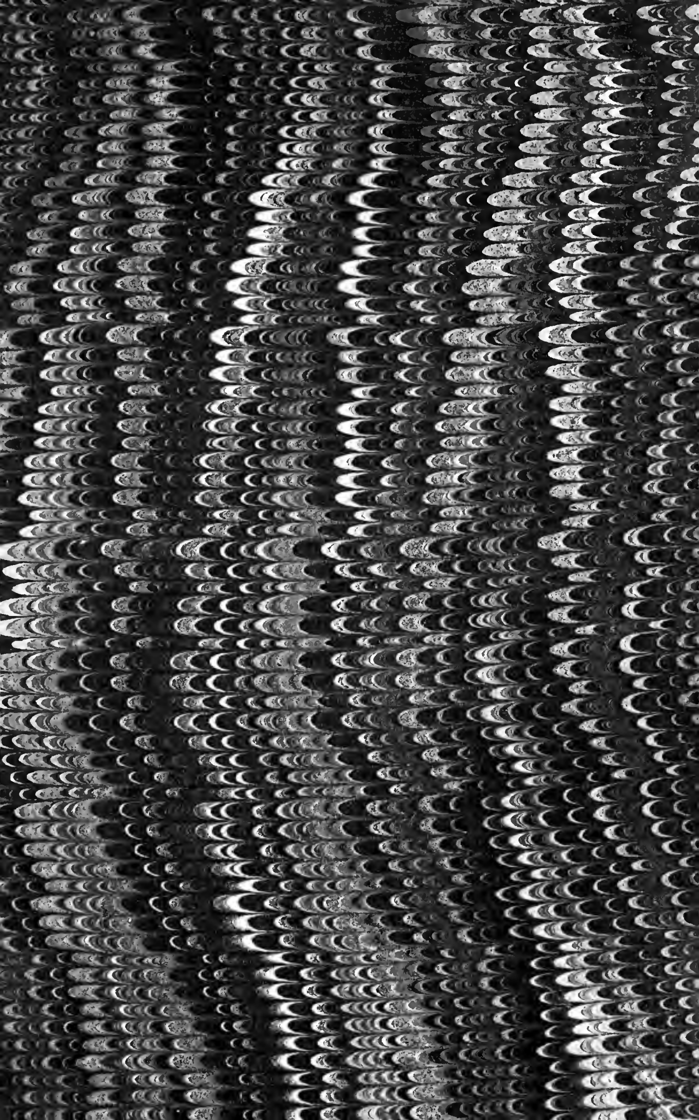

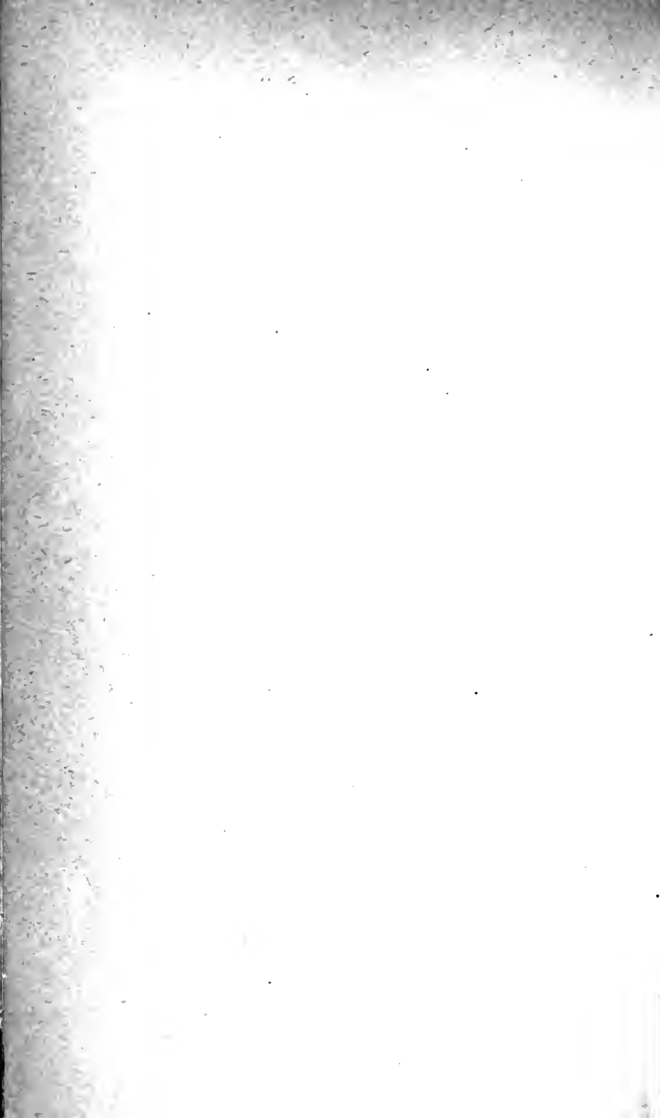

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TALES

FROM

"BLACKWOOD"

New Series

VOL. VIII.

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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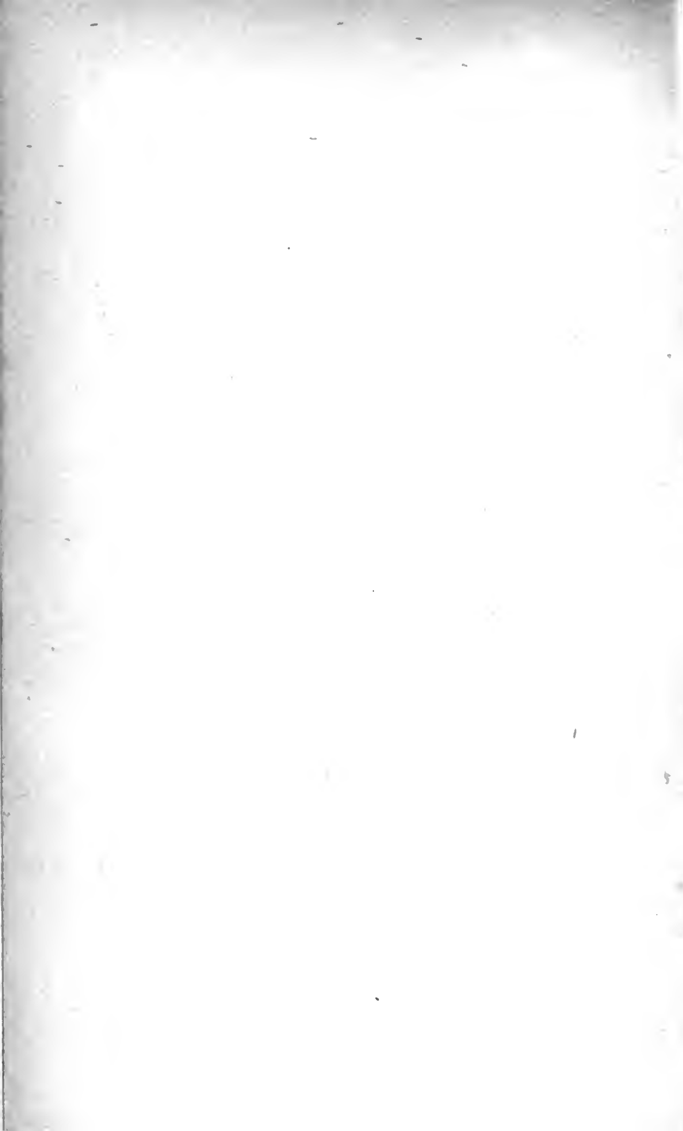

TALES FROM "BLACKWOOD."

THE DEVIL'S FRILLS.

A DUTCH ILLUSTRATION OF THE WATER CURE.

[*MAGA.* AUGUST 1843.]

CHAPTER I.

A STRANGER who visits Haarlem is not a little astonished to see, hung out from various houses, little frames coquettishly ornamented with squares of the finest lace. His curiosity will lead him to ask the reason of so strange a proceeding. But, however he may push his questions—however persevering he may be in getting at the bottom of the mystery—if he examine and cross-examine fifty different persons, he will get no other answer than—

"These are the devil's frills."

The frills of the devil! Horrible! What possible connection can there be between those beau-

tiful Valenciennes, those splendid Mechlins, those exquisite Brussels points, and his cloven-footed majesty? Is Haarlem a city of idolaters? Are all these gossamer oblations an offering to Beelzebub? And are we to believe, in spite of well-authenticated tale and history, that instead of horns and claws, the gentleman in black sports frills and ruffles, as if he were a young dandy in Bond Street?

"These are the the devil's frills."

It is my own private opinion that these mystic words contain some prodigiously recondite meaning; or, perhaps, arise from one of those awful incidents, of which Hoffman encountered so many among the ghost-seeing, all-believing Germans. But don't take it on my simple assertion, but judge for yourself. I shall tell you, word for word, the story as it was told to me, and as it is believed by multitudes of people, who believe nothing else, in the good town of Haarlem.

CHAPTER II.

Yes, — one other thing everybody in Haarlem believes—and that is, that Guttenberg, and Werner, and Faust, in pretending that they were the discoverers of the art of printing, were egregious specimens of the art of lying; for that that noble

discovery was made by no human being save and except an illustrious citizen of Haarlem, and an undeniable proof of it exists in the fact, that his statue is still to be seen in front of the great church. He rejoiced, while living, in the name of Laurentius Castero; and, however much you may be surprised at the claims advanced in his favour, you are hereby strictly cautioned to offer no contradiction to the boastings of his overjoyed compatriots — they are prouder of his glory than of their beer. But his merits did not stop short at casting types. In addition to his enormous learning and profound information, he possessed an almost miraculous mastery of the fiddle. He was a Dutch Paganini, and drew such notes from his instrument, that the burgomaster, in smoking his pipe and listening to the sounds, thought it had a close resemblance to the music of the spheres.

There was only one man in all Haarlem, in all Holland, who did not yield the palm at fiddle-playing to Castero. That one man was no other than Frederick Katwingen, the son of a rich brewer, whom his admirers — more numerous than those of his rival—had called the Dutch Orpheus.

If the laurels of Miltiades disturbed the sleep of Themistocles; if the exploits of Macedonia's madman interfered with the comfort of Julius Cæsar, the glory of Katwingen would not let Castero get a wink of sleep.

What! a man of genius—a philosopher like the *doctus* Laurentius, not be contented with his fame as discoverer of the art of printing; but to leave his manuscripts, and pica, and pie, to strive for a contemptible triumph, to look with an eye of envy on a competitor for the applauses of a music room! Alas! too true. Who is the man, let me ask you, who can put bounds to his pretensions? Who is the man that does not feel as if the praises of his neighbour were an injury to himself? And if I must speak the whole truth, I am bound to confess that these jealous sentiments were equally entertained by both the musicians. Yes,—if Castero would acknowledge no master, Frederick could not bear that any one should consider himself his rival, and insisted at any rate in treating with him on equal terms. Laurentius, therefore, and the son of the brewer, were declared enemies; and the inhabitants of Haarlem were divided into two parties, each ruled over with unlimited power by the fiddlestick of its chief.

It was announced one morning that the Stadtholder would pass through the town in the course of the day. The burgomaster determined to receive the illustrious personage in proper style, and ordered the two rivals to hold themselves in readiness. Here, then, was a contest worthy of them; an opportunity of bringing the great question to issue of which of them played the first fiddle in

Holland — perhaps in Europe. It fell to Frederick's chance to perform first—in itself a sort of triumph over Laurentius. The Stadtholder entered by the Amsterdam road, attended by his suite — they passed along the street, and stopped under a triumphal arch which had been hastily prepared. The burgomaster made a speech very much like the speeches of burgomasters before and since on similar tremendous occasions; and Frederick finally advanced and made his salaam to the chief magistrate of the United Provinces. The performer knew that the Stadtholder was a judge of music, and this gave him courage to do his best. He began without more ado, and everything went on at first as he could wish; fountains of harmony gushed out from under his bow. There seemed a soul at the end of each of his fingers, and the countenance of the chief magistrate showed how enchanted he was with his powers. His triumph was on the point of being complete; a few more bars of a movement composed for the occasion — a few magnificent flourishes to show his mastery of the instrument, and Castero will be driven to despair by the superiority of his rival; —but crash! crash!—at the very moment when his melody is steeping the senses of the Stadtholder in Elysium, a string breaks with hideous sound, and the whole effect of his composition is destroyed. A smile jumped instantaneously to

the protruding lip of the learned Laurentius, and mocked his mishap: the son of the brewer observed the impertinent smile, and anger gave him courage—the broken string is instantly replaced. The artist rushes full speed into the allegretto—and under the pressure of his hands, burning with rage and genius, the chord breaks again! The fiddle must be bewitched—Frederick became deadly pale—he trembled from head to foot—he was nearly wild.

But the piece he had composed was admirable; he knew it—for in a moment of inspiration he had breathed it into existence from the recesses of his soul. And was he doomed never to play this cherished work to the governor of his country?—An approving motion from that august individual encouraged him to proceed, and he fitted a string for the third time.

Alas, alas! the result is the same—the chord is too much tightened, and breaks in the middle of a note! Humbled and ashamed, Frederick gives up his allegretto. He retires, abashed and heart-broken, and Castero takes his place. Mixed up in the crowd, his eyes swam in tears of rage and disappointment when the frantic applauses of the assemblage—to whom the Stadtholder had set the example—announced to him the triumph of his rival. He is vanquished—vanquished without having had the power to fight—oh, grief! oh, shame! oh, despair!

His friends tried in vain to console him in promising him a brilliant revenge. The son of the brewer believed himself eternally disgraced. He rushed into his room, double locked the door, and would see nobody. He required solitude—but the woe of the *artiste* had not yet reached its height. He must drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs. Suddenly innumerable voices penetrated the thick walls of the brewery, and reached the chamber of the defeated candidate. Those voices—Frederick recognised them too well—were those of the faction which acknowledged Castero for their chief. A triumphal march, performed by twenty instruments, in honour of his rival, succeeded in overturning the reason of the unhappy youth. His fiddle was before him on the table—that fiddle which had disappointed his hopes. Exasperated, out of his senses, the brewer's son seized the instrument—a moment he held it aloft at the corner of the chimney, and yielding to the rage that gnawed his soul, he dashed it into a thousand pieces. Faults, like misfortunes, never come single. "Blood calls for blood," says Machiavel—"ruin for ruin."—By that fatal tendency of the human mind never to stop when once we have gone wrong, but to go on from bad to worse, instead of blushing at our folly—Frederick, after that act of vandalism, dashed like a madman out of the brewery. The sight of his instrument in a thou-

sand fragments had completed the business—life was a torment to him. He hurried towards the lake of Haarlem, determined to seek in its gloomy depths a refuge from disgrace.—Poor Frederick!

CHAPTER III.

After a quarter of an hour's run across the fields, he arrived at last at the side of the lake, with the sounds of his rival's triumphal march for ever sounding in his ears. The evening breeze, the air from the sea, "the wandering harmonies of earth and sky," were all unable to bring rest to the perturbed spirit of the musician. He was no longer conscious of the sinful act he was about to commit. He shut his eyes—he was just going to throw himself into the water when he felt a hand laid upon his left shoulder. Frederick turned quickly round. He saw at his side a tall man wrapped up in a large cloak—in spite of the hot weather—which hid every part of him but his face. His expression was hard, almost repulsive. His eyes shot sinister glances on the youth from beneath the thick eyebrows that overshadowed them. The brewer's son, who had been on the point of facing death without a tremor, grew pale and trembled. He wished to fly, but an irresistible power nailed him

to the spot. He was fascinated by the look of the Unknown.

"Madman!" said the stranger in a hollow voice—"madman who cannot resist the first impulse of anger and false shame!"

"Leave me," answered Frederick in his turn; "I am disgraced, and have no resource but to die."

"The triumph of Castero, then—the triumph he owes to luck—has cowed you so that you are afraid to challenge him to another trial?"—rejoined the stranger in an angry tone.

"Everything is lost," said Frederick, "don't you hear those sounds?" he added, holding his hands out towards the city; "my courage cannot bear up against such mockery—*væ victis!*—my doom is sealed."

"But you do not yet know the full extent of your rival's victory. There is a young girl who was to have been your wife—a girl who loves you——"

"Maïna!"—cried Frederick, to whom these words restored his recollection.

"Yes, Maïna, the daughter of Jansen Pyl, the burgomaster of Haarlem. Well, encouraged by his success, Castero went to the house, and demanded the hand of her you love."

"What?—what do I hear?"—said Frederick, and looked once more towards the lake.

"The burgomaster never liked you very well, as

you are aware. In consenting to receive you as his son-in-law, he yielded more to the wishes of his daughter, to her prayers and tears, than to his preference of you over the other adorers of the Beauty of Haarlem. Castero's fame had long predisposed him in his favour; and the triumph he obtained to-day has entirely won the old man's heart."

"He has promised her?" inquired Frederick in a voice almost inaudible from anxiety.

"To-morrow he will decide between you. You are ignorant of the arrangement entered into; and, yielding to a cowardly impulse, you give up the happiness of your life at the moment it is in your grasp. Listen! The Stadtholder, who did not intend to remain at Haarlem, has accepted the invitation of the burgomaster, and will not leave the city till to-morrow afternoon. That illustrious personage has expressed a wish to hear again the two performers who pleased him so much, and his patronage is promised to the successful candidate in the next trial. He is a judge of music—he perceived the fineness of your touch, and saw that it was a mere accident which was the cause of your failure. Do you understand me now? Maïna will be the wife of the *protégé* of the Stadtholder —and you give up your affianced bride if you refuse to measure your strength once more against Castero."

The explanation brought tears into Frederick's

eyes. In his agony as a musician he had forgotten the object of his love—the fair young girl whose heart was all his own. Absorbed in the one bitter thought of his defeat—of the disgrace he had endured—he had never cast a recollection on the being who, next to his art, was dearer to him than all the world. The fair maid of Haarlem occupied but the second place in the musician's heart; but not less true is it, that to kiss off a tear from the white eyelid of the beautiful Maïna, he would have sacrificed his life. And now to hear that she was about to be carried off by his rival—by Castero—that Castero whom he hated so much—that Maïna was to be the prize of the conqueror! His courage revived. Hope played once more round his heart—he felt conscious of his superiority; but—oh misery!—his fiddle—his Straduarius, which could alone insure his victory—it was lying in a million pieces on his floor!

The Unknown divined what was passing in his mind; a smile of strange meaning stole to his lip. He went close up to Frederick, whose agitated features betrayed the struggle that was going on within. "Maïna will be the reward of the *protégé* of the Stadtholder, and Castero will be the happy man if you do not contest the prize," he whispered in poor Frederick's ear.

"Alas! my fate is settled—I have no arms to fight with," he answered in a broken voice.

"Does your soul pant for glory?" inquired the stranger.

"More than for life—more than for love—more than for——"

"Go on."

"More than for my eternal salvation!" exclaimed the youth in his despair.

A slight tremor went through the stranger as he heard these words.

"Glory!" he cried, fixing his sparkling eyes on the young man's face, "glory, the passion of noble souls—of exalted natures—of superior beings!—Go home to your room, you will find your fiddle restored," he added in a softer tone.

"My fiddle?" repeated Frederick.

"The fiddle of which the wreck bestrewed your chamber when you left it," replied the stranger.

"But who are you?" said Frederick, amazed. "You who know what passes in my heart—you whose glances chill me with horror—you, who promise me a miracle which only omnipotence can accomplish. Who are you?"

"Your master," answered the man in the mantle, in an altered voice. "Recollect the words you used a minute or two ago, 'Glory is dearer to me than life—than love—than eternal salvation!' That is quite enough for me; and we must understand each other. Adieu. Your favourite instrument is again whole and entire, and sweeter toned than ever.

You will find it on the table in your room. Castero, your rival, will be vanquished in this second trial, and Maïna will be yours — for you are the *protégé* of a greater than the Stadtholder. Adieu —we shall meet again." On finishing this speech the Unknown advanced to the lake. Immediately the waves bubbled up, and rose in vast billows; and opening with dreadful noise, exposed an unfathomable abyss. At the same moment thunder growled in the sky, the moon hid herself behind a veil of clouds, and the brewer's son, half choked with the smell of brimstone, fell insensible on the ground.

CHAPTER IV.

When Frederick came to his senses he found himself in his chamber, seated on the same sofa of Utrecht brocade which he had watered with his tears two hours before. On the table before him lay the fiddle which he had dashed to atoms against the corner of the chimney. On seeing the object of his affection, the enraptured musician, the rival of Castero, rushed towards it with a cry of joyful surprise. He took the instrument in his hands—he devoured it with his eyes, and then, at the summit of his felicity, he clasped it to his bosom. The instrument was perfectly uninjured,

without even a mark of the absurd injustice of its owner. Not a crack, not a fissure, only the two gracefully shaped *ſ ſ* to give vent to the double stream of sound. But is he not the victim of some trick—has no other fiddle been substituted for the broken Straduarius? No!—'tis his own well-known fiddle, outside and in—the same delicate proportions, the same elegant neck, and the same swelling rotundity of contour that might have made it a model for the Praxiteles of violins. He placed the instrument against his shoulder and seized the bow. But all of a sudden he paused—a cold perspiration bedewed his face—his limbs could scarcely support him. What if the proof deceives him? What if——; but incertitude was intolerable, and he passed the bow over the strings. Oh blessedness! Frederick recognised the unequalled tones of his instrument—he recognised its voice, so clear, so melting, and yet so thrilling and profound,—

> "The charm is done,
> Life to the dead returns at last,
> And to the corpse a soul has past."

Now, then, with his fiddle once more restored to him, with love in his heart, and hatred also lending its invigorating energies, he felt that the future was still before him, and that Castero should pay dearly for his triumph of the former day.

When these transports had a little subsided, Frederick could reflect on the causes which gave

this new turn to his thoughts. The defeat he had sustained—his insane anger against his Straduarius—his attempt at suicide—his meeting with the stranger, and his extraordinary disappearance amidst the waves of the lake.

But, with the exception of the first of these incidents, had any of them really happened? He could not believe it. Was it not rather the sport of a deceitful dream? His fiddle — he held it in his hands—he never *could* have broken it. In fact, the beginning of it all was his despair at being beaten, and he was indebted to his excited imagination for the rest—the suicide, the lake, and the mysterious Unknown.

"That must be it," he cried at last, delighted at finding a solution to the mystery, and walking joyously up and down his chamber. "I have had a horrible dream—a dream with my eyes open; that is all."

Two gentle taps at the door made him start; but the visitor was only one of the brewery boys, who gave him a letter from the burgomaster.

"Yoran, did you see me go out about two hours ago?" asked Frederick anxiously.

"No, meinheer," said the boy.

"And you did not see me come in?"

"No, meinheer."

"That's all right," said the youth, signing for Yoran to retire. "Now, then," he said, "there

can be no doubt whatever that it was all a dream." Opening the burgomaster's letter, he ran through it in haste. The first magistrate of Haarlem informed Frederick Katwingen that he had an important communication to make to him, and requested him to come to his house.

The musician again placed his lips on his instrument, and again pressed it gratefully to his heart; and then placed it with the utmost care within its beautiful case, which he covered with a rich cloth. Locking the case, and looking at it as a mother might look at the cradle of her new-born baby, he betook himself to the mansion of Jansen Pyl.

That stately gentleman was luxuriously reposing in an immense arm-chair, covered with Hungary leather. His two elbows rested on the arms, and enabled him to support in his hands the largest, the reddest, the fattest face that had ever ornamented the configuration of a Dutch functionary before. Mr Jansen Pyl wore at that moment the radiant look of satisfaction which only a magistrate can assume who feels conscious that he is in the full sunshine of the approbation of his sovereign. His whole manner betrayed it—the smile upon his lip, the fidgety motion of his feet, and the look which he darted from time to time round the room, as if to satisfy himself that his happiness was "not a sham but a reality." But his happiness seemed far from contagious. On his right hand there was

a lovely creature, seated on a footstool, who did not partake his enjoyment. There was something so sweet and so harmonious in her expression, that you felt sure at once she was as good as she was beautiful. There was poetry also in her dejected attitude, and in the long lashes that shadowed her blue eyes; nor was the charm diminished by the marble neck bent lowly down, and covered with long flowing locks of the richest brown. And the poetry was, perhaps, increased by the contrast offered by the sorrowing countenance of the girl to the radiant visage of the plethoric individual in the chair. Whilst the ambitious thoughts of the burgomaster rose to the regions inhabited by the Stadtholder, the poor girl's miserable reflections returned upon herself. Her eyes were dimmed with tears. It was easy to see that that had long been their occupation, and that some secret sorrow preyed upon the repose of the fair maid of Haarlem.

It was Maïna, the betrothed of Frederick. On the left of the burgomaster, negligently leaning on the back of the magistrate's chair, was a man still young in years, but so wrinkled and careworn, from study or bad health, that he might have passed for old. The man's expression was cold and severe; his look proud and fiery; his language rough and harsh. On analysing his features you could easily make out that he had prodigious

powers of mind, a character imperious and jealous, and such indomitable pride that he might do a mischief to any rival who might be bold enough to cross his path.

Now, we are aware of one at least who ran the risk; for the man was Laurentius Castero. Frederick Katwingen started back on entering the burgomaster's room. His eye encountered the glance of Castero, and in the look then interchanged, they felt that they were enemies between whom no reconciliation could take place. From Laurentius, Frederick turned his eye to Maïna. The sorrowful attitude of the maiden would have revealed to him all that had happened, if the self-satisfied look of his rival had left anything to be learned. The conqueror browbeat the vanquished.

"Mr Katwingen," said the burgomaster, deliberately weighing every word, "you are aware of the high compliment paid by the Stadtholder to our city."

"My dream comes true," thought Frederick as he bowed affirmatively to the magistrate's inquiry.

"And you are also aware," pursued the burgomaster, "of the Stadtholder's wishes as far as you are personally concerned?"

Frederick bowed again.

"Thanks to my humble supplications," continued Jansen Pyl, raising his enormous head with an air of dignity, "our gracious governor has condescended to honour our good town with his august presence

for twenty-four hours longer. But what ought to fill you with eternal gratitude is this: that he has determined to hear you a second time when he returns to-morrow from inspecting the works at Shravnag. I hope you will redouble your efforts and do all you can to please your illustrious auditor; and, if anything is required to stimulate your ambition, and add to your endeavours to excel, I will add this—the hand of Maïna will be bestowed on the conqueror at this second trial."

"But, father!——" said the maiden.

"It is all settled," interrupted the burgomaster, looking astonished at the girl's audacity; "you are the reward I offer to the *protégé* of the Stadtholder. You hear what I say, gentlemen?" he added, turning to the rivals.

"I shall certainly not miss the appointment," said Castero, throwing back his head proudly. "If to-morrow is not as glorious to me as to-day has been, I will break my violin, and never touch a bow again as long as I live."

"As for me," said Frederick, "if I do not make up for the check I unluckily met to-day by a glorious victory, I swear I will renounce the flattering name my countrymen have given me, and will hide my shame in some foreign land. The Orpheus of his country must have no rival of his fame."

"To-morrow, then," said the burgomaster.

"To-morrow!" repeated the rivals, casting on each other looks of proud defiance.

"To-morrow!" whispered Maïna, and buried her face in her hands.

CHAPTER V.

I shall not attempt to describe the strange sensations of Frederick on returning from the burgomaster's house. It will have been seen from the glimpses we have had of him already, that he was of a quick and sensitive disposition, and that the chance of defeat in the approaching struggle would sting him into madness. He pictured to himself the ferocious joy of Castero on being declared the victor—the agony of Maïna—the misery of his own degradation; and there is no doubt if the mysterious Unknown, whose appearance he now felt certain was nothing but a dream, had visited him *in propriâ personâ*, that he would have accepted his terms—his soul for triumph over his enemy, for the possession of the girl he loved.

The morrow rose clear and cloudless. At the appointed hour Frederick took his violin, and prepared to set out. But just when he was opening the door, the man in the mantle—the same he had seen the day before—stood before him.

"You did not expect to see me," said the Unknown, following Frederick to the end of the room,

where he had retreated. "I told you, nevertheless, that we should meet again," he added, placing himself face to face with the son of the brewer.

"Then it was no dream," murmured the youth, who appeared to have lost all his resolution.

"Certainly not," returned the stranger, looking sarcastically at Frederick from head to foot. "I promised you yesterday, on the banks of the lake, that you would find your fiddle unharmed, and that I would enable you to conquer your rival. But I don't feel that I am bound to do anything of the kind for nothing; generosity was never my *forte*, and I have lived long enough among the burghers of Holland to insist on being well paid for everything I do."

"Who are you, then; and what is it you want?" inquired the Dutch Orpheus, in an agitated voice.

"Who am I!" answered the man in the mantle, with all the muscles of his face in violent convulsions—"Who am I!—I thought I had told you yesterday when you asked me—I am your master. What do I want? I will tell you. But why do you tremble so? you were bold enough when we met. I saw the thought in your heart—if Satan should rise before me, and promise me victory over my rival at the price of my soul, I would agree to the condition!"

"Satan!—you are Satan!" shrieked Frederick, and closed his eyes in horror.

"Didn't you find me out on the side of the lake, when you told me you would exchange your salvation for years of love and glory. Yes, I am that King of Darkness—*your* master! and that of a great part of mankind. But, come; the hour is at hand —the Burgomaster and the Stadtholder await us. Do you accept the offer I make you?"

After a minute's hesitation, during which his features betrayed the force of the internal contest, the musician made his choice. He had not power to speak, but he raised his hand, and was on the point of making the cross upon his forehead, to guard him from the tempter, when Satan perceived his intention, and seized his arm.

"Think a little before you discard me entirely," he said, raising again in the soul of the musician all the clouds of pride and ambition that had given him power over it at first; "look into the box where your violin is laid, and decide for the last time."

Frederick obeyed his tempter, and opened the case, but uttered a cry of desperation when he saw his Straduarius in the same state of utter ruin to which he had reduced it before. The neck separated from the body; both faces shivered to fragments—the ebony rests, the gold-headed stops, the bridge, the sides—all a confused mass of wreck and destruction.

"Frederick! Frederick!" cried a voice from the brewery—it was his father's.

"Frederick! Frederick!" repeated a hundred voices under the windows—"Come down, come down, the Stadtholder is impatient! Castero swears you are afraid to face him."

They were his friends who were urging him to make haste.

"Well?" inquired Satan.

"I accept the bargain. I give you my soul!" said Frederick, while his cheek grew pale and his eye flashed.

"*Your* soul!" replied Satan, with a shrug of infinite disdain. "Do you think I would have hindered you from jumping into the lake, if I had wished to get it? Do you think that suicides are not mine already?—mine by their own act, without the formality of a bargain?—*Your* soul!" repeated the Prince of Darkness, with a sneer; "I don't want it, I assure you: at least not to-day—I feel sure of it whenever I require it!"

"My soul, then, belongs to you—my fate is settled beforehand?" inquired Frederick.

"You are an *artiste*," answered Satan, with a chuckling laugh, "and therefore are vain, jealous, proud, and full of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. You perceive I shall lose nothing by waiting. No, no; 'tis not your own soul I want—but that of your first-born, that you must make over to me this hour!"

"What do you want me to do?"

"Here is the deed," said Satan, pulling a parchment from under his cloak, on which strange characters were drawn, and letters in an unknown language. "In putting your name to this, you bind and oblige yourself to let me know when Maïna is about to become a mother; and before the baptismal water shall touch the infant's brow, you shall hang from the window a piece of lace which shall have been worn by Maïna at her wedding. One of my satellites will be on the watch; he will come and tell me when the signal is made, and—— the rest is my own affair! You will find this agreement in your fiddle-case."

"Frederick! Frederick! be quick, be quick!" again shouted the father.

"Frederick! Frederick! Castero is boasting about your absence!" cried the chorus of impatient friends.

"I agree!" cried the *artiste*, and affixed his name. While he was signing, the stranger muttered some words of mysterious sound, of which he did not know the meaning; and immediately the pieces of the broken instrument united themselves—rests, bridge, stops, faces, and sides, all took their proper places, and the soul of the noble violin re-entered its musical prison, at the moment when that of the future baby of Maïna was sold to the enemy of mankind!

"Now, then," said Satan, as he sank beneath the floor, "go where glory waits thee."

CHAPTER VI.

What need is there to tell the success of Frederick Katwingen—how he triumphed over Castero, captivated the Stadtholder, and was the pride of his native town? The Stadtholder attached him to his person, settled a pension on him of fifteen thousand florins, and treated him as the most cherished of his friends. The burgomaster was delighted to gain so illustrious a son-in-law, and hurried forward the marriage with all his might. On the day of the wedding, when Frederick was leading the bride to church, at the moment when the party was crossing the market-place, a voice whispered in his ear—"A piece of the lace she will wear at the ball this evening." Frederick recognised the voice, though no one else heard it. He turned, but saw nobody. After the ceremony, the burgomaster handed the contract to the bridegroom, to which the Stadtholder had affixed his signature. A present of a hundred thousand florins from the governor of the United Provinces proved the sincerity of that illustrious personage's friendship, and that his favour had by no means fallen off. The burgomaster was emulous of so much generosity, and introduced a clause in the contract, settling his whole fortune on his son-in-law, in case of Maïna's death.

Behold, then, the *artiste* praised—fêted—and

happy. Possessed of the wife he loved—rich—honoured—what more had he to hope than that those advantages should be continued him? Castero was true to his word—reduced his violin to powder, acknowledged Frederick's superiority, and betook himself to higher pursuits, which ended in the great discovery of printing.

The Dutch Orpheus is freed from the annoyance of a rival. He reigns, by the divine right of his violin, the undisturbed monarch of his native plains. His name is pronounced with enthusiasm from one flat end of Holland to the other. In the splendour of his triumphal condition, he has forgotten his compact with Beelzebub; but Maïna reminded him of it one day when she told him he was about to become a father.

A father!—ha!—Frederick! That word which brings such rapture to the newly-married couple—which presents such radiant visions of the future—that word freezes the heart of the *artiste*, and stops the blood in his veins.

It is only now when Maïna is so happy that he knows the enormity of his fault.

He is about to be a father—and he—beforehand—basely, cowardly—has sold the soul of his son who is yet unborn—before it can shake off the taint of original sin. Shame! shame! on the proud in heart who has yielded to the voice of the tempter—to the wretch who, for a little

miserable glory, has shut the gates of mercy on his own child—shame! shame!

If Satan would consent to an exchange—if—but no—'tis impossible. The "archangel fallen" had explained himself too clearly—no hope! no hope! From that hour there was no rest, no happiness for the *protégé* of the Stadtholder—sleep fled from his eyelids, he was pursued by perpetual remorse, and in the agonies of his heart deserted the nuptial bed: while light dreams settled on Maïna's spirit, and wove bright chaplets for the future, he wandered into the midnight fields—across the canals—anywhere, in short, where he fancied he could procure forgetfulness; but solitude made him only feel his misery the more. How often he thought of going to the gloomy lake where he had first encountered the Unknown! How often he determined to complete the resolution he had formed on the day of Castero's triumph! But Satan had said to him, "The suicide is condemned — irrevocably condemed;" and the condemnation of which *he* would be sure, would not bring a ransom for his first-born.

The fatal time draws on—in a few minutes more Maïna will be a mother. Frederick, by some invisible impulse, has chosen from among the laces of his wife a rich Mechlin, which she wore round her neck on her wedding-day. It is now to be the diabolic standard, and he goes with it towards the door of his house, pensive and sad. When he got

to the threshold he stopped—he raised his eyes to heaven, and from his heart and from his lips there gushed out prayers, warm, deep, sincere—the first for many years. A ray of light has rushed into his soul. He uttered a cry of joy; he dashed across the street into the neighbouring church; he dipped the lace into the basin of consecrated water, and returned immediately to hang it at the door of his apartment.

At that moment Maïna gave birth to a son, and Satan rushed impatiently to claim his expected prey. But the tempter was unprepared for the trap that was laid for him. On placing his foot on the first step of the stair, he found himself pushed back by a superior power. The Mechlin, dripping with holy water, had amazing effect. It was guardian of the house, and protected the entrance against the fallen angel. Satan strove again and again, but was always repulsed. There rises now an impenetrable barrier between him and the innocent being he had destined for his victim. Forced by the pious stratagem of Frederick Katwingen to give up his purpose, he roamed all night round the house like a roaring lion, bellowing in a most awful manner.

In the morning, when they wrapt up the babe in the precious lace to carry him to be baptized, they perceived that it had been torn in several places. The holes showed the determination with which

Satan had tried to force a passage. The enemy of mankind had not retreated without leaving the mark of his talons on the lace.

On coming back from church, Frederick ran to his fiddle; and found in a corner of the case the deed of compact he had signed. With what joy he tossed it into the fire, and heard it go crackling up the chimney!

All was over now; Satan was completely floored. He confessed, by giving up the contract, that he had no further right on the soul of the newly-born when once it had been purified by the waters of baptism. The father had recovered the soul which the musician had bartered away! Since that time, whenever a young woman in Haarlem is about to become a mother, the husband never fails to hang at the door the richest pieces of lace he can find in her *trousseau*. That standard bids defiance to the evil one, and recalls the noble victory won over the prince of darkness by Frederick Katwingen, surnamed the Dutch Orpheus. And that is the reason that, in passing through Haarlem, the visitor sees little frames suspended from certain houses, ornamented with squares of Mechlin, or Valenciennes, or Brussels point. And that is the reason that, when he asks an explanation of the singular custom, he gets only the one short, unvarying answer—"These are the Devil's Frills!"

A STORY OF EULENBURG.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

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I.

IN one of the most celebrated galleries on the Continent there stood many years ago, and still stands, a certain statue, to which tradition, for some forgotten and unintelligible reason, has given the name of the nymph Hercyna, one of the attendants of Ceres during her wanderings in search of Proserpine. It is of immense age: indeed not a few of its admirers go so far as to claim for it an origin nothing short of Athenian, while even the more moderate are not unwilling to have it ascribed to that Rhodian school which produced the Laocoon. Nevertheless, in spite of its extreme antiquity, it is extraordinarily perfect: not a single detail is destroyed or even injured by accident, neglect, or time. Nor has it been

undeserving of its singular good fortune, for it is wonderfully beautiful — so much so that the fact of its fame being less wide than the whole world only goes to prove, in the opinion of some of us who hold ourselves to be no mean judges in such matters, that the large but unintelligent jury by whom fame is accorded or withheld is as capricious in judging immortal marble as in judging mortal man. For my own part, I own to a love for this particular piece of marble passing my love for any other that it has ever been my good fortune, during the course of a not very short life, to see and know: and my love for it is strengthened by the knowledge that, while I do not follow the multitude—for whose opinion in art matters I have not the faintest respect—I have on my side the opinion of all critics by whom, on other grounds, I am proud to be directed.

For the benefit both of the many who have not seen it and of the many who, having seen it, have unobservantly passed it by—for there is not much about it in the guide-books—I must give a short description of this really wonderful work of art, avoiding any vain and useless endeavour to express in anything like appropriate words my own private and personal enthusiasm. Nobody can hate more than I the common jargon of rapture in art matters—invariably as much the result of affectation and pretence as the profuse use of

technicalities is of ignorance. My description, therefore, shall be as short and as plain as possible; and I hope to receive some credit for my reticence, seeing that I could write a dozen volumes about it with ease and pleasure.

After all, what matters it when, or where, or by whom, the statue was made? Had it been manufactured in Manchester yesterday, instead of having been created, as tradition would have it, in Athens more than two thousand years ago, it would not be a jot the less beautiful. The perfectly nude figure is fully developed, exquisitely proportioned, and wholly free from such forcings of lines in order to obtain additional and artificial grace, as we find, for example, in the Venus de' Medici. It is the face, however, that places it above all others. Every other great statue depends for its beauty upon form alone; but in the face of the Hercyna, beauty of form is subordinate to beauty of expression. The outline is that of a classic nymph; the character, that of a woman who has lived and suffered. The sculptor trespassed so far on the province of the painter, that colour alone seems wanting to make his creation breathe. It stands erect, but undulating, with the head slightly turned aside and thrown back, so as to make the sad but calm smile of the perfect lips seem as though it were speaking silently to heaven of sorrowful, but not unhappy, memories. One who watches it for

any length of time wonders that he does not hear the very words with his ears, so near to the lips do they seem; and to say that before long he sees the bosom actually rise and fall in tumultuous waves, is only to note what is common to all really great figures, whether carved in marble or painted on canvas, when the attention is concentrated upon them. The only defect in the whole work is not a fault in art, but an unlucky caprice of nature, who ever seems to abhor absolute perfection—a thin black vein in the marble which, beginning behind the left shoulder, passes over and in front of it, and then, dividing, runs a short distance along the arm in one direction and down the left breast in another.

So much for my description. But there is something to be said about the statue historically as well as artistically. When I said that it stood in the gallery some years ago, and that it stands there now, I chose my words advisedly. Within my recollection there was an interval of time during which it did not stand there. The gallery is one of the best kept in the world: a staff of thoroughly well-selected and trustworthy custodians and other officials is continually on duty: ingress and egress during the night are absolutely impossible: the marble is, of course, of great weight, and cannot be moved without the utmost care and trouble in the use of mechanical appliances; and yet, one

morning, it was missing from its place, nor could any one even hazard a guess as to what had become of it.

Zealous, long, and exhaustive was the search made by the authorities of the museum, supported by all the resources of the Government, for their missing art-treasure, which had been made the subject of a theft so inexplicable. The police were set to work; spies and detectives were employed in almost every large town in all Europe; an incessant and thoroughly careful watch was kept up at the frontiers; and two persons of high rank, one notorious for a passion for carrying out practical jokes of the most difficult and *outré* kind, and the other as an art-collector, were kept for a long time under secret and close *surveillance.* Popular suspicion at last reached the very highest quarters of all, and began to hint that the police had missed the right track not altogether unintentionally. But in this matter popular suspicion was, as usual, unjust. I could tell some curious stories about what was incidentally discovered in many unexpected quarters, and perhaps I may some day; at present, I will only say that not a trace of the truant nymph could be discovered, and that the matter dropped in due course of time into the *limbo* of inexplicable mysteries. Nothing more was said about it save when the unfilled pedestal served as a text for the amusement of visitors. I was much younger then than I am now, and I

remember, when all was given up, writing a long poem on the subject which was much admired by my friend, Doctor Mohnkopf the curator—who, by the way, was one of the worst poetical critics I ever knew—wherein I argued, with much elaboration of matter and manner, that the nymph Hercyna had gone to rejoin her old mistress, unexpectedly returned to earth; whence we might prophesy an immediate and universal reign of peace and plenty. I am afraid, however, on looking back, that my poetic and prophetic powers were very nearly equal.

But by far the strangest part of the story is yet to come. When the nymph had become no more than a memory among her admirers, when all the gossip and scandal to which her disappearance had given rise were forgotten save by one or two of us who had taken a more than common interest in the matter, it happened that one morning, very early, I received a pressing message from Doctor Mohnkopf that he wished to speak to me at the museum instantly. People are early risers in that country, and it was very little past sunrise when I found my friend anxiously waiting me in the hall. It was the 15th of September — will the reader be good enough to bear the date in mind? The Herr Doctor was there alone, as was often his habit, before the doors were open to visitors.

He was a slow and phlegmatic man, this curator, with an owl-like figure and face that betrayed

but little of his real intelligence and quickness of penetration; but on this occasion he looked, for him, positively wild with excitement—so much so that I felt alarmed. I began to speak to him; but before I had uttered three words—

"Come with me!" he exclaimed, interrupting me at once; and then, seizing me by the arm, led me, two steps at a time, up the broad staircase to the door of the great gallery, which, puffing and panting with his haste, he hurriedly unlocked and threw wide open.

I was struck motionless with wonder. There, upon her pedestal, stood Hercyna, in exactly the same position as when I had last seen her. I had my own reasons for remembering that last time.

"In the name of magic!" I exclaimed, "what is the meaning of this?"

"You may well say, 'In the name of magic!'" he answered. "You know as much about it as I do. No—I am wrong. Do you see no change? Is it the same?"

I looked again. Then, for the first time in my life, I remarked in the face that strange, beautiful, human look which no other statue ever bore. Then I looked again at the curator and our eyes met. He had observed it also.

The news soon ran through the town, and the police were again set to search. But my friend this time showed but little zeal in aiding them.

"What does it signify," he used to say to those engaged in the inquiry, "so long as we have it again now, where it has been meantime?" This carelessness on his part was set down by some to the effect of increasing age and lethargy; but I knew better. Certain strange experiences of my life, certain deductions that I was now driven to make from those experiences, enabled me to form more than a mere guess at the real truth of the mystery. I, and my friend the curator, through me, had become the sole confidants of the secret of the missing statue. During Doctor Mohnkopf's life, I have not felt myself at liberty to tell this story, about which he felt a delicacy that I confess I could not even understand, much less share, although it relates far more to me than to him. Ever since that September morning he would sit for hours absorbed before the figure, like a lover who had grown fat and plethoric before the tomb of the mistress of his youth; and, save to me, he would never even name her name, which he seemed to treat as something sacred. But he is long gone; and I need no longer remain silent, now that by speaking I shall run no risk of giving my old friend pain. I do not think, in justice to another, that this experience of mine ought to be buried with me; and I will therefore, in as few words as possible, relate for the first time the true story of the missing statue. And should any reader be so extremely impolite as

to doubt my words, let him, when next making a foreign tour, sleep a night at Eulenburg, and spend the next day at the gallery of the museum. In the very first room, facing the door, his eye will be caught by a statue of white marble slightly disfigured by such a stain as I have already described. Then let him take a chair and sit down before it, closing the door behind him if he is afraid of draughts; and I will wager, ay, a thousand to one, that in five minutes he will believe—nay, that he will *know*—that my story is true.

II.

It was spring in Eulenburg. The air was sweet and warm; the lilacs were blooming, the sun was shining, the sky was blue. Who could work when more pleasure, and more profit too, could be gained from a single hour of sunny idleness, than from four-and-twenty of the hardest toil? So, at least, on this 23d of May, seemed to think a young and handsome man—I may say this now, for I am certainly neither young nor handsome any more—who was sitting, with a drawing-board upon his knees and a crayon in his hand, right in front of the statue of the nymph Hercyna in the gallery of the museum. But neither were his eyes upon his model, nor was the faintest trace of a line upon

his paper. On the contrary, his look was almost as vacant as his paper itself, so far as regarded any interest in what was around him: it sought the window above, through which streamed a sunbeam out of a glimpse of blue sky. At last he seemed able to resist the sight no longer: or else the scent of the outside air, filling the place with suggestions of fields and gardens, invaded senses and awakened desires beyond the reach of all the pictures and statues in the world. With no more than a single parting glance upon the exquisite form before him—more exquisite by far than any he was likely to meet either in street or meadow—he suddenly gathered his materials together, tossed on his hat, and burst from the door with a deep sigh of relief and that sharp and glorious sensation of pleasure which, I maintain, in spite of morality, of philosophy, of everything and everybody, always belongs to the neglect of work for the sake of sunshine.

"I wonder how it would be to feel like that statue," thought he. "What a doom for her whose spirit once wandered about the world with the earth-goddess herself to be fixed to a pedestal on a day worthy of her own Aonia in the golden age! How she must have envied me when she saw me run out into the sunshine! She must feel lost without her constant visitor, and be positively jealous of Madame Flora. Well, I know which is the fairer of the two to-day at least—and hurrah for

the fairest, always and everywhere!—Ah!" he exclaimed aloud, suddenly; for he was unexpectedly encountered by two ladies, the sight of whom brought his buoyant steps to a stand, his hat from his head, and a flush to his face.

"Mr Melvil!" said the elder of the two, a pleasant and comfortable person of middle age, in a tone of pleased surprise, "only think of our meeting you here!" She held out her hand as she spoke. Her companion, a very pretty girl whose age and appearance corresponded with the season, did not hold out hers, but she returned his blush,—which was better still.

"The surprise ought to be on my side," he answered. It is nothing so wonderful to meet me here, I assure you. The only reason why, in fact, I do not feel surprise is, because the surprise is lost in the pleasure."

"Then in that case we will lose ours too, and for the same reason. We have been here since yesterday only. Have you been here long?"

He glanced at the young lady as he answered, "Yes, indeed—for three long months, which have seemed three years. This is my home at present. You are travellers, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied she to whom his look, not his speech, was addressed—and her voice was charmingly sweet and clear—"we are making a tour. Papa is with us."

The young artist's face clouded for an instant.

"I hope Sir John is well?" he asked.

"My brother is not very well this morning," answered the elder lady; "he is rather tired with yesterday's long journey, so Alice and I have come out alone. We were on our way to the museum."

Certainly we are the creatures of circumstances. I do not by any means state this as a truism, but as a good hard truth, which it has taken me more than half a lifetime to learn, and which very few men ever really learn at all. Melvil's delight at being out of the museum all at once became an eager desire to return to it. It was the turn of the goddess Flora to be jealous now—although the Hercyna was by no means avenged.

"Then you are indeed fortunate," he said, "for you have lighted upon the best of all possible guides."

"But you are coming from it, are you not?" asked the elder lady, to whom, however, the offer did not seem by any means unwelcome.

"But now I am going back," Melvil answered—"that is, if Mrs Dalton and Miss Fenwick will allow me."

"We shall be only too delighted, indeed," replied Mrs Dalton; and the three ascended the steps of the museum.

"All of us must be drunk once," says Goethe: "Youth is drunkenness without wine." Lewis Mel-

vil, even had he not already been much more than half in love already, would have felt his blood flow with scarcely less warmth than now, while wandering by the side of Alice Fenwick through such a treasure-house of beauty in such an atmosphere of spring. He thought not for an instant that she was far too rich and he far too poor for him to be justified in more than admiration from afar; that society had placed between the only child of a titled merchant-prince and a future drawing-master, a barrier even stronger than was placed between them by money: he only thought, if indeed he thought at all, of the present moment, and of a future whose wildest impossibilities seemed already to be realised. For the present, it sufficed him that he was with Alice: for the future, Titian, Raphael, Michael Angelo were to welcome an equal to an equal throne. Love and ambition were mingled and fulfilled in the unconscious happiness of the hour. The outside air, which before had drawn him from the gallery, now seemed no longer to speak of fields and gardens; it seemed rather to have its birth in the place where he was: the windows were open, not to admit it, but to allow it to expand.

Mrs Dalton was certainly the very worst of chaperones. She was not only unsuspicious by nature, but utterly prosaic also, and would have stared in blank amazement had any one suggested to her the least particle of danger in this meeting, though ren-

dered all the more exciting by a long separation. If the truth must be told, she looked upon the young artist rather in the light of a favourite dog, whom she liked to stroke and to feed with sweet biscuit—who might, indeed, be formidable to strangers, but could be thoroughly trusted by his friends. I am afraid, when I come to think of it now, that Melvil used to act rather hypocritically by the good lady, and, to follow out the dog simile, wagged his tail a little too ostentatiously before her. She was of an age when ladies dearly love attentions from very young men, and can be flattered by a bungler who would be laughed at by a young girl. Besides, to do her justice, she was good-nature itself, and nothing gave her greater pleasure than to see people enjoying themselves—as it is called. Even the most prosaic of middle-aged ladies may have a good deal of youth left in her, so far as want of prudence is concerned. And so it need not afford very much ground for wonder, especially considering her rather full style of figure, that she began presently to feel reminded, by certain sensations in her neck and limbs, of the Turkish saying about sitting being better than standing, and took a seat in front of that *chef-d'œuvre* of the Pavotine school, the "Seven Sleepers" of D'Ormiglione, out of sight both of the Hercyna and of her charge.

For it was before the Hercyna that Alice Fenwick and her guide ere long found themselves. They

had no pains in the neck; for she had kept her head a good deal bent down, and he had not been raising his eyes very high, except in a metaphorical direction. And now her head was bent lower still, and his eyes were not raised even to a level with those of the neglected nymph.

"How lucky it is," he was saying, "that I met you this morning, as you are leaving so soon. But I suppose I may hope to see you once more before you go?"

"That depends entirely upon yourself, I should think," she answered, with a bright smile. "You know where we are staying?"

"If it depends on me, then—but are you really going on Thursday?"

"Really and truly."

"But that will be a very great mistake."

"Why a mistake?"

"I can assure you there is a great deal to be seen at Eulenburg."

"Indeed! I always heard it was one of the stupidest places in the world."

"I suppose you got the idea from the name. 'Eulenburg' means 'stronghold of owls,' you know."

"And is that the character of the Eulenburgers?"

"Rather. But they—the real owls, I mean—are by no means stupid birds. I have rather an affection for them."

"What a singular taste!"

"You would learn to share it, if you stayed. There are three owls that I almost always see whenever I go in a certain direction at night to whom I always take off my hat, they are so large and so white. I call them Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar."

"How very interesting! But I should scarcely care to stay at a place only to make the bowing acquaintance of three owls, even though they are so large and so white, and have such magnificent names."

"But there is more than the owls; there is the *Dom-kirche*——"

"The most hideous old church I ever saw."

"There is the country and neighbourhood——"

"I did not think much of it from what I saw in our journey yesterday. And I suppose it is hardly equal to where we are going in Switzerland."

"Had you not better put yourself in a position to make the comparison?"

"You seem very devoted to Eulenburg."

"I am—till Thursday."

"And why till then?"

"Can you ask?"

She did not press the question. He went on,—

"Now that you have once been here, I shall hate the place as soon as you leave it."

She ought to have told him he was talking nonsense, but she did not. She was a very sincere

person, and not given to say what she did not believe.

"It will make very little difference, I should think," she answered.

"How can it be the same place again?" he asked. "You might as well say that the marble statue in front of us would be the same as before, if it could, for a passing moment, be touched with such real life as mine is now."

Poor deserted Hercyna! But then it is true that her ears were made of stone."

"But tell me something about yourself," said Miss Fenwick, hurriedly. "Are you getting on well? Are you working hard? Have you anything to show us?"

"I am doing as well as I can—but——"

"But what?"

"But what is the use?—I was going to say."

"The use!"

"Yes—when it brings me no nearer——"

"But it does bring you nearer—nearer to fame and honour for yourself—nearer to doing something in the world—nearer to doing something for Art." There was a brightness in her eyes as she spoke that argued her to be worth the love of a nobler man than he.

"Alice, dearest Alice!" he exclaimed, suddenly, "only say nearer to yourself, and you will have said all."

What did Alice answer? The Hercyna at least heard not: for they passed on, and she was left once more alone.

III.

Love as well as Spring had been in the room with her. But love had gone out with the lovers, and Spring, as in duty bound, had followed. And so the day passed on in that empty place, so full of now unseen beauty, until the evening came, and all was darkness as well as solitude. Herr Mohnkopf having made his rounds — a duty which he never neglected,—the doors were closed and barred. For a while the saints, heroes, and angels, the trees, rocks, and rivers, that cover the walls, fade away into the monotony of a night without stars. The statues fare worse; for they remain visible only to become confused masses of shapelessness. But presently all changed.

The moon rises slowly, but is not as yet in sight; the first sign of her gradual coming being a single lance-like beam of a pale amber colour thrown through one shining point of the great window, and striking full upon the blue robes of the *mater dolorosa.* Above, below, and on all sides of its path, everything in the long bare chamber, whose walls and ceiling have receded into a vague region of night which knows not of bounds and limits, is only

thrown into a deeper obscurity and a yet more mysterious repose; but those blue robes, pierced by the touch, presently begin to flutter and wave. Their artificial lights and shadows, made for the eye of the sun, change, and deepen, and grow pale; their folds become confused, and hang in a strange disorder. Soon though slowly, the figure itself gradually rises under the influence of the rising and brightening dart of amber, which begins now, as its shaft broadens and ascends upon the wall, to change from amber to grey. Tremblingly she stands out for a single moment from the dark background; and then, in the dead silence, she once more kneels to weep and pray, not now as the painter, but as the moonlight wills; not now the still, motionless figure such as the sun points out with his wand of truth to common eyes, but with manifest tears and heavings of the breast, with eyes that strain and lips that quiver. But she does not wake alone for long. Suddenly, without an instant's warning, the white, round shoulder, whiter and rounder even than in the softest twilight, but clearer and brighter even than when seen in the fresh light of an autumn morning, and the wreath, no longer of marble, but of pure silver, of some vine-crowned Mœnad flash out of the darkness as if to mock the tears of the mother of sorrows. Prayer-absorbed, and with eyes averted from earth, she indeed sees not the advent of the wine-priestess;

but the motion of the white arm is not unheeded. The hand waves and beckons; the foot moves as if to leap from the pedestal. The marble grows drunken with the first full draught of moonlight, and, by reflecting, bestows also what it receives. At the silent summons other phantoms rise into waking, first singly and slowly—then more quickly, and by tens and scores—then furiously, and by hundreds at once. First appear the kindred and fellow-servants of the Mœnad: Bacchus hurls himself from his car—Venus stands half emerged from her shell—Silenus rolls on the ground, and his sides shake visibly with the silent laughter which he cannot contain. But all is grotesque and out of keeping. It is not into the arms of Ariadne that Bacchus springs: alas! it is the longing embrace of some holy Theresa which is to be balked by that of the unholy god. The court of Venus is no longer made up of the nymphs and shepherds of Cyprus; the worshippers who flock round her now are of a far other kind. The worn, meagre form that presses nearest is, despite the goat-skins in which he is clothed, no Arcadian shepherd, but Saint Anthony, or Saint Paulus Eremita; that knight in snow-white armour is Sir Galahad; that tall, pale woman with the wounded breast is not Cleopatra, but Lucretia; those mitres betoken not priests of Serapis, but popes and prelates; those fillets belong to vestals, and those dark robes to nuns. Nor is it some revel of Bac-

chantes at which Silenus laughs; it is that in the confused mingling of outlines, in the distortion of forms, in the maze of colours, the pure and reverent harmony of day is lost at last in a witches' Sabbath utterly unfitting to describe, either here or elsewhere. The pure and beautiful is not altogether wanting; but it is only that the crowd of monstrous combinations may be rendered more horribly grotesque by force of contrast. For a moment, perhaps, Titania, with her dainty and delicate court, may come forward to lead a more sweet and tender revel; but she strives in vain. How should poor earth-fairies stem a torrent in which saints and angels themselves are lost and intermingled with a triumphant orgy of satyrs, apes, goblins, and fiends? It is all a veritable nightmare, only without sleep—a brain-fever of Art. At last, so do the shadows of heaven, earth, and hell mock each other with contortions and grimaces that they become undistinguishable. Evil burlesques good, and good evil. The place, formerly so empty, begins to swarm. It is true that the forms which fill it do not touch the floor, but that is only because the air is a firmer ground for gambols such as theirs. It is certainly not that they are contained and supported by their frames and pedestals. And, what makes it all the more bewildering, all the more weirdly oppressive to the soul, is the utter silence of it all—but for the occasional cry of some wandering owl, not a sound is

to be heard. There is music of a sort, indeed, but it is music without even the shadow of a sound—the music of a vague and fancied rhythm such as the deaf seem to hear when they watch the feet of dancers. But meanwhile the light grows still broader and broader, whiter and whiter. Its current changes, and the kneeling mother, who has alone remained true and steadfast, is lost in the wider flood. She is no longer the one pure note in that harmony of discord. And now wilder and wilder, faster and faster, more and more dream-like grows the dance of shadows.

The moon is wholly risen, and the grotesque vision changes again. The last gestures, the last attitudes, the last contortions of feature remain, indeed, but they are arrested and fixed by the cold lake of light. The outlines, although no easier to unravel, no longer bewilder by ceaseless variation, and the colours, washed in a bath of whiteness, are startingly clear and bright—clearer, brighter, and purer than on the sunniest of days. And so, for a full minute, the vision remains; and then at last it begins to grow pale and faded, as before sleeping eyes wearied out with dreams. The full light, instead of spreading, now begins to concentrate itself, and falls upon some beautiful statue, which it renders doubly beautiful. The walls, with their now languid burden, begin to retreat again into dim, mysterious distance; and

the eye is fascinated only by that one still figure, shining like a silver mist in the strong but fantastic light, with its transparent outlines, and its form that has become pure once more; for it is no longer one of a world of shadows that have now slowly vanished back into the black chaos whence they came.

But to be alone in the moonlight for long together is impossible. One troop of shadows departs only that another may succeed it. There are always memories and dreams. When the rays of the sun are upon us it is possible to live in the present: warmth and light destroy regret and fear. But it is not so when the only light is of a night which does not bestow the forgetfulness of sleep. As a statue cannot be said ever to wake, so it cannot be said ever to sleep, any more than, since it does not live, it can, even when destroyed, be said to die. Wherefore, since she did not sleep, the night fairies trooped down upon the moonlight to the Hercyna also as soon as she seemed to be left alone.

"I am called beautiful," she said, or rather they said for her. "From the bounds of earth men come to see and worship me. At my feet thousands have sat—thousands before my eyes. My form is of the gods, men say; a pattern of human grace—nay more, of grace that is not human, but divine. Poets have sung of me, and painters

studied me, and sculptors have copied me. Rich men have spent their gold to buy me, and the poor have drawn from me and from my loveliness full many a draught of joy and comfort. Even the air around breathes but the glory of my beauty. I am verily a goddess and a queen. And then—one breath of spring, one glance of the sun, and lo, my crown falls off, and is no more.

"Is, then, the spring more beautiful than I? Are flower-buds better carved than are my lips, and are the leaves more lovely than my hair? Is hawthorn-bloom more white than is my bosom, and are the waves more graceful than my limbs? Yet must I think so, since spring conquers me. My lovers leave me at her lightest look; and even he, my truest slave of all, who daily sat before my feet, and sought to learn my secret, and declared my praise over all things that are on earth, even he has left me at her whisper—even his eyes no longer rested upon mine, but roamed from me to seek the far sky, and his feet fled from me, as though I were to be loathed, and were not beautiful.

"And yet is spring truly more beautiful? For he left the spring, and came back hither for the sake of one whose form, though like, was yet no match for mine. More lovely than the spring, then, he at least must have deemed her; but surely not than I. That cannot be. Is any part of her to be compared with the all-perfect whole

that my great master made me? Hers is but the imperfect beauty of a woman; mine, the complete beauty of all womanhood made perfect wholly—nature's beauty blent with all the beauty of triumphant art.

"What is this thing called life, which is in truth my rival? What the thing that makes men stone to me as I to them, and makes them flesh to those that are of flesh? What is this thing that is called love, the child of life and spring, that I, with all my beauty, cannot gain from my poor rival? What this thing called youth, that I have never known?

"I hate it all, the godlike beauty in which thus I dwell as in a prison. I would yield it all could I but also know what these things are—could myself hear the music of the birds, and breathe the flowers' fragrance—understand how beauty is not all things in the world. Ah! my great master, hadst thou also breathed, like him of Amathus, a living soul into the beauty fashioned by thy hands! Be thine the curse, not mine, if my desire prove stronger than my strength. I would no more be but of stone. I am weary of the world of art, and yearn for that of nature. Be it for pain or torment, only let me live!"

The moonlight grew paler and more pale. It was fading away from her—in another instant all would be dark again.

"Give me life," cried once more the voice of her dream: "let me only leave this place and live!"

Then once more the moonbeam streamed full upon her, pale no longer, but filled with a new and golden light; and a whisper reached her that came from no dream of hers,—

"As thou wilt, daughter of my mortal hands, so be it fulfilled to thee even unto the third time."

In fancy she bowed her head and clasped her hands.

"Be then my desire fulfilled for the first time!" her thought exclaimed. "Soul of my master, let me live!"

The golden followed the silver light. The moon had climbed out of sight, and the long gallery was again plunged in darkness.

IV.

As I foresaw so I found — that the peaceful German city, where I had spent so many happy and studious days, really became hateful to me after Alice Fenwick had carried the spring away with her. Our foolish scene before the Hercyna had led to nothing, except that I was left profoundly and miserably in love. That I was loved in return, I had been assured, and I believed; but this only made matters all the worse. I was not of a nature to love without hope; but, under the circumstances, there was but little, if any, difference between hope and despair. Can I make myself

understood by this cynical, impassive generation of young men, who seem to me to be born bald and grey-headed? Shall I be believed, even by their sisters, when I say that Alice Fenwick was literally the one idea of my soul; and that I was wrapped in a very luxury of wretchedness in perceiving how slender was the chance that she could ever be my wife? It was so, however; and perhaps a few old fellows of my own age, who keep yellow and ragged camellias wrapped in tissue-paper in some dusty, out-of-the-way corner, will sympathise with me. Yes, we used to love in my day, and rather prided ourselves on our weakness; and so I fled to Paris, as the city which of all cities is least like Eulenburg. My energy needed some vent, and I took a pride in proving to myself that I was not quite unworthy of my goddess. Of follies I was guilty without end—*cela va sans dire*—Bohemia is not a land of modern discovery, and its inhabitants are not very worldly-wise, or very constant in practice. There are certain lyrics of Béranger and of Henri Murger which I read always with a sort of feeling that I myself am the author of them, so much their experience appears to have been my own. But even in the Bohemia of the *pays Latin* there are more modes of living than one, although externally the life of its inhabitants may seem much the same. I, at least, had thrown out one strong anchor which had taken firm hold below

the shoals and shifting sands; and it is certain that far more mud has been thrown upon me in my more prosperous days from the carriage-wheels of good society, than ever, during my garret life, was splashed from the unprudish feet of Jeannette or Madelon.

At this idle, hard-working, happy, miserable, extravagant, self-denying period of my career, I was one day met upon one of the *boulevards* by poor Félix Laurent, whom my old comrades, now so scattered, will remember at once as the best and most promising of us all, and who died just too soon to achieve the most splendid fame. Some day, perhaps, I may tell his story—but this by the way.

At present I must confine myself to my own. I turned, and we walked on together. I had been struck by an amused look on his usually over-serious face, and, after a short time, he said—

"My dear Lewis, only think what has just happened!"

"What?" I asked. "I never try to guess. Life is short, you know——"

"And Art is long. But even art has an end at last. That is the very point."

"Well, then?"

"You know what I have been wanting for so long, and intriguing for too, after my own fashion? Well, I begin to consider myself a complete Talleyrand, and to perceive that diplomacy is my

true career. I am to be at Madame M——'s this evening."

"The banker's wife?"

"Yes. And—ah—a thought strikes me!"

"Allow me to congratulate you."

"Congratulate yourself, rather; for you will do me the greatest service in the world."

"Consider it done."

"I shall cover myself with no end of *éclat*. Have you a dress-coat?"

"After a fashion."

"All right. And gloves?"

"They can be stolen."

"Good. Then come with me to Madame M——'s. I shall be prime favourite for a whole day if I bring her a live *Anglais*, especially if you will condescend to behave as much like a bear as possible, and talk about nothing but *rosbif* and *la boxe*. Madame will adore you. Now I think of it, don't wear gloves. It will look more barbaric. If you will only shave your face and dye your hair scarlet, it will be glorious—with a kilt, and a collar *à la* Byron, it will be superb!"

The Anglo-mania was just then at its height; and Félix had his reasons for wishing to propitiate Madame. I was duly presented, and favoured by having to receive from her a monologue in some language which I could not understand, but which, from just catching the words "zat *grand poète*,

tender, impassioned, *sublime*, your Sare Adam Smit," I conjectured might be my own. However, there was neither necessity nor opportunity to answer, so I listened with as much stolidity as I could assume, bowed stiffly when it was over, said "Oh, yes!" like Lord Allcash in 'Fra Diavolo,' and then, having done my duty as an Englishman, made way for the next lion. Or rather lioness—for she was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. To say that she was a model for a sculptor is to say nothing, even though the sculptor were Praxiteles himself. She was, I believe, rather tall,—but so perfectly was she proportioned that it was impossible to tell without carefully comparing her with others; and one was not likely to look much at others when she was by. The true test of a beautiful face is the profile; and hers was of the best and most faultless Greek type, of the low-browed order. Her hair, however, was not dark, as might be expected from the style of her features, but lay in great thick waves of shining gold, partly gathered up closely at the back of the head and fastened by a small *stiletto*, and partly flowing down the neck, and thence over the shoulders in a broad cataract of loose and natural curls. It grew down in front considerably over the line of the forehead, which was marked by a kind of frontal, such as the ancient Greeks called an *ampyx*—although I believe it is still

in use, I am ignorant of its name in the technical language of modern *coiffeurs.* It did not, however, strike me as being a well-chosen head-dress; for, being of bright gold, it was scarcely distinguishable from the hair itself, and seemed to argue an imperfect eye for harmonies and contrasts of colour. The slender neck was wonderfully graceful, and together with the face, the shoulders, the arms, and the hands, was of a pure and transparent whiteness that was literally dazzling, reflecting light instead of absorbing it. And yet, in reality, it could not be very clear, for it was without the delicate pencilling of the veins or the passing rose-tints that we generally admire in fair complexions. Her eyes were large and of a rich deep blue, but cold; and cold also was the expression of her perfect lips, which were as pure and undisturbed in their outline as those of a young child. The whole character of the face was grave and by no means unamiable; but the coldness of the eyes and lips, the general faultlessness of the features, and the completeness of their repose, made it far from being sympathetic; it seemed made to be admired far more than to be loved. Her dress, I fear I must confess, I have forgotten; and so I may fairly assume it to have been in as good taste as was possible in days when the apparent object of dressmakers was to make the costume of each successive year more hideous than that of the pre-

ceding. But I have always observed that so long as a beautiful woman is dressed fairly according to the existing fashion, it is of very little consequence, in the eyes of men, what that fashion is. I only call to mind that she seemed to affect pale and uniform colours, and that she wore but few ornaments: there was a necklace of pearls, certainly, and a bracelet or two; but there were no earrings, for the delicate ears were not even pierced; and there was no display of diamonds, which in itself made her look rather remarkable in a room full of jewels. Yes—I do remember one point in her costume; she wore a scarf of white lace, embroidered with golden thread, carefully but gracefully arranged over her left shoulder and the upper part of her left arm. The general effect she produced at first sight was that of a cold cloud of gold and snow.

As I had but just left the side of my hostess when this lady approached, I was still near enough to hear her first words. They were no more than some ordinary salutation; but I was immediately struck by the voice in which they were spoken. It was of a rare *contralto* quality, and wonderfully soft and clear. Her pronunciation of French, although lady-like and correct, was still that of a foreigner; and its full and rather inward character made me think that her tongue must be familiar with some strongly-aspirated language—

such as Spanish, for instance. And yet, charming and musical as were her tones, they, like her face, wanted the indefinable charm of sympathy. Moved by the interest which her appearance excited in me, I spoke to Monsieur B——, a young man of good family with whom I had some slight acquaintance, and asked him if he could tell me anything about the stranger.

"Of course I can!" he answered. "It is the Circassian Princess. Have you never seen her before?"

"I am ashamed to say that I have not even heard of her."

"I suppose you have been away from Paris," he said. "She is to be the lioness of the season —of the rest of it, that is to say. Beautiful, is she not?"

"And her name?"

"Her name? — *Diable!* I wish I had been taught Circassian. We always call her the Princess. What is her name?" he asked of another man who was near; "I am ashamed to ask, but I never can remember names that I can't spell."

"What—the fair Hungarian's?"

"No—the Circassian's—the Princess's."

"She's a Hungarian, I believe—or else a Russian, or Servian, or something of that sort. De Sancy knew her at Vienna."

"And yet the name is by no means hard or un-

vocalic," said another. "Madame la Princesse de Paro—that's all."

"That's not the name I heard; there were z's and gutturals in it. But De Paro—that sounds Italian or Spanish. And how is she a princess?"

"How she is a princess I cannot tell you," said an old gentleman in spectacles; "but the name is not Italian and not Spanish. Paro is the name of an island in the Archipelago which used to be called Paros in old times. The difference in the name is very slight, you see."

"Then we may call her Princess of the Marble Mines?"

"Precisely so," said the old gentleman. "Monte Marpessa, in the island of Paro, or Paros"—and he began a long discussion upon marble in general, from which he naturally branched off to that of Monte Matto and Carrara; thence to the mineral wealth of Italy, thence to mines in general; and so, naturally, to the inevitable *bourse.* I afterwards learned that he was my host, Monsieur M—— himself.

It was clear enough, from the course of this conversation, and from others in which I shared that evening either as talker or listener, that, while it was evidently the right thing to seem to know all about her, no one really knew who the Princess was, or whence she came. And yet at the same time no one, even among the most

habitually suspicious, hinted a doubt of her being fully entitled to the very highest consideration. Perhaps the fact of her having a great reputation for wealth had something to do with this. There was also another remarkable thing respecting her, that among all the women present I noticed a singular amount of real, not affected charity, in their allusions to such a rival. They seemed, indeed, scarcely to speak of her as if she were one of themselves—as if they and she, in spite of their common sex, had anything really in common. It was even stranger still that she did not seem to have the power of drawing men to her side. I feel sure that on that evening not one woman who was there lost a single attention by reason of the presence of this lady. I can answer for myself, that in spite of curiosity, interest, and admiration, I not only did not feel attracted towards her, but even almost repelled by her.

At length, however, our eyes happened to meet, and, to my surprise, I could not help seeing that she gave a slight start, and that it was some instants before she looked away again. In fact she favoured me with a long look, not in the least of boldness, but rather of surprise, and even of anxiety. If I had not been certain of the contrary, I should have thought she recognised me; and, as it was, I fancied that she must have mistaken me for some one else. In a few minutes, however, I was still

more surprised when I was led up to her by Madame M——, and formally introduced to her. It could only have been in consequence of her own request; for certainly my hostess had no reason of her own for paying me any particular attention.

When we are young—I am not sure that I might not add, when we are old also—we are apt to think that every handsome woman who treats us with anything like deference is intellectually remarkable. I daresay that I am not without my full share of this sort of vanity. But I am sure that vanity had nothing to do with my perceiving, after a very short conversation, that the Princess de Paro, whoever she might be, was no ordinary person. She was by no means what is called a well-informed woman, that was evident; but she was something very much better. She was, as evidently, a quick and accurate observer; she had a lively desire to know and understand everything, and a ready intelligence that worked well with her desire.

She appeared to know, or to assume, that I was an artist by profession, and she talked to me and asked me many questions—some of them, I must confess, wild and ignorant enough—as to the various pictures and statues in the several galleries that I had visited during my few years of study, and with which she herself seemed to be fairly acquainted after a vague and desultory fashion.

Our conversation lasted some time; and we became such good friends that she even made me promise to call upon her in the course of a few days, and show her some of the contents of my portfolio. As may be supposed, I felt exceedingly gratified, and saw a long vista of prosperity opening out before me, at the end of which shone, with renewed brilliancy, Alice Fenwick's now dimly-shining star. For do not let me be misunderstood. The admiration that I still felt for my new and interesting acquaintance was cold as the marble of Marpessa itself. Now that I had spoken with her, I was still more acutely sensible of that want of something about her—call it heart, or sympathy, or what you will—that I have mentioned already. I instinctively felt that she was not a woman whom I could possibly have been inclined to love, even had my heart been free.

There is nothing more that I need say about this particular conversation. Laurent walked home with me, and we had a good deal of talk together, in which, as may be supposed, the Princess de Paro held a prominent place. We had both been struck by her in much the same way, and rivalled each other in inventing the wildest romances about her. The conversation I had held with her at last naturally led our own into the same groove, and, in order to illustrate some remark of mine, I took a portfolio of studies and turned to one of my sketches

made in the Eulenburg Museum. As we went on with our discussion, Laurent lazily continued to turn over the rest, and to glance at them one by one. At last he started and paused, and then suddenly asked for a pencil. He was not a man of much humour in conversation, but it was his habit, when he sat talking with his friends, to amuse himself with making caricatures and humorous sketches, which were gems in their way. It was thus that I now supposed him to be engaged: and at the end of ten minutes he showed me the result. "What is that?" he asked.

"That?" I said, rather puzzled; "why it is an exact copy of the outline of my last study of the Hercyna in the Eulenburg Museum."

"And now give me your colour-box, and stand over me while I go on."

With his wonderfully facile, bold, and yet accurate hand, he worked rapidly for a short time. Soon, without the alteration of a single point in the outline, without a shadow of change in the expression of the features, the pencilled lines developed into that cloud of white and gold which we had heard called "Madame la Princesse de Paro."

V.

I fully intended to call upon my new friend very soon; but a day or two after Madame M——'s reception I heard some news that led my thoughts into an entirely new channel, and, as is usual when the mind is filled with a fixed idea, rendered me procrastinating about other matters. Besides, I was by no means drawn towards Madame de Paro otherwise than as towards a possible patroness, so that my visit to her wore the air of being a matter of duty rather than of inclination. Tamely as I have thus spoken, the news which thus had the effect of distracting me from obeying the calls both of self-interest and curiosity was at the time terrible indeed—it was nothing less than that Alice Fenwick was engaged to be married to the eldest son of a peer of great wealth and importance, both political and social. Patrons and patronesses seemed nothing to me now; and I fell—absurdly it may be, but none the less really for all that—into a state of unhappiness which I cannot even now recall without pain. Most of the sorrows of youth we would willingly feel over again, for the sake of having once more the faculty of feeling them; but there are some that we would no more undergo for any price whatever than we would again fall down a precipice for the sake of again

having the strength by which we climbed to the summit. I was all the worse off, too, because in this matter I had no confidant, and had to bear my sorrow alone. Nor had I any means of learning to what extent the projected marriage was one of affection or of policy, and so I had all the torment of jealousy added to my despair.

But it is needless to dwell on my own commonplace love-story—commonplace at least thus far—farther than to show why it was that Madame de Paro passed out of my thoughts so soon. But at the end of some days, or weeks, I forget which, I was reminded of her by receiving a short note, which, with Laurent's sketch, I have by me still. It was to ask me to call upon her at an hour which she named, and to let her see any sketches of mine that I pleased and could conveniently bring; and she more than suggested that she hoped to be able to put work that would be worth having in my way.

Will it be believed that I was even then indisposed to see her? Nevertheless, such was the case; and even now I am myself unable to discover any satisfactory reason, even fully taking into account the mental illness by which I was then prostrated, to account for all the symptoms of my strong disinclination. However, as a mere matter of the most common politeness, it was impossible for me to refuse; and so, at the time named, I kept the appoint-

ment, carrying with me a portfolio, the contents of which, however, I was by no means careful to select or arrange.

Madame de Paro—if she really bore the title of Princess, I imagine that it was in the Russian or Slavonic sense, and not in any sense in which the title is used in Western Europe—occupied magnificent apartments, which seemed to show that her reputation for wealth was not ill-founded; but they were not furnished quite according to modern ideas of taste, although it would be difficult to explain why. It struck me, however, that the occupant herself could have no very settled taste in the matter, for there was a sort of strife between the extremes of classical simplicity and of almost barbaric splendour. She was reclining on a sofa when I came in, and apparently amusing herself by contemplating the effect of her *pose* in one of the mirrors with which the room was filled. Her general appearance was much the same as when I saw her at Madame M——'s, and although it was now day, her complexion was as perfectly free from the least suggestion of colour as then, showing that its extreme clearness and whiteness had not been due in any way to the effect of artificial light, but was natural to her. She was, however, much more plainly and negligently dressed than I had expected to find her, and looked rather fatigued and *ennuyée*.

She seemed glad to see me, and again held me under that long look of hers which I have mentioned already, and which, with all its strangeness, was as unembarrassing as it was unembarrassed.

"I am delighted to see you, Monsieur Melvil—and all the more as I see you have brought your portfolio. However, we will look at that presently—there is plenty of time.—But how pale you are! I hope you have not been ill?"

I answered by making some vague excuse for not having called on her sooner.

"I am afraid you work too hard?"

"That would not be easy in Paris, madame."

"Why? Paris is only a place like others."

This speech struck me as being rather absurdly *blasé* for a woman like her, and I set it down to affectation.

"Well," I said, "I find it so uncongenial to work that I think of leaving for that very reason."

"Indeed! And where should you go?"

"Oh, I don't know—anywhere. Perhaps back to the little German town I was at before I came here."

"Ah, you were telling me about it—Eulenburg, was it not? What sort of place is it? I have never been there."

I gave her some account of the place and of the gallery of the museum, in which, with the strong curiosity as to all artistic matters which I had before remarked in her, she seemed highly interested.

The missing statue was also mentioned. She asked me to describe it to her. I did so with something of my lost animation, and then, seized with an irresistible temptation, added—

"But if madame would stand before that long glass, she will herself see an exact copy of it—if not its original; for I almost suspect madame, in spite of all appearance to the contrary, of being at least two thousand years old, and to have sat to Polydorus."

She smiled, rose, and went to the mirror, into which she looked earnestly and gravely. Any other woman would have sought to find a compliment in my words, but she took them literally. After an instant or two she returned to her seat.

"Then I could sit to you as the statue?" she asked, in a serious manner.

I looked up. "She can't surely be going to propose herself as a sculptor's model," I thought; and yet there was something altogether so strange about her that I should not have been very much astonished. There were many ladies at that time of quite as high a position as hers seemed to be, who did very odd things and indulged very odd caprices—odder than that by far. Besides, when I came to think of it, her social position was, after all, very vague; and her visiting Madame M——, though a kind of certificate of good reputation, was not absolutely final.

A banker must pay some amount of respect and attention to a rich and distinguished client, even though she may not be a real princess.

However, there was nothing for it but to say "As well? What sculptor could ever hope to find a statue half so perfect?"

"Did you not say you considered the Hercyna perfection?"

"As perfect as a statue can be."

"And me?"

"As perfect as a woman."

I almost began to think my new patroness a little touched in the brain, her questions seemed so utterly beside any mark whatever.

"Come, let me see your portfolio," she said. suddenly.

I opened it. I have already said that I had not taken any trouble to make any arrangement or selection, and as I have always been what good housewives call an untidy person, I had no accurate notion as to what it contained—nor did I very much care. She sat down at a table, and began to turn over the sketches, while I stood over her, so that I might give any explanation that she might require.

I am certainly not going to give a catalogue of what she found there. In fact I remember very little about it, for my mind was by no means so intent upon my exhibition as by rights it should

have been. Madame de Paro still kept up her interest, and asked some hundreds of questions, some of the most childish character, some which, as coming from a lady, made me stare considerably, and some showing not only intelligence and even depth of thought, but an experience of far greater width than my own. In justice to her, however, I must say that the freedom of her talk seemed rather to be that of an innocent child who has been brought up in an impure atmosphere of which it has caught up the phrases, but nothing more, than that of a woman who is consciously coarse or eccentric; nor was there anything else in her manner and tone otherwise than perfectly modest and refined. Her questions and remarks were all made with a directly and honestly critical purpose; and had I been ten times vainer than I ever was, I should have thought no differently either of them or of her. If I have not succeeded in making my portrait of her intelligible, or like that of any real human being—if I have not made her *live*—it is because she had not hitherto seemed to myself to live. There was something still so very unreal and unwomanlike about her altogether—not in my eyes only, but, judging from my observations taken at Madame M——'s, in those of other people also—that it seems to me as difficult to make her live in words as if she had been a Wyvern or a Gorgon.

At last she came to a sketch at which she

paused for some time in silence. I did not immediately notice this, however, for I had fallen into a brown study, so that, while my eyes were mechanically directed to the portfolio, my thoughts were far away. Presently, however, roused by some slight movement of hers, I became conscious of her long silence, and I looked. To my infinite distress, she had come across a slight water-colour picture of Alice which I had taken some time ago, and had brought with me from England.

A mirror was opposite to Madame de Paro as she sat at the table; and just then I happened to catch in it the expression of her face. It was very peculiar. She was looking intently at the sketch with a slight frown of puzzled annoyance something like that of a naturalist who has suddenly come across some undiscovered specimen which belongs to no known class, and, by its very existence, protests against some favourite system of the finder. I neither spoke nor moved, hoping that she might pass it by without remark.

But I was disappointed. "Yes," she said, parodying the "*Il y a des fagots et des fagots*" of Molière; "there is life and life. I must know this woman."

I did not answer.

"This face is no sculptor's model," she said; "and yet——" I saw her glance at her own in the mirror, and then look again at the sketch,

which she examined in every way, sometimes bending closely over it, sometimes holding it at arm's-length, as though it contained some secret that she could not read. At length—

"What does this picture mean?" she asked.

"It is the portrait of a young lady."

"No—it is more than that. It is the portrait of one who has done more than merely live."

"More than live? What is there more than life?"

"Is there not what men call love?"

She looked at me as she spoke, with that long look of hers. I fancied that she had read my own secret. For the first time my eyes fell before hers; and they rested on the picture. She sighed deeply; and her look once more sought the mirror, into which she gazed intently.

"Am I not right," she asked, "in thinking that this face has seen Love?"

I was confused and silent.

"Strange!" she said, half aloud. "There seems to be as much difference between love and life as between flesh and marble. May I keep this sketch?" she asked, suddenly.

"If madame would excuse me," I stammered. "It is the portrait of a friend—and——"

"But your friend would excuse you, surely? I have taken a fancy to it—I really wish for it. As to the price, I will name that myself."

"If madame could choose any other — but I

have reasons for asking madame to allow this to remain mine."

"So be it, then. But will you do me one favour instead?"

"I shall be only too happy."

"Paint, then, my own portrait twice: the first time at once, and the second whenever I may desire it."

"I do not profess to be a painter of living portraits; I am far more versed in marble. If madame desires her portrait, I can recommend her others far better—there is Félix Laurent——"

"No; I will be painted by you, and by no other."

I was not altogether disinterested in my disinclination to undertake the task. The unreasonable antipathy that seemed to exist on my part towards Madame de Paro kept growing stronger and stronger; and this, combined with her extreme singularity, made me a little afraid of her, while at the same time I was not in a mental state to care very much about understanding her better. Perhaps at any other time curiosity and artistic interest would have made me leap at the chance of obtaining so remarkable a study; but it was not so now.

"Since you really wish it, madame——"

"I do wish it. When can you give me a sitting?"

"Whenever madame pleases."

"To-morrow, then?"

"By all means."

"At ten o'clock. I do not want a large picture—about that size will do," she said, pointing to the sketch of Alice. "Where do you work? I will come to you there."

I gave the address of my own small and inconvenient studio, at the same time apologising for the want of accommodation she would find there.

"I will be with you at ten to-morrow, then, punctually. As to terms—will you leave them to me?"

"On condition that madame is satisfied with the result; for I confess I doubt my ability."

"Let it be so, then. But I shall be satisfied."

I put up my portfolio, and was about to leave the room.

"Stay," she said, suddenly; "the lady of that sketch—how is she named?"

"Mademoiselle Fenwick, a young English lady," I answered, as carelessly as I could.

"And do you see her often?"

"I have not seen her for long."

"And you consider her very beautiful?"

"I consider her beautiful."

"More beautiful than that statue at Eulenburg?"

I could not help smiling, in spite of my embarrassment. "As regards form, by no means.

That statue of which you speak is the most beautiful piece of form I ever saw. Supposing that it had been a living woman, no woman living would be comparable to it."

"You think, then, that it wanted nothing but life?"

I could not for the life of me make out at what the lady was driving with questions that seemed so utterly absurd. But, as she evidently expected an answer—

"With life," I said, "it would have been the perfection of woman's beauty."

"You are wrong, then," she replied, quietly. "There would have been something still wanting to make it perfection."

"And that would have been——?"

"Surely you, an artist, are not ignorant? Well, you will see in good time. Meanwhile I shall reckon upon your being prepared to receive me at ten o'clock to-morrow."

And so ended my second interview with the Princess de Paro.

VI.

The beautiful Greek, Circassian, Hungarian, or whatever countrywoman she was, was more than punctual to the appointed hour. Indeed her im-

patience was such that she arrived at my studio full ten minutes before the clock struck ten. When she had thrown off her outdoor wrappings, she appeared before me in precisely the same costume as that in which I had seen her at Madame M——'s, the white lace scarf with the golden embroidery not being forgotten. I confess that I was a little relieved when I saw how she was dressed, for I was quite prepared for her appearance in a costume far more nearly approaching that of her marble likeness at Eulenburg. She appeared to be rather silent and excited when she first arrived; but her face very soon recovered the calm coldness of its usual expression.

Nothing could have done me more real good or braced my thoughts better than thus being compelled to work, and that at so extremely difficult a subject. It was then that I first unconsciously began to learn the divine lesson that work itself is consolation; and that, of all men, the artist—by which term I do not mean the painter only—has that consolation always within reach if he can only summon up just sufficient energy to lift his hand. As I endeavoured to reproduce the form and colour before me, my strength began gradually to return, and I began to do my best merely for the sake of doing it. The Princess de Paro was an excellent and unwearying sitter, so that considerable progress was made even in the first hour.

The next day she sat again; and after that she came almost daily until the picture was completed. I own that I was proud of the result when I showed it to her in its finished state; and on looking back, I still think that my pride was not unjustified. It was by far the best attempt I had yet made—indeed I doubt if I ever succeeded in making so entirely satisfactory a portrait since.

She looked at it lingeringly—I almost thought sadly, as if it were the picture of an old friend whom she had lately lost, or was about to lose, and would never see again. Her eyes even filled with tears. Then, without a single word of praise, she just thanked me, gave me some directions as to how the picture should be sent to her, and left the room quietly. I was, however, more than satisfied with her silence, holding with the prince in 'Emilia Galotti' that the artist is then most highly praised when, before his work, his praise is forgotten. It was then about mid-day, or a little past. By evening the picture had been carried away by one of madame's servants, who at the same time left for me a sum of money, such as, I should imagine, had never been paid to any painter for a portrait even in art's most royal days. In fact it was so exorbitant that I could not reconcile it with my conscience to take so much without some protest, or at least without furnishing my patroness

with something like an equivalent. With this motive I went out the very next afternoon to see her again.

Need I say it? I was not half-way along the Rue Rivoli when I found myself face to face with Alice once more.

This time, however, she and her aunt were accompained by a man of some few years older than myself, for whose sake alone I would have passed them by, had that been possible. I had been thinking too much of Alice to see her until we were close together; and then I beheld in her face such a war of white and red that half the burden was lifted from my heart.

"So you did not die of *ennui* at Eulenburg?" said Mrs Dalton.

"It seems not; unless this is my ghost."

"I am not so sure that it is not," she answered. "I certainly cannot compliment you on your healthy appearance. I am afraid people do not keep quite such regular hours at Paris as at Eulenburg?"

I had taken the hand of Alice for an instant as her aunt spoke, and tried hard to imagine that I felt it tremble the least in the world in mine.

"Let me introduce you," said Mrs Dalton; and she went through a form that was vainly supposed to put me on friendly terms with Lord Wynfield.

"Do you remember," she went on, "your show-

ing us over the museum at Eulenburg last May? We are now on our way to the Luxembourg—and, if you are as idle as you were then——"

If it had not been for the presence of Lord Wynfield! But, as it was, I answered — more coldly and stiffly, I fear, than kind-hearted Mrs Dalton ever in her life deserved to be answered by any one—

"I am afraid I am engaged just now."

"Particularly?"

"Yes—I have to call on a new patron—or rather patroness—of mine." This I was silly enough to add for the benefit of Alice.

"Then I suppose we must not detain you," said Mrs Dalton, in a tone which was cold in its turn; but her coldness had the good effect of making me ashamed of my own.

"Indeed, Mrs Dalton, I should be only too happy to join you, but I really have business." I racked my brain for a good excuse; for, in truth, my real business was not of an immediately pressing nature, and Mrs Dalton, good-natured as she was, by no means liked being neglected — indeed she had always been far too kind to myself for me to run away from her on such an occasion as this without some more satisfactory reason.

"I have been painting the portrait of a Princess de Paro," I said; "and——"

"The Princess de Paro?" interrupted Lord Wyn-

field; "what! the mysterious Italian whom we heard so much about last night?"

"The same, no doubt; and I have an appointment to see her this morning; and——"

"Then I think I can save you the trouble," said Lord Wynfield. "I met to-day Monsieur M——, the banker, you know, who seems to know more about her than any one else; and he told me that she left Paris yesterday evening, and that he himself saw her off."

"Left Paris!" I exclaimed, in surprise.

"Monsieur M—— was surprised himself. But she seems to be a lady full of caprices, from what I have heard from him and others."

Mrs Dalton shook her head. "I don't like capricious people," she said, sententiously. "I hope she has paid you?" she asked, turning to me.

"I was on my way to tell her she had over-paid me."

"I am so glad!" Mrs Dalton answered. "It was very clear that she did not want to hear anything more of what she chose to give you. I am sure I congratulate you heartily; and the more so, as you will now come with us to the Luxembourg."

I do not think that any one ever repented of having told a lie more than I then repented of not having told one. There was no help for it now, however; and so, having expressed the pleasure that I ought to have felt, but did not feel, I turned

and walked on with them. Lord Wynfield and Alice went in front, and I followed with Mrs Dalton.

Now to walk behind with a middle-aged aunt, and to be compelled to watch, silently and helplessly, the open attentions paid to one's mistress by a successful rival, may be ridiculous enough to those who watch the game, but to the unfortunate performer—well, I will only say that I do not think I ever before or since had so much intense misery compressed into so relatively short a time; and, what made matters worse, I was expected, and almost bound, to talk pleasantly and to make myself agreeable the whole while. I was of a jealous nature in those days, and had not the happy faculty of losing a game with either fortitude or dignity. Nor was I a good hand at concealing what I felt; and I am conscious that I must have occasionally made my kind-hearted companion stare by my fits of abstraction and by the things that I said *à tort et à travers.* If she thought that the paleness and loss of health that she had noticed in me arose from cognac or absinthe, as well as from late hours, I fear that she was not altogether without apparent ground for her error. I am not about to give even an abridged version of our talk by the way, for the simple reason that I do not remember a single word of it; and I am glad to have forgotten.

At last we reached the Luxembourg: I cannot

say to my relief, for here, I thought, must matters necessarily become worse for me still. I, too, had before now taken advantage of a picture-gallery and an unsuspecting *chaperone*, so that I knew something of what might happen in such places. Still my experience would be of some practical service to me—I would take care that the *chaperone* should not confine her attention, as before, to the school to which D'Ormiglione belonged, or that, at the least, I would supply her sins of omission. Of course the result would only entail annoyance on the lovers without being of the smallest benefit to myself: but then jealousy is as unreasoning as it is unreasonable, and as spiteful as it is weak.

As it happened, this idea of mine was a pure piece of self-torment: for had I been in my proper senses, I should have seen that, so far as Alice herself was concerned, I had every reason to be of good hope. She evidently had not the least intention that our party should be divided into couples, while, at the same time, she was as cold to me as women never are save towards those whom they either hate or—the contrary. But I was not yet fully versed in that strange feminine language in which black means white and cold means warm. I doubt, indeed, if any one ever does come to understand it where he himself is concerned: and so, perhaps, I was not exceptionally blind after all. At last I reached that state in which, time and place being

alike disregarded, one feels driven, almost in spite of one's self, to bring matters to a crisis, whatever the cost may be. While trying, therefore, to talk pictures with Mrs Dalton, I set my brain to work to find or invent an opportunity for saying six words to her niece.

Had I been utterly careless about the matter, nothing would have been easier: as it was, nothing could have seemed more difficult. At last, however, chance favoured me. Lord Wynfield happened to see some English friends, to whom he stopped to speak. Mrs Dalton took advantage of the opportunity to sit down, and somehow or other — I do not exactly know how — I found myself standing with Alice out of earshot. She looked round, and, finding herself alone with me, was about to turn and rejoin her aunt.

"Wait an instant," I said; "look at that—— So it seems that you have forgotten Eulenburg. I must speak to you now, Alice — I have that right, at least: and it will be some kindness if you will be open with me, and tell me at once that what you said then was a folly of which you have repented."

"I was wrong, then, and I have suffered for it," she said quickly, and in a low voice. "I hoped you had forgotten."

"That I had forgotten!—But the news was true, then; and nothing remains but to say good-bye at

once. I thank you indeed for being so frank, and I would congratulate you if I could."

"If I could tell you all! But that cannot be. It would be wrong of me to say one word—more wrong even than—— Though it is hard that you should think of me——"

"I think nothing wrong of you; I only think myself a fool—that is all."

Nor, when I think of it, was I so much out in my thought: only not in the way that I meant at the time.

"Indeed you would forgive me, if you only knew! Do not be afraid that I shall forgive myself."

"There is nothing to forgive," I answered, half roughly, half coldly. I was beginning to add brutality to folly.

"Then——" She stopped: tears were in her eyes and voice. Her unmistakable emotion restored me to my better self. "It is I who must be forgiven, Alice," I said. "So it is all over. Well, I must try to bear it as I can. I am not the first, I suppose, who has been waked like this from such a dream." I was going to say much more, but Lord Wynfield had now left his friends, and was coming towards us with Mrs Dalton. Alice busied herself with one of the pictures that hung nearest to where she stood. I, to give her time to recover her composure, left her, and went forward to meet our companions.

"And now," I somehow managed to say, "I fear I must really leave you. I have spent with you all the time I had."

"Will you not dine with us?"

"I fear not. Indeed, perhaps I may not see you again while you are here."

"Not see us again? Surely——"

"I am afraid not. I forgot to tell you that this is my last day in Paris for the present—I have preparations to make——"

My old friend looked surprised and hurt.

"I hope there is nothing wrong?" she asked. "Where are you going? To England?"

"No; to Eulenburg."

For about the first time within my recollection of her she seemed to see below the surface of things. Her eye rested for an instant on Alice, whose face was still turned away. Her voice softened as she said—

"Then, if you really must go—but I am so sorry—we shall see you when we are back in town?"

"I hope so."

"Of course we shall; but we shall hear of you before then." The good lady held out her hand, which I took, formally touched that of Alice, bowed to her future husband, and hurried away. I do not think that he suspected anything; and, as he had never seen me before, probably set down my be-

haviour to natural bearishness. In any case, he must have had plenty of reason for preferring my room to my company.

VII.

And so my romance seemed to have come to a very decided end. Still, what else could I have expected? I know what I should think were one of my own daughters to engage herself without my knowledge to a poor devil of an artist, with no prospects, living anyhow in Paris, of whom no one knew much, and of whom I knew nothing at all. I do not imagine that even my own old recollections would make me very soft-hearted in the matter. The risk of a broken heart is far safer to run than that of an unhappy marriage; and as for the feelings of the lover, even if I knew him to be a good fellow, I confess that I would trample upon them without a shadow of compunction. Therefore I warn off from my sheepfold all such wolves as I used to be; and if a second Lord Wynfield seeks to enter, I will receive him, if not quite with open arms, yet with all respect and hearty goodwill.

But "*Et in Arcadiâ ego*"—and so I went to bury myself once more in Eulenburg.

For their part, the Fenwick party remained in

Paris throughout the season, proceeded thence to Nice, or some such place, and were at Rome in time for Easter. One day, while there, it happened that Alice had been with some acquaintances to some one of the services which are especially attractive to foreign spectators. In the seat next to her was a lady, who, however, did not seem to have come, like most of those in that part of the church, with the object of curiosity or amusement, for her whole demeanour was that of real devotion; and yet, at the same time, she seemed but little familiar with the form or nature of the function at which she was assisting. What made Alice take particular notice of her was her extreme but singular beauty, which was of a type belonging to no particular nation, for it was perfectly fair, and yet was certainly not of the north. The two remained in the same place until, the ceremony being over, they found themselves at the door of the church; and then, for the first time, their eyes met. Those of the stranger, although of a deep soft colour, were bright and flashing, so that those of Alice fell before them. The latter felt, she knew not why, as though the other had sought to read her soul, and she was afraid. At the same time she heard a bearded and long-haired Frenchman say to a companion—

"*Tiens, Félix!* There is Madame de Paro."

The other looked at the stranger with grave

attention. "No," he answered, slowly, "that is not Madame de Paro, unless Madame de Paro has found a soul."

"A soul—in Rome? But it is her body at all events," replied the first; and they went away.

Alice remembered having heard of that singular person when in Paris, and also of her having been acquainted with Lewis Melvil; and so regretted not having observed her more closely. Her regret, however, was short-lived; for the very same evening, at a large ball, she met the same lady again, dressed in her usual style of white and gold, with the Greek head-dress, and with the embroidered lace scarf upon her shoulder.

Before long the two found themselves side by side.

"That was glorious music this morning," said the Princess, apparently for the sake of saying something. "We were neighbours there, were we not?"

"I remember seeing you there. I enjoyed the music extremely."

"I did not enjoy it at all," replied Madame de Paro. "I enjoy the chirping of a sparrow better. It was glorious—but it was glorious pain."

"You do not love music?" asked Alice, timidly, and, like most people who conversed with the Princess, not quite knowing what her companion meant.

"Love it?" the latter asked, hesitatingly; "well, I suppose I do, but I don't know. I am always glad and relieved when it is over, and I know nothing about it. But pardon me," she added, "am I right in thinking that you are Mademoiselle Fenwick?—I thought so. Have you heard of Monsieur Melvil lately?" This she said suddenly, with a slight rush of colour into the face that was usually so pale and undisturbed.

Alice, in her turn, flushed with a far deeper crimson. "No," she said. She again felt the glow of the sapphire eyes.

"For I have a message for him," replied the Princess. "Do you know where he is? Do you correspond with him?"

Alice felt as though the eyes were piercing into her heart; but, resolved to yield up none of its secrets, she met them boldly and calmly. "He is now, I believe, at Eulenburg," she answered, quietly, "but we have no correspondence with him."

"Ah, at Eulenburg!" exclaimed Madame de Paro, with a touch of something triumphant in her voice. "Thanks. My dear girl, we must be friends," she added, with a charming smile, from which all the old coldness seemed banished. "Where are you living? I will call upon you if I may."

"I shall be delighted," answered Alice, although

rather taken aback at the proposal; "and I am sure that papa——"

"I have been introduced to Sir John already; so that is settled, and you will see me very soon. And now good night—I always keep early hours."

She rose up from her chair rather suddenly, so that the lace scarf which she always wore over her left shoulder slipped partly off. With a look of alarm she quickly pulled it up and replaced it in its usual folds; but not before Alice had seen that it concealed a long black stain, coloured like a fresh bruise, which disfigured her shoulder, her breast, and the upper part of her arm, all of which were otherwise of such marble whiteness.

The manner and words of the Princess in mentioning Melvil had been such as to lead any one to suppose that there was some relation between herself and him of a stronger kind than that of artist and patron, and so it seemed to Alice; and yet the latter was puzzled at it only, and not in the least really disturbed. No one, somehow, ever seemed to be jealous of the Princess de Paro, with all her beauty.

VIII.

"Alice," said the Princess, as they were sitting together one morning, "you still have something more than I."

"I do not know what it can be, then." She was still rather afraid of her new friend; but a week of frequent intercourse had given a peculiar form to her fear, and had mingled with it that feeling of trust which the weaker of two natures entertains towards the stronger.

"Look into your own heart and then into mine. You have life—that I have also: you love——"

"Princess!"

"Is it not so? That also I have obtained; but there is one gift which is not mine even yet—the gift of being loved."

Alice was silent. She had not the least desire to receive these strange confidences.

"Do you think I cannot see it in his eyes—hear it in his voice? He, too, flies from the summer to your presence, and loves it only through you. No; to live and to love is not the whole of earthly happiness. What is beauty if it is not loved, and love if it is not returned? And this gift I have yet to obtain."

"But——"

"Teach me, Alice," continued the Princess, drawing the young girl still more closely towards her—"teach me the secret of becoming loved."

Alice looked at her with all her eyes. "Surely it is not for me to teach that to you, so beautiful, so clever, so amiable; surely you have only to wish it, and you will be loved."

"It needs a wish, then? I had hoped that love made love. But so be it. You have taught me what I asked, and I am resolved to know the whole. Before long I too will be loved, even as you are loved by him—by—— His name, dear child?" she asked, with a smile: "these English names——"

Alice was alternately red and pale. "His name?" she asked, tremblingly.

"Is it then so difficult to name him who loves one?" asked the Princess; "surely not! I should have thought he would be named with pride, whoever he might be." She spoke as though she meant to be obeyed.

"Do you mean—Lewis Melvil?" said Alice, with an effort.

"Lewis Melvil!" exclaimed Madame de Paro, no longer with a smile. "Are you dreaming, child?"

Poor Alice was ready to sink under the earth for confusion and shame. She had indeed been dreaming; but she had talked in her sleep, and the secret of her dream was no longer her own.

Madame de Paro shrank from her side. "So it is he whom you love, and not Lord Wynfield?—I have the name now," she said.

Alice did not answer, but only looked down upon the floor in a state of distress that was pitiable.

"And so this is the happiness of love!" the Princess continued. "You love him, and you marry another."

"Pray do not ask me any more," said Alice. "I did not mean, indeed——"

"What did you not mean? And does he love you also, this Lewis Melvil?"

"I hope not—now."

"And you shall have your hope—that I promise you. Are you sure he loves you? Has he told you so? But I forget—I thought that was all over." The last few words she seemed to speak to herself.

"Why do you not marry him, then?" she asked again. "Tell me—do not be afraid," she said, more kindly. "I am not angry—why should I be? Are we not friends? Only I cannot see what should stand in the way of love." And so she petted and caressed, and talked softly to her, until Alice, little by little, really felt a need to pour her confidence into such apparently sympathising ears.

"I must marry Lord Wynfield," she said. "It is to obey and to save my father."

And so, by degrees, she told her story—how she had taken it into her head to fall in love with a penniless painter, and had listened to him when he told her of his love, without thinking any harm; how her father came to see ruin staring him in the face, and worse than ruin; how after a sore struggle she had engaged herself to Lord Wynfield to save all to whom her love was due. Then said the Princess at last—

"You are a good and brave girl. Do not vex yourself about Melvil; he shall not suffer—he shall love you no more."

IX.

It was very soon after the date of this conversation that I, seated once more in my old room at Eulenburg, received this note:—

"The Princess de Paro begs to remind Herr Melvil of his promise that he would paint a second portrait of her. She will be at Eulenburg within a week from now."

Not many days afterwards I received this also:—

"The Princess de Paro is arrived, and will be glad to see Herr Melvil at any hour to-morrow between eleven and two."

It is impossible to be always at the same pitch of moral depression; and even to me, heart-wounded as I really was, Eulenburg was not the same place as Paris—that is to say, I missed my friends, and the pleasures that would have given me at least distraction, if they failed to afford me genuine amusement or interest.

Doctor Mohnkopf, excellent old gentleman as he was, was not Félix Laurent—not to speak of other things; and so I was really glad of the appearance of my mysterious Princess once more upon the

scene of my *ennui*. I was with her very soon after eleven.

But was this the Princess de Paro whom I saw? Was this the cold-eyed lady of the Marble Mines—the cloud of snow and gold that Félix had sketched for me?

Let me describe her now if I can. Formerly I excused myself, and with good reason, for not having succeeded in setting before my reader the picture of a living woman. Now, however, if I fail to do so, the fault is wholly my own.

She was the same, and yet not the same. The wonderful form was unchanged; but she was no longer only a sculptor's model. She was now rather for the painter. And I had to paint her who would have been Titian's triumph or despair! The thing was then as far out of the reach of my colours as it is now out of the reach of my words. Imagine Aphrodite just risen from the sea, Papha bursting into life at the prayer of Pygmalion, Hera after borrowing the *cestus*, Helen—— Bah! It is not to describe a woman, this wandering back to hackneyed types. And yet these are the best examples, too, were they not so worn as to convey no longer any definite and living idea.

I will try again, in another way. When, being then quite a child, I first read 'The Abbot' of Sir Walter Scott—whether it was the result of the suggestive power of the author, or of my own

imagination, or of a mixture of both, I know not—I evolved a Mary Stewart, whose image has never been affected by anything that I have subsequently read or learned about her. I always pictured her, and I picture her still, not as a woman merely, but as my representative woman, in all her strength and weakness, in all her largeness and littleness: and I gave her a *physique* in accordance with my idea. Whatever she may have been historically, to me she is tall and full of figure, with long limbs and strong, and yet as tender and delicate as those of a young girl; full of the strength of health, into which no idea of coarseness or grossness enters, and with flesh which, though round and firm, would shrink and bruise at the slightest touch that is not of love. Her white skin, pale everywhere, and rather of satin than of velvet, suggests, like the "*Andalouse au sein bruni*," the hues of autumn rather than of the spring or summer: but her mouth is of the noon of summer, and her eyes of the morning of spring—that is to say, express richness of passion and brightness of mind. She is one in whom Rizzio, the delicate southern poet, and Bothwell, the rough northern soldier, alike find their ideal of womanhood; in whom I—to be egotistic—first found mine, child as I was, and for whose sake I regretted that I had not been the George Douglas, who, having loved her from afar, came to die at last under the rain of her tears.

And now I saw her before me, and did *not* fall down before her feet.

It was certainly not because I was of a cold nature, for coldness on such occasions has never been one of my qualities: it was not that I had outlived my romance, for I was not more than five-and-twenty, and was most romantically in love; and among men love for one woman by no means lessens the power of the beauty of others. And yet, even as I had formerly looked on her as I should have looked on a statue, so I now regarded her as if she had been a beautiful picture, which one loves with the mind only. Even her voice, which had acquired a warm softness of tone in addition to its pure clearness—and, worker in form and colour as I am, it is by the voice that I am ever most attracted or repelled—did no more than charm my actual bodily ears. I felt positively angry with myself for my unaccountable coldness; and all the more angry because even then I was unable to account for it on the ground of my love for Alice Fenwick.

It was certainly a very different thing from what it had been in Paris to endeavour to reproduce her now upon canvas. The fact that the likeness had to be the same in form only added to the difficulty: it was like trying to fill old bottles with new wine. I failed completely and ignominiously; nor could any one be more conscious that I had failed than I.

But she seemed to perceive other reasons for my having been unsuccessful.

"I am not surprised," she said, "though I own I am disappointed. By the way," she asked, suddenly, putting one of those abrupt and odd questions of hers, to which, however, I had by this time nearly grown accustomed, "what do you suppose was the origin of painting?"

"That is rather a wide historical inquiry, is it not, Madame?"

"Is there not some legend——"

"Oh, you mean the story of the lady who traced her lover's shadow on the wall with a lump of charcoal, and wrote under it, I suppose, *amor pinxit?*"

"That is what I mean. And I imagine that portrait, at least, was no failure."

"I have no doubt it served its purpose."

"And that is more than yours does."

"I am most sorry——"

"Oh, it is of no real consequence. I hold you to your promise, and you will try again."

"And fail again. You are beyond my skill, Madame."

"At present I may be; but not next time. Next time you will not only not fail, but succeed admirably."

"Then, in that case, by next time I shall have become the greatest portrait-painter since the world began."

"You will be the equal of the girl who traced the shadow."

"I confess, Madame, that, fail as I may, my ambition would not be quite content with that."

"Your ambition could find no loftier object. Only wait. Both of us have many things to learn."

I do but plead guilty to an incapacity common to all writers who have ever attempted to report a conversation when I apologise for having tried to paint that of Madame de Paro by such a tame, spiritless collection of common words. It was not with words that she talked now, but with eyes that did far more than speak, with slight but eager movements, and with flashes of colour, which made what she actually said of far less consequence than how she said it. I have abstained from quoting one of her spoken words that did not seem in itself of special significance; and I can do no more.

A day or two passed without my seeing anything more of my Princess, though I certainly heard enough about her. She was not a person to remain many days even in Paris without becoming the topic of general conversation and curiosity; and it did not take many hours to produce the same result in a place like Eulenburg. She kept herself very close, however, and was seen but little abroad or in people's houses, although one of the peculiarities about her was the manner in which a

person who was really so unknown as she, seemed to be accepted everywhere by the best society. But though I heard plenty of admiration expressed for her beauty, I doubt if here, any more than in Paris, any of her own sex had the least cause to be jealous about it for a moment: and I do not think that the most romantic of art-students would for her sake have deserted his easel, or have been tempted by the prospect of her society to lose a single morning of sunshine. It seemed that she spoke the literal truth when she said that Alice Fenwick, whose beauty was not to be compared with hers, had something or other in her nature that was wanting to that of the Princess de Paro.

But something far more interesting to myself than even the visit of the Princess put all other matters out of my head completely for the time. It was the following piece of news which I happened to see in an English newspaper:—

"We learn from Rome of the serious illness of Lord Wynfield, eldest son of the Earl of ——. The state of the noble lord is such as to cause considerable anxiety to his medical attendants, and, though not dangerous, is, we are sorry to learn, eminently critical."

But what, it may be asked, was this to me? Even if Lord Wynfield should die, not the faintest real difference would be brought about in my own circumstances. I should still be as far off as ever

from attaining the desire of my soul. I was neither his heir nor his next brother; and, without being one or the other, his death could no longer improve my position with regard to Alice: nor, indeed, having now been regularly rejected, upon what I could not but think worldly grounds, was I very likely to renew the struggle, even were the field ever again really and practically open to my attempt. Still, however, as may easily be imagined, the news was by no means ungrateful to me. Hope can scarcely be said to have given its very last gasp until the church-door has closed upon the very last of the returning bridesmaids. I do not accuse myself of going the length of consciously wishing the death of Lord Wynfield, but I should not like to have to analyse my unconscious wishes too closely.

As may be supposed, I perpetually looked in the English papers in order to learn whatever particulars they might give as to his condition from time to time; but of this I learned nothing more. I did not even know whether he was still in Rome, and I had no acquaintance there from whom I could inquire. At last, however, in the 'Times,' I saw something that was news indeed, although it affected Lord Wynfield but indirectly.

The piece of news was this, that Sir John Fenwick, to whom I had always looked up with awe and wonder as a typical pillar of commercial magnificence and stability, had fallen down from

his place, and had—apparently, for his character was thoroughly cleared afterwards—turned out to be nothing more than a very ordinary, though for so long a very successful, rogue. No sooner had I learned this news than, acting upon the best impulse that ever man had, I wrote at once to my friend Mrs Dalton, enclosing at the same time a letter to Alice.

X.

Now it was that the Princess began in truth to try the effect of her undoubted beauty, and strove to bring entirely to her feet him who had been carried from before those of her likeness, the lost statue, by Alice Fenwick ; nor, although he was her principal quarry, did she seem unwilling to collect all whom she could under her power. And yet in every case, and not only in that of Lewis Melvil, she still met with uniform failure ; and this although all were unanimous in declaring her to be the most beautiful and *spirituelle* of women, so that to have had even the reputation of having an affair with her would in itself have been a distinction. As she had herself as much as said to Alice, there was still something about her that seemed to divide her from the world.

She herself brooded bitterly over it as she sat at her open window one fine autumn morning.

"And so it is not true, as I supposed, and as men choose to fancy and pretend, that still the fairest needs must rule the world; since to be loved one must be more than fair, and even love and beauty buy not love: for there is none with beauty like to mine, nor is there one who loves as well as I—and yet I am not loved.

"Thus mine is not the life that I would learn. I have learned nothing but the pain of life—painful with all its sweetness. I did not desire to live that I might pour forth all and receive nothing. That is for the things of Art—for statues, pictures; not for me, a living, loving woman.

"I am no marble, content to give its beauty and its grace without a word of thanks: I am no picture, absorbing all the glory of the light only to shed it in a greater glory of red and gold and blue: I am no violet, that blossoms and is sweet, although no eye beholds and blesses it: I am no rose, whose life is all fulfilled when it is plucked, robbed of its spirit, and then thrown aside. Shall, then, my body be no better prized—my eyes draw in no part of the world's beauty for my own pleasure? Shall my heart be warm, and my soul's glory great, without reward? Should hunger be made full and thirst be quenched, yet love keep dry and empty?

"My last wish shall not be made in vain. When the time comes I will desire no more such poor half gifts as those I have obtained. For still one

wish is left to me to use—and, by that last, I will not live in vain.

"But that my last may not, like those, be wasted, I will test once more my own strength and my beauty's power; and then, if that should fail, then I will use my third, last wish—for I must needs be loved."

Truly any one who looked on her in her reverie would have wondered that she should need any gift for conquest other than the life and beauty and heart full of love that she had already. That she herself was fully convinced she could not fail, might be read in the expression of consciously expected triumph to which her first look of weariness had now given way. Assuredly Alice Fenwick had plenty of reason to fear for the heart and faith of her lover, if she valued them still.

Just as the Princess had reached the close of her thought, Lewis Melvil himself passed by, and, looking up, saw her as she sat framed, as it were, with the late roses that still climbed and blossomed round the window, and hung down over her golden head. An actual blush came over her face, and her eyes deepened and brightened as their looks met. By a sign she invited him to enter.

This time she did not mention her portrait; an omission at which he was not a little relieved. Indeed her whole conversation was of an altogether unfamiliar tone. It corresponded with her manner,

which, for her, was strangely soft and tender—almost caressing. There is a well-known picture of Titian which on many grounds I consider a masterpiece, and which is own sister to Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis." Read in connection with the poem, it expresses the moment of the disdainful smile that a second time strikes the "poor queen of love, in her own law forlorn." I pride myself upon a special comprehension of the idea of it, and with some reason; having known, as I have known, one who could be blind and deaf to the Princess de Paro. The idea that any mere mortal should impassively withstand and reject the love of the queen of love herself may in itself seem monstrous, unless he were fortified by some such celestial vision as comforted St Anthony in his struggles; but to me it has a peculiar significance. Even Venus herself, according to orthodox mythology, needs something besides her own beauty and her own love to make her triumph sure. She also needs a magic girdle; and as yet the Princess de Paro had not donned that final resource which she had seemed to claim in her reverie for her own.

I hope that I have not by any chance suggested, by my allusion either to Titian or to Shakespeare, any return on the part of my princess of the nineteenth century to the Arcadian or Phœnician style of love-making. If so, I have done her much wrong. The old story was reproduced by her in

no grosser form than old stories are daily being reproduced among us every day in such simple forms and colours as eyes and voices and changes of tone and complexion afford. But then it is just these simple forms and colours that have most danger. In these modern times, and in Western nations, sentiment is not so much the herald as the very mother of passion.

I have but hope of reproducing the Princess de Paro. She must be turned into a poem, and delivered in musical recitative by some *quasi* contralto voice like her own, to the accompaniment, now of some full-chorded harmony of Spohr, and now, I think, of some overflowing melody of the *gran maestro* who died last year. Then I should wish that while the audience listened in perfect silence and in perfect repose—for which reason the performance should not take place in any theatre with which I am acquainted—the other senses should be gratified also: there should be a fugitive and vague perfume of mixed flowers, among which the daphne should prevail. And yet the scene should not take place at night, under a flare of artificial light and heat. There must be no roof over our heads to interpose between the music of sounds and perfumes and the sun and blue sky. The birds and bees and all natural sounds that seem to mingle with rather than disturb all other music should have full permission to form a chorus *ad libitum;*

and in the distance should be just audible the faint plash of a calm sea. The theatre of the Acropolis must be restored.

Yet Lewis Melvil remained still unmoved. At last Madame de Paro must have thought that she had sufficiently put her unaided beauty to the test, and that it was time to form that third and last wish by which the young artist was to be made hers wholly and for ever. Up to this moment, although she had seemed perfectly unrestrained outwardly, her whole soul had been on the strain; but now she allowed herself to relax. She could not nerve herself to a full effort of what is called "will"—or, as I should prefer to term it, the free indulgence of a single unmixed impulse—all at once, and without some preparation. She needed to change her attitude and gather herself together before she sprang. Her heart became filled with anxious fear, the glowing light died from her face, and her eyes fell. She felt languid and weak, and an intense longing came upon her to reverse the position which she intended to bring about, and instead of bringing Melvil to her feet by an effort of strength, to sink down, in utter helplessness, at his. As for Melvil himself, little did he think that these signs of weakness were only intended to herald his own captivity. Presently she began to raise her eyes through the arch of roses to the blue sky.

Eternal mingling of poetry and prose! The very words were on the lips of her heart when a tap was heard at the door, and there appeared the squat figure and expressionless face of the curator of the museum, Doctor Mohnkopf. He had become acquainted with Madame de Paro during her stay at Eulenburg, but not well; and neither did she find any pleasure in his society nor he in hers. Indeed he infinitely preferred marble to flesh and blood, and would have gladly sacrificed a thousand Princesses de Paro, or of anything else, if by so doing he stood a chance of recovering the missing statue. The Hercyna was unique; but there were plenty of women in the world—and all, as he used to think, turned out after much the same pattern, so that a few hundreds more or less would make no difference. Holding these opinions, it may be supposed that he was not very popular with the sex which he thus professed to despise.

"*Guten Morgen, gnäd'ge Frau,*" he said to the lady, who looked at him as though she knew how to hate as well as to love; "it is right beautiful weather, and good for the harvest. A letter came to the museum yesterday directed to Herr Melvil—in passing, I stopped at his house to deliver it. There I heard that he had been seen come in here, so I brought it in, as it was marked 'Immediate.' Excuse me, *gnäd'ge Frau,*" and he handed me the letter.

She bowed to the curator not over-politely.

"May I open it?" asked Melvil. "It is marked 'Immediate,' and I recognise the hand." His heart beat as he spoke, for it was from Mrs Dalton.

"Certainly," answered the Princess.

Without even remembering to thank the Herr Doctor for his good-nature — who, after trying clumsily to say a few civil things to the Princess, took his departure—Melvil opened his letter; and very soon was rude enough to forget the presence of Madame de Paro herself, who, poor lady, sat and watched him silently and anxiously as he read.

Two sheets of paper fell from the envelope. The first was as follows :—

"My dear Mr Melvil,—I—we, I should say—cannot thank you half enough for your most kind letter. We are indeed in terrible trouble, of which not the least part is the dreadful things people say; though how they can believe them of Sir John, who has always been so respected, I cannot understand. Your letter was therefore all the more welcome. It was just what I should have expected from you, however—not that everybody has done at all what one expected. We cannot afford to lose any of our friends now; and so, once more, it was very good of you to write. If there is anything you can really do, I will not hesitate to let you know. You mean what you say, I am sure.

"Of course poor Alice's marriage has had to be broken off. I don't know, I'm sure, what she is to do, poor child! I gave her your enclosure, and she says she is going to answer it; so I will not say more about that myself. I should be so glad, only don't do anything imprudent. You must think of yourself as well as of us; and we are not in a position to think for you.

"I am sure Sir John would wish to be remembered to you if he knew I was writing, only all his time is so taken up with the lawyers and people. How I hope we shall get through it all somehow! I myself, they tell me, shall have enough to scramble on with; but then you know, when everybody else will be so poor, that will be the same as having nothing at all. But I suppose it's all for the best, if one could only see it. Once more, with my best thanks and my best wishes, believe me, my dear Mr Melvil, yours most sincerely and gratefully,

"MARY ANNE DALTON."

This was the second:—

"17 —— STREET.

"DEAR MR MELVIL,—My aunt has given me the letter you enclosed for me, and I reply to it as soon as possible. Of course I leave it to my aunt to thank you for your kind offers of help—I fear there

is no one who can do anything for us that is worth doing—and come to that part which concerns myself. I certainly do not need to be reminded either of Eulenburg or of Paris. . . . But I cannot consent to be a burden on you, as I should be, for very many years to come, even if you are as successful as you deserve to be. You must not ruin yourself for my sake. Wait, at all events, until this cloud is over, and we all of us know how we are placed. That any fortune can be saved—not that I do you such injustice as to suppose you think of that — is quite impossible, they say; but our name will at all events again be clear.

"Papa is much touched by your generosity, if you will let me call it so—it is his own word. He has seen your letter, of course, and he knows I am writing this.

"If only for my sake, think well over your own position. I should never forgive myself if I thought you were in any way sacrificing yourself. —Believe me yours most sincerely,

"ALICE FENWICK.

"Should you be in London, you will find us at this address."

Victoria! "Be in London?"—as fast as horses can gallop! which, by the way, was not very fast on the post-roads in those times, especially about Eulenburg.

"Madame! How can I apologise?—I have been very rude——"

"You have received good news — I read it in your face. That is more than sufficient apology. May I congratulate you?"

"You may congratulate me a thousand times!"

The Third Wish was surely dead, unless it was spoken now. She felt that her time had come.

XI.

"It is not so usual," she said, "to witness happiness, that one does not wish to share it when it comes in one's way."

"It is rather selfish happiness, I am afraid."

"But we are friends, are we not? And I have heard that friendship doubles pleasure. Am I right in thinking that your news is of Miss Fenwick?"

"Miss Fenwick? Do you know anything of her, then?"

"Do not look as though you took me for a sorceress. You showed me her picture in Paris, and I met her at Rome."

"My news is of Miss Fenwick, certainly. But it is not good—that is——"

"And you are happy?" she asked, with hope in her voice. "Is she ill?"

"It is always happiness to be brought nearer to

those we—to our friends, even though it is by their descent to us and not by our ascent to them. No, she is not ill, thank God! But she is now as poor as I am."

"She is to be married, I heard?"

"To Lord Wynfield, you mean? Not now."

"To yourself, then?"

"That is the hope of my life—and, if it depends upon her and me——"

"But it depends upon neither."

"On her father, you mean? But he——"

"On her father? No."

"On whom, then, Madame?"

"On me!"

She rose from her seat, and stood as if in truth she were Lachesis incarnate, holding in her hand the spindles of life.

It was certainly a startling assertion, to be made by one who was apparently in full health both of body and mind. Suddenly, however, she relaxed from her statuesque attitude, and said, with a sad smile—

"That was well acted, was it not? and would have brought down the house. I always thought I had some tragic talent—or comic, perhaps," she added, with a sigh that was certainly no piece of acting; "which was it? After such a *coup*, I must dismiss you to-day, if you will excuse me. But only for to-day, mind. I shall expect to see

you again soon—and to see you still as happy, though perhaps not quite in the same way."

She was alone again, with her own chamber and the sky that was still blue through the roses.

"And now for my triumph," she said to herself, "and it shall be brought about solemnly."

She paced her room in deep thought, or rather in a deep dream; for they were emotions rather than conscious thoughts that were chasing each other through her heart. An hour passed by thus, and still she had not yet uttered the wish that was to insure her life and victory.

"Is it that I fear the fulness of life?" she asked herself. "Is it that I dare to love, yet dare not be loved?"

But her question remained unanswered. Whether she dared this or not, she dared not utter the word.

Then she left off the continual pacing backwards and forwards through the room, and threw herself upon a couch far from the window. It was now the afternoon. She lay there for long, wondering at the weakness that forbade her to reach out her hand to the prize that lay almost within it.

She lay there until the sun was going down, and the room had grown dim; for though the weather was still bright and warm, it was sufficiently within the province of autumn for the days to be rapidly shortening. Thus she remained in passive silence, while the war within her grew more and

more defined, until at last, little by little, the space between the two opposing armies of emotions became open and unconfused.

It declared itself to be the old battle which is always taking place in so many different forms—the strife between one's love for another solely for that other's sake, and one's love for that other for the sake of one's self: in this case, between her desire for the happiness of Melvil simply because she loved him, and her desire for his happiness in order that thereby she herself might be rendered happy. It is a battle that takes place, consciously or unconsciously, not only in respect of this special kind of love, but of every other kind—of the love of parents for children, of patriots for their country, of philanthropists for their kind. The Princess de Paro could insure the happiness of him she loved by simply abstaining from using the hitherto unused power that she professed to be hers; but then she herself would suffer, and the whole object of her life would fail. She could secure the happiness of herself by making use of that power; but then, in order to secure that happiness for which she longed, she must render her future lover false, treacherous, and a coward, and unworthy of any woman's love; and besides, it by no means followed that he would find happiness in loving her. She must either sacrifice him to her or herself to him. But, after all, supposing she did make up her whole soul

to sacrifice him, had she not lived solely for the purpose of gaining love? She certainly had not wished for life in order to live in misery and imperfection until she died. And now, in any case, she must continue to love this one man—she felt that she could love no other; so that, if she did not make him hers she must come to an end at last with her life incomplete and unfinished, having learned only the evil and sorrowful side of the world, while, at the same time, she had had the power to enjoy the good side also. This, at all events, must never be.

And so the darkness came on; and gradually her thoughts began again to wander, and to lose their concentration until they became rather a series of visible and almost tangible images, such as belong to dreams, than the invisible and intangible ideas that we usually mean when we speak of thoughts.

Eulenburg is haunted by Owls—brown, black, white, and grey. And thus talked three of them at Dream-time, under the window of the Princess de Paro:—

Caspar.—"The evenings are getting rather chilly, I fancy."

Melchior.—"Yes—it is time our feathers began to thicken. What o'clock is it?"

Balthazar.—"The bell of the *Dom-Kirche* has just gone nine."

Caspar.—"I thought it was later. There is plenty of time, then. I am hardly awake yet."

Melchior.—"What a sleepy-headed old bird you are! You're never ready to set out. It's the early bird that picks up the mouse."

Balthazar.—"Yes; and they've got a new cat up at the barn; and new cats eat clean, you know."

Caspar.—"Well, I suppose I'm getting old, and like my sleep o' days better than I did. Perhaps, after all, cats are not such monsters if we could but consider them from their own standpoint. I suppose thay have their use in the world."

Melchior.—"I don't know about that. They not only steal our game, but they don't object to a meal on ourselves."

Balthazar.—"Caspar, you see, can afford to be charitable; he knows that he would be such tough eating."

Caspar.—"Any way, we needn't be in such a hurry to set out just yet. I like to begin the night with a little talk."

Melchior (to Balthazar).—"We'd better humour the old bird. I want to get out of him about that rat-hole, you know."

Balthazar.—"All right. We'll take it easy for a little, then. Only don't forget that that cat will be before us, that's all."

Caspar.—"Oh, there's plenty of time. What have you been thinking about to-day, Melchior?"

Melchior.—"I? Oh, my old subject—the origin

and development of species. I have got as far as the development of apes into men—that is easy; but you see there is still a huge gap to fill up before we can ascend from man to the *Bubo*. Was there ever a feathered man, I wonder? There are fowls without feathers, they say—perhaps they are the connecting link."

Caspar.—"And you, Balthazar?"

Balthazar.—"Squaring the circle."

Caspar.—"And have you squared it yet?"

Balthazar.—"All but. And you?"

Caspar.—"I? I have been thinking about love!"

Melchior.—"Pallas Athene!"

Balthazar.—"Stars and poppies!"

Caspar.—"Don't swear, there's good birds. I am writing its history."

Melchior.—"Oh, that's quite another matter."

Balthazar.—"I thought you might have been mistaking pairing-time."

Caspar.—"The idea! Do you take me for a man, and suppose that I don't know when to marry and when not? But perhaps you can help me. I want some examples."

Melchior.—"Of what?"

Caspar.—"You must both of you have observed a good deal in your time. I want an instance of perfect human love. What is the most perfect love you ever knew?"

Melchior.—"Yes, I have seen and known much

in my time; but that is a difficult question. Let me see."

Balthazar.—"And I too, as you say, have seen and known much. But I must consider."

Caspar.—"I have lived longer than either of you, and seen and known more; but my instance is very imperfect."

Melchior.—"What is it?"

Caspar.—"The most perfect love of which ever I heard was this: There was a certain knight of the Holy Temple loved a lady who loved him again; and so she slew herself that he whom she loved might remain pure in body and in soul."

Melchior.—"That is well; but I have known of a yet more perfect love. There was a young girl loved one who loved her not, nor even gave her a thought of kindness. And so she too slew herself, and sent him a flower, that he might give one kind thought to her before he also died."

Balthazar.—"That is well also; but I have known of yet more perfect love. She of whom I know lived and died unloved, but she lived that she might bestow upon him she loved all good gifts, nor did she ever seek to be loved again. So it is that scarcely the angels love mankind."

Caspar.—"That also is well; but I, as I blinked and dozed to-day, bethought me of a yet more perfect love—the highest that may be shown by mortal man. But hark! What is that?"

Melchior.—"Ten o'clock by the *Dom-Kirche!*"

Balthazar.—"Off, then! The mice are at play."

Melchior.—"And the cat is not away."

Caspar.—"Fly, then; but not too fast, for my pinion-joints are getting stiff and rusty. If you should arrive first, leave a mouse or two for the old bird."

Melchior (to Balthazar).—"The cunning old rogue! He means to give us the slip as we go, and slink off to that private rat-hole."

Balthazar.—"Off, then! *Hu!*"

The moon, which had long been rising, now streamed broadly through the roses in the window and filled the room. The Princess de Paro suddenly rose from the couch on which she lay, and, standing upright, looked out into the night and towards the sky, which was still blue between the thin white clouds. The last stroke of the clock, the last cry of the owls, was still in her ears.

"Thus, then, I will make my Last Wish—and I make it with a firm and willing heart. Whatever it may prove, be it for sorrow or for joy, for life or for death, let *me* fulfil that highest, that most perfect love of all."

XII.

The moon, which streamed through the roses, streamed also once more into the long gallery of the museum, and again aroused its inhabitants to their nightly pastime. But it is not with these that I have now to do.

Shall I be understood now when I remind the reader that the next day was the 15th of September —the very day on which I received that sudden summons from Dr Mohnkopf at the very outset of this story? Shall I be understood now when I allude again to the wild fancy that rushed into my mind when I again looked on the long-lost Hercyna? Would it could have ended otherwise than it did, and that Lewis Melvil had been other than I! And yet, no—the world would have lost a beautiful statue: and that it can ill afford to lose. But however lightly, perhaps vainly, I may appear to speak or to have spoken, it is not because fear and wonder were not then in my heart, or because the memory of it all is not in my heart even still. But, like those of my old acquaintance Caspar, the bones of my pinions are grown a little rusty, and it is all an old story now.

Oddly enough, however, the true story of the missing Hercyna as developed in the minds of my friend the curator and myself somehow made

more impression upon him than upon me; it is he, indeed, although I do not yield to him in fulness of belief — for had I not seen and known? — who is to be held, rather than myself, its responsible author. I never afterwards saw him without his discussing the matter with me from beginning to end, and looking at it on all sides and from every possible point of view —more especially when his largest china bowl had twice been filled with his own especial *knaster*, and his own especial glass-bottomed and silver-covered mug had thrice been emptied and four times filled.

"My dear Ludwig," he said to me the last time, alas! that I had the pleasure—for to me it was always a pleasure—of thus sitting with him,—"my dear Ludwig, it is as plain as that circle which just now escaped from my pipe, and is at this moment hanging in the air. It is broken now, I see, but the result of the comparison is the same. But you have no sympathy, you see; and how could you? It was not in the programme. If you had, the sacrifice would have been in vain. I will tell you what the oldest owl was going to say when the clock struck ten."

He looked by no means unlike an old owl himself, with his hooked nose, his blinking spectacled eyes, his short thick body, and his hair brushed up perpendicularly on each side of his bald head. I

looked curious, for this had always been a difficulty with me; nor had the Herr Curator arrived at the explanation until after some few years of close thought, for I have had to pass over two or three years in order to introduce this conversation.

"You see," he went on, "she did not sacrifice her love for the sake of one who loved her, like the Knight Templar's lady. She did not sacrifice her life in order to be loved, like the girl with the flower. She did not satisfy her love by living for one who loved her not, but for the sake of one who loved her not she sacrificed her love. We have therefore seen more than those old birds, Ludwig, men though we are, and as yet unfeathered—though, if there be other souls like that, some of us will mount wings one of these days."

"But that I, of all men in the world, should be deemed worthy of such a sacrifice!"

"It is true that you were utterly unworthy of it," answered Doctor Mohnkopf, politely; "but that question belongs to a different branch of mysteries. I have always observed that in these cases one party is invariably unworthy of the other. Generally, of course, it is the woman who is unworthy of the man"—he professed misogynism—"but it does sometimes happen, as in your case, my dear Ludwig, that the man is not worthy to clean the woman's shoes."

"I am quite willing to assent," I replied.

"But then, on the other hand," he said, "your unworthiness only makes the sacrifice the stronger. It was not as though she was by any means your slave: she was a free agent. There must be sympathy to bring about moral subjection. Ah!" he added, "would I had been thirty years younger!" and he heaved a sigh, which made him look like a very sentimental old owl indeed. I could not forbear smiling at the idea that he apparently entertained.

"You may smile," he said, "but that only proves that you do not understand me. That she should ever have loved *me* is a ridiculous notion—almost as ridiculous as the idea that she loved you; but she would not have ended without having been loved—ay, and she shall not, even now, unless marble is harder than I think." He paused, and for some minutes sat and smoked in the silence either of thoughts or of dreams. I was gradually also beginning to grow unconscious of where I was, and to wander into strange and obscure regions, when I again heard the Doctor's voice through the smoke. He did not, however, seem to be addressing me individually—indeed I doubt if he was aware of my presence. His voice sounded like that of a professor addressing a class of which I happened to be a member.

"It is written in the Talmud, as the saying of Rabbi Baruch ben Elias, that 'love is better than

sacrifice.' It is written in the Museum of Eulenburg, as the deed of a graven image, that Sacrifice is better than Love."

It was decidedly a fixed idea with the old gentleman; and, as I have said, he took to showing his sympathy with the statue in the only way in which, I conjecture, sympathy with a statue can well be shown—that is to say, by spending part of every day in its company. I do not imagine that he went so far as to suppose that any sympathetic current could really flow between himself and a piece of marble, but he certainly acted as though he supposed it. He was always a man of the most extremely regular habits, so that he, for his own part, made a real sacrifice in altering them so as to gain time for these daily devotions; but the merit of it did not last for long, since these visits of his very soon became a second nature to him which he could not have broken through even if he would. Every day, at the same hour, would the Herr Curator take up his position in front of the Hercyna, heedless of students and visitors. There he would sit in silence, at first with his eyes open and fixed on the form before him. Then, by degrees, his eyes would begin to blink, and his head to make sudden jerks forwards. At last it would fall completely upon his breast; his eyes would close, his mouth would become open, while the silence of the place would be most unmusically disturbed. As

days grew to years, and years increased in number, these fits of sleep commenced sooner and lasted longer; until, like the Knight of Toggenburg—

"So he laid him down and slumbered,
With no dream of pain,
And rejoicing, when the morning
Came to him again:
So for many a day he sat there,
So for many a year,
Keeping silence, till the vision
Should again appear:

. . . . . .

So he sat, till dead one morning
Slept he in the place,
Towards the spot where he beheld her
Turning still his face."

And now that I have told the whole of what I undertook to tell, I do not know whether it is incumbent upon me or not to add anything about my own love-story, which, however interesting it may have been, and is, to its hero, must not be assumed by him to be in itself, and for its own sake, necessarily interesting to others. Were it not for its connection with the episode of the Princess de Paro, from which it was inseparable, it would never have been told at all. But, knowing that there are plenty of people who, being poor I suppose in the matter of imagination, always like to be told, in so many words, the end of everything, I will indulge myself by making my last words relate to my dear

Alice, who has also, for some years past, after a good and pure and happy life, gone to that land of shadows, towards which I, too, have made no little progress. Indeed, of all my *dramatis personæ* I am now the only one who is still a living reality.

I left Eulenburg at once, was soon in London, and lost no time in calling on Sir John Fenwick, who certainly received me in a manner very different from that of former times. He was evidently rejoiced and relieved at the thought of his daughter's having found a husband and protector under circumstances in which the misery of ruin was enhanced by suspicion and slander. But still, like his daughter, he would consent to no engagement till matters should have grown clearer; and he altogether showed a real generosity and delicacy towards myself at which I was then inexperienced enough to be surprised, and which I then did him the injustice of ascribing to the effect of our altered position towards each other. I did not then see that, to whatever extent he had formerly been opposed to or prejudiced against me, he had always been actuated, if not by the highest, yet by good motives; and that, in reality, it had been for me to prove my worth in his eyes, and by no means for him to prove his in mine.

In this position matters remained for some time —in a state, that is, which was half satisfactory to me by reason of my having become so unexpect-

edly, and after so much unhappiness, the accepted and openly-declared lover of Alice—half unsatisfactory still, by reason of there being no prospect of our being married for very many years to come. I had the whole of my way in life still to make—it was scarcely even begun; and so, I need hardly say, considering my very uncertain position and my very certain want of both means and influential friends, whether in possession or in prospect, the way seemed as though it would be very long indeed, without the intervention of a miracle.

Of course, however, I worked hard and did my best, now that work did mean getting nearer to Alice; and though I had more ill-luck than good-luck, I did not quite stand still. At last I was surprised one morning in December by receiving the following letter, which had evidently found very great trouble in finding me, as it had travelled to Eulenburg and I know not where:—

"— Rue ——, Paris,
September —, 18—.

"Dear Sir, — We have been instructed by Madame la Princesse de Paro, who honours us with her confidence, and for whom we are acting generally, to transfer to your hands the sum of —— francs, in full and final payment for certain work done by you for her in your profession, and as the price of certain works of art. Madame la

Princesse has, by this time, left Europe, and we are no longer in communication with her ; but we have undertaken to act for her in arranging her affairs, and have full power to do so.

"Awaiting your instructions in the matter as to the mode in which you would prefer that the above sum should be transferred, and whether you would wish that the account should remain in our hands for the present, accept, Monsieur, the expression of the very high consideration of your most obedient servants, M—— ET CIE.,

Bankers, &c."

I have not named the sum of which I thus found myself master ; but it was a fortune—not relatively to my then circumstances, but absolutely. It was so large, and so out of all proportion with anything I had ever done for Madame de Paro, that I had real scruples about receiving so much from her on any consideration ; and with this view I wrote at once to Monsieur M——, explaining the circumstances to such an extent as I thought necessary. In reply, I received this :—

"DEAR SIR,—We have received yours of the —th ult. In reply, we have to say that our instructions were such as we stated to you in ours of the —th, and were altogether positive. We were given to understand by Madame la Princesse de Paro that

the amount of remuneration for your services was to be left entirely to her.

"In this matter we have no discretion but to fulfil the instructions with which we were honoured by Madame la Princesse.

"Hoping that we may also be honoured with yours at your earliest convenience, and that we may be favoured with your account, accept, Monsieur, &c. M—— ET CIE."

I tried my best to find out, through the bankers and through other sources, what had become of my more than generous patroness; I fixed upon a certain date, before which I resolved to abstain from using a penny of her gift—I cannot call it by any other name. Finally, however, there was nothing for me to do but accept it: and so it was that, at a time far in anticipation of my very wildest hopes, I became the husband of Alice Fenwick. And now those who may have had any curiosity to know the end, so far as I and my wife were personally concerned, know all about it—as much, in fact, as I know myself.

There is now only one point upon which I ought to touch before writing my last words. It will probably strike others, as it has struck me, that these instructions to her banker are somewhat inconsistent, in many ways, with the history of the

Princess de Paro as it was read by Doctor Mohnkopf—that is to say, the question remains, supposing his version to be the true one, how and when did she communicate with Paris after I last saw her at Eulenburg? To this I have no answer. I cannot account for this discrepancy; and yet it is seemingly so strong as fully to justify any one in thinking that the Princess de Paro, having finished her travels, did simply, and in point of fact, leave Europe, and return to her home in Circassia, or in the land of Prester John, or wherever it might be, and that the recovery of the statue at that particular time was nothing more than a coincidence. But then, on the other hand, it is only poems, romances, and suchlike artificial things, in which all is consistent, and where everything is left accounted for in a probable manner. In the simplest complications of real life, there are always a hundred discrepancies, and a hundred knots that cannot be untied. To my mind, therefore, a difficulty of this sort throws no real discredit upon the truth of a narrative, while, at the same time, I am perfectly willing to allow others to think whatever they please. It is purely a question of evidence: and while I, as a man of honour, expect to be believed in what I say, still no amount of honour exempts any man from the weakness of fallibility that is common to all mankind. I have only stated facts, and have been careful to draw no in-

ferences—at least verbally. That I formerly left to Doctor Mohnkopf, and now leave to my readers; and I do so freely, even although my own conviction on the subject is as unalterable as that of my old friend the curator.

I have only to add that, from the day of my closing accounts with Messieurs M—— and Co., I have not only never seen, but have never even heard, directly or indirectly, of the Princess de Paro; but the Hercyna I saw to-day and shall see again to-morrow: and the soul in her lifeless but immortal face grows upon me every day more and more.

THE SHADOW OF THE DOOR.

[*MAGA.* JANUARY 1877.]

I.

A RIVER, eighty or a hundred yards in width, flowing with a strong current—a rounded point projecting well out on its eastern bank, and changing just there the general direction of the stream—the region, in the western part of North Carolina, before the hills rise into mountains,—these are the only features of the general landscape which the reader of the following narrative will have to bear in mind.

On the point mentioned, elevated some twenty feet above the water, stood, at the time when I saw it, many years ago, a plain house of wood in the ordinary carpenter's style. Unlike most houses of its class, which are usually placed as near the public road as possible, this was but a few yards from the river; while the road that followed the main course of the stream cut across the base of the projection on which the house stood, and which

included the fifty acres and more of the small farm attached to it. With the road at a distance in front, and a broad stream, fringed with trees in its rear, the house and its occupants were very nearly shut out from the observation of all but persons who directly approached it.

It had been built and occupied for a few years by William Dempton, who, with the wife he brought with him, made his appearance as an entire stranger to the neighbourhood. He said nothing of his affairs, except that he wanted to purchase a small property. He invited no questions, and, if not surly, was unsocial. His wife was one of the subdued sort—in the cut and colour of her dress, the tone of her voice, the meekness of her manner, and even the washed-out hue of her complexion. People felt, somehow, that they learned more of him by looking at her than in any other way.

There was little learnt, however, in any way. Dempton bought the land lying between the road and the river; paid for it in cash; seemed to have money enough to do what he wanted, but evidently wanted to do as little as possible—except in building a house much larger than he had need of. When a year or two went by, the problem which his coming had presented took a new form: not, why he came and who he was; but, what was the use of a house and a farm to a man who was not using either for the purpose that other men would?

II.

"William, will you let me speak to you?"

"Speak! why not? I haven't stopped you."

"Yes, you have, again and again; for you know what I mean, and I can't keep still about it."

"I guess you can, for you've got to. It's you that have shut us both up; for if I let you begin on anything, you get round right off to the same cursed old subject again."

"That's not true now, William, and hasn't been for a long while, as you know; for it was something harder to bear than blows that shut my mouth, except when I had to speak, as I must speak now."

"You can't say I ever struck you," returned the man, with the manner of one who was willing to get up an altercation, if he could change the subject in that way.

"Nor have I said you did—with your hand; nor, for that matter, though you are speaking so harshly now, with hard words either. But you've laid a weight on me by your looks and manner that's just crushing the very soul in me. Don't go away,"—and as the man rose to his feet she rose also,—"I'll go with you if you do. I'll wait till you come back, if it's all night. Speak I will, and of nothing else, even though the worst happens I've been afraid of."

She had just acquitted him of using hard words,

and one look into his face showed that he had no need of them. Sombre-visaged as he always was, and with strongly-marked features, he was not ill-looking, with some smoothness of skin and freshness of complexion. But while his wife was speaking, the skin seemed more tightly drawn across the forehead; sharp lines cut the smooth cheek; the deep-set eyes half closed, as if to hide the expression that glowed within; and the paleness of repressed passion spread over his face.

"What are you afraid of?" He uttered the words quietly; but there was a change in his tone like that in his countenance. The woman evidently observed and felt that gathering up and preparation of the spirit to do ill, which is more fearfully suggestive even than its outbreak. Her hands, pressed against her bosom, trembled; her voice sank lower in a compressed tone that seemed to exhaust the lungs with the one word "Murder."

For a brief pause they stood—he with his eye fixed upon her, she shrinking from it, yet as one resolved to go through what she had begun. Then suddenly, with an impatient movement of his head, he exclaimed, "Pho! what put that into your head?"

Slowly drawing a long breath, as if something had not happened she expected, the woman answered—

"You put it there, William. I've seen it in your eye; I've read it in your manner. I can't

be mistaken. I am sure the thought of getting me out of the way has come to you more than once. It hasn't frightened me for myself. What good is life to me? I'd be glad to leave it—but not by your hand. Yet it's not that that's breaking me down, and has closed my lips till the words come in spite of me. It's not of myself and you together that I've been thinking, but of you and murder together. You say that I always came back to the same subject. That is why I did, because there is murder in it."

"Are you crazy?" here Dempton broke in. "In what was there murder? Do you know what you say?"

Perhaps it had not surprised him that she had entertained some personal apprehensions; indeed, he had somewhat played upon her fears. But her last words evidently touched upon something for which he was not prepared. There was a startled as well as inquiring look upon his face as he raised his head abruptly. Her reply, though still in the same repressed voice, was prompt and distinct.

"I ought to know, for I've been saying it over to myself for years, and as much of it to you as I dared—for your sake, William, more than for my own."

"Say it out then now, once for all, and have done with it. The last time you broke out in this way, I told you that once more would end it, and now

we've got there. As sure as we are living now, one or both of us will be dead before there's another chance."

"I knew it," said the woman; "I knew it wasn't only because I wanted you to give up living here, and kept telling you that your plans about it would never end well, that you looked so black, and spoke as you did."

"Any man would look black," returned her husband, "who had such a dead drag on him as you have been since we first set foot on this place."

"I would have dragged you back, if I could, when you took the first step to come here. I knew before we started we were coming for no good."

"Why did you come then? I told you to stay behind till I sent for you, but you would come."

"So you did; and your sister wanted me to stay. But you knew I couldn't live with her, and you wanted all the money. And as God hears me, I *would* come because I was your wife, for worse as well as for better; and I believed the worse was at hand. I meant it should not be the very worst, if I could help it."

"This was all for my sake, was it?" said Dempton, with a sneer, yet in a tone of inquiry that seemed designed to lead his wife on.

"It was for your sake, William, and my own too; for when I married you I meant to keep my promise, God helping me, to the end. He knows I

did not look for this; but He knew that this was to be, and that this was my part, and I mean to be faithful to Him as well as to you."

"Oh yes, yes!" he exclaimed, impatiently; "I know all that. We've lived a hell on earth because you were too good to let it be anything else. See here, Jane"—and as he spoke he laid his hand on her arm, which shook in his grasp as though the passion he suppressed in his voice was quivering through his nerves—"let's have it all out now in plain terms. What I understand about your meaning is this. You think I've wanted to kill you rather than stand your croaking about the way we live here, and not going back to respectability and the old home, and your prophesying evil to come of it. Keeping that sort of talk up and nothing else for years is enough to make a man think of killing himself or somebody. If I have let such thoughts out sometimes, it's you and your doleful ways that have made me. But I begin to think you mean more, and that's just what I want to understand. What is it, woman? What did you mean by saying there was murder in the old subject? Speak out! I'm not afraid to hear if you ain't to tell."

She met his stern gaze with a steady eye, and answered still in the same distinct, subdued tones; but there was a huskiness in her voice that indicated the agitation within.

"I hoped you would understand me, William,

without any plainer words. There shall be no doubt about them now. The time has come when there's nothing left but to speak out. What I am going to say came to my own eyes and ears—no one helped me to it. When father died and left the old homestead and all his securities to brother James because he was feeble in mind and body both, and couldn't make his way as you could, I saw the change that came over you. Every one saw it, but not as I did—for you were always grave, and no one wondered that you were cut down at getting only the money in the bank and the little house and acre lot we lived in. You were never bitter or sullen to me till then. I had learned before to be afraid of offending you, but I never thought you were a dark man who could have any deadly secret. When you married me, William, you said you liked me because I was quiet but quick." As she said this, she caught her under lip between her teeth, and a movement in her throat showed her effort to keep down her emotion. The man never moved, and continued to regard her with the same fixed look.

"The six months after father's death made me quieter than ever, and quicker to notice all that was going on. I knew that you felt one way about Jim and talked to him another. People thought it good of you after the first disappointment was over, to be pleasanter with him than you ever were with

any one else. I soon began to feel that it was bad. I saw you were playing a game, and don't mind saying that I set myself to watch you. Not as your enemy, William" — she said this quickly, breaking out of the low tones she had used, for a grim expression passed over the steely countenance into which she was gazing—"not as your enemy, but as your faithful wife who would no more let you do harm if she could help it, than she would let harm come to you. I couldn't tell you now, if there were any use in it, all that happened to make me sure I was right, and to show me what you were about. It came to me by little and little; one thing after another. It turned my heart cold, and I went about as if I had drawn a thick veil round me to keep people from seeing what was in my thoughts."

All this while Dempton's hand was on his wife's arm. He had relaxed his hold but not abandoned it, as if by some magnetic influence of his touch he could dominate her spirit. But at this moment the passion he had so long repressed was too much for him. Tightening his grasp, he raised her arm and shook it violently between his face and hers which he had brought near together, and then with, "Curse your cunning," flung her hand back upon herself. It struck her across the eyes. The lids instinctively closed with the suddenness and violence of the blow. She kept them so a moment and then

raised them—her eyes undarkened by a shadow of fear, but dilated with an expression of horror and sorrow combined that had its effect even upon the man before her. She muttered, "The first blow! the first blow!" and with the other hand pressing back the hair from her forehead, looked at him as if his eyes had a dreadful fascination. There was no confusion in his, but somewhat less of intentness as he said quickly, "Go on, Jane; I'm sorry. Go on; there's no stopping now."

"No," she said, repeating his words with a long-drawn breath, "there's no stopping now. Better get to the end as quick as I can. The end is, William Dempton, that I made up my mind you were coming here, not because you could get more land and make your little money go farther—there were less out-of-the-way places for that than here—but because you had talked James into the idea of one day following you, pretending the climate would be good for him, and a large plantation down here would be a good investment. You meant to get his money somehow, I was sure. How, I could not think, but you would find a way—there was no good way to such an end. I got a glimpse of it at last, just before we left. Do you remember that evening when the lawyer came who managed the purchase of our house and lot, and you told him about father's will, and why you sold out and were coming down here? I wondered at

your being so free to talk with him. It was not natural in you; and when you raised your voice so that every word could be heard as you went with him to the gate, I knew you meant that those people passing by might hear how good-humouredly you made light of his asking why you did not break the will. I had followed you out on the stoop, and had stepped down on the path behind you. As you came back with a slow and heavy tread—I couldn't but notice it—you said to yourself, bringing each word out in the same slow, firm manner, 'There's a surer way than that.' It was pitch-dark, and you went by without seeing me. There was no light in the entry, except what came through the door of the room where we had been sitting. It fell on you as you turned to go in, and then I saw for the first time that dreadful look that struck my heart as you struck my face just now. Had it been my way to scream as some women do, I should have cried out 'murder' then. But the idea of it and the fear of it sank deeper into my mind. It's the word that has been ringing in my brain ever since. I went quickly round to the back door, and perhaps you thought that I had been up-stairs, for when I came into the room you said nothing. The black look had nearly passed away, but my eyes met yours, and I was willing they should speak for me. You never asked and I didn't say anything. But I tell you now, William, that from that hour I have had

but one purpose in living—to be what you called me, but not as you meant it—a drag upon you. I have meant to hold you back from doing what it was you had planned or thought of doing, and from going any way towards it. It was not to make you unhappy. I believe that you know well why it was, and that you believe me when I say it was only for your sake. Not for anything that might happen to me or to James, but to keep you from murder—murder—murder."

Her voice sank with each repetition of the word, and her lips moved once when no sound issued; as if, now the dreadful thought and fear were uttered that had so long been brooded over, there was a dismal necessity to repeat it. Her brave spirit had struggled on so far. She had borne up under the twofold horror — that while trying to impede her husband's advance towards the crime he meditated in the distance, she might possibly provoke its commission sooner and in a still more fearful way. She had reached the end. She could say, and do, and bear, no more. The one word, in the utterance of which her worn-out spirit exhausted itself, was simply the token of the strife within. The pale face grew more pallid; the quivering lips became rigid and bloodless; the keen expression of an anguished soul died out of her eyes, and she fell to the floor in a swoon.

No further words passed between her husband

and herself on the subject that had so powerfully agitated her. He raised and not ungently laid her on the bed by the side of which they had been sitting. Such simple means of restoring her as were at hand he promptly used. Not even a look was exchanged as she recovered. "Will you lie still for a while?" he asked; to which a faint "yes" was the only reply, when he left her.

A day in February was drawing to its cloudy end as she moved about the house again: more feebly than her resolute spirit would have allowed, had there not been an unusual reaction from the scene through which she had just passed. The subdued air with which she usually appeared would not, to a close observer, have had the effect of weakness. It was that of one who submitted rather than was crushed. But now an utterly broken spirit was evident in her countenance and every movement. She had made her last effort—with what result?

Somewhat later than usual the preparations for their evening meal were completed. Dempton had once come in, but, finding the delay, had gone out again among the outhouses. When he returned, the table was ready, the candle shedding its dim light; but no other sign of life appeared. He called her name: there was no answer. He opened the door, calling again and peering round in the last glimmering of the twilight. He waited a few moments and called once more. He looked for her

bonnet and shawl; they hung upon the nail as usual. He took the candle and went up to the storey above; the whole unfinished space was bare and empty. His eye glanced round upon the articles in ordinary use. Where was the water-pail? He caught up the lantern—and there was an unwonted tremulousness in his manner as he hastened to light the candle within. Going round to the rear of the house, the outline of the footpath that led down to the river was dimly visible. After taking a few steps, he opened the door of the lantern and let its light fall full on the path. It was soft and sloppy with the rain that had fallen during the day, so that the latest footprint was well defined. There could be but two sorts—hers and his; and there could be no doubt whose was the fresh mark of the narrower sole and smaller heel. Striding quickly onward till he reached the bank, he paused at the top of the steep descent, and, supporting himself by a tree as he leaned forward, he said, in a tone that, unconsciously to himself, was low and hushed, "Jane! are you there?" Unconsciously to himself, also, the idea that was growing more solemnly distinct before his mind gave a gentleness to his voice which, if her ear had caught, would it not have brought her back from the very gate of death? As he listened intently, the rush of the river swollen by the rains was all that he heard. It needed all the courage of that resolute

man to descend the bank, trying to distinguish the forms of objects amid the darkness, and at last to stand upon the log that was put there for convenience in dipping up the water. The stream was higher, the current stronger than he expected, and swept close up to the log with bitter force. He turned the light on either side. He raised it above his head to cast its rays far out upon the stream—as if there could be any use in that! If anything had happened there only a moment before, no trace of it remained. It happened in the utter loneliness and darkness, and vanished into the night.

He needed no evidence in sight or sound. Only in this way could her absence be explained. While waiting for his return, she had noticed that water would be needed, and as she was accustomed, went for it herself. It came to him, now, that of late she had never asked him to do this for her, and he had never once offered. His bosom heaved—wretched as he was, there was something of manhood's best in him still—as he thought of her in her feebleness going out into the dark, for he had taken the lantern with him. Still, perhaps, somewhat light-headed, she had bent over the stream, and the first grasp of the pail by the current had drawn her in. Once off her feet, the curve of the bank would project her into the full force of the river, which would bear her far down before anything could arrest her course till life was extinct.

So it proved to be. The next day her remains were found amid some drift-wood on the opposite side of the river, and a long way down, her hand still clutching the pail. Her countenance, scarce more pallid than before, had a placid expression it had not worn for years.

III.

How William Dempton met his neighbours, and went through the scenes that followed the death of his wife, need not be told. Though, as I have said, not surly, he was repellent in manner, so that as few words were exchanged as circumstances permitted. Whether or not the idea crossed his mind that he was the object of suspicion, it made no perceptible difference in his conduct. He stated the facts as they had occurred, in immediate connection with the accident, and left them to make their impression, apparently careless of the result.

Yet he felt what had happened, as his sturdy frame might have felt a blow dealt him by some powerful hand. Not overthrown, nor even staggered, he was intensely conscious that it was a blow, and a hard one.

The reader will have gathered, from the conversation detailed above, the principal facts with which

we are concerned. His wife had truly read his heart, and it was this disclosure of the keen discernment of the woman who, notwithstanding her occasional expostulations, had gone along in the main so quietly by his side, that provoked his unusual outburst of passion. The emotion it expressed still stirred his inmost soul. He well knew that her meekness was not weakness; that she was resolute to do whatever she thought was her duty; and that her conduct towards him had been governed by this principle. Though not prepared to learn, as he did, from her own lips, how soon she had detected the purpose which he kept in the background of his own mind, he had counted on her knowledge of his character as one means by which he would keep her silent: he had never supposed that he could bend her to participate in his plans. On this account he had exaggerated his natural sternness of manner, and though never abusive or violent, had affected a roughness of speech. She would take refuge in silence rather than keep up contention. Perhaps, just glancing at the future, he counted on her sense of a wife's duty as a shield when it might be needed. Thus he had explained to himself their manner of living for the three or four years past, and his own object in keeping it up.

The blow, then, which was given him by her death, following so suddenly on their last interview, was received by him mainly in his conscience.

Though utterly without religious principle, he had religious ideas that were as unquestioned by him as the sunlight. If he had wanted to do anything the sun must not shine on, he would not attempt to deny the sunshine, but would simply wait for the night. So in matters of conscience. God, and another world, and a day of judgment, were undisputed facts. But he acted as if there were a moral night-time: not for him to hide in —that would have implied activity in getting out of the way of objects keenly discerned and felt—but to wait for, and be passively enveloped by it. Then he would do what he pleased, unseen. A state of mind by no means singular, for it explains many a man's conduct.

At the point where he now stood, however, a ray of light darted through the gloom of William Dempton's mind.

If all that while his wife had believed that his plans were tending towards the commission of a deadly crime, what held her back from speaking out as she had done that last day? There had been many an opportunity as good. He had encouraged her idea that he might meditate personal violence against herself: it helped him to govern her more easily. But when he saw that she had not been trembling merely at this imagination of her own, but was overpowered by her apprehension of the very truth that never till now had seemed

so vast an object to his own mind, he sought for an explanation. That he did not shrink from doing so was characteristic of the man. There were certain objects that were troublesome to look at. If darkness covered them from his sight, he was satisfied. But he was no coward; and if he must see, would look with all his eyes.

She, then, that shrewd, discerning woman, who he knew was his friend as well as his wife, had judged him to be one who could neither be persuaded nor driven from his set purpose. Intense as her desire was to arrest it, she thought the attempt would be hopeless except through the workings of his own mind. He could supply the very phrase with which she would support her own spirit under that long trial. She would pray God to work in his heart through the few words which only she could wisely utter. Perhaps he had overheard some such prayer, or something that had fallen from her lips in conversation had suggested the idea. She had done all that she could without lessening her chance of success, and left him to his own conscience and to God. What an idea of him she must have had, if, being the woman she was, she would not attempt more than this!

Then, for the first time in his life, William Dempton understood what it was to be left to his own conscience. During the first hours of his pondering over it, conscience was not an idea only, but a

reality. He felt that his wife had more influence over him in her death than in all her life before.

Had this occurred at a time when there was a pause in the course of events which he had started —when some fresh impulse was required to continue it—it is probable that no such effort would have been made. But when such affairs as his are in progress, they gather momentum which renders it hourly more difficult to stop. He would have to be tenfold more in earnest to do it now than a year ago. Yet at this very moment there was a special motive for him to be active in the way.

Happy for herself in the time of her death, his wife was ignorant that he had received information only the day before of the success of his long-laid plan. The post, that arrived in that remote region only once a-week, had brought him word of his brother-in-law's final resolve to join him, and that he was on the very eve of carrying it out. All the communications between the two families passed through Dempton's hands. His wife knew only what he thought fit to impart. Her own letters he faithfully delivered, but they were few and brief, and the correspondence was mainly his. He neutralised the effect of her representations, partly by admitting their truth, partly by toning down her strong language; but mainly by his own plausible statements as to the prospects which that region opened to a new-comer. Let James Elsey come and

see for himself. Let him bring the money to pay down, which, in the unbusiness-like ways of the people, would make the sum seem twice as large as if he only promised to pay, and he might suit himself as to land on his own terms. In that case Jane and he would be together again. They would both have a better chance in that climate to live long, and they would all have an opportunity to rise in the world such as Dempton by himself could never hope for.

Such were the ideas suggested, with variations, from time to time, that prevailed with a lonely man, somewhat feeble in health, and shrinking from society, to convert his property into ready money, and join the sister who was his only intimate, and her husband, who, besides showing a generous and friendly spirit, had some claims on the score of his disappointment. As often happens, the resolve that had so long been pondered was taken suddenly at the last, and acted upon promptly. The letter Dempton had received announced the writer's immediate departure. He would be some days upon the road; nor, had Dempton been so inclined, was there any way of arresting his journey by the news of his sister's death.

Here, then, the crisis in the fate of those three persons came almost in one day, and suddenly.

Men who meditate crime seldom study it out in all its detail. The dark result is in the future—

known to be there, but not actually seen. The first step, and the next, and the following, are evident and easy; after that, the general course itself is hardly distinct. There is an indefinite interval yet to be passed over before the result. Few spirits are so hardened as not to receive a shock when, all at once, there appears but one step more before the irreversible event.

This was what befell William Dempton. All that had as yet distinctly occupied his thoughts was to persuade Elsey to make the move. There was no reason as yet to look beyond that point. It had been uncertain if he should ever get even so far. Thus matters stood only a few hours before, while he yet held that unopened letter in his hand. The news it brought startled him with its significance, and he had purposely let a day go by without speaking of it to his wife. With the event of that day, however, the final issue of his whole scheme advanced upon him at one stride. For James Elsey to come while his sister was living, creating all the stir of such an arrival with its preparations for the routine of their new life, was one thing—and seemed progress quite fast enough for the steady-moving spirit of a man like Dempton. Just because he was so deliberate, it came as near as anything could to take his breath away, that things suddenly assumed a shape so imminent. What effect would his sister's death have upon

Elsey? Would he still be inclined to remain? Would he not attract more observers into their little circle than Dempton cared to have? Obviously there was less margin for opportunities than the latter had counted on. There was a necessity to do promptly whatever he decided on doing.

And why should he not be prompt? If he seriously held to his purpose, why delay to carry it out? Why not grasp the opportunity so suddenly within his reach, and that might not remain there?

For this once only, he looked in the face that truth which his wife's words, aided by the impression of her death, brought before his mind—only long enough fairly to see it, and make his rejection of its promptings deliberate and wilful. Should he and Elsey meet and mingle condolences as the afflicted widower and the sorrowing brother, and he himself take his chances for bettering his condition that way? Where everything had so unexpectedly proved favourable to his purpose, should he give it up because of what happened on that one day?

A coarse ruffian would have broken out into an oath and sworn to have his way in defiance of heaven and hell.

William Dempton only paused in his walk up and down that path which his wife had last trod between the house and the river, and raising both hands tightly clenched above his head as though he were about to deal a double blow, brought

them forcibly down again by his side. It was the only sign of emotion that escaped him—except the measured heavy tread which, like his slow, determined utterance, had always been noted by his wife as indicating the immobility of his spirit.

The die had been cast: Satan had won.

IV.

A day or two passed by when Dempton had occasion to drive to "Spicer's Store," as it was termed—the centre of business and gossip to the whole neighbourhood.

No one would have thought from his appearance and manner that anything unusual had happened, or that he had anything but the tenor of his ordinary life before him. He returned the greetings of the few persons whom he met, and then went through the process which had been the unfailing astonishment of the lookers-on ever since he first came among them. He had a few purchases to make, and he made them at once and was done with it. Any one else would have drawn them out into half-a-day's bargaining. What a waste of opportunity!

In one respect he departed from his usual manner. He mentioned that he was preparing to receive his wife's brother—which, as he had

never volunteered before a statement about his own affairs, made a marked impression. Not much was said, indeed: simply that Mr Elsey was coming, with a view to "settle" in the neighbourhood; but what he would do when he learned what had happened, Dempton could not foresee.

This was all that was made known of the circumstances of Elsey's coming, except what the neighbours saw with their own eyes. Dempton drove past one day, having with him a slight-built, delicate-looking man, respectably attired, whose dejected air was fully accounted for by the dreadful news he had so lately heard. Those easy-going people took their excitements mildly; but Mrs Dempton's sudden death had roused them to a keener interest than usual in all that pertained to her husband's affairs. On the day of her funeral, when his house was necessarily thrown open, much speculation had been started by the unfinished condition of the upper part. It was now concluded across the counter of Spicer's store that, with the articles he had lately bought, Dempton would fit up a sleeping-place for the "stranger" up-stairs, and probably, if the latter remained, would finish off a room, for which, it had been noticed, there was abundance of unused materials. This conjecture received confirmation not long afterwards, when sounds of hammering came over to the public road, and the figures of the two men were seen as if

busily at work. With which incident the record up to this period in the history ends.

A month more went by. The spring opened slowly. There were frequent rains, and the roads were bad. Dempton had been seen now and then in his waggon with Elsey, and once they attended the nearest place of worship, exchanging a few words with the neighbours as they went in and out. There was nothing in this to excite comment, as the one was a stranger and the other an unsocial man; and they might both be reasonably credited with a special reserve, in view of the late painful accident.

But one day Dempton appeared, with horse and waggon, at the store unaccompanied by Elsey. Less sparing of his words than usual, he took occasion to say that his visitor had left. He had wished to go up into Virginia, and had started before daylight the day but one before, so as to catch a conveyance on a road at some distance to the north.

One Dick Pender, who happened to be present, here struck in with—

"Why, that was you, then, squire, comin' across the creek t'other side of my house just after sunrise. I was wonderin' what brought you there so early."

"Yes," said Dempton, "we started soon after three o'clock, the roads were so deep; but I made

the distance over to the Corners in pretty good time, and came across a man there who belonged over towards Wilkesville, and was on his way home. He agreed to carry Mr Elsey right on to Wilkesville, and as that saved a good deal in distance, Elsey got in with him, and I turned back. I got to the creek, as you say, Mr Pender, after sunrise, but it was a good while after; and I remember thinking you had overslept yourself, from the way in which you shaded your eyes, as if the light had taken you by surprise."

This was not only more than any one had ever heard Dempton say before, but the only instance in which he had been known to attempt a pleasantry. A laugh went round at Pender's expense, who, under the circumstances, felt rather flattered by it: indeed, it figured largely in the accounts he afterwards gave of his share in this history. At the same time, every one noticed that Dempton spoke with unusual freedom, and even with an approach to heartiness that seemed forced. Elsey was coming back, he told them, probably to remain; but his sister's death had somewhat disturbed his plans, and required his presence at his former home on business. On his way thither he thought he would take a look at the up-country of Virginia, for which he had always something of a fancy. Meantime he, Dempton, meant to finish the house, for he was confident of Elsey's return,

and wished to have it as comfortable as possible. He was about to plaster the rooms up-stairs, and came to the store now to procure something he wanted for that purpose.

All this was very naturally said, and excited only the attention such particulars always gain from such people as he addressed. No remark was made upon it after he left, except of surprise at his "coming out quite sociable." The incident was told and retold till interest was exhausted, and everything connected with Dempton had fallen into its usual train.

One pleasant evening not long after, a group was collected at the store, on the outskirts of which a half-dozen negroes shifted round, ready to put in a word or let out a guffaw as opportunity offered. Some one happened to mention Dempton's name, when Nep, a free negro who owned a skiff on the river, in which, when the water was not too high or too low, he spent a good part of his time, struck in with, "I 'speck Mas'r Dempton gwine to hab de fustratest corn in dese parts dis year."

"What do you say that for, Nep?" asked one of the party.

"'Cause he got mighty rich heap of manoor. I smelt him toder day. Golly!" Everybody laughed, each negro in particular, as if he himself had to laugh for everybody.

When the yah-yahing ceased, questions poured

in from all sides. "Where were you, Nep?" "How did you happen to be there?" "What were you doing?" "Didn't you get a good whiff of yourself, old boy?"

"You needn't poke no fun at me," replied Nep; "'twas jest as I tell yer. I was a-tryin' to git de skiff up roun' de pint, and had amost gib it up, de current was so wilent, when I tought I'd jump asho, and work up stream dat way. I pulled de skiff along, tuggin' most like to break my back, and nebber tinkin' nuffin' ob Miss Dempton till I got sight ob de log whar she tumbled off. It kind o' skeared me, and I stopped, and sez to myself—Nep, you gwine to put foot right dar on dat welly spot? And jest den de wind cum ober de bank, I tell yer—thick. Sez I, dis chile don't stop long h'yar. Git de roomatiz in de nose, or de knock-down, or sumfin wus, if I does. So I jump into de skiff, and off she went for kill down stream. Didn't hold on to nuffin' 'cept my breff, and when I let dat go, de sploshun cum mighty nigh upsettin' de skiff."

Nep's energetic description brought the "house down," his sable friends fairly rolling on the ground in an ecstasy of fun. The negro had no more to tell, though cross-examined till he lost his temper, and walked off, saying, "Dey might go and smell for demselves, if dey liked." But every one felt there was something in his story more than his own

imagination. Its truth was not questioned, for Nep's manner carried conviction with it, in spite of its ludicrous accompaniments. No one hinted at anything suspicious, the most likely suggestion being the simplest—that Dempton's old cow had died, and that he had buried her near the river-bank.

So matters stood, or rather, from this point they started. Nep's adventure was repeated with variations till the whole neighbourhood heard of it. Who can tell how the seeds of suspicion are planted? The birds of the air bring them. The winds gently waft them about. Some slight warmth of excitement is created by an incident like that narrated above, and all at once a tinge of doubt spreads itself over the whole community.

Such a process, however, takes time, and that was a community where everything and everybody took plenty of time. Weeks passed away before people began to wonder why Elsey did not return. Dempton seldom gave any one the opportunity of speaking to him. He was frequently seen about the house and farm, and he seemed busy. Yet a sharper curiosity than usual noted how little after all he did. Was he only trying to seem busy? He was regularly at the store once a-week, where the group, always larger when the post-bag was opened, were conscious of a growing desire to have more light thrown on the point of common interest;

but none of them cared to question Dempton, for he was eminently a man to be let alone. There was no want of pluck among those people. Their slouching, lazy ways covered any amount of that quality. The very existence of such a spirit, however, made them feel that whenever things got to be serious, words had to be weighed on both sides, or trouble would come of it. So Dempton came and went, impressing them more than ever by his never taking a step, nor speaking a word, nor spending a moment, more than what he was doing required.

Still, even under a slow fire, steam will get up, and Dick Pender was the valve through which it announced its pressure. He had more occasion than any one else to go by Dempton's place. One day his lanky figure on an equally lanky nag was seen approaching the store with an evident eagerness to get there, regardless of risk to man or beast. The sun was now powerful enough to make the shady and breezy side of the house attractive; and as this happened to be the front, all the loungers, black and white, witnessed Pender's unusual style of approach. Not a man of them uttered a word, which was itself significant. Before he opened his lips, there was not one of them but thought of Dempton—so quick is the magnetism of feeling on a subject of engrossing interest.

"What's up, Dick?" uttered by one of the party,

was sufficient to unlock his lips. Not much, after all. Yet in the mood they were in, it seemed everything. Pender had been slowly jogging by, his eye ranging over Dempton's house and fields from the moment they came in view, as if they were a MS. in unknown characters, and he were searching for the clue to read it. Suddenly a cloud of smoke rose somewhat on one side, and towards the rear of the house—such as might be produced by a quantity of damp rags thrown on a bed of coals. Pender's one gift was a keenness of vision that had helped to give him the name of the best hunter in all that region. A slight rise in the ground and the bushes by the roadside gave him the opportunity to study out what Dempton was about. The result was to satisfy Pender that he was burning—not rags simply, but clothing and other articles, among which he was sure were the fragments of a trunk that had been pulled apart.

There would have been nothing in this a few months ago. The passer-by would not have stopped to notice it. Even Pender could not then have seen so much, for there would have been no intentness of feeling to bring his vision to its sharpest; nor was it till he had told what he had seen with unwonted point and promptness of expression, that he and his hearers were aware how deep was the source of their excitement. He had lifted the stone from the spring, and its waters

flowed freely. Then and there for the first time were the suspicions that had been gathering strength in every mind openly expressed, and the possibility discussed that James Elsey had come to a violent end by Dempton's hand.

Yet I should not say it was discussed. There was much less among those people of the spirit that makes mischief than prevails in a busier, sharper community; less readiness to meddle; more consciousness of responsibility in touching another man's character. Such, at least, was the impression I brought away with me from a two months' sojourn among them; and all the experience of after-years has not made the value seem less of such qualities—be the circumstances what they may that foster them. The dullest-minded in the group to whom Pender told his story, felt that it was not a subject for tattle. And it must give some elevation of spirit even to the dullest man when he sets a guard upon his thoughts and words about a possible criminal, in respect for their common manhood.

At any rate, the seriousness that pervaded that whole community, from that day onward, had something dignified in it—rudely as it was sometimes indicated.

V.

It was Dempton's habit, as it was that of many others, to come to the store once a-week and on the same day, both on the chance of a letter arriving and to make what purchases might be required.

When the time next came round, the company was larger than usual, and contained more persons of consideration. As, on his asking for letters, one was handed him, it seemed to be a sort of signal to the lookers-on. No sooner was it in his hand than one of the persons present said—

"Squire Dempton"—so he had been called from the first, by a tacit recognition of his superiority—"will you allow me to ask if you have lately heard from Mr Elsey?"

"No, sir, I have not," was the prompt response, on which Dempton fixed upon the speaker a somewhat surprised look.

The pause that followed indicated the common feeling that some good reason must be forthcoming for asking this question at this time. Yet ordinarily it might have passed for a mere expression of friendly interest.

"Well, squire," said Atkins, the man who had spoken, "we all heard that Mr Elsey was coming back; and it has been talked round a good deal that he was going to settle among us, and it seems natural to show an interest in it."

"Did you make his acquaintance, sir, when he was here?" asked Dempton.

"Not exactly, squire; I only spoke to him once, and was rather taken by his pleasant voice and looks, and should be glad to learn when he is coming back."

"That is to say, Mr Atkins, you knew him just as much as you know me. I believe we have been named once to each other."

This brought Atkins to his feet, with a sense of being called upon to show his ideas of propriety and self-respect.

"Very true, Mr Dempton, and I think once was enough to make my question a proper one. I hope you don't dispute it, sir?"

"I have no wish to dispute with you or with any one," said Dempton, "but I have a right to my way, which is to come and go, asking and being asked no questions. It's not your question, Mr Atkins, but your asking it, that surprises me; and between neighbours who want to live quietly, the quicker such a thing is understood the better."

In saying this, Dempton's manner was so quietly resolute as to produce the effect which he intended, of making every one feel that he took the position of one who had been interfered with. The more trivial the interference, the stronger such a position. Only a weighty reason can justify interference at all, especially in the eyes of a people

jealous as they were of personal rights. Atkins felt this instantly, and had sense enough to treat it in the only manly way.

Dropping his tone of self-assertion, he said: "I ask your pardon, squire, for seeming meddlesome, which I didn't mean to be. If a gentleman speaks civilly when he meets a neighbour, and don't choose to do more, it's nobody's business but his own. But I must say, squire, for myself and the rest of us here, that all we know of Mr Elsey was what you told us yourself, and that's the reason, perhaps, why I was readier to ask about him."

Dempton saw that Atkins had drawn back, and was too shrewd not to concede something himself. Neither party could have had more than a general notion what was in the mind of the other. Each was intensely conscious of his own motive that gave importance to an incident in itself utterly trivial.

"That is true, Mr Atkins," Dempton replied; "had I thought of it, your stopping me on my way out might not have struck me as it did. I don't like to be stopped; and to show you that I minded that more than your question, I'll give you an answer to it when I have read this letter, which, I think, has something to do with it."

So saying, he walked out to where his horse and waggon stood, while the party indoors awaited his return in silence. The contrast between what

appeared upon the surface and what was underneath imposed restraint upon them all. Dempton presently returned, and holding the open letter in his hand he said, with perfect naturalness of manner—

"Gentlemen, this is a very grave business indeed, and, as it turns out, I am not sorry for what has passed between us this morning. This letter informs me that Mr Elsey has never reached his former home, and that no communication has been received from him. I have been anxious about him for some time. When he left, it was understood between us that if he were detained by the way he would write, but otherwise I should not hear from him till he had completed his journey. Not hearing, I thought little of it at first, supposing that when the letter came it would explain the delay. But, growing uneasy, after a while I wrote to the person with whom he left what business he had, and this is my answer. They are as much in the dark as I am; and I must admit I am seriously troubled."

As he ceased, Dempton glanced round, as expecting the remarks that would naturally follow. Looks were exchanged, but no words. The utter silence and grave faces of the group were very marked. Dempton's compressed lip and darkening countenance showed how he felt it. He half turned towards the door, when Atkins interrupted him

with, "It does look very bad, indeed." Deliberately folding up the letter, and keeping his eyes fixed upon it, Dempton replied—

"It looks very serious, Mr Atkins, and I should expect my neighbours to show some interest in it. My friend may have fallen ill on his journey; he may even have died suddenly. But——"—and as he said this, he looked full at Atkins—"I was not prepared for your feeling it so much."

Here again what he said was so reasonable, his manner so in keeping with his recognised character, as to render it difficult even to hint at the suspicions that were entertained by every one present. Atkins again showed himself the readiest man among them.

"It seems to me, squire, that if Mr Elsey had been taken sick among Christian people, or died in a Christian way, word would have been sent to you, or to his other friends. I suppose he had something about him to show who he was?"

"That's plain enough to be thought of," replied Dempton, "and makes it more of a trouble to me. It is possible that Elsey has come to a bad end—if that's what you meant. But I think you meant more; and the rule I have gone by all my life is to hold my tongue altogether, or speak out all my mind. I am no fool, sir, not to understand when a thing like this happens, and a man's neighbours meet him, as I've been met here to-day, that there

is something underneath had better be brought on top. I wish to know what it is, if there's any one here man enough to tell me."

This bold challenge took every one by surprise. Here was the very man himself opening a way to the secret which they had taken for granted would be wrung from him only when he could hold it no longer. He could not have roused them up more thoroughly than by the taunt contained in his last words—yet they rather liked him for it. The stir that showed a half-dozen of them eager to take his words up, referred more to this taunt than to their suspicions. Atkins promptly interposed a milder and more judicious answer than the others would have been likely to give.

"Well, squire, I must say that's frank and fair; and none of us is going to resent a hard word at such a time—not I, for one. You mustn't think hard of me if I answer you just as plainly as you've asked. But you know, squire, why none of us is very ready to begin talk with you—which, I must say, has gone against you in this matter pretty bad."

And then Atkins went on in his blunt way, but not unkindly, to tell what the suspicions were, and how they had been excited. Nep's adventure and Pender's inspection figured largely, but somewhat to his own surprise, Atkins got to the end of his story sooner than he expected. Those two

incidents and the mere fact of Elsey's sudden disappearance, contained the substance of it. He felt unwilling to go back to the circumstances of Mrs Dempton's death which, in truth, had been the first unnoticed stimulant to suspicion; nor could he very reasonably dwell on the disposition which prevailed to suspect Dempton on account of his manners and mode of life. When he ceased speaking, the cork was drawn but the fluid was flat; the pent-up excitement of the past weeks suffered a collapse. In his simplicity, Atkins felt half ashamed of himself, and provoked at his neighbours as if they had got him into a scrape. He was too sincere and manly, however, not to give Dempton distinctly to understand that there was something to be explained, if it less than fully justified the suspicions that had been entertained.

The singular vigour of Dempton's mind and character now showed itself. Whatever the likelihood beforehand of some such occurrence, its gravity and the turn it took had to be met on the moment. He saw his advantage and used it with decision, but very calmly; did not press over eagerly the points in his favour; and promptly forestalled future proceedings by proposing an immediate investigation, which, he said, he had a right then and there to claim at their hands.

Never did a man, starting under such disadvantages, go so far and so quickly to reinstate himself

in public opinion. Not only that: he gained what he never had before, some measure of personal regard—he seemed so manful, bore himself so well under a trial so sudden and so severe. There was not a sign of begging off or of evading any point of the inquiry. He seemed not to notice the favourable disposition which began to show itself, and which might have been readily applied to ease off the pressure.

His explanations, which we need not closely follow, were minute and full. The letter, which he put into Atkins's hands, was what he had said. A grim smile passed over his face as he acknowledged that there was some cause for Nep's disturbance, though it was only a dead dog that he himself had been compelled to dispose of the next day by the simple process of throwing it into the stream. They all knew how a negro's imagination would magnify such a circumstance. Pender, too, was right. He had been destroying some old clothes of his own that were made utterly worthless by the work he had lately been engaged in: and there was an old moth-eaten hair-trunk that had belonged to his wife which he burnt at the same time. He touched skilfully the prejudice against him on account of his manners. There might be causes unconnected with evil, yet implying much sorrow and trouble, to render him silent and reserved, not to speak of natural disposition. Must a man

publish all this on coming to a strange place, or be suspected?

The master-move on Dempton's part then followed.

"Gentlemen," he said — and the plainer the white people of that region, the more punctilious are they on formal occasions as to that title—"had you been invited to meet me here for this purpose" —the shrewd man suspected they had come by a *quasi* agreement—"there could hardly be a better representation of the neighbourhood. I am willing to trust myself to your judgment. Your verdict, as I may call it, will be accepted by the whole community. I propose, then, gentlemen, that we proceed at once and together to my house, and that a full and thorough search be made of the premises. I am ready to abide by the result. If there were anything else that I could do to back up the assertions that I have made, I would do it. But this is the utmost in my power. I think the law itself would not require more."

Dempton had taken them entirely by surprise when he offered to begin his explanation. His present proposal redoubled the sensation. A battery suddenly captured and turned upon its defenders could not have done more execution. He was master of the situation.

There was nothing demonstrative, however, in his manner or theirs. His suggestion was instantly

and quietly acted on. It was obviously the only test of his explanation that was within reach; but by bringing it forward himself he had greatly added to his credit. He went out at the head of the little procession that followed him as an escort rather than a guard. There would have been a promiscuous accompaniment of boys and negroes, and Dempton's cheek flushed as he observed it, but he said nothing. Some remarks passed in an undertone among the others, and one of them said aloud, "Gentlemen, we are going to visit Mr Dempton's premises at his invitation, and I'm of opinion that it will be proper for the children and niggers to stay behind." One or two others beside youngsters and "boys" took the hint, so that the party, as finally composed, was fairly respectable and representative. Dempton's manner rose almost to dignity as he said, "Gentlemen, are you ready?" and raised his hat; the response to which, though very unconventional, showed how the innate sense of propriety is brought out by a serious purpose or any high-wrought feeling. The half-hour's drive was made for the most part in silence, and they were soon gathered in one group before the door. Dempton then spoke.

"I ask it both as a favour and a right, gentlemen, that you will conduct this search thoroughly in your own way, so as perfectly to satisfy yourselves. I am ready to answer any questions, and to comply

with any request you may think proper. Will you go through the house first?"

"Seeing we are at the door, squire, perhaps we may as well do that first,"—whereupon Dempton threw the door open, and the whole party entered.

It is unnecessary to accompany them in every step of what proved to be a long, and, so far as any discovery was concerned, a fruitless search. The house and everything in it were closely scrutinised. There were a bundle of papers and some letters, and a pocket-book with a few bank-notes in it, which Dempton offered to put into the hands of any two of their number for closer inspection if they desired it. With like carefulness the out-houses and all the surroundings were examined; every part of the farm was visited; any suggestion that was made by any one of their number, however improbable, was followed up. And any one of them might as well have submitted his own premises to inspection, so far as producing any evidence against Dempton. Throughout the whole proceeding nothing could be more frank than all his actions, though his words were very few, and the expression of his face intensely rigid. But that was natural to the man and the occasion.

Several hours were thus occupied, and towards the close the examining party showed a tendency to stop and consult together. Dempton left them to themselves; and when the last point of the

search was passed, they all found themselves together again where it began—at the front door—Dempton standing a little apart. There was a moment's silence, broken by Atkins.

"Our friends think, Squire Dempton, that as I took upon myself to begin this day's work by the question I asked you, it's my part to end it; and I have to say for myself and them that we don't find the first thing against you. It's all the other way. We couldn't say less, if we were disposed to, and you may depend upon our saying this whenever the subject is mentioned. It seems as if some apology ought to be made; yet we don't like to admit that we were quick to suspect a neighbour. We want to hear from you that you don't bear us any grudge for this day's business."

Dempton addressed his reply to the whole company.

"I hold that what Mr Atkins has said is no more than my due; and feeling it to be so from the very beginning, I can't thank you, gentlemen, for coming to this result. But I bear no grudge, and shall deem you better neighbours for the part you have performed. What I have said and done to-day ought to be my sufficient defence; but I may as well let you know that if you are satisfied, I am not. I have something more to do, and that is—to follow up James Elsey's track and see if I can find some trace of him. I do not yet give up

all hope, and shall set about my search as soon as I can arrange about the live-stock and other things I've got here that must be looked after."

"I reckon, squire," said Atkins, "that that's the best thing you can do, and you may be sure we shall all wish you good luck at it."

And so this momentous affair ended. Before nightfall it was rehearsed far and wide, with generally the same result—a more favourable opinion of Dempton than had ever been entertained, and an expectation that the inquiry he was about to make would solve the fate of James Elsey.

Not so: that entire community was utterly misled. Our acquaintance Nep was the sable digit providentially selected to point out the clue.

VI.

Agreeably to the intention he had announced, William Dempton lost no time in preparing for his proposed journey. He simply did what was absolutely necessary, arranging with one of his nearest neighbours to look after his small crops, and disposing of his live-stock among two or three others. A special readiness to oblige was found on all sides. The result was, that without its taking that form distinctly, he virtually distributed pledges of his good faith throughout the neighbourhood, and insured the utmost possible patience should his

absence be prolonged. No one thing conduced more to this than his leaving his house as it was, simply fastening down the windows, and giving the key to Atkins. There was no danger, he said, that any white man would disturb it (tramps were unknown in those days); and as for the "darkies," they wouldn't venture it in the daytime, and no one of them would dare go near the house at night.

On the morning of his departure, Atkins, whom he had asked to be present, received the door-key from his hand, and was the only one to see him throw his saddle-bags across his horse and take the lonely road among the hills towards Wilkesville and Virginia.

Under ordinary circumstances, had a second month followed the first without bringing news from the traveller, it would not have caused much comment, beyond the remark that he was "taking it mighty easy." He had told Atkins that the limit of his journey would be a town which he named in the interior of Pennsylvania, and that he would there communicate its result.

When four weeks went by, quite a lively expectation showed itself that the fifth would bring word from Dempton. At the sixth, the whole neighbourhood was confident, and looked blank when the post-bag produced nothing. Here the part Dempton had played so well told powerfully. Caught badly once in yielding over readily to

suspicion, their minds were slow to turn that way again. Every squeal of Dempton's pigs, and mooing of his cow, was an appeal in his favour. The key of his house would have burned Atkins's fingers had he handled it suspectingly.

Still, it was generosity, not stupidity, that was enlisted on his side. All at once the idea awoke in almost every mind, that such a mystery could not be left to sleep out its third month, while they waited for what some of them began to think might never come. Where people act under such circumstances, they are apt to make up for lost time by an exaggeration of vigour. Their patience swung over to the opposite extreme. Their quietness became clamour. The stir throughout the community was unparalleled. A demonstration of some kind was inevitable. A spark would have kindled it, and a very live coal was suddenly thrown into the inflammable heap.

The postmaster had remembered that the letter mentioned already as having been received by Dempton was in answer to one of his own, addressed to "Sprage Tompkins, Esq.," in the town to which he told Atkins he was going. To this person Atkins had written, stating the circumstances of Dempton's departure, and inquiring about his movements. The reply disclaimed all knowledge on the subject, and sharply added, that by a slowness which seemed to the writer extraordinary, they had

probably given a crafty criminal who counted upon it ample time to escape. There was a large gathering at the store, in expectation of news, when this letter arrived; and the moment it was read aloud, as it was called for, the whole thing seemed as clear as day. They were made very mad by such a snubbing from a "Yankee lawyer;" but the deeper feeling was of indignation at being the dupes of Dempton. In two or three hours' time the whole community had risen *en masse*, and lighted down on Dempton's place—ransacking it to the very inside of an old tin kettle.

The negroes of course were there, but trod gingerly, and hunted in groups. Even if it were broad daylight, not a "chile" among them was going to catch, or be caught by, a "spook" unawares. They peered, with Nep, nostrils dilated and specially intent, over the bank beneath which he sniffed the first suspicion of this now exciting history. Nep himself, with a companion or two, ventured into the house and up-stairs. "Whar you gwine, Nep?" said one of them as he led the way. "Why you go up dar fur?" But Nep persisted, with a shake of his head, as if he had at last made up his mind; and up they went, relieved to find they were not alone. Spicer the storekeeper, Atkins, and another respectable planter were in one of the back rooms, engaged in earnest conversation over the affair. "Well boys!" said one of them,

"there's nothing to be seen here; you'd better go down again." "Yes, mas'r," replied Nep, but still protruding his head through the doorway, and staring round with a peculiar expression that struck the three observers. "Why, you fool," said Spicer, "the walls aren't going to jump at you; what are you looking for?" Nep fairly caught his breath as he answered, "I—I—I don't see it, mas'r." "See what? what did you expect to see?" "Only a door, mas'r; I tought there was a door h'yar."

"Nep," said Atkins, quietly, "come in here." Nep obeyed, his skin getting a greyish tinge, and his eyes glancing round rapidly. A tremendous scuttling on the stairway told what had become of his companions.

"Now, Nep," said Atkins, "you've got something to tell, and don't be scared about it. Were you ever in here before?" "Nebber, mas'r, so help me——" "There," interrupted Atkins, "you needn't take your oath just yet. Only tell us the truth, and all you know about it. If you were never here before, what made you think there was a door here?"

I could not do justice to Nep's reply without so large an infusion of that irresistibly comic element which marks the unsophisticated negro in his most serious moments—and the more so on account of his seriousness—as would hardly agree with the tragic interest of the facts involved.

Nep's part therein was, in itself, very trifling—but on what trifles do the gravest events sometimes depend!

He told a straightforward story, helped occasionally by Atkins's considerate questions, to this effect:—

Some months before, about the time of Elsey's disappearance, Nep had been caught at nightfall on the opposite side of the river. He had crossed in his skiff, and remembered it as the first time he had been able successfully to stem the current after the unusual floods which had prevailed. Having to go some distance back into the country, he was belated on his return, and struck the river a good way above the spot where he had fastened his skiff. To reach it he had to follow the curve of the shore opposite the point on which was Dempton's house. He admitted that he did not like being there in the dark; and, according to his own account, must have been stumbling along at a great rate among the roots and bushes on the bank, when, all at once, he could not help crying out, "O Lord! what's dat? for sure's you lib, I see'd a light 'cross de ribber, right 'bove de place whar Miss Dempton must a come down de night she got drowned." He was afraid to move at first, and stared at the light, expecting—he did not know what. There was no stir, however; and he soon saw that it was higher up and farther back than

the top of the bank, and came from the house itself. His childish alarm changed to a child's curiosity, and he stood for some minutes watching the shadow of the person who was holding the candle. At last it seemed to be set down on the floor, and the person who had it—apparently Dempton himself—crossed the window, and opened what Nep was certain was a door, for he saw its dark substance come before the light, and noticed also the edge of its shadow drawn up and down the window. Dempton presently came back, closing the door behind him, and bringing his own shadow full against the window as he stooped to take the candle up. All this must have been noted by Nep with a simple pleasure at the idea of seeing so much of what Dempton was doing when he thought himself unobserved. "I sez to myself—guess Mas'r Dempton would a blowed dat light out if he tought I see 'um." Nep then thought no more about it, but made his way to the skiff, and crossed the stream.

"Did you never speak of it?" asked Atkins.

"Oh yes, mas'r—told de old woman when I got home, and some ob de boys de nex' day; but dar wasn't nuffin much in it, and I soon forgot all about it, till I cam h'yar dis mornin'."

"Well, what scared you so to-day when you came in here?" It was not strange, for such obtuseness occasionally happens to us at critical

moments. But not one of his hearers seemed to catch as yet the point of his story, of which the negro himself had only a dim idea.

"Dunno, mas'r;—made me feel mighty queer to cum h'yar whar I seed Mas'r Dempton all by hisself. It kind a cum back to me, and I 'membered de candle on de floor, and de shadow of de door; and when I didn't see no door 'tall, seemed as if de debbil must 'a been at work."

"I don't see that this nig's story goes for much," said Spicer; "there's a closet in the next room with a door to it—I suppose it's there Dempton was."

"So there is," replied Atkins; "I noticed it when Dempton showed us his wife's clothes hanging there. Now I think of it," continued Atkins, half to himself, as if studying out the point, "I noticed, too, in what a clumsy way the door was hung, so that it opened right back against the window, and shut it up. Spicer! *that* door would have shut in all the light of the candle, and not let Nep see half of it."

The three men stared at each other for a moment in silence.

"Good heavens!" exclained the planter, who had hitherto said nothing; "do you suppose he could have hid the body THERE," pointing to where the door, by the negro's account, should have been, "and then walled it up?"

Spicer was leaning with his hands behind him

against the very spot, and shot from it with a convulsive spring. Atkins raised his hands and eyes to heaven. Conviction came like a flash with the words just spoken. Nep disappeared, with how much or little of noise no one of them noticed till a loud cry arose out of doors, and, as those who saw him said, the negro went tearing down the path like a crazy creature, crying, "Dey's foun' de body! dey's foun' de body!" and then suddenly the poor fellow fell down in a fit.

The excitement created was fearful. Women screamed. Shouts of men were presently mingled with deep oaths. A rush from all sides was made for the house. The three men in the fatal room above had scarce time to recover from their first shock, when their silence was broken by the tramping and struggling of the excited throng. So unseemly a thing could not have happened but for the fact that the nervous tension to which they had all been subjected had become nearly unbearable, and nature itself demanded some physical outlet. Atkins now gave proof of that sturdiness of spirit of which indications have already appeared. He met the first who reached the upper floor, looking almost like madmen, with an uplifted hand, and a manner so collected and solemn that its calming effect was instantly felt.

"For God's sake," he cried in a strong, earnest tone, "keep cool! Don't act in this wild way. It's

all too soon. Nothing's found out yet. Let us behave like men who have a most solemn duty to perform."

They were crowding him more and more into the doorway from the larger into the smaller room, those behind still pressing up in the fierce excitement of the moment. He raised his voice to its full pitch, with the authority such exigence gives.

"Friends! neighbours! listen to me. Some of you back there, stop that rush, and help me to keep order. What are you after? There's nothing here that we've seen yet but an empty room. If there's anything to be found, we've got to find it. Let's go about it as orderly men should. Keep quiet, and I'll tell you all that has happened."

Such words, so spoken, had full effect. Indeed their passion had spent itself in its own outburst. Order was soon obtained, and then in a few clear words Atkins explained what the clue was which the negro had so unexpectedly put into their hands. By this time the front room, which was equal in size to the two smaller ones at the back that opened into it, was literally packed full—an idea of something proving powerful enough to keep them from passing through the door at which Atkins stood, except a little way under the great pressure from behind. No one stepped in of his own accord. To their credit it must be said, that as soon as the necessity for greater freedom to move about ap-

peared, most of their number voluntarily descended and awaited the result below.

Of the three rooms, one, as already stated, ran across the front of the house. The two at the back opened from it, and were made of unequal size by a rough stairway up into the loft, under the peak of the roof, constructed against the partition that divided the rooms. The space underneath this was fashioned into the closet which Atkins had observed. All three rooms had been roughly plastered by Dempton himself at the time when he had professed to be preparing for Elsey's return.

The first step taken was to examine the closet. With their attention thus directed to it, its depth, which should have been equal to the width of the stairway into the loft, seemed considerably less: on measurement it proved to be so. They listened at the inner partition of the closet while a strong rapping was made upon the wall of the next room. It was evident that there was a space between that deadened the sound. Thus the presumption of a secret there to be disclosed increased. Why need they approach it so gradually when a few blows of an axe would penetrate the concealed space—if it were there? Men naturally shrink from breaking violently in upon the dark silence of such a spot. They move about it till grown somewhat familiar with it. But at last there was nothing else to be done. Dempton's own store of tools supplied what

was wanted. All the rest stood back while one vigorous arm knocked away the plaster and lath till there was made—a ghastly hole indeed! Who wanted to look at it? The recoil was general; and the expectant throng below, so eagerly awaiting the issue of the sounds they heard above, felt as if the horror were descending to them when they saw one strong man after another come almost tottering down the stairway, white as a sheet, and without uttering a word.

This was the first effect. At the immediate spot measures were soon taken to bring the whole secret to light. And a marvel of contrivance it was for such a purpose. A space some eighteen inches wide was carefully and closely plastered all round, except a concealed passage to the outer air at the upper part. A layer of stones, also thickly plastered, composed its floor. On this bed—a bed of death, truly — were stretched the remains of a human form — rightly so termed, for the means taken to consume them had left but little. There was nothing to tell whose form it was, but of that there could be no doubt.

To the few who had gone through that house before, and to whom that iron-nerved man had offered to take down the sister's clothing from the very partition that concealed the brother's fearful tomb, how strange it seemed that they could have been so blind, when now the story of his proceed-

ings could be so plainly read in almost every step. Dempton's first care, having slain Elsey, was to conceal his body; how he did it is sufficiently indicated above without entering into detail. The closet under the stairway to the loft was an afterthought. The rooms had originally communicated through the door which the negro had so strangely seen; and when he had completed his plan, Dempton had taken the door down and carried the side wall of the room smoothly over.

But what a head and heart, and what nerves, that could plan and execute all this, and, when done, endure to be with it day and night for months! There were some tokens, indeed, that Dempton had spent a portion of his time in and around the small barn; but they were so slight as not to carry conviction. One would like to believe it. Not that the actual difference between being under the same roof and only a little way off was so great; but it would indicate that the man had not stifled all his humanity.

It was afterwards ascertained that Elsey had taken with him to Carolina a large sum of money —the proceeds of his whole property. It was for this that Dempton had planned craftily, sinned ruthlessly, and succeeded. For he was heard of no more. There was no one to press inquiry and pursuit. He had gained a start, at any rate, that probably would have rendered pursuit useless. It

was a half-century ago, when telegraphs were unknown, railways scarce beginning, and the policeman not yet evolved out of the constable. Dempton was content to renounce utterly what little property he left behind for what he carried with him.

He succeeded — that is, he was not pursued, brought back, and hung; without which palpable demonstration that justice overtakes the criminal, it seems to some minds as if the moral government of the world were not vindicated.

Nor am I able to tell that the money that was so ill got brought a curse with it in the shape of vicious indulgence, and entanglement in other snares of sin, from the immediate consequences of which there was no second escape.

But I have failed in giving an idea of this man, if they who have followed this history must have ocular proof of his punishment. It was no shallow nature that had so yielded to the tempter — no nature to be enervated by bad success. Money could purchase no sensual indulgence that he would care for, to stupefy that vigorous mind. But strong natures, vigorous minds, and purposes that are not only bad, but base, often go together in this world. For years he had trained himself to think and act for such a purpose. That training invigorated him, not only to attain his end, but, what he did not think of, to be punished afterwards. Neither in meditating nor in consummating that crime had he

joined himself to the criminal class, to live their life henceforth. Their excitements and pleasures were not for him. Let him go where he might, and apply himself to any occupation that suited a spirit like his, the characteristic qualities he could bring to it were stamped with the mark of those years of dreadful training. He could but coin fresh tokens of the parts in every act and hour of his future course, which—shall we call it successful, because it did not end on the gallows? Though no record of him remains, one saddens at the idea of the gloom in which such a life must have been passed, and ended.

TALES FROM "BLACKWOOD."

THE WRECK OF THE STRATHMORE.

[*MAGA*. Sept. 1876.]

LETTER FROM MRS WORDSWORTH, THE LADY WHO SURVIVED THE WRECK, TO HER DAUGHTER.

THE CHILDERS, *Feb.* 18, 1876.

DEAREST F——, I daresay you never expected to see my handwriting again; but I suppose I must be the veritable bad halfpenny, and of course have turned up once more. We are now on board the ship Childers of Liverpool, on our way to Rangoon.

I will begin my story from the poor ship Strathmore. We had rather a tedious voyage. I was sick the whole way, and if the sickness stopped, I had nausea. I could not eat—I loathed everything; and when we got to the line, "low fever" set in. In short, I thought I should never reach New

Zealand, though Captain M'Donald showed great skill in medicine, and was exceedingly kind and attentive. On one occasion, curiously enough, he jokingly threatened that if I did not get better soon he would land me on the "Twelve Apostles,"—little thinking then, poor man, how soon his words were to come true.

Miss Henderson, the lady who occupied the other berth in my cabin, and who, with her brother, was going to New Zealand to join their father, always tended me with the greatest kindness and gentle care during my long illness. On the 30th of June, the very night before we "struck," I felt rather better, and got up to join the other passengers in a game at cards in the saloon. I had generally slept badly hitherto, the fever always returning in the night; but on this occasion, being more fatigued than usual, I slept soundly, till bump! bump! bump! I was knocked violently backwards and forwards in my berth. I thought, "surely that is a curious motion;" but, determined not to be easily alarmed, I endeavoured to compose myself. To my horror there then followed a crunching and grating sound which could not be mistaken. I said to Miss Henderson, "Oh! surely there is something wrong."

We got out of bed, and had just lit our lamps, when Charlie and Mr Henderson came to our cabin. Mr Henderson never spoke; but Charlie said in very

quiet tones, "Mother, the ship has struck, and is quickly settling down. You have not time to dress —only a moment to put on what you can." They left us; we never spoke. I helped the poor child to dress; she was pale and trembling, but quiet and collected. I did not take time to dress myself fully, merely putting on my dressing-gown and the tweed tunic you bought me. My sealskin jacket was unfortunately locked up, so I huddled on my warm shawl, and tied up my head warmly. This took us about three minutes, at the end of which time Charlie and Mr Henderson again appeared. I took your brother's arm, and we went into the saloon, Miss Henderson and her brother following. Charlie, bethinking himself of some useful things he had forgotten, left me in the saloon in order to get them from his own cabin. Thinking he remained too long, I followed him, and begged him to come at once, for I had heard the captain from the poop call aloud in an agonised tone, "Now then, come!" But whilst I had been waiting for him, I had run back to the cabin and got my rosary, which I put round my neck, and seized a pair of blankets. We made our way to the companion-hatch, but it was partly fastened up, so I was forced to drop my load of blankets, and creep through the small aperture which was left. Arm in arm, and followed by Miss Henderson and her brother, we walked to where some

sailors were endeavouring to launch a boat. Charlie noticed to me that generally in shipwrecks the first boat launched is lost; and though I heard "Sails's" voice cry out, "I'll shoot any man who gets in before the women," I said to Charlie, "Don't go in that boat; remember wherever we go if there is not room for you there is not for me." He replied, "No, mother, we will live or die together."

We passed the Joselyn boys. Percy, the eldest —a fine fellow—I heard say to his younger brother, "We will stick together, old boy, whatever happens." I saw poor Captain M'Donald at the rigging, and would have spoken to him, but I knew he was a broken-hearted man, and, like myself, preparing for eternity. I had not the least hope of being saved. Just then I heard Mrs Walker, who unfortunately had got separated from her husband and child, ask Charlie to look for him, but he did not hear her; he was considering how I could be got into the port lifeboat. "Can you get on the bridge, mother?" he asked. I said "Yes"—though it was a place I dared not have attempted in daylight on a calm day. I got into it, I know not how. Charlie, and a sailor named Jack Wilson, pulled me up into the boat by the hands. The moment I was lifted from the quarter-deck a sea swept over it, some of the water splashing on my face. That sea washed Miss Henderson from her brother's arms down to

the main deck, and so the poor child was lost. Her brother told me afterwards that all she said to him was, "Oh Tom! we did not think it would end this way."

In the meantime the sailors were doing everything to have the boat ready, on the very slight hope of her floating clear of the ship, which we thought then was rapidly settling down. We sat awaiting our fate. A few farewells were exchanged. I said good-bye to my dear boy, and a pang of anguish went through me for his young life, so soon to be taken. It passed in a moment, and we were preparing ourselves as well as we could to meet our God when, wonderful to relate, a heavy sea came sweeping along over the poop, carrying everything with it to destruction; but instead of dashing our boat to pieces, or tumbling it from the beams on which it stood down to the deck, it caught it up and miraculously floated us between the main and mizzen rigging into the sea. I thought at the time we were going quietly into eternity. I felt Charlie's grasp tighten, and with a prayer on my lips I think I was almost gone. We had hardly breathed when Charlie suddenly almost threw me from him, and wrenching an oar out, shouted, "Saved! saved! by a miracle. Up, lads, and keep her off the ship!" It was pitch dark, in the dead of a winter night. We had few clothes, and the boat having been stove in on its passage across the

deck, we were sitting almost up to our waists in water. Huge sprays washed over our shoulders; and so, surrounded by breakers and sharp rocks, we did not know which way to turn for safety. By dint of hard labour, and great caution, we managed to keep clear of every obstacle, and the boat was constantly baled to lighten her, but with little success. Indeed, had she not been a splendid lifeboat we should very soon have sunk. I sat silent in my corner, trying to comfort and warm poor Spencer Joselyn, who had hurt himself jumping into the boat. Percy, poor fellow, fell short in his leap, and was drowned. Charlie gave me his coat to hold whilst he pulled an oar, and I think that £155, which was in a pocket-book that he had saved, must then have been lost by dropping out of one of his pockets into the water in the boat, and then being baled overboard.

We beat about all night, not knowing where we went, afraid of being drifted out to sea without food or water. Breakers ahead! and Land, ho! was the cry all night. Once, in the grey of the morning, we got a glimpse of the ship. She was leaning over a good deal, and looked very helpless and forlorn, and so sad. A little after day broke I was the first to see another boat. I gave a joyful scream, and the second mate, Mr Peters, with some passengers and sailors, came to us and towed us to land. When we came to the landing-place I gave

up in despair, for I saw nothing but a high perpendicular rock before me, upon which it would have been impossible almost for a goat to find footing. You know I am not very clever at climbing at the best of times, but weak and ill, stiff with cold, and dripping wet, I felt I had no life in me, and could not do it. I said, "Charlie, I can't do it; you must leave me." "Nonsense," he said; and one of the seamen, Jack Wilson, added, "If there is anybody to be saved you will be." The sailors who had already mounted the rock soon managed to lower a rope with a loop in it, in which I sat, and was pulled up, assisted by Charlie and young Mr Keith on either side. I was stunned with cold, and almost fainting, so that it seemed only a few minutes to me till Charlie came with the reeking-hot skins of two albatrosses and wrapped my feet in them. Oh, how delightful it was! Some one knocked down a white pigeon, which was cooked on some sticks and given to me. I thought I had never tasted anything so good. Mr Peters, who all along had behaved with great presence of mind and gallantry, had been backwards and forwards to the wreck and brought off several boatfuls of people. He also picked up some wine, spirits, &c. —in fact all that was portable and useful. It soon got dark, and we were obliged to move higher up the rock, where a slight tent was erected and a plank was placed on the rock for me to lie upon.

Some of the sailors covered me with their coats, but they were taken from me during the night by some of the passengers, and then, Oh the agony I suffered in my limbs! Mr Keith and Charlie had to move my feet and hands, and when I could bear it no longer I went outside and sat by a small fire they had lit. Black Jack gave me his own stockings, which were warm, for I had none,—the crew were all so kind to me.

The next day Mr Peters brought the remainder of the survivors from the rigging of the wreck. The noble captain had been washed overboard shortly after Miss Henderson and the man at the helm, a bright-eyed little fellow called Darkey on account of his gypsy-like complexion, who was washed away from his post with a part of the wheel in his hand. He had refused to leave it till the word to save himself was given; but the captain never lived to give it. There was a very interesting newly-married couple called Mr and Mrs Riddle. Mrs Riddle had waited for him for eight years, and the poor man was frantic at the prospect of losing his young wife. A Mrs Mobile, another young married woman, behaved with great heroism at the wreck. At all times a merry laughing creature, and kind to every one, she tried hard to save the lives of some of the children, but without success. She was heard to ask, "Is there no hope?" "None." Then throwing her arms round

her husband's neck, she said, "I will die with you."

To return to the island. Next day Walter Smith, the sailmaker, and Mike O'Reardan, an A.B., brought me a suit of manly garments—Mike giving me the shirt from his back. Trousers, my flannel petticoat, and a "monkey-jacket" completed my outfit; but either the trousers were curiously made or else I was, for we did not get on well together. I kept them though, and they were most useful to Charlie afterwards.

I will now only give you a few incidents of our island life, as Charlie is writing a full account, which you will receive with this letter. I was very near death several times; had it not been for Charlie's constant care and tenderness, I should really have gone—it was such a long time of suffering and endurance. The eggs saved my life twice, and there was a little of the famous "Red-heart rum" put away for the use of the sick by Mr Peters, which did me incalculable good. I felt I could not last long. One morning, the 21st January, I awoke quite cheerful and bright, saying, "Charlie, I've seen *the* ship" (we never dreamt of any but the one that was to take us off). In the afternoon, as Charlie went out of our own little "shanty," he shouted, "Sail, ho!" and immediately ran towards the flag-staff. I sank on my knees at the entrance, and wept tears of joy. Soon

I saw the ship turn towards our island, and then I began to prepare. Charlie came back to give me one or two articles of his apparel, that I might look somewhat more respectable, for my wardrobe was reduced to a flannel shirt and petticoat much the worse for wear, and (what I considered very grand) the polonaise you bought me—everything as well as myself black, greasy, and smelling horribly fishy, though we did not notice it at that time. What moments of delight were these! We first hurried to one side of the island, then to another, scrambling over rocks, holes, and slime—no easy matter. At last we arrived at our old landing-place. I could get down to a certain part of the rock in safety, but from there I had to be lowered into the boat in a "bowline." To the uninitiated this bowline looks a very carelessly-made knot, but it is strong notwithstanding.

When I was hanging above the sea, I heard "Sails" shout out, "Don't scrape her; rather throw her into the water;" but I meekly expostulated that I rather preferred being scraped. Poor "Sails" was ready to jump in for me, being half stripped; and the last thing I clung to on the island was his smooth fat neck. I hung in mid-air, and when the boat rose on the swell I was lowered into Captain Gifford's arms and placed safely in the boat. The ship was a whaler named The Young Phœnix, Captain Gifford. Charlie,

Mr Peters, "Sails," and two invalids came off with us at the same time. Captain Gifford congratulated me on my fortitude. He said some men had to be helped, and would scarcely come at all. Long before we reached the ship I was sick, of course. Captain Gifford insisted on my staying in the boat, and it was hoisted up with me on board. The first moment that Captain Gifford saw distressed people on the island, rightly judging they could not all be got off the rock that night, he had thoughtfully provisioned the boats, even to tobacco. I was taken down-stairs and met by an "angel," as she seemed to me, with such a fair tender face—a tall, slender woman, like a lily, in her fresh cotton gown. She took me dirty, wretched, sick, in her arms, and immediately got a tub of water to wash me, for I could do nothing, I was so ill and weak. She washed, clothed, and fed me with the tenderest gentleness. The best of everything was given me. A bed was arranged on a sofa, with pillows, sheets, and blankets. For seven months I had thought it a luxury to get a flat stone to sit on, and had hardly ever lain down without my feet in a pool of water; and now, surrounded by every comfort, I did not speak or think, but could only lie and wonder, and thank Almighty God for His mercy. Next day the sickness wore off, and I was able to enjoy the nice little American dainties she brought me. I think

she herself scarcely ate anything whilst we were on board, she was so delighted. She had said to her husband when he was going for us, "Bring me a woman," she was so home-sick, poor thing!—having been at sea a considerable time already, with no prospect of seeing home for many long months. Five happy days we stayed on board bound for the Mauritius, though the captain, by thus taking us out of his way, was losing a fishing season, a serious matter for a whaler, and he had not been very successful already. Curiously enough, not long before, he had picked up the crew of a deserted vessel numbering about thirty, so far as I can recollect. On the fifth day a ship hove in sight. We "spoke" her, and her captain agreed to take twenty of us. I preferred stopping; but the second mate, Mr Peters, and most of the passengers, went with her. She was the Sierra Morena. I was exceedingly sorry to part with Mr Peters, who had all along proved so kind to me. In the afternoon of the same day, as Captain Gifford and I were comfortably chatting in our small "sanctum," José, the little steward, came down with the news that there was another sail on the "lee bow." Up went the captain on deck; and I, very sorrowful, was preparing to get ready to be transhipped, when I was told not to stir till we learned more particulars. In the meantime I saw the captain's wife busily employed packing up

a whole lot of her best things for me to take; but I would only accept from her a change of commoner ones, as she had previously given me a very handsome rep wrapper, and various other articles, including a waterproof, and lovely shoes and stockings. Such shoes! She is a full head taller than I, yet her feet are smaller, and mine, you know, are not very large. Besides, though she does all work on board of the vessel, her hands are small and beautifully white. We signalled this ship as we had done the other, and it was arranged that the remainder of us, twenty-four in all, should go on board the new vessel. We were without exception exceedingly sorry to part with our American friends. Mrs Gifford cried when I left her, and would scarcely let me go; and Captain Gifford at the very last said, if I had the least objection to going, that Charlie and I could remain with them, and they would be very glad to have us. However, we went away; and the last I saw of Eleanor Gifford leaning over the side with a kerchief round her head and a tender half-sad look in her eyes, recalled to my mind the sweet face of my vision on the island.[1] All honour to the American flag. We should most likely have been on the island now but for their humanity. Captain and Mrs Gifford are pure Americans; and if I am able in other years when they return to New Bedford, I

[1] See Mr Wordsworth's Narrative, p. 51.

shall almost dare cross the ocean to see them once more. Captain Gifford is as tall for a man as his wife is for a woman. He has the rather long face of the American, but he is very handsome. They had a very fine harmonium on board, but I was too weak to use my feet to blow, so I sat wrapped in a blanket on her knee, she using her feet and I playing. The Young Phœnix will go to the Mauritius in about six months, where Mrs Gifford will stay some time for a rest. She would have made her visit then had we gone on with them.

Had you seen me at first you would not have known me. I was a perfect skeleton; my eyes sunken and hollow, with a wild burning light in them horrible to see; my skin white and like a dead person's, my hands transparent, my hair short, and my figure gaunt, tottering, and with a dreadful stoop. For the first three months on the island I could not walk a yard without assistance, even through the shanty. It was all rock and slippery stones, and the least wind blew me down. When I got a little better, Charlie would take me out a few yards and I returned myself. If no one was about to give me a help, I generally crawled on my hands and knees. Afterwards, when we got to our own little hole on the other side of the island, I got rather stronger, and was able and proud to go to the spring for water, escaping with only two or

three falls. You never saw such an uncompromising place. On my way to the well I passed through crowds of penguins without fear. I think they were surprised at my appearance.

But to return to the Childers (the ship we are now in): she belongs to Liverpool, and is commanded by Captain M'Phee, who is very kind to me. The living is good; plenty of nice vegetables, delightful bread, and eatables of all kinds, and lots of preserved fruits and jams. If you have any nice home-made, I can tell you they will suffer in comparison. Since the first day, I have never been sick, and have an enormous appetite. The consequence is, I am becoming fast like myself, and my bones are getting quite covered. I had no idea they were so small. Captain M'Phee gave me a curtain (Dolly Varden print) to make a skirt of—a fancy blue shirt for a boddice, and his own white linen coats for jackets. My constitution is entirely changed. Before, I was always sea-sick, which is not the case now; and when I crossed the line before, I never perspired—the result being that I felt the heat exceedingly; but now I am in a constant bath, and so have neither red face nor suffering. Charlie looks and is well and firm now. From the effects of the exposure and bad feeding on the island, his hair had got quite flaxen, which didn't suit him at all; but now it has nearly recovered its original colour. One day on the island, when food

was scarce and hunting hard, he was quite worn out and burst into tears. Poor fellow! I felt that more than anything that happened to me. He has shown himself a grand fellow, cool and steady in danger, with all his wits about him. Such tender care he took of me too, never making a fuss about what he did! You would have thought he had been the only one shipwrecked before. All the others were extravagant and wasteful with clothes, string, &c. He got many out of a difficulty by supplying a little of the latter commodity, and at the last he was the only one with a lashing for carrying his birds. He won the respect of all, especially the sailors, with whom he was a great favourite. In the evenings, when the day's work was done, I would amuse Charlie by telling him all the little stories I could remember about his own, your, and even my childhood, which took back our minds to home, and never failed to interest, however often repeated.

Some of the men were great favourites of mine. Walter Smith, or "Sails," as we always called him, was a gem in his way. He would knock down his enemy one minute, and the next risk his life for him, and when he had a friendship it was to the death; he was always so generous and kind—so were they all. The three apprentices were very fine lads. Frank Carmichael seemed a little delicate, but Ned Preston and Harold Turner were

more robust, and capital hunters. On Christmas-day Harold brought me three eggs out of five that he had buried for himself when the eggs were plentiful. I shall not forget such a generous action. There are many other little anecdotes I might tell, but it would make my letter too long; however, there is one I must not forget. John Evans, A.B., or "Old Jack" as we called him, one day when food was very scarce, brought me a small duck roasted, which he had been lucky enough to kill and get cooked. Though starving himself, he freely gave me this delicacy, and insisted on my taking it. It requires a person to be under similar circumstances in order to appreciate such self-sacrifices as I have mentioned. As for Mr Peters, I think him the *beau ideal* of an officer. On the island he did not belie the good opinion that the poor captain had of him. He never spared himself in any work. In danger he was cool-headed, and nothing seemed to turn him away from doing what he thought was right. I am afraid you must think me very confused in my head, judging from my letter. First I am on the island; then on board the whaler or Childers, and then back to the island again; but I have written this letter from day to day, and put down just whatever ideas came uppermost. So to go back again to the Childers. The crew here are all blacks, some rather handsome. They are a very merry lot, and, when work

is done, fond of a little music or dancing. We have had very squally weather. The ship has to go where there is wind, which makes my heart beat—in fact I shall be more or less terrified till I get on solid ground again in Old England. We hope we will not be very long before we reach Rangoon. It would be rather awkward landing in a strange place without a *sou* in our pockets, but I suppose somebody will have pity on us till we get money. Oh, I am thoroughly sick of the sea! No more going to the seaside in summer. I am bringing home quite a valuable book of receipts which the steward has very kindly given me—quite Yankee notions, and very good ones too. I mean to be no end of a cook when I get home. I have studied the theory on that desolate island in our grim solitude. At present everything is "I wonder" to us. I wonder what you and Richard are doing where you are, and what everybody is thinking about us. I felt so sorely for you not knowing what had become of us. I am thankful I was not at home, the suspense would have driven me crazy. I hope dear old friends are all well both in England and Scotland. I shall not write more than this one letter, so please send it to my sisters, and all our relations and friends who may be interested.

After such a long ramble, fancy us being landed at Burmah, of all places! With the exception of

two rings and the rosary Mrs Dycer gave me, I have not a relic of my past life. Even when I thought I was going to the bottom, I regretted our lovely picture of your dear father (a life-size painting of my husband when a boy, with his favourite pony—the figure by Sir Henry Raeburn, and the animal by Howe). However, we have ourselves, and it has been Almighty God's will that we should lose the rest. Once I had a delightful dream of your kitchen at Bebbington, full of lovely clean clothes airing before the fire. It was quite a treat to me, squalid, ragged, and cold as I was. I only slept about three nights in the week—my bed was so hard and uncomfortable. It is almost worth being shipwrecked to experience so much kindness. Captain M'Phee is very kind. His family live in Liverpool, and his wife often goes with him. I would not like to be a sailor's wife. I was always afraid of building castles in the air about seeing you again. I scarcely dared think of you. Frank Carmichael, one of the apprentices, and I were wondering whether any masses were being said for us on All Souls' Day. By the by, you had better write to his mother, and tell her he is safe, and behaved like a man at the wreck. Her address is ————. I shall have so much to hear when I get home—all good news, I trust. I would like to forget all the hardships and disagreeables of the last seven months; but I trust I shall never forget

all Almighty God has done for us,—our life and preservation on the island was all a miracle. Fancy living all that time on a barren rock, with a little rank grass on it, not even brushwood! The men knew I had a daughter, but I had never said what like you were. Mike dreamt of you, and to my amazement gave me an exact description of you—hair a shade lighter than mine—even to your rapid walk and short steps. I hope the ship we come home in will go to Liverpool. Love to my sister, brothers, and all kind friends. Oh how I weary to be at home again! We are such queer-looking figures here, with as few clothes as we can possibly do with, lazy and weary—the sea is such a dreary, monotonous life. I can't think how any one can choose it. Charlie is quite satiated with his experiences of it. If it were not for home-sickness, I think I would like to have a peep at Indian life. To-day it is nearly a calm, what little breeze there is being in the wrong direction. We sighted Sumatra two days ago. My life here is this: Get up at seven, bath, &c.; breakfast at eight; and then, after having worked everything there was to work, and read everything there was to read, a little writing is all I can do. I expect this erratic mode of writing will account for some of the rambling. Dinner at twelve; sleep an hour; then after that the heat is simply intolerable. Tea at five; go on deck to see the sun go down. Walk and sit on

deck till nine or so. A glass of *eau sucrée*, and go to bed. Ah! it is tiresome. Bed, indeed! *Our* ideas of bed are usually associated with thoughts of rest; but on the Strathmore we had fleas, on the whaler cockroaches, in this ship we have a pleasing variety of rats. The fleas and rats I don't mind; so much so, that the rats run all over me at night in a friendly way. I merely give them a slight shake and weak shoo! I will never recover my figure, my back is so bent and weak; the salt bathing is doing it *some* good. How I wish I was steaming away to England! I expect you will all be very much astonished when you get our telegram. Unless anything very exciting happens, I will not write any more till we are sailing up the Irawaddy.

When people are dead, a great many virtues are generally found out about them unknown before. I trust ours will be remembered now, even though we are unromantically in life. Ill though I was, I felt I *couldn't* die on that desolate island. But I must not abuse it. I daresay we were healthier there than we should have been on a more favoured island. We are now in the Andaman Sea. It is as calm as a lake—scarcely a breath of wind. How lovely the sunsets are! and the moon and stars, how dazzling and brilliant! Lightning playing about all night. People at home have no idea of lightning or rain; here it comes in sheets, not

drops. I am in great pain with rheumatism all down my spine and right side, and such dreadful throbbing at my heart. I can hardly breathe.

24th March.—Arrived at Rangoon; people most kind. Just going to post. With love from both. —Your affectionate mother,

FRANCES WORDSWORTH.

MR WORDSWORTH'S NARRATIVE.

(6 *months*, 22 *days*, *on a Barren Rock.*)

On her voyage from London to Otago, N.Z., the Strathmore of Dundee, Captain M'Donald, struck on one of the rocks of the "Twelve Apostles," which are comprised in the Crozet group—a very dangerous set of islands, and not much known about them—July 1st, 1875. There had been no sun taken for several days back, the weather being overcast. The captain expected to see the land, but, I believe, from the southward, instead of which he went to the northward. A little bad steering on the part of the man at the wheel would have cleared us. The weather was fine, except for the fog, and the ship was "shortened down" to her maintop-gallant sail, in order not to pass out of sight of the land before daylight. The accident happened at 3.45 A.M., being quite dark and thick.

The man on the look-out reported breakers ahead, and seeing the rocks looming through the mist on the starboard side, shouted to the man at the wheel to put his helm hard a-starboard; but the mate, seeing land on the port bow, ordered the man to port his helm, but all to no purpose. We were right into a bight of a lot of rocks, with breakers all round us; and the unfortunate Strathmore first grated, and then gave three bumps, staving in her bottom. The water, rushing into the lower hold, burst open the 'tween-decks; her bows jammed themselves in between two rocks; whilst the after-end of the ship was lower, and was soon swept by seas, tearing up the poop, and completely gutting that end of the ship. The captain thought at first that she might clear herself, and told the man at the wheel not to leave his post—which he did not, bravely standing there waiting for the word to save himself, though the seas were now washing over the poop; and one taking him, with the wheel broken to pieces in his hand, swept him overboard.

I shall now go back a little, and give an account of our own actions—those of my mother and myself. My mother had been very sea-sick the whole voyage, as well as being ill with a sort of low fever which had hung about her since we had been in the tropics; but the night before the catastrophe, feeling better, we had all of us—*i.e.*, the saloon passengers—been playing cards in the saloon.

The captain, either that night or a day or two before, had playfully told my mother that if she did not get better soon, he would land her on the "Twelve Apostles." He little thought how soon his words were to come true. We were in bed, of course, when the ship struck. The first bump awoke me; the second told me something was wrong, and I jumped out of bed, for I had guessed the truth. Telling Mr Keith to light the lamp, I ran to my mother's cabin, and told her and Miss Henderson to dress quickly. I then returned to my own cabin and dressed myself, putting on my warmest clothes and a new pair of Wellington boots. I unlocked my box, and took out of it a little safe, in which was £155 in Bank of England notes, enclosed in a sort of leather pocket-book, and which I put in the breast-pocket of my coat; also a revolver and a sheath-knife, which afterwards turned out to be invaluable. The latter I put in my belt. The only thing I forgot was a cap; otherwise I was fully equipped for anything that might turn up.

My mother and I then went up on deck, followed by Miss Henderson and her brother. Some of the men were trying to get the port quarter-boat out, and I went to help; but my mother said she would not get into the first boat, as she thought this boat would have all the women packed into it, and very likely I should be separated from her. These quarter-boats could never have been used before, for

they were jammed between the bluff of the lifeboat and the mizzen rigging; and what made matters worse was, that the quarter-boats had to be got out first, for there were only three davits for the two boats (the lifeboat and quarter-boats) on each side; but as neither of these quarter-boats could be swung out, the two lifeboats were rendered useless. Seeing that the quarter-boats could not be launched, I walked right aft to secure a life-buoy, but she began to "poop"—that is, take seas over aft—and thinking it even too serious a case for life-buoys, for at that time her stern seemed to be sinking, I thought the only chance of safety lay in getting into the lifeboat, cutting the gripes, and trusting to Providence that when the ship went down, as I then supposed her to be doing, the lifeboat would float off clear of the wreck. The lifeboats were placed upon "skids" or beams from side to side of the ship, and about eight or nine feet above the main deck. My mother managed to get into the port lifeboat from the bridge, and not a moment too soon; for Miss Henderson, I think it was, was washed away from her brother and hurled with a scream down to the main deck from the poop and drowned: she was but a few paces behind us. About twenty more were in the boat we were in, waiting our chance, there being a hope of getting off by the merest accident, but we thought our last moment had come. A huge sea swept over the ship, taking

everything and every one with it that was not in the rigging or well forward; and lifting up our boat —not dashing it down on the main deck, as might have been expected, but lifting us off the skids—it washed us clean over the starboard side, knocking down on its way a strong rail, the "standard compass," &c., and reached the sea in safety, though a little "stove in." The wonder was the sea did not take us down into the main deck, for the waves were running almost in a straight line from aft, forward. The boat, when it reached the sea, was still foul of the main brace, and as we thought the ship was going down every moment, we made strenuous efforts to get clear. We spent a miserable time of it till daylight, dodging about in the darkness and fog, trying to keep clear of the rocks, breakers, and large quantities of sea-weed, and yet keep near land. Half of us were engaged in baling, we being up to our middle almost in water; but we might have saved ourselves the trouble, for the water neither decreased nor increased, the air-tight tanks keeping her afloat. The rest that were able pulled at the oars.

It was this night I lost my £155. I had taken my coat off to pull an oar, and it was then I think I lost it; for most likely it dropped out of my pocket and was baled overboard during the night, for I never saw it again, and the list of the numbers of the notes I had left on board. At last

morning came, but with it fog, and we were very nearly losing land altogether. We had just made up our minds to run off before the wind and give all our energies to baling out the boat, when the fog lifted, and we saw the big rocks looming out; so we put on a spurt and got close inshore, and looked out for a landing-place, which was not easily found, the rocks rising perpendicularly out of the sea. We had not been long pulling when we sighted the gig, with Mr Peters, our second mate, in it. We gave him a hearty cheer, and he towed us to the only landing-place on the island, which was a ledge on the face of the perpendicular rock, and to reach which a man had to watch his chance when the swell took the boat up, catch hold of parts of the rock, and haul himself up a height of about twelve feet from the sea. We all then that were not going back to the wreck got on shore, pulling ourselves up by the "painter" of the boat. My mother was hoisted up in a "bowline," a knot she now firmly believes in. We sat huddled together on a ledge of rock, wet, cold, hungry, and miserable. Some lit a fire, and others got birds—sea-fowl, young albatross, &c.—which were on the island, and cooked them; and to us starving creatures they tasted well. In the meantime, the gig and dingey which the others had launched from the wreck made trips to and from the ship to take the survivors off, though we did not manage them

all that day, but were two days picking the half-frozen wretches from the rigging or yards, they having to drop from the yards into the water, as the boat could not get near on account of the heavy sea. When every one was got from the wreck, the boats made excursions to the site of the wreck—it having gone down in deep water the night after the last of the survivors had been taken off—and picked up what they could. As far as I remember, the following were what we got: some Keiller's confection-tins, which we afterwards used for cooking in; some cases of spirits and a cask of port; some bottles of pickles, a few blankets, spoons, and forks, two kegs of gunpowder, two parasols, a small cleaver, a bucket or two, one tin of preserved meat, some wood, and a few odds and ends thrown off the forecastle-head. With the help of these riches, we managed nearly seven months. It came on to blow hard the same night, and we lost our boats, as there was no means of hauling them on shore anywhere; and though some might think the boats could have been saved by people keeping in them, yet how could any of us manage to keep them safe, broken up and leaky as the boats were, even if we had gone to the lee side of the island, and kept pulling in shore against a terrible gale for two or three days, exhausted for want of food, wet, and most likely frozen? It could not have been kept up for two hours. We saw the boats afterwards on the

other side of the island still attached to each other by their painters, but smashed and bottom up, they having been driven by the gale through a tunnel that ran underneath the island, and caught for a time in some sea-weed a mile or so off the land; and we had the mortification to see them drift out to sea without the possibility of saving them.

The first night ashore was dreadful; we lay ex posed on the rocks, huddled together for warmth, the rain pouring down and chilling us to the marrow. We got the covers off the gig and dingey, and made a sort of tent, which came down during the night and made matters worse. My mother, in consideration of her sex, had some planks to lie upon, but she was wofully crushed, and her legs nearly broken, by people crowding in under the canvas. Though greatly fatigued, few of us slept, and during the night a man named Mellor died from fright and exhaustion. For the next night or two my mother and myself, with one or two others, slept in a sort of open cave, or rather overhanging ledge of rock, a little higher up than we were before; and though the frost lay on our blankets, and the icicles over our heads, yet it was pleasant to what the other place had been. We stayed there about a couple of nights, until another shanty, by no means water-tight, had been built. About 30 odd of us crammed in here, lying in tiers on and between each other's legs; and it was not

for months after that this horrid crowding was remedied by building other shanties.

From the Strathmore 40 were drowned and 49 got ashore, my mother being the only woman saved, and Walter Walker, son of one of our cabin passengers, the only child. My mother and Walter got what was supposed to be the best corner of this delightful place. From the damp and frost many of us had sore and frost-bitten feet, and one poor fellow called Stanbury was so bad that lockjaw set in. Before he died his feet were in a horrible state of corruption, and the odour from them and from the other bad feet was most offensive. After death we buried his body as soon as we could, digging the grave with sticks.

When we had explored the island we found it to be about 1½ mile long, and a good part of that was rock and stones, the rest being covered with a long, coarse grass. There was no firewood on the island, but we had lots of splendid water. At this time the food we lived upon was young and old albatross; the young ones gave more eating than the old, being large, heavy birds, with a beautiful white down upon them about three inches long. They sat in nests built in the grass about a foot from the ground, one young one in each nest. Another bird that we lived upon was what we called "mollyhawk," but which we afterwards found out to be "stinkpots," a carrion bird. They were large,

heavily-built birds, with fierce, strong beaks. I remember getting a bite from one that hurt through a pair of Wellington boats, trousers, and drawers. They seemed to stay on the island all night, and we caught them by chasing them into rough ground, or into gullies, where they could not easily get on the wing, and killed them with wooden clubs. They would face you when brought to bay; the albatross seldom did. We used to see these stink-pots feeding on floating substances in the water, very likely the bodies of our unfortunate shipmates, but that did not deter us from eating them, even half cooked as they sometimes were; the very thought of that food now almost sickens me. I am sure that nothing in the shape of herbs that grew on the island was poisonous, but our favourite vegetable was a sort of moss with a long, spreading root. On a cold morning you might have seen us scraping the snow off the ground, and tearing up the root with our benumbed fingers, often too hungry to take the whole of the soil off the root, eating everything ravenously, dirt and all. The birds were boiled in confectionery-tins, after being skinned and cut up, and as long as the pickles lasted they were minced and put into the water the meat had been boiled in, which made a very tolerable soup. Being winter time we had not long days, but about 15 hours' darkness, which we spent lying in our hovel, forgetting our miseries

in sleep if possible; for though we had the most vivid dreams of home, &c., and things to eat, yet there was always a feeling in the background which dispelled a good deal the pleasure of the dream—at least that was my case; but still I looked forward to my dreams.

About a dozen of the men built a shanty a little higher up than ours, and a sailor called "Black Jack" ruled it—and a capital ruler he made, too. When my mother came on shore first, she was wet through, and nearly starved with cold; but she soon got a rig-out of a semi-masculine description. One of the sailors took the shirt off his back and gave her it: she put on also a pair of trousers and drawers, a pair of stockings and an overcoat, and various odds and ends, all the contributions of the sailors; a handkerchief, an old straw mattress, and a coverlet completed her appointments, together with a flannel petticoat picked up, which afterwards did good service as a door in our little shanty that we afterwards lived in for some months. The coarse, rank flesh which was our continual food soon disagreed with her, and she got very ill with a sort of low fever, and a dreadful bowel complaint, which reduced her to a perfect skeleton, and made her so weak that I had to turn her in the night when a change of position was needed. Although my mother was very subject to rheumatism, yet while on the island, exposed to wet and cold, she never

was troubled with it. Our clothes, such as they were, were seldom quite dry; and to say that our sleeping-places were damp, would be a mild expression; we often lay in downright slush, composed of wet grass and dirt, with the rain coming down on our faces. My mother, it is true, had a mattress, but that was sodden and rotten with the moisture, and, from its clammy and wet feeling, was most disagreeable to touch. That we were impervious to cold, was due to the ammonia in the guano. Most of us suffered a good deal from diarrhœa and dysentery, and the wine and spirits we saved were invaluable. We had used them very economically, a small salt-cellar full of wine or spirits-and-water being served out every night till finished, except a bottle of rum and one of wine, which were buried for the use of the sick. Mr Walker's child, Watty, suffered dreadfully: he was a lively little boy, and talked on board the ship, but nothing but moans and whimpering could now be got out of him, and his little body was covered a good deal with sores; he seemed to have shrivelled up—his knees drawn up to his chin, his bony shoulders up to his ears, and about the size and weight of a lean turkey. Besides the dread of being compelled to stop long on the island, our fuel was nearly finished, and we were contemplating the prospect of eating the meat raw. I ate two small birds raw, and a piece of another, by way of accustoming my-

self to it; but ugh! it was bad. If it had come to our being obliged to eat the meat raw, I had arranged a dish for my mother of minced liver, heart, and "greens" (the moss that I have mentioned), seasoned with gunpowder as a substitute for salt; of that article we had none, and were obliged to put salt water in our soup to give it a taste. Afterwards when we cooked in stones, and had lots of burning material, some of us used to make salt; but it took such a time for the salt water to evaporate, and so small were the results that ensued, that none of us kept this up regularly. I think I was the first to make salt on the island. Another dish I often got ready for my mother, when she could not eat the flesh, was the brains taken out of the birds' heads and fried. That was considered one of our delicacies; and was also one of the inventions of my culinary genius.

At last the firewood was finished, except a few sticks, which were used for killing our birds. Efforts had been made to keep up a fire with a kind of turf found on the island, but it would merely smoulder slowly, and that only when there was a strong draught; when luckily somebody threw a skin on this kind of fire, and to the delight of everybody it burnt pretty well. So here was this difficulty bridged over, and we should not want fire as long as we could get birds; then to save matches, of which we had only half a boxful

of Bryant and May's safeties, we scraped the fat off the skins, melted it down into oil, made a sort of lamp out of a piece of tin, and a wick out of the cotton padding in coats, &c., and burnt it whenever the fire was put out. Though the lamp sometimes went out, the upper shanty would most likely have a light, so we got it rekindled without reducing the stock of our precious matches. An ordinary housewife would be rather puzzled to keep up a fire with bird-skins—it requires experience.

We had been about a month on the island when the mollyhawks commenced to lay, and there was great rivalship between the two shanties to get the eggs, one striving to steal a march on the other by getting up before daylight, which was very cold work, having to grope our way in the dim light of the moon or breaking daylight over the frozen ground, with mere apologies for shoes, generally struggling against a high wind, for it was nearly always blowing a gale in that bleak quarter of the world, with snow, hail, and rain to make it worse, and our inner man very indifferently replenished; but the eggs were good and saved my mother's life, for at that time a few mouthfuls of the soup we made was all that she could take of the former food. There was never a time when she was at her worst, but that something turned up just in time to save her.

Aug. 31st, every one was startled by the cry of

Sail ho! and immediately we were in the highest state of excitement and hope; but it was a great deal too far off for them to see us, or for us to signal them. Poor Mr Henderson, who had been ill and low-spirited since we landed, got worse. I daresay the raised hopes that had so suddenly come and gone with the ship were too much for him in his enfeebled state, and he died September 2d. His body was mere skin and bone. He had been ill with a never-ceasing diarrhœa which nothing could stop. On account of the severe frost and bad weather we could not bury him for two or three days. His limbs up to the last were quite supple, and that was the case with all those who died after having been any time on the island. We seldom could clean ourselves; the dirt was too fast on us to allow of water alone taking it off, and the weather was so bitterly cold that we could only dabble a very little in it. But we had a mode of cleaning our faces a little by means of bird's skin, rubbing ourselves with the greasy side first, thereby softening the dirt, and afterwards rubbing that off with the feathery side. Our clothes were black with smoke and very filthy, and we were crawling with vermin, which we could not get rid of. There was little of the birds that we did not find a use for; even the entrails were roasted and eaten, and the large guts we stuffed with chopped-up meat, and tried to imagine them sausages; but there was no

such thing as anything with a taste on the island, except the soup when plenty of salt water was put in it.

We got very hard up for anything to eat at one time; one day there were only one or two mollyhawks for our last meal, and Black Jack's tent had had nothing to eat all day. We were very weak and low-spirited. I felt as if all the moisture in my joints was dried up, and I fancied I could almost hear them creak as I dragged myself along. It was with a heavy heart I went out to hunt, and instead of climbing up the hills, I went down by the side of the island, where I remembered to have seen a large quantity of nests, built of mud, smooth and round, about a foot from the ground, looking at a distance like the turrets of a small castle. Down the rocks I went, and saw, to my great delight, a quantity of beautiful white birds. We named them the "Freemasons," but we afterwards discovered their real name was mollyhawk. I killed about fourteen of these, as they let me come quite close to them, when I knocked them down with a club. They even flopped down among my feet. I carried about half of my prize down to the tent, and great was every one's delight and astonishment at the increase of our larder. Many of the others went out, and killed about a hundred in all. Such a feast of tails we had then! That appendage was cut off close to the back, the long feathers pulled

out, and being burnt for a time in the fire, was considered a great delicacy, and one of the perquisites of the hunter. About this time, seven or eight who had been engaged building a shanty for themselves removed to it, thereby leaving us a little more room. Our larder being always supplied with the new birds, we began to look about us more, and shanty No. 4 was started; also another great and *real* delicacy came in about this time—viz., the "mutton-birds." We found the young, but never, I think, the old ones, who seemed most mysterious birds. Their nests were under the ground, and to find them we had to stamp about till we discovered a hollow place, our feet very often going right through the surface into their nests, when we had only to put in our hand and pull out our treasure. They had a delightful flavour, and were covered with beautiful fat. We also had whale-birds, divers,[1] and what we called "the whistlers," from the noise they made. All these smaller birds lived in burrows underground, something after the manner of the mutton-bird. The whale-bird laid, I think, two eggs of a delicate pale colour: the little diver's egg was noted for its size compared to its own bulk. We were visited also in great numbers by a ferocious brown hawk; the

[1] Some of these names may have been applied to wrong birds, but they were what we believed them to be; if we knew nothing at all of a bird, we invented a name.

hawks were most audacious birds, and if their nests were interfered with, they attacked with vehemence the trespassers. The underground residents, whale-birds and divers especially, were wofully preyed upon by these hawks: the latter would stand patiently for hours near their burrows, like keen terrier dogs watching a rat-hole, ready to pounce upon the unwary who ventured from their fortresses.

The weather was now getting rather less severe, but we could only recollect three fine days all the time we were there, and we always had to pay dearly for them. Another shanty was being built, and I was promised a very small old one for my mother and myself, which a third-class passenger had previously built, and had kindly offered us. On a cold, stormy day, September 13, a vessel, a full-rigged ship, under reefed topsails, as far as we could make out, came between Hoggs Island and ours, then, running close along our island, kept away to the east. I was in what was called the Skinning Cave, and saw the ship and gave the alarm first. Away went some of us, as hard as we could run, with blankets and counterpanes to the flagstaff, our black figures showing well against the snow-covered hill, so that I believe they could not have helped seeing us. The blanket-flag was up in a very short time, and the ship, when she had got past the end of the island, came into the wind, I believe, for previously she had been run-

ning with the wind aft, and we all thought that she had seen us, and was going to stay for us till finer weather came to take us off, when a squall of snow came on and hid her from view. She had gone off a little in the squall, but some of the men said she was still "hove to." She had not increased her distance much, but eventually she took to her heels. Of course it was a great disappointment, but we expected when in port she would report us, and hope kept us up for about a couple of months. But no; we never heard anything more of her. Now I am sure she saw us, to desert us thus was abominable. She was near enough to let us see her topmast and top-gallant and rigging; and when we could see all that, how could she not see our black figures and a large blanket and counterpane flying against a clear sky? Except during the squall the air was beautifully clear, and they must have had glasses, which we had not. Mr Peters has the date of this ship's appearance, and I should like to find out her name.

About the end of September the penguins first made their appearance. They are a most remarkable set of birds, if we may call them so; for they have no wings, but just flippers, and their coats look more like fur than feathers; in fact I think them not unlike seals. It was very amusing to watch them making their nests: one would go to

a little distance and pick up in its bill, with great ado, a small stone, and carry it with immense dignity to its mate, when they carefully arranged it in some mysterious way, shaking their heads and gobbling over it; then turned up their faces towards the sky and waved their flippers, as if asking a blessing on their labour or making incantations. A few stones thus got together constituted their nests: a single blade of grass or two I have seen treated in the same manner; but I never heard of them or saw them build in the grass, but always on stony places, often great heights above the sea.

The tracks that the penguins made through the grass wound up round the edges of cliffs; they were narrow and stony, and had the appearance of having been worn down to their present condition, through the soil and grass, by the tread of countless penguins seeking every year their favourite resorts, which must have been their choice for ages. Some of these paths in places were very steep; and really, to look at the rocks they manage to climb up, you would think they would require a ladder.

They made great fuss over their courting, and woe betide any unfortunate hen who dared to be frivolous, leaving its own nest to go a short walk; for no sooner was it noticed, than all the neighbours raised a cry of anger and horror, and prepared to give the delinquent an unmerciful pecking as it wended its way through the thick

ranks of its comrades. If it returned to its lord and master the tune was immediately changed from discordant howls and croaks to a more musical tone of thanksgiving and rejoicing. I have seen in books of natural history that penguins lay only one egg; now our penguins laid three. The first was the smallest, and of a light-green colour; the others whiter, and larger, especially the last one. They all had strong rough shells, which, when the eggs were nearly hatched, had been worn by constant friction on the stones smooth and thin, easy for the young ones to break through. The position of the bird when "sitting" is upright, or very nearly so. The yolk of these eggs boiled hard before the white, the latter looking like arrowroot when quite boiled, and also tasting not unlike it: but our palates were perhaps not to be depended upon after living so long on coarse fishy food. I noticed that the penguins always turned their backs to a squall, whilst the other birds—albatross, &c.—always faced it. Being always amongst the penguins, their habits were of great interest to us, and their noises my mother used to fancy resembled nearly all the sounds of the farmyard. A lot of them cawing at a distance seemed like the lowing of a cow; there was the cackling of ducks, the hissing of geese, the gobbling of turkeys, and even the noise of a donkey braying, to be distinguished amongst the babel of tongues.

When the penguins had been sitting some weeks on their eggs, a visible decrease in their numbers was noticed, and we thought at first that they were leaving us entirely; but the hens were left on the island, looking very lean and care-worn, whilst the cocks went to sea. This was the first time we had seen any of the regular householders leave their homes, even for food, since their arrival on the island; and whilst on shore they were never seen to eat anything. However, I think in a week or so the cocks came back, and very fat, there being about an inch thick of fat on their skins, which was very precious to us. Most of them, too, had their paunches full of a sort of food which did not look unlike a linseed-meal poultice; this was for their young, which were either hatched, or very nearly so. The hens, when relieved by the cocks, then left for their holiday; but I do not think that they stayed so long away nor came back fat like their mates. After that, there was a constant traffic of penguins going down and returning from the sea.

The long lines of travelling penguins, meeting each other on their narrow tracks to the sea, seemed to be very particular about keeping their own side of the street. The homeward-bound ones, with their full paunches, laboriously climbing up the steep paths, and their funny little short legs, white bosoms, and black, extended flippers, looked like fat old gentlemen in white waistcoats; and

one could almost fancy that you could hear them puffing and blowing with their hard work.

Whether the penguins who had been out at sea always came back to their old mates, who had been left behind, or not, I would be afraid to say. Yet I think sometimes they did; but their numbers were so great, and they were so much alike, it would be impossible to decide.

We used to see great flocks of young penguins congregated together under the care apparently only of one couple. These young ones were very tender eating, but, except when very young, of rather a rank flavour.

The penguins are plucky creatures; and I have even seen a weak, soft-looking youngster stand up manfully for itself against a fierce hawk.

The albatrosses were very majestic and graceful in their movements. We used to see them, when pairing, bending and bowing to each other like courtiers in the olden time dancing a minuet; but their voices were not equal to their appearance, sounding like a bad imitation of a donkey braying. At one time, when they were sitting on their eggs, we had, I daresay, about a couple of hundreds or more of the beautiful creatures scattered over the grassy parts of our island. They lay but one egg, and it is scarcely so large as you might expect from the size of the bird: it is white, with pinkish spots on the broad end.

I had almost forgotten to mention the real owners of the soil: the only unwebbed-footed birds on the island, and constant residents, were what we called "little white thieves," "white pigeons," or "white crows." They possessed many of the qualities of our jackdaw, being very inquisitive and mischievous, hardy, and not to be daunted by trifles. Their build was stronger and more compact than that of a pigeon, but they were about the same size. I do not think they were powerful fliers. Their feet and beak were black, the latter having a sort of wart on it about the nostril, larger in the male than in the female: whilst their plumage was pure white. Their eggs were dark and speckled. These little "thieves," when the penguins were on the island, never ceased watching them and their eggs. They would sit on a stone which gave them a commanding position over the multitude beneath, and wait for a chance of stealing an egg, and they had a very knowing way of bending down and putting their head on one side to see under the penguin's tail. When a chance of robbing presented itself, they descended from their elevated position, fearlessly hopping amongst the crowded penguins, evading adroitly the pecks aimed at them, stuck their beak into the egg, and, if they had not time to enjoy it there, would open their beak whilst inserted therein, and lifting it in this way, would fly to their holes in the banks or rocks and de-

molish their cleverly-earned meal at their leisure. One of our men tells a story of one of these "white thieves," who, tired of an unprofitable vigil, had the audacity to come quietly up behind a penguin sitting on its egg and impertinently peck its tail (a great insult); and when the penguin got up to resent the injury, the little rascal dabbed its beak into the egg and carried it off. *Apropos* of their hardihood, an American sailor relates the following anecdote; but I daresay it requires to be swallowed *cum grano salis.* He had killed one of the birds, as he thought, and had sat down to pluck it warm; he had done so all but the wings, and had taken out his knife to cut the latter off, when away the bird fluttered *minus* the body-feathers. Their chirrup sounded like "Quick, quick!" which seemed to be their motto.

Some more of the men left the lower shanty, and my mother and I got installed in our new abode. It was high up on the hill at the other side, on one of these stony places frequented by the penguins. We had to force our way through a dense cloud of these to reach our hole, which we called Penguin Cottage. The height inside was about four feet in the highest place, length rather less than four feet, and a sort of shelf on the rock which we used as a bed-place about three feet wide and five in length. The bottom of this bed we called the "well," for the damp was so great that our coverlet would get

as wet as if dipped in muddy water; consequently we kept our legs curled up, which took away from the width. When both were in the shanty, one often retired to bed to make more room, we were so crushed; besides, one side not being water-tight was too wet to sit down near, and we had to crouch under the rock to keep out of the rain. The wall was about four feet wide, built of sods; but not having a spade, tearing up these sods with our hands made them very uneven, and gave lots of channels for rain to find its way through. In the wall of our little shanty there was a whale-bird's nest. They were very quiet; but before rain they cooed and moaned in the most plaintive and musical tones, and after that you never had to wait long for wet weather. Of course I plastered up these places with mud as well as I could, but to little purpose. Our cave was made by building a turf wall against a slanting piece of rough rock. We managed to have a fire, as there were lots of penguins, though we were not very good at keeping it alight till we got accustomed to it. The way we managed was this: At night, before the fire was quite out, I put in a piece of dry turf, which kept a spark in, or got red-hot through, and lasted, if a good piece, till morning. I then put dry grass or shavings from the mattress and blew it till it caught, or helped it with gunpowder, then hung strips of fat skin over the flame, thereby making a good fire. The fire

once lit I put on the stone pot and prepared breakfast. A list of our furniture and effects might be interesting: a very small mattress of dirty shavings, a counterpane, a table-spoon (plated), a tea-spoon (real), a fork, two bottles (great treasures), a small piece of tin made into a frying-pan, about six inches long and one in depth; a stone lamp, two stone frying-pans, in which we cooked all our meat; a fireplace, two or three umbrella wires, which were used for pokers, or bars to rest the tin pan on. The most valuable articles in the cabin were my club and knife: the latter was simply invaluable—no money would have bought it; without it I could not have kept up an independent shanty, and upon it and my club depended every necessary of life. Another useful article was a needle made from the wire of an umbrella. The thread we used was unravelled worsted. I also had my revolver, and some precious rags I could make "touch" of, with the help of gunpowder. I had quantities of oil got from the fat of the penguins put in the large gut of the other sea-birds, also in what we called "pigs"—that is, the skin of a penguin without a cut in it, dried and made a bag of. They were also used for carrying water.

When we first went to our own shanty, I generally went down to one of the other shanties for boiled meat and soup; but I afterwards gave this up, and depended entirely upon myself. This was

the usual daily routine, from which the reader will be able to form some idea of the life we led: I got up about seven o'clock and took the ashes out of the fireplace, lit the fire, and swept out the house with a bird's wing. When the stone pot got heated, I put in the grease, and if we had eggs, we fried them in it, or cooked the meat in it. It generally took about a couple of hours to cook the breakfast, as we could do so little at a time: my mother looked after it sometimes. After breakfast I often went down to the gully and had a wash—with eggs when plentiful, often using a dozen of them; and when they could not be spared, I cut a penguin's throat over a piece of rag, scrubbing myself with the blood, and then washing it off with water: it was not such a good plan as the eggs, but was better than nothing. My wash over, I would get birds for our evening meal, either young penguins or mollyhawks, and then set to work skinning and cutting them up. After that I generally killed and skinned about fifty old penguins, and stored up the skins for winter fuel. Thirty fat skins were about as much as a man in our reduced state could carry easily. I packed them in stacks about four feet high. The old-kept skins burnt well, though they smelt strongly, and were full of maggots; but we were very glad to have them. I had stored about 700 or 800, which would have lasted us some time, as we only burnt about five or six in our small fire

during the day. I was always glad to get my skinning over, as I had got so sick of it; and dreadful looking figures we must sometimes have been —our hands and clothes covered with blood, and our faces often spotted with it. The evening meal was generally cooked by my mother, of which I ate some, leaving a little for the morning, then got in water for the night, put the turf on the fire, and retired to bed, or rock rather. I generally slept well, except when I dreamt of skinning penguins. My mother also slept pretty well, considering the discomfort, &c. On Sunday I never did any skinning, but washed myself in the gully in the morning. We always had a supply of food ready for the Sunday. I then paid visits to some of the other shanties, and got all the news, such as a new yarn; and dreams were a great source of amusement—we dreamt in such a realistic manner. Having dreams was quite like a letter by post, for they took our minds off the island, and enabled us to forget for a time our miserable circumstances, and any interesting ones I retailed to my mother. In the night when we woke we invariably asked each other's dreams, which were often about something to eat, often about being at home and the ship that was to take us off the island—always pleasant. Dreaming, in fact, was by far the pleasantest part of our existence on that miserable island. Many were the prophecies that were made about when we should

get off. At first we anxiously paid attention to them; but when one or two turned out wrong, no one took much account of them.

A curious thing happened to my mother on the 1st of November. She was sitting by the fire when she said she saw a woman's face and head appear. It was a beautiful face—pale complexion and dark eyes, with a kerchief tied over the head under the chin. It smiled kindly to her and slowly faded away. I told some of them about it, and it was soon all over the island; but the curious thing is, that Captain Gifford's young wife, a most gentle, kind lady, when she leaned over the ship's side, saying "good-bye" to my mother as she was leaving the whaler, had the face of the vision on the island, even to the kerchief tied under the chin.

Other two ships passed us, but they either did not see us, or took no notice. One of them nearly ran ashore herself, as the weather was thick; but it cleared in time for them to see the land, though it was a narrow escape. Whilst the penguins were laying we had plenty of eggs, not only for the time, but for long afterwards, as I "pitted" about a thousand of them for future use. Even my mother has eaten seven at a meal, fried, roasted, or raw, beaten up with a little fresh water, which made a most refreshing drink. The eggs did every one a great deal of good, and we all felt

satisfied, and had not the longing desire for other food. Those who had been haggard and miserable got quite plump and fresh—some of them ate about thirty at a meal; and we saw each other with clean faces, for we used the eggs as soap; whilst a most remarkable thing was, that every one had fair skins and light hair, dark faces and hair being quite changed—black hair turning brown or red, and fairer people quite flaxen. As for myself, my complexion was pink and white like a girl's, with white eyebrows, yellow hair and moustache. My mother did not change much, but she was a mere skeleton and very feeble. The old quartermaster, "Daddy" or "Nimrod" as he was called, died October 20th. The eggs came too late for him, poor old fellow! but he gave himself up from the first. He always said most of us would get off, but not himself, and that our greatest chance of getting off was after Christmas, which also came true. Of course, people would only come near these dreadful rocks of their own accord in fine weather, which we expected about Christmas time.

Christmas-day was very cold, though midsummer, with snow-squalls—in fact, at home you would have called it seasonable weather. Poor little Watty died on Christmas-day at twelve o'clock noon, and was buried next morning. You could almost have blown him away, he was so thin and wasted. He was between three and four years old, I think, and

looked like an old man of seventy. He would only take a drop of soup, and that from one of the quartermasters called Bill Vyning, an American. His shoulders were up to his ears, and his knees up to his chin, being drawn up that shape by the cold. He was buried near Henderson, and was happily the last of the unfortunate few whom it was our sad task to bury on that bleak, lonely island. Poor fellows! Though their graves lie far from all sounds of human toil, and only the dash of the waves or the sea-bird's cry is heard above their last resting-place; though no stone stands to bear the record of their virtues, and no affectionate hand marks the spot with the humble tribute of flowers —still they will not be forgotten. In some quiet hour their comrades' thoughts will turn to those lonely graves, far in the midst of the restless ocean, and surely their hearts will soften with some thought of pity or regret when they recall the existence there so miserably closed.

We were very much afraid of our engine-driver, John Nicoll, or "Steam," a nice cheery fellow, who was very delicate, and spitting blood in quantities. He was to have got the bottle of wine that was buried, but it was stolen—a great sin, for they knew it was for the sick. There was still a little rum left, which did him good. (*N.B.* Get Henry White of London's "Redheart rum," if you want anything good in that line; it is medicinally better

than brandy.) We were all getting very anxious to be off; another winter on the island would, I fear, have left very few to tell the tale, though we were storing skins to burn, and oil also, in case of such a dire necessity. There would have been little to eat. The young albatross were on the island when we landed in July; and just before we left, the old birds returned and built their nests and laid their eggs, so we presumed we had seen the round of the sea-birds. We never took any albatross-eggs, as we looked forward to depending on the young for food later on. The seals we used to hear barking like dogs at a distant hamlet; it sounded so pleasant, for we could imagine ourselves near some village; indeed, our imaginations and dreams formed almost our only pleasures. We never could get near these seals, as they frequented places unapproachable to us. One day a huge beast, described as having a head like a bear and the body about ten feet long, was seen to attempt a landing, but, on second thoughts, it dived into the depths again. I suppose it was a sea-lion. I have seen several of what appeared to me large seals swimming about, but perhaps they were all sea-lions. We never knew what fish inhabited these waters, for it was impossible, on account of the quantities of sea-weed and the constant swell of the sea dashing against the rocks, to keep anything that we could make for a line clear

enough for fishing; and what made it worse was the height any likely place was from the water.

We used to see parts of fish in the big gut of the albatross when they had their young to feed. I remember once killing an albatross, and, as was often the case just before dying, it vomited up the contents of its bag, and amongst the mess was an eel quite perfect, and having the appearance of being cooked. I took it up and ate it, and it tasted quite like stewed eel. I daresay that was the only fish eaten on the island.

A good look-out was kept, and all who could were engaged building a turf tower upon which we were to plant a small staff, but we were rescued before it was completed. All the eggs were done, and my mother was getting exceedingly weak, for she could not eat the bird-flesh without it making her very sick, and it was only now and then she could manage to take a little; she said herself she could not last another fortnight; but relief was close at hand. On the 21st January 1876, the happiest day we shall ever know on earth, the gallant little bark Young Phœnix, American whaler, Captain Gifford, took my mother and myself and several others off that night, and the rest the next day. There was not much wind, and the day was fine. I thought I would give myself a holiday from skinning, so I had just got a "pig" full of young penguin's legs, and had hung them on a string on

the roof to dry and smoke a little, and was backing out of the shanty, when, just visible, I saw a ship. I yelled out, Sail ho! and ran to see if the look-out had seen it from the flagstaff. They had seen her a short time before, and the flags and everything were up; fires were lit also on different parts of the hill so that they might see the smoke, and blankets were about in every position that looked eligible. Of course we were all very much excited, hope and fear alternately predominating. I had gone to the flagstaff, and was running back to tell my mother not to be too sanguine, as the ship had not as yet altered her course, when a cheer made me look out to sea. There—delightful sight!—she had seen us, and was steering close in to the island. Some of us cried with joy. I packed up all our valuables—my club, revolver, knife, fork, and two spoons—and prepared everything for embarking. When the ship came closer, she ran up the American ensign, and lowered two boats. They came to the wrong side of the island for embarking; so Walter Smith, the sail-maker, swam out to them, though with considerable risk, for there was a heavy surf, and directed them to the other side, where our old landing-place was. It was now getting late, and Captain Gifford only took my mother, Mr Peters, "Sails," two invalids, and myself, off in the boat that night. When we got on board we got a warm bath, clean clothes, and tea; and every one was exceedingly kind to us.

I don't know how my mother could have managed without Mrs Gifford's kind assistance. She was comfortably cushioned up on a large sofa in the stern cabin; a nicely done up little place, with pictures, books, and harmonium. The Young Phœnix was but a small vessel, and had a crew of 30 hands, so that there was little room to spare, and Mr Peters and I slept on the floor. Captain Gifford was undecided whether he could take us all or not; however, he made up his mind to manage as well as he could, leave his fishing-grounds—which would be a great loss to him—and take us to the Mauritius or the Cape, unless he could tranship us to English ships. That night we stood off the land till morning. The day was lovely, and we steered for the island again, and took off the rest, Mr Peters writing a short account of the wreck, and the names of the drowned, on paper, which was enclosed in a bottle, sealed up, and buried at the top of one of the graves. Each grave, as well, had a wooden cross placed at the head of it.

Everybody, as they came on board, had a good wash in hot water, and clean clothes, boots, &c., all good new suits: we had every kindness shown us. We steered for the north; and on the 26th January a Liverpool ship, the Sierra Morena, hove in sight, which the captain signalled, and 24 of us, including Mr Peters, went in her. She was bound for Kurachee; and the same afternoon another

Liverpool ship, The Childers, Captain M'Phee, took the remaining 20, including my mother and myself. She was bound to Rangoon, in Burmah. We were all very sorry to leave the whaler; and Mrs Gifford was quite distressed at parting from my mother. Captain Gifford offered to keep my mother on board if she had the least objections to going to Rangoon. We were most kindly and courteously received by Captain M'Phee of the Childers, and my mother is now getting quite fat and strong.

This ends my journal, and my mother adds the rest.

C. F. W.

MRS WORDSWORTH'S ADDITIONS.

Captain M'Phee carries a black crew, most of the men colossal and very handsome and strong: they are a merry lot, and their laugh is worth hearing. Charlie has been busy painting pictures on the sailors' boxes, and has also been employed to-day washing, and makes a first-rate washer. I shall go on with the narrative myself, as Charlie is busy to-day (16th March) pulling ropes and going through great exertion. We have had light variable winds or none at all, the days awfully hot and the evenings charming. At last, we got near enough to sight land two days ago. It is a most dangerous coast, with sand-banks stretching far

out, and the pilots will only come to the mouth of the river, when the worst danger is over. The captain has neither slept nor eaten for two days, and yesterday he seemed very anxious. He had put out signals for a pilot that we saw, but they took no notice, and we have been anchored for two nights. The currents are so strong, that even with a strong breeze the ship cannot keep its own. It is very anxious work, and the captain constantly keeps sounding, and yesterday the man that was sounding took no notice though we got into shallow water. I had just gone to rest in my bunk after dinner, when I heard a great trampling on deck and hurrying about, sails being dragged up and down, when, just at my window, I heard the man say, "Only three fathoms water," and I at once knew we were within a few inches of being aground. I started up; my face felt stiff, it was so white, and my lips blue with terror, and went up to see what was going on. The ship was like a bee-hive, every one was so busy. In a very short time every sail was furled and the anchor dropped. Charlie was hurrying me along to see it go, when go it did with a vengeance, the huge chain snapping like a bit of wood, and off went the anchor with thirty fathoms of valuable chain cable. I was in horror; however, little Jemmie comforted me by telling me there were five more on board; and another was soon dropped. The ship slightly

grazed the bottom, but of course we did not anchor till we were in deeper water. The captain said no wonder I turned pale; he felt he did so himself. A captain has indeed an awful responsibility. One of our men, Jack Evans, who has been wrecked five or six times, ran past me laughing, saying "it would be queer if we were wrecked twice this voyage; there must be some Jonahs amongst us, I think." A breeze sprang up in the evening, too late, as usual, to do any good. At tea to-night the first mate told me what frightful danger we were in just as the anchor cable broke, as he feared the others might not act well at once. There was a strong tide drifting us into a river, out of which *nothing*—either ship or living creature—ever came again: it is certain death. They have tried to survey it, but it is impossible; no one ever returned to tell the tale.[1] It is a frightfully dangerous coast. At every alarm I go and put on a full complement of clothes, and have our small bundle of possessions ready. The men have had very hard work, and they do it all so cheerfully. I have gained a great deal of nautical knowledge; the captain very kindly takes great trouble with me, and then I have long chats with "the man at

[1] Not quite correct. The river is very dangerous, but small craft or boats do occasionally go up. The name of the river is the Setang, and the danger lies in the shoals, quicksands, and swift tide, also what is called a "bore"—some description of tidal wave.– C. F. W.

the wheel." Sometimes the "man" is a boy, or rather child, elf, or sprite, called Jemmie, very small, and knows as much or more than most in the ship except the captain; up to every mischief, very often in disgrace, but neither captain nor any one else can keep a serious face with him, thanks to his *beaux yeux.* He is half Irish and half Spanish; you can imagine the gypsy beauty of the child. A big black called "Big Jo," when Jemmie teases him, brings his eyes to bear upon him from his height, and says, "Go 'way, child." He is Liverpool, ran off to sea, and I suppose has given his parents more trouble than half-a-dozen usual boys. He comes with great graciousness to comfort me and explain things. He is invaluable to the captain; he has such splendid eyes that he can see further than any one else. There is one comfort in being the only woman on board; I can poke about and go anywhere: two or three would be in the way. I understand the compasses pretty well, and can tell the course we are going by the stars.

17*th March* (*St Patrick's Day*).—We are now all right, nearly in the roads, and see six or seven ships at anchor. We will surely get in to-morrow. After dinner-time boats came up to us, and some very curious individuals came on board. I immediately ran up to have a good stare at them, and found I was as much an object of curiosity to

them as they to me. There was one young Mussulman, a great swell, with a long skirt of red checked stuff, and a beautiful figure and carriage. They were the stevedores. The pilot was not come, and we have anchored among a delightful lot of lights, and can see the bush and cocoa-nut trees quite plain.

18*th March.*—The pilot came on board early this morning, and I had the honour of breakfasting with two turbaned Mussulmans. I am trying pigeon English, but can't resist the small words. We shall be up to Rangoon this evening, though we may not get on shore; oh, how glad I shall be! I never saw more extraordinary-looking individuals than some of these natives were—some with long skirts and no bodies, others with waistcoats and very little else. The little stevedore is quite a bright merry Mohammedan, very stout and upright; he puts me in mind of an Italian singer. He took tea with us, and very kindly took down an enormous turban to show me how it was done. He was dressed something like a European, except the turban. What with our colossal Christies and copper-coloured gentry, I feel as if I were in the "Arabian Nights;" even the "hump-back cadi" came on board last night: you remember the trouble he gave to everybody by choking on a fish-bone. The "old man of the sea," our pilot, is very grand, with a long red silk skirt, a long

white night-dress over that, and, when cold, a coat. The night-dress is kept on in my honour. Oh the bananas and fresh oranges! We don't know what oranges are in England. It is delightful to think of new milk and eggs, and abundance of delicious fruit, cocoa-nuts in perfection. I am a great believer in sugar now; I think it cured me of sea-sickness; Mrs Gifford said it was so strengthening for the stomach. A little ginger and plenty of sugar-and-water makes a delightful drink. This afternoon Charlie called me to come on deck. All sorts of queer boats, Chinese junks, sampans, and barges, to be seen as we turned into the narrower parts of the river, and, what was an exquisite pleasure to me, *green trees.* We have been exactly eleven months at sea—nothing but bleak dazzling sea; we could just see the dome of the golden pagoda. It has a thing like a huge umbrella of pure gold on the top worth £80,000, and the jewels on the gold work are very valuable. There is more than one beautiful pagoda.

19*th March* (*Sunday morning*).—We had to drop anchor about five miles from Rangoon, and I suppose we shall be towed in to-day. The captain went ashore last night. Charlie and Mr Walker sleep on the two couches in the saloon, Mr Keith in a bunk; and last night when they came down to go to bed, to their astonishment they found two long dark figures stretched out in their places, so

all they could do was to have a hearty laugh, and sleep on the floor. This morning I heard delightful sounds of birds singing just like larks, and we could see the monkeys playing about on the trees —such curious trees—it is all so strange!

And now my task is done. A gentleman, Mr Case, asked us most hospitably to go on shore with him, though we said good-bye with great regret to Captain M'Phee, who has been most generous and kind to us. He took such care always to make everything comfortable for me, I must remember him with gratitude all my life.

Now our story is finished. We expect our letters to go to-morrow, and hope soon to follow them.

F. W.

HERO-WORSHIP AND ITS DANGERS.

A STORY.

BY CHARLES LEVER.

[*MAGA*. June 1865.]

JEAN PAUL tells us that there never was a nature yet formed without its vein of romance —that the most realistic and commonplace people we have ever met have their moods of romance, and that the cord, however little we may suspect it, runs through the woof of all humanity.

I am not able to affirm that he is right; but certainly a little incident which has just occurred to me leads me to believe that there are cases of the affection in natures and temperaments in which nothing would have led me to suspect them. I need not be told that it is the men who have a most worldly character, who are often seen marrying portionless wives; that traits of self-sacrifice and devotion are being continually displayed by cold, ungenial, and, to all seeming, unimpressionable people. What I was not prepared for was to

find that hero-worship could get a place in the heart of a hard, money-getting, money-lending fellow, whose ordinary estimate of humanity was based less on what they were than what they had. I own that I had no other clue to the man's nature than that furnished by a few lines of a newspaper advertisement, which set forth his readiness to advance sums from one hundred to five hundred pounds on mere personal security, and at a most moderate rate of interest. And though the former amounted to obligations the breach of which would have reduced one to bondage, and the latter varied from eighty to a hundred and thirty per cent, he was so pleasant-looking—so chatty—so genially alive to the difficulties that beset youth—so forgivingly merciful to wasteful habits and ways, that I took to him from the moment I saw him, and signed my four bills for fifty each, and took up my hundred and eighteen pounds off the table with the feeling that at last I had found in an utter stranger that generous trustfulness and liberality I had in vain looked for amongst kindred and relatives.

We had a pint of madeira to seal the bargain. He told me in a whisper it was a priceless vintage. I believe him. On a rough calculation, I think every glass I took of it cost me forty-seven pounds some odd shillings. It is not, however, to speak of this event that I desire here. Mr Nathan Joel and I ceased after a while to be the dear friends

we swore to be over that madeira. The history of those four bills, too complicated to relate, became disagreeable. There were difficulties—there were renewals—there were protests—and there was a writ. Nathan Joel was—no matter what. I got out of his hands after three years by ceding a reversion worth five times my debt, with several white hairs in my whiskers, and a clearer view of gentlemen of the Jewish persuasion than I had ever picked up out of Ecclesiasticus.

A good many years rolled over—years in which I now and then saw mention of Mr Joel as a plaintiff or an opposing creditor—once or twice as assignee, too. He was evidently thriving. Men were living very fast, smashes were frequent, and one can imagine the coast of Cornwall rather a lucrative spot after a stormy equinox. I came abroad, however, and lost sight of him; a chance mention, perhaps, in a friend's letter, how he had fallen into Joel's hands — that Joel advanced or refused to advance the money—something about cash, was all that I knew of him, till t'other evening the landlord of the little inn near my villa called up to ask if I knew anything of a certain Mr Nathan Joel, who was then at his inn without baggage, money, papers, or effects of any kind, but who on hearing my name cried out with ecstasy, "Ah, he knows me. You've only to ask Mr O'Dowd who I am, and he'll satisfy you at once."

"So," thought I, "Joel! the Lord hath delivered thee into my hands, and now what sort of vengeance shall I take? Shall I ignore you utterly, and declare that your claim to my acquaintance is a gross and impudent fraud? Shall I tell the innkeeper I disown you?" If this was my first thought, it soon gave way—it was so long since the rascal had injured me, and I had cursed him very often for it since then. It was his nature too; *that* also ought to be borne in mind. When leeches cease sucking they die, and very probably money-lenders wither and dry up when they are not abstracting our precious metals.

"I'll go over and see if it be the man I know," said I, and set off at once towards the inn. As I went along, the innkeeper told me how the stranger had arrived three nights back, faint, weary, and exhausted, saying that the guide refused to accompany him after he entered the valley, and merely pointed out the road and left him. "This much I got out of him," said the landlord, "but he is not inclined to say more, but sits there wringing his hands and moaning most piteously."

Joel was at the window as I came up, but seeing me he came to the door. "Oh, Mr O'Dowd," cried he, "befriend me this once, sir. Don't bear malice, nor put your foot on the fallen, sir. Do pity me, sir, I beseech you."

The wretched look of the poor devil pleaded for

him far better than his words. He was literally in rags, and such rags, too, as seemed to have once been worn by another, for he had a brown peasant jacket and a pair of goatskin breeches, and a pair of shoes fastened round his ankles with leather thongs.

"So," said I, "you have got tired of small robberies and taken to the wholesale line. When did you become a highwayman?"

"Ah, sir!" cried he, "don't be jocose, don't be droll. This is too pitiful a case for laughter."

I composed my features into a semblance of decent gravity, and after a little while induced him to relate his story, which ran thus:—

Mr Joel, it appeared, who for some thirty years of life had taken a very practical view of humanity, estimating individuals pretty much like scrip, and ascribing to them what value they might bring in the market, had suddenly been seized with a most uncommon fervour for Victor Emmanuel, the first impulse being given by a "good thing he had done in Piedmontese fives," and a rather profitable investment he had once made in the Cavour Canal. In humble gratitude for these successes, he had bought a print of the burly monarch, whose bullet head and bristling mustaches stared fiercely at him from over his fireplace, till, by mere force of daily recurrence he grew to feel for the stern soldier a sentiment of terror dashed with an intense admiration.

"Talk of Napoleon, sir!" he would say, "he's a humbug — an imposition — a wily, tricky, intriguing dodger. If you want a great man — a man that never knew fear—a man that is above all flimsy affectations—a man of the heroic stamp —there he is for you!

"As for Garibaldi, he's not to be compared to him. Garibaldi was an adventurer, and made adventure a career; but here's a king! here's a man who has a throne, who was born in a palace, descended from a long line of royal ancestors, and instead of giving himself up to a life of inglorious ease and self-indulgence, he mounts his horse and heads a regiment, sir. He takes to the field like the humblest soldier in his ranks, goes out, thrashes the Austrians, drives them out of Milan, hunts them over the plains of Lombardy, and in seven days raises the five per cents from fifty-one and a half to eighty-two and a quarter 'for the account.' Show me the equal of that in history, sir. There's not another man in Europe could have done as much for the market."

His enthusiasm knew no bounds; he carried a gold piece of twenty francs, with the King's image, to his watch-chain, and wore small coins, with the cross of Savoy, in his breast as shirt-studs. An ardour intense as this is certain to bear its effects. Mr Joel had often promised himself a trip to the Continent, of which he knew nothing beyond Paris.

He took, then, the season of autumn, when the House was up, and money-lending comparatively dull, and came abroad. He told his friends he was going to Vichy; he affected a little gout. It was a disease gentlemen occasionally permitted themselves, and Mr Joel was a rising man, and liked to follow the lead of persons of condition. Very different, however, was his object; his real aim was to see the great man whose whole life and actions had taken such an intense hold on his imagination. To see him, to gaze on him, to possess himself fully of the actual living traits of the heroic sovereign; and if by any accident, by any happy chance, by any of those turns of capricious fortune which now and then elevate men into a passing greatness, to get speech of him!—this Mr Joel felt would be an operation more overwhelmingly entrancing than if Spanish bonds were to be paid off in full, or Poyais fives to be quoted at par in the market.

It is not impossible that Mr Joel believed his admiration for the *Rè galant'uomo* gave him a *bona fide* and positive claim on that monarch's regard. This is a delusion by no means rare: it possesses a large number of people, and influences them in their conduct to much humbler objects of worship than a king on his throne. Sculptors, authors, and painters know something of what I mean, and not uncommonly come to hear how ungraciously they

are supposed to have responded to an admiration of which it is possible they never knew, and which it would be very excusable in them if they never valued. The worshipper, in fact, fancies that the incense he sends up as smoke should come back to him in some shape substantial. However this may be, and I am not going to press it further on my reader's attention, Mr Joel got to imagine that Victor Emmanuel would have felt as racy an enjoyment at meeting with *him*, as he himself anticipated he might experience in meeting the King. It goes a very long way in our admiration of any one to believe that the individual so admired has a due and just appreciation of ourselves. We start at least with one great predisposing cause of love—an intense belief in the good sense and good taste of the object of our affections.

Fully persuaded, then, that the meeting would be an event of great enjoyment to each, the chief difficulty was to find a "mutual friend," as the slang has it, to bring them into the desired relations.

This was really difficult. Had King Victor Emmanuel been an industrial monarch, given to cereals, or pottery, gutta-percha, cotton, or corrugated iron, something might have been struck out to present him with as pretext for an audience. Was he given to art, or devoted to some especial science?—a bust, a bronze, or a medal might have paved the way to an interview. The King, however, had no such

leanings; and whatever his weaknesses, there were none within the sphere of the money-changer's attributions; and as Mr Joel could not pretend that he knew of a short cut to Venice, or a secret path that led to the Vatican, he had to abandon all hopes of approaching the monarch by the legitimate roads.

See him I must, speak to him I will, were, however, the vows he had registered in his own heart, and he crossed the Alps with this firm resolve, leaving, as other great men before him have done, time and the event to show the way where the goal had been so firmly fixed on.

At Turin he learned the King had just gone to Ancona to open a new line of railroad. He hastened after him, and arrived the day after the celebration to discover that his Majesty had left for Brindisi. .He followed to Brindisi, and found the King had only stopped there an hour, and then pursued his journey to Naples. Down to Naples went Mr Joel at once, but to his intense astonishment nobody there had heard a word of the King's arrival. They did not, indeed, allege the thing was impossible; but they slily insinuated that if his Majesty had really come and had not thought proper to make his arrival matter of notoriety, that they as Italians, Neapolitans *surtout*, knew good manners better than to interfere with a retirement it was their duty to respect. This they said with a sort of half-droll significancy that puzzled Mr Joel

much, for he had lived little in Italy, and knew far more about Cremorne than the Casino!

Little dubious sentences, shallow insinuations, half-laughing obscurities, were not weapons to repel such a man as Joel. His mind was too steadfastly intent on its object to be deterred by such petty opposition. He had come to see the King, and see him he would. This same speech he made so frequently, so publicly, and so energetically, that at the various cafés which he frequented, no sooner was he seen to enter than some stranger to him—all were strangers—would usually come up in the most polite manner and express a courteous hope that he had been successful, and had either dined with his Majesty or passed the evening with him. It is needless to say that the general impression was that poor Mr Joel was a lunatic, but as his form of the malady seemed mild and inoffensive, his case was one entirely for compassion and pity.

A few, however, took a different view. They were of the police, and consequently they regarded the incident professionally. To their eyes, Joel was a Mazzinian, and come out specially to assassinate the King. It is such an obvious thing to the official mind that a man on such an errand would attract every notice to his intentions beforehand, that they not alone decided Joel to be an intended murderer, but they kept a strict record of all the people he accidentally addressed, all the waiters who served,

and all the hackney cabmen who drove him, while the telegraphic wires of the whole kingdom vibrated with one name, asking, Who is Joel? trace Joel; send some one to identify Joel. Little poor Joel knew all this time that he had been photographed as he sat eating his oysters, and that scraps of his letters were pasted on a large piece of pasteboard in the Ministry of Police, that his handwriting might be shown under his varied attempts to disguise it.

One evening he sat much later than was his wont at a little open-air café of the St Lucia quarter. The sky was gloriously starlit, and the air had all the balmy softness of the delicious south. Joel would have enjoyed it and the cool drink before him intensely, if it were not that his disappointed hopes threw a dark shadow over everything, and led him to think of all that his journey had cost him in cash, and all in the foregone opportunities of discounts and usuries.

A frequenter of the café, with whom he had occasionally exchanged greetings, sat at the same table; but they said little to each other, the stranger being evidently one not given to much converse, and rather disposed to the indulgence of his own thoughts in silence.

"Is it not strange," said Joel, after a long pause, "that I must go back without seeing him?"

A half-impatient grunt was all the reply, for the stranger was well weary of Joel and his sorrows.

"One would suppose that he really wanted to keep out of my way, for up to this moment no one can tell me if he be here or not."

Another grunt.

"It is not that I have left anything undone, heaven knows. There isn't a quarter of the town I have not walked, day and night, and his is not a face to be mistaken; I'd know him at a glance."

"And what in the devil's name do you want with him when you have seen him?" exclaimed the other, angrily. "Do you imagine that a King of Italy has nothing better to do with his time than grant audiences to every idle John Bull whose debts or doctors have sent him over the Alps?" This rude speech was so fiercely delivered, and with a look and tone so palpably provocative, that Joel at once perceived his friend intended to draw him into a quarrel, so he finished off his liquor, took up his hat and cane, and with a polite *felice sera, Signor*, was about to withdraw.

"Excuse me," said the stranger, rising, with a manner at once obsequious and apologetic. "I entreat you to forgive my rude and impatient speech. I was thinking of something else, and forgot myself. Sit down for one moment, and I will try and make you a proper reparation—a reparation you will be satisfied with.

"You want to see the King, and you desire to speak with him: both can be done with a little

courage; and when I say this, I mean rather presence of mind—*aplomb*, as the French say—than anything like intrepidity or daring. Do you possess the quality I speak of?"

"It is my precise gift—the essential feature of my character," cried Joel, in ecstasy.

"This, then, is the way—and mind I tell you this secret on the faith that as an English gentleman you preserve it inviolate—'parole Inglese,' is a proverb with us, and we have reason to believe that it deserves its signification."

Joel swore to observe the bond, and the other continued—

"The King, it is needless to tell you, detests state and ceremonial; he abhors courtly etiquette, and the life of a palace is to him the slavery of the galleys. His real pleasure is the society of a few intimates, whom he treats as equals, and with whom he discourses in the rough dialect of Piedmont, as it is talked in the camp by his soldiers. Even this amount of liberty is, however, sometimes not sufficient for this bold native spirit; he longs for more freedom—for, in fact, that utter absence of all deference, all recognition of his high estate, which followers never can forget; and to arrive at this, he now and then steals out at night and gains the mountains, where, with a couple of dogs and a rifle, he will pass two, three, perhaps four days, sharing the peasant's fare and his couch, eating the coarsest

food, and sleeping on straw with a zest that shows what a veritable type of the medieval baron this Count of Savoy really is, and by what a mistake it is that he belongs to an age where the romance of such a character is an anachronism!

"You may feel well astonished that nobody could tell you where he is—whether here or at Turin, at Bologna, at Florence, or Palermo. The fact is they don't know, that's the real truth—not one of them knows; all they are aware of is that he is off —away on one of those *escapades* on which it would be as much as life is worth to follow him: and there is La Marmora, and there sits Minghetti, and yonder Della Rovere, not daring to hint a syllable as to the King's absence, nor even to hazard a guess above a whisper as to when he will come back again. Now I can tell you where he is—a mere accident put me in possession of the secret. A *fattore* of my brother's came up yesterday from the Terra di Lavoro and told how a strange man, large, strong-boned, and none over bland-looking, had been quail-shooting over the Podere for the last two days; he said he was a wonderful shot, but cared nothing about his game, which he gave freely away to any one he met. I made him describe him accurately, and he told me how he wore a tall high-crowned hat—a 'calabrese,' as they call it—with a short peacock's feather, a brown jacket all covered with little buttons, leather small-clothes ending

above the knees, which were naked, light gaiters half way up the leg, his gun slung at his back, pistols in his belt, and a *couteau de chasse* without a scabbard, hung by a string to his waist-belt; he added that he spoke little, and that little in a strange dialect, probably Roman, or from the Marches.

"By a few other traits he established the identity of one whose real rank and condition he never had the slightest suspicion of. Now, as the King is still there, and as he told the Parocco of the little village at Catanzaro that he'd send him some game for his Sunday dinner, which he meant to partake of with him, you have only to set out to-night, reach Nola, where with the aid of a pony and a carratella you will make your way to Raniglia, after which, three miles of a brisk mountain walk —nothing to an Englishman—you'll arrive at Catanzaro, where there is a little inn. He calls there every evening coming down the valley from St Agata, and if you would like to meet him casually, as it were, you have only to set out a little before sunset, and stroll up the gorge; there you'll find him." The stranger went on to instruct Mr Joel how he should behave to the distinguished unknown—how, while carefully avoiding all signs of recognition, he should never forget that he was in the presence of one accustomed to the most deferential respect.

"Your manner," said he, "must be an artful blending of easy politeness with a watchful caution against over-familiarity; in fact, try to make him believe that you never suspect his great rank, and at the same time take care that in your own heart you never forget it. Not a very easy thing to do, but the strong will that has sent you so far will doubtless supply the way to help you further;" and with a few more such friendly counsels he wished Joel success and a good-night, and departed.

Mr Joel took his place in the "rotondo" of the diligence—no other was vacant—and set off that night in company with two priests, a gendarme, and a captured galley-slave, who was about to show the officers of justice where a companion of his flight had sought concealment. The company ate and drank, smoked villanous tobacco, and sang songs all night, so that when Joel reached Nola he was so overcome with fatigue, headache, and sickness, that he had to take to bed, where the doctor who was sent for bled him twice, and would have done so four or five times more, if the patient, resisting with the little strength left him, had not put him out of the room and locked the door, only opening it to creep down-stairs and escape from Nola for ever. He managed with some difficulty to get a place in a baroccino to Raniglia, and made the journey surrounded with empty wine-flasks, which required extreme care and a very leisurely

pace, so that the distance, which was but eighteen miles, occupied nearly as many hours. It took him a full day to recruit at Raniglia, all the more since the rest of the journey must be made on foot.

"I own, sir," said Mr Joel, whom I now leave to speak for himself, "it was with a heavy heart I arose that morning and thought of what was before me. I had already gone through much fatigue and considerable illness, and I felt that if any mishap should befall me in that wild region, with its wild-looking, semi-savage inhabitants, the world would never hear more of me. It was a sad way to finish a life which had not been altogether unsuccessful, and I believe I shed tears as I fastened on my knapsack and prepared for the road. A pedlar kept me company for two miles, and I tried to induce him to go on the whole way with me to Catanzaro, but he pointed to his pack, and said, 'There are folk up there who help themselves too readily to such wares as I carry. I'd rather visit Catanzaro with an empty pack than a full one.' He was curious to learn what led *me* to visit the place, and I told him it was to see the fine mountain scenery and the great chestnut and cork woods of which I had heard so much. He only shook his head in reply. I don't know whether he disbelieved me, or whether he meant that the journey would scarce repay the fatigue. I arrived at Catanzaro about three in the afternoon. It was a blazing hot day—

the very air seemed to sparkle with the fiery sun's rays, and the village, in regular Italian fashion, was on the very summit of a mountain, around which other mountains of far greater height were grouped in a circle. Every house was shut up, the whole population was in bed, and I had as much difficulty in getting admission to the inn as if I had come at midnight."

I will not trouble my reader to follow Mr Joel in his description of or comment upon Italian village life, nor ask him to listen to the somewhat lengthy dialogue that took place between him and the priest, a certain Don Lertoro, a most miserable, half-famished fellow, with the worst countenance imaginable, and a vein of ribaldry in his talk that Mr Joel declared the most degraded creature might have been ashamed of.

By an artful turn of the conversation, Joel led the priest to talk of the strangers who occasionally came up to visit the mountain, and at last made bold to ask, as though he had actually seen him, who was the large, strong-boned man, with a rifle slung behind him? he did not look like a native of these parts?

"Where did you meet him?" asked the priest, with a furtive look.

"About a mile from this," said Joel; "he was standing on the rock over the bridge as I crossed the torrent."

"Che Bestia!" muttered Don Lertoro, angrily; but whether the compliment was meant for Joel or the unknown did not appear. Unwilling to resume the theme, however, he affected to busy himself about getting some salad for supper, and left Joel to himself.

While Joel sat ruminating, in part pleasantly, over the craft of his own address, and in part dubiously, thinking over Don Lertoro's exclamation, and wondering if the holy man really knew who the stranger was, the priest returned to announce the supper.

By Joel's account, a great game of fence followed the meal, each pushing the other home with very searching inquiries, but Joel candidly declaring that the Don, shrewd as he was, had no chance with him, insomuch as that, while he completely baffled the other as to what led him there, how long he should remain, and where go to afterwards, he himself ascertained that the large, heavy-boned man with the rifle might usually be met every evening about sunset in the gorge coming down from St Agata; in fact, there was a little fountain about three miles up the valley which was a favourite spot of his to eat his supper at—"a spot easily found," said the priest, "for there are four cypress trees at it, and on the rock overhead you'll see a wooden cross, where a man was murdered once."

This scarcely seemed to Joel's mind as a very

appetising element; but he said nothing, and went his way. As the day was drawing to a close, Mr Joel set out for the fountain. The road, very beautiful and picturesque as it was, was eminently lonely. After leaving the village he never saw a human being; and though the evening was deliciously fine, and the wild flowers at either side scented the air, and a clear rivulet ran along the roadside with a pleasant murmur, there was that in the solitude and the silence, and the tall peaked mountains, lone and grim, that terrified and appalled him. Twice was he so overcome that he almost determined to turn back and abandon the expedition.

Onward, however, he went, encouraging himself by many little flatteries and compliments to his own nature. How bold he was! how original! how unlike other money-lenders! what manifest greatness there must be somewhere in the temperament of one like him, who could thus leave home and country, security, and the watchful supervision of Scotland Yard, to come into the wild mountains of Calabria just to gratify an intellectual craving! These thoughts carried him over miles of the way, and at last he came in sight of the four cypress trees; and as he drew nigh, sure enough there was the little wooden cross standing out against the sky; and while he stopped to look at it, a loud voice, so loud as to make him start, shouted out, "Alto là—who are you?"

Mr Joel looked about him on every side, but no one was to be seen. He crossed the road, and came back again, and for a moment he seemed to doubt whether it was not some trick of his own imagination suggested the cry, when it was repeated still louder; and now his eyes caught sight of a tall high-crowned hat, rising above the rank grass, on a cliff over the road, the wearer being evidently lying down on the sward. Joel had but time to remove his hat courteously, when the figure sprang to his feet, and revealed the person of an immense man. He looked gigantic on the spot he stood on, and with his stern, flushed features, and enormous mustaches, turned fiercely upwards at the points, recalled to Mr Joel the well-known print over his chimneypiece at home. "Where are you going?" cried he, sternly.

"Nowhere in particular, sir. Strolling to enjoy my cigar," replied Joel, trembling.

"Wait a moment," said the other, and came clattering down the cliff, his rifle, his pistols, and his ammunition-pouches making a terrific uproar as he came.

"You came from Catanzaro—were there any gendarmes there when you left?"

"None, sire; not one," said Joel, who was so overcome by the dignity of the gentleman that he forgot all his intended reserve.

"No lies, no treachery, or, by the precious tears of the Madonna, I'll blow your brains out."

"Your Majesty may believe every word I utter in the length and breadth of the Peninsula; you have not a more devoted worshipper."

"Did you see the priest Don Lertoro?"

"Yes, sire; it was *he* told me where I should find your Majesty, at the well here, under the cypress trees."

"Scioccone!" cried the stranger; but whether the epithet was meant for Joel or the Curé did not appear. A very long and close cross-examination ensued, in which Joel was obliged not merely to explain who he was, whence he came, and what he came for, but to narrate a variety of personal circumstances which at the time it seemed strange his Majesty would care to listen to—such as the amount of money he had with him, how much more he had left behind at Naples, how he had no friends in that capital, nor any one like to interest themselves about him if he should get into trouble, or require to be assisted in any way. Apparently the King was satisfied with all his replies, for he finished by inviting him to partake of some supper with him; and producing a small basket from under the brushwood, he drew forth a couple of fowls, some cheese, and a flask of wine. It was not till he had drunk up three large goblets of the wine that Joel found himself sufficiently courageous to be happy.

At last, however, he grew easy, and even familiar, questioning his Majesty about the sort of life he led, and asking how it was that he never fell into the hands of brigands.

Nothing could be more genial or good-humoured than the King; he was frankness itself; he owned that his life might possibly be better; that on the whole his father confessor was obliged to bear a good deal from him; and that all his actions were not in strictest conformity with church discipline.

"You ought to marry again; I am persuaded, sir," said Joel, "it would be the best thing you could do."

"I don't know," said the other, thoughtfully. "I have a matter of seven wives as it is, and I don't want any more."

"Ah! your Majesty, I guess what you mean," said Joel, winking; "but that's not what I would suggest. I mean some strong political connection—some alliance with a royal house, Russian or Bavarian, if, indeed, Austrian were not possible."

"On the whole," said Joel, "I found that he didn't much trust any one; he thought ill of Louis Napoleon, and called him some hard names; he was not over complimentary to the Pope; and as for Garibaldi, he said they had once been thick as thieves, but of late they had seen little of each other, and for his part he was not sorry for it. All this time, sir," continued Joel, "his Majesty was always fancying something or other that I wore

or carried about me; first it was my watch, which I felt much honoured by his deigning to accept; then it was my shirt-studs, then my wrist-buttons, then my tobacco-pouch, then my pipe, a very fine meerschaum, and at last, to my intense astonishment, my purse, whose contents he actually emptied on the table, and counted out before me, asking me if I had not any more about me, either in notes or bills, for it seemed a small sum for a 'Milordo,' so he called me, to travel with.

"Whatever I had, however, he took it — took every carlino of it—saying, 'There's no getting any change up here—there are no bankers, my dear Signor Joel; but we'll meet at Naples one of these days, and set all these things to rights.'

"I suppose the wine must have been far stronger than I thought; perhaps, too, drinking it in the open air made it more heady; then the novelty of the situation had its effect—it's not every day that a man sits hobnobbing with a king. Whatever the reason, I became confused and addled, and my mind wandered. I forgot where I was. I believe I sang something—I am not sure what—and the King sang, and then we both sang together; and at last he whistled with a silver call-whistle that he wore, and he gave me in charge to a fellow—a ragged rascally-looking dog he was—to take me back to Catanzaro; and the scoundrel, instead of doing so, led me off through the mountains for a

day and a half, and dropped me at last at Reccone, a miserable village, without tasting food for twelve hours. He made me change clothes with him, too, and take his dirty rags, this goat-skin vest and the rest of it, instead of my new tweed suit; and then, sir, as we parted, he clapped me familiarly on the shoulder, and said, 'Mind me, *amico mio*, you're not to tell the padrone, when you see him, that I took your clothes from you, or he'll put a bullet through me. Mind *that*, or you'll have to settle your scores with one of my brothers.'

"'By the padrone you perhaps mean the King,' said I, haughtily.

"'King, if you like,' said he, grinning; 'we call him "Ninco Nanco:" and now that they've shot Pilone, and taken Stoppa, there's not another brigand in the whole of Italy to compare with him.' Yes, sir, out came the horrid truth. It was Ninco Nanco, the greatest monster in the Abruzzi, I had mistaken for Victor Emmanuel. It was to him I had presented my watch, my photograph, my seal ring, and my purse with forty-two napoleons. Dirty, ragged, wretched, in tatters, and famished, I crept on from village to village, till I reached this place yesterday evening, only beseeching leave to be let lie down and die, for I don't think I'll ever survive the shame of my misfortune, if my memory should be cruel enough to preserve the details."

"Cheer up, Joel; the King is to review the National Guard to-day. I'll take care that you shall have a good place to see him, and a good dinner afterwards."

"No, sir; I'll not go and look at him. Ninco Nanco has cured me of hero-worship. I'll go back to town and see after the exchanges. The sovereigns that come from the mint are the only ones I mean to deal with from this day forward."

ANNIE AND HER MASTER.

[*MAGA*. APRIL 1864.]

CHAPTER I.

FRAU VON HEILMANN, mother of Gottfried von Heilmann, musician and composer, a prophet not without honour in his native place of Wüstestadt, knitted as deftly and as constantly as do all the homely and old-fashioned among her countrywomen.

On the morning when we first look in upon her, the easy-chair Frau von Heilmann occupied was placed in its fine-weather position—that is, the estrade in front of the centre window of a handsome and comfortable room on the *bel étage* of a house situated on the outskirts of a frequented public garden—a "garden" which is no garden as we English understand the word, but something between a wood and a park; a wood with no sylvan wildness, a park with no lawny slopes or turf expanse: in reality, it is the remnant of an ancient forest, cleared here and there to make place for a statue

or a piece of water, and intersected in all directions by carriage-drives and narrower paths, making a sheltered and pleasant enough resort for the idle and the fashionable among the inhabitants of Wüstestadt.

Frau von Heilmann smiled to herself, over her knitting, as the autumn sunshine fell upon her. She was a handsome snowy-haired old woman, with bushy brows overhanging dark eyes that kept in them much of the fire of youth. She made a striking and pleasant picture, sitting as she did in a sort of indoor bower; ivy festooned the inside of the window, and was trained over the lattice-work which edged two sides of the estrade; behind her chair was a little thicket formed by her great India-rubber plants, and a few pots of blossoming shrubs and sweet-scented flowers placed at their feet.

Outside, the sky seemed to be blown into a more and more burning blue, and the sunshine into a fiercer brightness, by the keen wind that was merrily, madly, whirling about the red and brown leaves it had torn, somewhat untimely, from the trees in the great garden. The light that fell on this indoor picture was wonderfully clear and sharp.

Frau von Heilmann was a little deaf; when the door at the end of the room, towards which she had her back turned, opened, she did not look round. Presently she started, for there fell into her lap a heavy drop, which proved to be the first of a perfect shower of bonbons—*chocolate à la crême*, which

she loved right well—rained down upon her from a hand above her head. The shower ceasing, two arms were clasped round her neck, and a soft cheek pressed against hers.

"I was expecting you, Annchen, Töchterchen," the old lady said. She laid down her knitting and tried to return the caresses lavished upon her, but she could not get at her assailant.

"Come round in front of me, my child. Take care of my plants! Come round where I can see you. You must tell me all about it."

"If you won't look at me, Mütterchen, perhaps I can. Knit, knit, knit! look only at your needles, like a good, kind Mütterchen, as you are."

Annchen (or rather Annie, for she was an English girl) carefully pushed her way through the thicket —only her head and arms had penetrated it till now —and knelt down at the old lady's feet. She put the abandoned knitting into the old hands with a little shy, beseeching smile; then, when she heard the familiar and friendly click-click of the needles, she laid her head down on those motherly knees, and by-and-by began to cry—at first very quietly; and at first Frau von Heilmann only noticed this crying by now and then, when she came to a point in her knitting at which she had to shift her needles, laying her hand caressingly on the bright brown hair that was scattered over her lap. Generally at the same time—that is to say, in the same

pause of her industry — she put one of her pet bonbons into her mouth, showing that these tears shed upon her knees caused her little uneasiness, not even fear that they might induce a more acute attack of her chronic complaint, rheumatism.

But when five, ten, fifteen minutes passed, and the head was not raised, and the sobbing had become violent, Frau von Heilmann laid her knitting and her bonbons away on the little table that stood at her elbow, and lifted up the girl's face.

A quarter of an hour's hearty crying does not make a pretty face prettier, though undeniably it makes a plain one plainer. In spite of the temporary disfigurement, however, this face that Frau von Heilmann took between her kind brown hands was a sweet, bewitching, lovable, little face. In the eyes there was a tender, gentle, and yet wild look —wild in the sense of untamed; the pretty mouth had a passionate but refined fulness; the delicate nostril a sensitive curve; the soft clear skin let every change of mood shine through, betrayed by the flushing and retreating blood.

Holding this face between her strong old hands, Frau von Heilmann tried to read it.

"More tears than enough, Annchen. What ails thee, my child?"

"Everything, Mütterchen."

"Then I think we shall prove that it is nothing."

"It is one or the other—either everything or

nothing. It sounds silly to say so, but truly, Mütterchen, I hardly know which. Either I am too happy—happier than any girl ever was before, or will be after"—here a sparkling light broke over her face—"or I am miserable, too miserable. There is something here"—clasping both hands tightly over her heart, and drawing a long breath—"that I cannot understand—a heavy weight that I cannot move. Ought not happiness to make the heart light, Mütterchen?—light as a feather, gay as a bird, bright as the sunshine?" Her voice, as she asked this, had a lark-like carol in its tones; but then the tears rushed blindingly into her eyes, and she murmured—"It is not so with me—

> " 'Meine Ruh' ist hin,
> Mein Herz ist schwer;
> Ich finde sie nimmer
> Und nimmermehr.'

Why do I feel like this, Mütterchen?"

"Ech!" ejaculated Frau von Heilmann, and her hands dropped and folded themselves in her lap, while her eyes grew dim and retrospective.

"I think this is how it is," she said, presently. "A great happiness coming to us suddenly, seems more than we can hold; a great blessing falling upon us all at once, seems more than we can bear. We feel burdened, weighed down, till we have found our way to the good God's feet, and asked His blessing upon His gift. When I was a girl,

my heart would be light and dance in me because the sun shone, because a bird sang—nay, even for a ball or a ball-dress; but when I was a woman, and Gottfried my husband, my only and ever-beloved, was given to me—and again, when Gottfried my son, the true and noble heart, was born to me,—it was not thus. Is it that your heart is heavy with its *unpraised* happiness, Annchen, my child?"

The young girl flushed deeply beneath the searching eyes at the solemn question.

"I do not know, my mother." Then, after a long pause, the truthful tongue said, tremulously—

"Suppose, suppose, Mütterchen, that my heart sinks and fails me for fear that I do not love him enough?"

"It can hardly be that you do not love him, child! For 'enough,' leave that to time: you will go on loving him more and more, better and better, through all your life."

"Suppose, then, Mütterchen," and the voice was more tremulous yet, and very low—"suppose that I fear, with fear that makes my heart sicken and shrink till I feel as if I should die, that he does not love me, not more than a very little, not so much as he pities me—that he does not love me enough—not enough to satisfy my greedy heart, so starved for love—not enough to make it for his happiness that I should be his wife."

Frau von Heilmann smiled.

"It cannot be that he does not love you a good deal, Annchen; or why should he, who has found his old mother enough till now, want you for a wife? For 'enough'—be good, wise, and loving, Töchterchen; strive to grow more and more worthy."

"But, Mütterchen, I am not good, not wise—I am so childish, so hot, so hasty; and he, your son, is always—no," she smiled and blushed as she corrected herself, "almost always—so calm, so wise, so perfect. Yes," she added, with a vivid and proud kindling of her whole aspect, "he is so perfect—that is the greatest fault I can find with him; and though it is no fault in him, your noble son, it may be a misfortune, even a misery, for poor me."

"Your heart tells you how false that is before your tongue has made an end of saying it," returned Frau von Heilmann. "My Gottfried is not perfect, I know, though I could not easily put my finger upon the speck or flaw. He lives towards perfection, as we all should do, striving towards the fulfilling of the command, 'Darum sollt Ihr vollkommen seyn;' but he is not perfect. If he were—we grow towards the standard of what we love, Töchterchen—if we set our hearts high, our lives will not be grovelling. No woman's misery ever came to her through the perfectness, or approach towards it, of him she loved." Frau von Heilmann had noted and rightly understood that

proud kindling of the sweet young face. She sealed the pure brow with a kiss, and said—

"Now tell me how it happened, Annchen. I, his old mother, was quite in the dark. Much as he talks of you—much for a man who talks so little about anything—and always with pity and grave kindness, I did not guess that he loved you."

"And does he? Oh, does he? Is it not a mistake? All pity and grave kindness—only such love as a father feels for a foolish little daughter."

"Last night, when he told me what he had done, I was satisfied that it was otherwise than that with him. But I, an old woman, cannot make love for a man, Annchen mein. Ask him—let him speak for himself. I love a love-story as if I were a young girl still, though. Will you not tell me yours?"

For a moment Annie hid her blushing face. Frau von Heilmann could feel how the full heart beat against her knee.

"What can be told at all is soon told," Annie began when see looked up again: having said which she paused—long enough to have difficulty in breaking the silence. "You know, Mütterchen, I am not happy at Fraulein Grüppe's. She is very hard and cold, and lately she has been almost cruel. Some of the little ones love the 'English teacher,' or I should not be able to bear it. Yesterday all things seemed bitter and black. Do you know, Mütterchen, that as we took our dull walk by

the dismal canal I gazed down upon it longingly; and if I had been alone, and it had not looked so ugly and slimy——"

"Child! Don't let Gottfried hear you talk like that."

"Would he be angry?"

"Hurt—grieved."

"Oh, Mütterchen!" Annie cried. "Suppose it is like that often!—that I often hurt and grieve him! You will come to hate me, and I shall be more miserable than ever, for I shall know I am making you two miserable. I cannot rule my tongue or myself always: I must be free sometimes — have some liberty: this often gets me into trouble at the school. But what a little fool I am! Is it likely I shall talk like that when I am happy? Already I cannot feel as I did yesterday. It is not like the same world. Yesterday the creeping water, the clinging fog—to-day! Is it the same world, mother?"

"No—not for you, little one." "And she doubts if she loves him enough," said Frau von Heilmann to herself.

"I was wicked yesterday, I know," Annie continued, "but it seemed as if there was nothing left to me. It was not bitter to struggle and to bear while there was some one else to keep and care for. I did not complain then, my mother; but just for one's poor little self, when one is miserable, you

can fancy that sometimes it does not seem worth while to take such pains to keep alive. Well, when I went home from that walk yesterday (it was yesterday, though it seems long ago!) chilled through and through, and very wretched, Fraulein Grüppe met me with a scolding. 'I had kept the girls out too long,' she said: 'Herr von Heilmann was waiting, and his precious time could not be wasted.' Do you know," Annie inserted in laughing parenthesis, "I shall lead a harder life than ever now, when she knows, I fancy. But what shall I care? Oh, I will be so good—so good! Yesterday it was scold, scold, scold—I do not know what she said to me. And then she sent me straight into the music-room to take my lesson first, that the young ladies might have time to warm their hands. I felt sure Herr von Heilmann had heard all that had passed, and I was ashamed to be scolded like a naughty child in his hearing—afraid he would believe I had deserved it all; but I was obliged to go to my lesson at once. When I went into the room he only bowed to me, just as usual, looking as tall and grand as he always does. He set my chair, arranged my music, standing till I was seated, as he always does." There Annie paused, a little proud and tender smile curving her lips. "I dashed at my music with my eyes full of stinging tears and my hands stiff with cold. I played frightfully, and did not stop myself for the wrong notes, and he did

not stop me. Generally he is strict—half a wrong note doesn't escape him. I could not tell what this meant—it frightened me more than a scolding. I stopped suddenly and looked into his face. It had a strange expression; the corners of his mouth were twitching, and his eyes were contracted and——"

"Yes, yes—I know the look," nodded the mother. "His father used to look so when he was deeply moved."

"I felt obliged to say something, Mütterchen, for I couldn't bear his silence; so I said, rudely and pettishly, 'You do not think me worthy of correction to-day, mein Herr. Why don't you send me away, and throw my music after me—treat me as Herr Steinwitz treats such pupils?' You see, mother, I was grieved, really, though I wouldn't show it. I had hoped to please him that day; it was his own music, and I had studied industriously. How do you think he answered me? He smiled, rather grimly—I know he must have been all on edge with my false playing—and took my hands, saying, 'The little hands are cold; mine are hot: I will warm them, and afterwards my Fraulein will play quite otherwise.' Then he began to chafe my hands. I did not think anything of that; he had done it for me before, and I had seen him do it for two or three of the quite little children. He always treated me as if I too were quite a child.

But that he should be so kind and patient when I had been so rude and naughty—I could not bear that! If he had scolded, I should perhaps have been as hard as iron; but at his goodness I burst out crying, and felt as if my heart were breaking. It is awkward to cry when one has no hand to hide one's face with, nowhere to lean one's head, Mütterchen——"

"Yes, yes," nodded the old mother. "Go on, my child. What happened next?"

"Your son felt my difficulty, I suppose. He did not give me my hands—he held them fast in one of his; but he drew me to him, closer and closer, till my head leant against his breast. Now, Mütterchen, what right had he to know that I should not be very angry?" Annie flashed up a shy smile into the listening face. "But somehow I did not seem to mind it—it did not seem strange to me to rest there. I did not try to get away; it seemed well with me there, and quite natural. Then, mother mine, while he held me against his heart, and bent his face down upon my head, he said—the words entered my soul without passing through my ears—I cannot tell you what he said. I did not move, I did not speak. I left off crying, and felt as if I had gone to heaven, or heaven had come down upon me. I was no more ashamed than if I had been in my own dead mother's arms. Presently he put me from him, gently, but quickly; he placed

my hands upon the keys, and turned the pages of my music. Fraulein Grüppe entered; he had heard her coming. He would not compromise me, for I had not spoken! Mütterchen, I feel I would trust him with all myself, my life, my happiness, my honour. I know he would guard them ten thousand times better than I could or would myself, and yet——"

"And yet—speak, Annchen."

The bright proud face clouded, the clear voice lost all its ring of truth and delight, as the girl murmured—

"And yet I cannot feel sure that I love him."

"At your peril let Gottfried hear you say that," the mother remonstrated, with a severe smile. "He is humble in his noble simplicity; he will believe you."

"Would it not perhaps be well for him, my mother, that he should believe that I do not love him?—not in the one way of loving."

The door opened, and Herr von Heilmann came up the room towards the estrade. A tall and stately man, not young, and of a soldierly bearing; naturally fair, but browned to the brown fit for a soldier's cheek. The high brow was a little bald, but the beard and mustache, which did not quite hide a handsome resolute mouth, were thick, strong, and tawny. The eyes had for habitual expression a look of introspective and concentrated thought;

because they did not concern themselves constantly with the common things of that outward world, they passed with some for "dreamy," but their glance could be keen and trenchant. They were the eyes of a wise enthusiast and a long-suffering patriot. The face was deeply lined, seeming to tell of things that had been; the whole aspect was noble and calm; the bearing and manner stiff rather than flexible. No wonder that a young girl like Annie Gresham, looking upon this man, should find it hard to realise that, otherwise than from "pity and grave kindness," a half-chivalrous, half-paternal yearning to take a weak and friendless thing home to his protection, should he desire to make her his wife.

It was this that she did find it hard to realise; this was the real difficulty which grieved and vexed a proud and sensitive young heart.

Annie sprang up from her kneeling attitude when Herr von Heilmann entered the room and stood beside his mother, one hand resting on her chair; her eyes were on the ground, and so she lost the sight that would have gladdened her poor little heart—the warm lighting-up of the grave face when Herr von Heilmann caught sight of her. As she stood there in shy and troubled happiness, she was wondering to herself how he would address her, what sort of notice he would take of her. They had not met since——, and then she blushed

overpoweringly, and rather scoffed at her own heart, and said to it, "It is nothing to him; he will call you 'highly-respected, Fraulein,' very likely."

Herr von Heilmann was on the estrade now; he bent over his mother, and kissed her hand and her cheek; then, with a face of doubt and inquiry, he turned to Annie.

"She cannot feel sure that she loves you, she says," spoke Frau von Heilmann, rather maliciously. She was a little annoyed that Annie should have repeated that statement, and meant to sting her to an acknowledgment of its falsehood.

Herr von Heilmann bowed over the hand he had taken in his own, and relinquished it. Annie had not looked into his face while that brief glow overspread it, but she now saw its cold gravity.

"Be seated, Fraulein," he said, setting a chair for her as he spoke. Then he looked at his watch —"I have ten minutes—the time will suffice for my explanation and apology." But he paused, and a shade of embarrassment crossed his brow. "Explain to her, mother," he resumed—"you women understand each other—that though yesterday I was surprised into a departure from my usual respectful attitude, she was quite blameless. I was wrong; my conduct was hasty, ill-considered, for her compromising. While I now offer her my most earnest apology, I wish her to feel assured

that in no way will I presume upon her goodness. How *should* she know if she can love me? Let her have time to question her heart. I will wait as long as she pleases; till she pleases to have them changed, things shall be between us as they have always been."

"Annchen!—have you nothing to say, child?" asked the mother, uneasy now at what she had done.

"Nothing, dear Frau," answered poor Annie, who felt as if the bounding life-current were freezing perceptibly within her.

"Gottfried, my son, you are too scrupulous, too punctilious, too formal; you misrepresent yourself, and——"

"Excuse me, my mother. In such a matter a man cannot be too scrupulous. Yesterday I was rash and wrong. Had the Fraulein Grüppe entered one moment sooner, consider in what a position my indiscretion would have placed the dear child here."

As he finished, recalled the scene, and allowed himself to use so tenderly-familiar an epithet, a momentary passionateness shone from his eyes. Annie, had she seen that look, might have followed what would surely have been the bidding of her heart, and, running to him, laid her head again where it had so fearlessly rested yesterday; but she did not see it; she sat still in her place, giving no sign.

The day had changed—cruelly.

"True, true, true," said the mother, "but Fraulein Grüppe did not enter, and Annchen forgives you. Is it not so, Annchen?" she turned upon the girl somewhat impatiently.

"Herr von Heilmann may think me too forgiving if I do," she answered. "Surely if *he* finds so much of which to repent, there must be something for *me* to regret. My conduct yesterday must have appeared to him bold, unmaidenly."

She spoke with a burning blush and a stinging sense of humiliation.

"Your conduct was admirable—in the purity of childlike simplicity," he answered—"a simplicity which no man of honour would abuse or presume upon."

Annie hardly heeded his words. She was seized by the impulse to escape, to breathe freely, to be alone. She hurried by, caught up her shawl and bonnet, and, discovering all at once that she had exceeded the time of her leave of absence, she declared that she must go immediately.

Throwing her arms round Frau von Heilmann, putting her burning cheek to hers, she kissed her passionately. As she did so, she whispered, "Liebe Frau, you have been a little cruel; but it is best so." Then, with a quick shy look and a hurried gesture of farewell, she passed Herr von Heilmann, and left the room.

As she took her way through the crisped leaves lying thick in the great garden, she felt her heart waiting and listening for a following footstep while her feet hurried her along.

Pausing to look back when she gained the door of her prison-house, she half fancied she saw the stately figure of Herr von Heilmann in the distance; if so, he had made no effort to overtake her. She might have known that he would not—that what he did not say to her when she was under the protection of his mother's presence, he was not likely to try to say to her in a public walk, and so expose her agitation to the remark of any chance passer-by. She did not think of this; she only recognised that the day was cruelly changed.

CHAPTER II.

Herr von Heilmann's lessons at Fraulein Grüppe's "Educational Institute" were given twice a-week —on Tuesday and Friday. On Wednesday the English teacher had a few hours at her own disposal—to visit friends, if she chanced to have any, or to do any needful shopping. So Annie Gresham's week had three days in it; seeing which, she was surely not much to be pitied, there being lives that seem as if they could know neither days in the week, weeks in the month, nor months in

the year. Thank heaven, not many! Please heaven, it may be that in those few the seeming show is other and worse than the reality. Nature, for most of us, does something to break up such dread monotony; even to the prisoner in the half-submarine dungeon comes change. The sun strikes the surface of the water, and the wind ruffles it, and there is a greenish and dancing shimmer reflected on the dreary wall; the shadow that stands to him for light changes with the changing hours of the day. Perhaps there has hardly been so cunning-cruel a tyrant, or so dark and deep a dungeon, but that, to every prisoner to whom life was left, has been, also, left some chink or cranny that let in something of the outer life of the upper world.

We have seen how Annie Gresham had used her Wednesday holiday. With a strange mingling of dread and longing she lived towards the following Friday.

It came; and on it, at the appointed hour, came Herr von Heilmann. It went too, and with it went Herr von Heilmann, and he and Annie had not met.

Fraulein Grüppe so contrived—*how* she contrived was her secret—that Annie had no lesson that day. Herr von Heilmann left; Annie listened, as well as she could through the throbbing of her heart, to the silence following the last pupil's lesson, to the

opening door, the step along the passage, the closing door—and she had not been summoned to the music-room! When it was too late, Fraulein Grüppe pretended to remember and regret this. On any former day Annie would not have allowed herself to be so forgotten. On any former day she would have frankly put the question that now died on her lips—"Had he not asked for her?" To-day she choked back some bitter tears, and answered nothing to Fraulein Grüppe's apology. All the more she tormented herself with that unspoken question, with others of the kind. If he had not asked for her, why had he not? Was it that he thought she did not choose to come? or did he think that her petulance of the other day deserved the rebuke of his neglect?

The same thing would have happened again; but on the next occasion, when all the lessons but Annie's had been given, and Fraulein Grüppe was about to take leave of Herr von Heilmann, he said—

"Excuse me, madame, but my most promising pupil, Miss Gresham, has not been to me. Is she ill?"

"Dear me, no—only so sadly indifferent. Always out of the way when wanted. Your time is more than up, my good sir; I will not think of detaining you longer."

"I have time for Miss Gresham," was the quiet

answer. Herr von Heilmann shot one of his keenly penetrating glances into Fraulein Grüppe's handsome eyes, and she yielded at once. Reddening, and murmuring something of his too great goodness, she went to fetch Annie. Returning with her, she resumed her former seat and her knitting. Till to-day Annie had always been left alone with her master. Fraulein Grüppe was not responsible for "the teacher," and "Englishwomen are so coldly cautious, so self-reliant, so competent to take care of themselves." However, something had roused some kind of jealous suspicion in the Fraulein's mind. Had she, on Annie's face that day, seen traces of tears and agitation? She therefore remained on duty—the duty, however, being to herself, not to Annie.

The lesson was only a lesson. Herr von Heilmann was inscrutable, and poor Annie strove to emulate her master's coolness. The lynx-eyed Fraulein discovered nothing; she could not perceive that the master leant over Annie more, or more closely, than over other of his pupils (in fact, it struck her that just the contrary was the case), or that his fingers lingered upon hers when they had occasion to touch them: it was such things as these that the coarse-textured mind of the woman had expected to discover. Had she been a wiser or a purer woman she might have found cause for the confirmation of her suspicion that

between Annie and her master there was "a something," in the fact that the master treated this pupil with more of distant respect than he observed towards any of the others, though two or three of them were no younger than Annie.

Poor Annie played badly; instinctively she knew that the ends of Herr von Heilmann's mustache were gnawed pitilessly, that his brow contracted with a frequent frown, that it was no use to hope to see the quiet smile, or the pleased twinkle in the sincere eyes, with which he had been wont to praise her. Annie could not bear that he should think her careless of his pained displeasure; so she braved the grim presence of Fraulein Grüppe, which often made her dumb, and said—

"I am very sorry to have played so ill, but I have had hardly any time for study." Which was the truth. He answered no otherwise than by a grave bow, but the pleasant, kindly light came into his eyes, and as he closed the piano for her he said—

"My mother much desires to see you; you will make her a visit to-morrow?"

The Fraulein Grüppe interposed—

"I am truly sorry to disappoint the most excellent Frau von Heilmann; but I propose a pleasure for my little friend to-morrow: I require her to take the young ladies to a concert at Scönhaus, at which Herr Steinwitz, whom the Fraulein Gresham admires, will play."

Sudden tears gathered blindingly in Annie's eyes. She did not admire Herr Steinwitz, who was a rival and opponent of her master's; but she did not dare speak, lest her tears should fall then and there: she hurried from the room with hardly a salutation to her master, and no message to her old friend, his mother. No sooner was it too late than she began to fret herself greatly at having been guilty of such ungracious discourtesy.

"Mees Gresham will never do you much credit, I fear, mein Herr," began the Fraulein; "she does not improve: how slightingly and unappreciatively she played that wonderful Andante of yours! She will never do you justice."

"To-day Miss Gresham did not do herself justice," was Herr von Heilmann's somewhat grimly-spoken reply.

"She is so uncertain! In everything I find her so flighty and unequal—sadly unfit for her position, poor thing!"

"Unfit for her position, as you say," Herr von Heilmann returned, rather absently. "You are right, madame; it strikes me so. And if you would, out of the fulness of your womanly charity, make the position a little more fit for her, it might be well; but excuse me, I presume."

"Any suggestions of Herr von Heilmann's on any subject! Is there anything of which Mees Gresham has complained?" The voice was soft

and smooth enough, but the eyes were dangerous, reminding Herr von Heilmann of the impolitic imprudence of interference.

He answered more blandly, not noticing the closing question—"I would suggest, then, some arrangement that should afford Miss Gresham fair time to study for her music lessons. She has a promising enough talent, madame, I assure you, and some love of the art." With those words Herr von Heilmann accomplished his retreat.

There was no attempt after that to defraud Annie of her lessons, or of time to study for them, but Fraulein Grüppe was invariably present. Two, three, four weeks passed without there being a possibility of her seeing Frau von Heilmann. In those weeks Annie grew thinner and paler. Sometimes it seemed to her that Herr von Heilmann himself was not quite as formerly—that a shade of melancholy saddened his serious eyes—that with each lesson he was more completely than ever only her master.

The setting-in of the "Wüstestadt season" showed Annie more than she had known before of Herr von Heilmann's position. She saw him in public, courted and flattered by all the music-loving beauties of the town and the neighbourhood. He was "well born"—as his father's son, he was not without a certain prestige, and his own reputation was steadily on the increase: among his pupils were many blond

baronesses and fair countesses, whose passion for his art was secondary to their passion for its master, and who in public places appeared to encourage each other to flutter about him, surrounding him with an atmosphere of flattery and fascination.

One evening Annie, hidden, as she thought, in the group of girls of whom she was in charge, watched him thus surrounded, with a sad, proud feeling at her heart of how far off he stood—sad for herself, and proud, so proud, for him! The concert had been given for a charitable object—for the benefit of an old and disabled musician. Herr von Heilmann had played grandly: now he stood, cold and courteous, tall and stately, the centre of an admiring group, paying a grave acknowledgment of just homage here, gravely pushing aside foolish flattery there, while his eyes keenly searched the crowded room. Annie did not know how much her eyes were saying when his found them. Steadily, without any show of haste, he made his way through the billowy sea of crinolined beauty to the quiet corner occupied by Fraulein Grüppe's pupils. He spoke to each of them — a word about the violinist who had played, the harpist who was about to play, a brief criticism of the various schools of music represented by the selections of the programme—then, last, he turned to Annie. There was nothing to draw attention upon her—no difference made that

could be perceptible to the world at large, or even to the sharp eyes of the pupils; but there was something which Annie felt—some sunshine of kindness and encouragement, some pleased recognition and acceptance of her unspoken admiration, passed from his eyes into her soul and made tumult there.

But somebody reported or invented something about that meeting which did not please the Fraulein Grüppe. After that evening Annie was not again required to take unassisted charge in public of Fraulein Grüppe's pupils—a charge she had always accepted with reluctance; for among the number were girls of her own age, who, having little womanly modesty or discretion, at times greatly vexed and annoyed her by the levity of their conduct.

CHAPTER III.

At last a Wednesday came on which Fraulein Grüppe could find no excuse to prevent Annie from visiting her old friend, Frau von Heilmann. Not at the end of her resources, however, the Fraulein herself experienced an earnest wish to visit the dear old lady, and bade Annie wait till she was at leisure to accompany her. By this means Annie lost two hours of her precious holiday. At last,

however, she and the Fraulein Grüppe were on their way towards the Garten-Strasse. At the end of it they met Herr von Heilmann: he released Annie from her jaileress by requesting the honour of a few moments' conversation with the Fraulein on the subject of the private concert to be given shortly at her Institute—at the same time stating that, as his mother was somewhat indisposed, it would be well that the honoured lady should postpone the favour of her visit.

"Will she see *me?* may *I* go on?" asked Annie, timidly.

"Will my mother see you! Certainly, Das versteht sich" (*ça va sans dire*). Herr von Heilmann's tone was rather reproachful, while there was a slight twinkle of amusement in the corner of his eye. Then, from courtesy to the Fraulein ogress (for a man must be courteous to an ogress who has more or less power to torment his heart), he added, still addressing Annie—"My mother stands on no ceremony with you, you know. The visit of the Fraulein Grüppe being a more unwonted honour——"

Annie sped on, and Fraulein Grüppe, well pleased, turned to accompany Herr von Heilmann some distance on his way. She knew now, that there was little chance of Annie's seeing her master again that day, for she knew that Herr von Heilmann's engagements would detain him till long

after Annie's leave of absence would have expired. Annie sped on, but when she reached the familiar door her heart failed her; she made no sudden ascent and rapid incursion, as had been her wont; her feet faltered; she approached her old friend with shy hesitation.

Frau von Heilmann sat in her cold-weather place near the stove to-day—knitting, of course. She greeted Annie with kindliness, but there was less motherliness and some restraint in her manner. She was under orders; the one subject on which she was not to speak was ever present to her, naturally.

"More crippled than ever, my dear," she said, in answer to Annie's questions. "I'm set fast till spring now, and that seems a long time to live forward to, for at my age one cannot look for many more earthly springs. Very pretty, my child, and very warm," she said, as she drew on a pair of mittens Annie had brought her. "So you have sometimes thought of the old woman all this time—eh? You made these for her!"

"Yes; you did not think I had forgotten—would not have come to you if I could! I have been hindered and tormented: the time has been very long." The tears were in Annie's eyes.

"Poor little one! It is as Gottfried says; you are thinner and paler."

"He said so—he notices, then?"

"Why should he not? You know how kind-hearted and compassionate he is: his eyes are keen too. Don't you remember, child, when that poor teacher at Fraulein Grüppe's first fell ill, that it was my Gottfried who noticed how she drooped and withered—as it was my Gottfried who had her brought here and nursed and tended till she died—the poor old, worn-out, friendless thing!"

"I remember," sighed Annie.

"As I was saying," proceeded Frau von Heilmann, "I am set fast till spring. I do not care much to go out: from that window, where Gottfried sets me whenever the sun shines, I see plenty of life and movement. A still-contained, inward-turned existence is the most fitting for an aged woman, some think, but I don't much believe it, Annchen. While we are in this world, it seems to me more beautiful and right to live its joys and sorrows—through those of others when our own are past. The thing that does sometimes fret me is, that I cannot hear my Gottfried play in public, and see how they court and praise him. Last night, in the concert-room of the Schauspielhaus, he played grandly, they tell me. Did you hear him, child?"

"No."

"He likes to play in that room; and then the concert was given for the benefit of the widows and orphans of actors and musicians. Yes, he played

grandly: the Gräfinn Rosalie von Thauenwald has been here this morning, brimming over with enthusiasm. She has paid me a great deal of attention lately, Annchen mein; can she fancy that the simple old mother does not see through her?" Frau von Heilmann laughed merrily, but not ill-naturedly. "Well, she is a pretty creature. I do not hold in great esteem the gay young widows of old husbands, nor, indeed, any widow whose life shows no effort to bring itself into accord with the apostle's description of that of 'eine rechte Wittwe,' 'die einsam ist, die ihre Hoffnung auf Gott stellet.' But she is a pretty creature; there are many excuses to be made for her, and she may say" (through the sober-minded and pious demeanour of this German woman would sometimes flash a spark of French vivacity—'wicked-wise,' she called it) "that she has at any rate set her heart upon the peace of God (Gottfried). I do not see how I can think the worse of her for that, though in my young days it was not the fashion for women, whether maidens or widows, to do the courting. Yet, undeniably, she is a charming creature, and seems to me to have more heart than most of her kind. Do you know her, Annchen?"

"By sight only, liebe Frau."

To-day it was not Mütterchen and Töchterchen. Formerly the old dear words had been innocently used; they could be so no longer; they must

mean their meaning, or not be spoken. If to-day they were uttered by chance, Annie would blush and grow confused beneath Frau von Heilmann's shrewd, inquiring look. In one of the awkward pauses ensuing when this had happened, Annie turned her eyes upon the flowers filling a vase on the table which stood near, and commented on their beauty. "Yes, they are lovely; but I do not much love to see such a forcing of the fair order of nature. May lilies in November must feel themselves so not-at-homish. They came from the young Gräfinn; she sent them this morning with the prettiest of notes, before she came herself. There lies the note, child; read it if you will: observe how neatly she compliments Gottfried in the postscript. He read it with the grimmest of faces, nevertheless. I have had many such pretty notes with neat postscripts. Ach, Annchen, when the opera comes out, I expect I shall have a fine time of it then with bouquets and billets-doux, fruits, bonbons, and what not! Sometimes I feel quite grieved that the pretty creatures should waste so much time and trouble: if I say so to Gottfried, he answers with one of his inwardly amused looks, 'You have the benefit, mother mine; they are not harmed, nor am I.'"

"But they must be harmed, and he too," cried Annie.

"Ech! you think so, child. *Place aux dames;*

we will begin with the ladies. 'They must be harmed,' you say—and why? It is no question of the true feelings of true women; it is puppet-play. Take Gottfried from them, and they will set up some less worthy idol. Is it not something that it should be a true man, and a true musician, before whom they play out their little game?"

"Perhaps."

"Where, for them, do you find the harm, then, of their amusement?"

"I do not know. Perhaps nowhere; yet I feel as if it were somewhere."

"As you do not know, we will pass on. You say he too must be harmed. How? Do you think this sort of thing will make my Gottfried vain?"

"No, no, no. I was not thinking that Herr von Heilmann could be made vain. But—but must it not be harmful to any man to have his notion of women brought so low?"

"It must be harmful to any man to have his notion of women brought low. Yes, child, there you are right; but on my son these things do not work thus. Even if, every day of his life, he were pained, grieved, disgusted, by seeing women so far from what he would have them, seeing their actions characterised by a want of all true humility, as by a want of all modest dignity, this would in no way affect his reverence for abstract womanhood, or lower his Ideal. I know this, not only

because, when we have talked on the subject, he has said it, but also because his conduct in many instances has proved it to me. He is too through-and-through chivalrous, too wholly the soul of honour, for these things to work upon him harmfully. It seems to me that his eye pierces through the atmosphere of frivolous untruth and fashionable ugliness with which we so often surround ourselves, and reaches to the central potential truth of our being. The spiritual insight of such a nature may in the most seeming frivolous of fashionable follies detect the stirring and striving of a saving element —the blind beating of the bars, and the dazzled fluttering towards the truth—may therefore detect something not unworthy of reverence. Reverence is the inmost principle of my Gottfried's nature. I have never seen the thing bearing the shape of woman that he seemed able to scorn. With such a man a woman is safe, let her—— But I am prosing; when I talk of Gottfried the subject sometimes runs away with me, Annchen." As she spoke, she suddenly looked from her knitting full into the girl's face. "Prosing and philosophising. I have just been reading the Herr Professor Dichmann's work."

Then, while Annie's heart was throbbing and burning to say some little word that should prove her recognition of the nobleness of such high faith and chivalry, the clever old woman began to talk with lucidity and power of the book she had just

named—talk which ended in being in itself a little philosophical essay — a mental exercise for self-improvement, for she knew right well that Annie heard little and understood less of what she was saying.

After Annie had risen to go, Frau von Heilmann said, "The Christmas holidays cannot be very far now; you must spend them with me, as you did the Midsummer. I will arrange that with the Fraulein Grüppe. You are not sold to her, body and soul, Annchen, so pluck up courage, and don't be so much afraid of her as Gottfried thinks you are, poor child. Should she send you away, I could no doubt find you a place would suit you as well, perchance better." Here she restrained a mischievous smile, which, spite of her efforts, indicated itself. "Through the Christmas weeks I shall be alone, as I was at Midsummer," she went on. "Gottfried goes to some of his grand friends — a round of visits in the neighbourhood, from one Schloss to another. I wish it, I send him. I did not desire that he should be a musician; I wished to see him a soldier, as his father was; but since he is a musician, I desire for him as great a name and as wide a fame, being a musician, as had his father being a soldier. The more he is known, the more he is respected. The people he goes to have influence—will be useful—so I send him, my Gottfried, out into the world."

The old woman's dark eyes flashed under the bushy snow-white brows, a flash that quickened the beating of Annie's heart.

In leave-taking to-day Annie stooped to kiss the old brown hands; they drew her down: Frau von Heilmann kissed her solemnly on both cheeks, with the words, "God guide thee, child." Then, still holding the girl fast, she added, "Gottfried gave me a message. He says, Annchen, he begs of you to remember that, however your heart may decide in a certain matter, you must not flee from us and shun us; that we, he and his mother, will always be your friends. He earnestly begs of you to remember this. He says that, if you choose so, he can be to you only a friend, and yet with all his might your friend. This is true; I know it. There, I have given his message; and again I say, God guide thee, child."

Again, and more fervently, Annie kissed the old woman's hands, then she hurried away.

Outside, instead of turning towards her prison-house, though she had already over-stayed her time, Annie took her way through the sodden paths and the bare trees of the great garden towards the dismal banks of the black canal.

She wanted freedom, open air, space. She felt that just then she could not endure to be shut in between walls, surrounded by eyes and tongues.

Having gained the canal-path, she hurried on

and on, faster and faster, unconsciously driven by her driving thoughts, not heeding the increasing cold and darkness.

When at length she paused and turned, she was frightened to find herself alone so late in that dismal place. The lights of the town, the few she could see through the branches of the trees which intervened between her and it, looked far off; nothing seemed near but the clinging clammy fog and the crawling water.

Presently it seemed to her that, walk swiftly as she would, a following footstep gained upon her. Between her and the town, after she should have crossed the bridge, lay the desolate gardens, as dreary and deserted at this hour as any savage wilderness or wood. There came into her mind, against her will, stories she had heard about things that had happened in this neighbourhood, and the steady tramp, tramp, tramp of the gaining footstep excited her wildest fears.

Reaching the bridge just as she knew by the sound that her pursuer, if such he were, was upon her, she paused there, breathless and exhausted, ready in the desperation of her fear to jump into the water, — either that, or he should pass her before she entered the garden.

A figure, looking large through the fog, was at her side; it passed. She thought she had not been observed; her heart gave a great bound:

then the person who was so much an object of her dread paused and turned. Annie clutched the low parapet of the bridge, and held herself ready for a spring.

"Is it possible!—here alone, at this hour?" questioned the voice, which she had no doubt now was the dearest to her in all the world.

Poor Annie! she sprang to Herr von Heilmann, and clasped both little hands round his arm, beside herself with relief and gratitude for the first moment.

"You knew me, then?" was her senseless question.

"Not at first, Fraulein; and now it seems too incredible. I paused and turned because I could not let myself pass by any woman in such a place, at such an hour, without making her the offer of my protection."

Annie's hands loosed themselves and fell from off his arm. What could he think of her? She felt her soul shrink from the severe pain expressed by his voice. Would he not have cause now to believe the worst Fraulein Grüppe might choose to tell him of her insubordination and wild imprudence?

Poor Annie! It was a pity the darkness had made it impossible for her to detect the light, sudden and sweet, that had come into his face, the twinkle of the eye and twitch of the mouth, when he felt the confiding clasp of those little hands. She had

once seen something like it, in the very early days of their acquaintance, when she talked his tongue with blundering difficulty. She had let a "du" slip out instead of the fit and formal "sie," and had for a moment wondered what error of hers had caused the look of repressed but pleased amusement, the transient sparkle, which she saw cross her master's grave face.

As well as she could the poor child excused herself as they walked towards the town side by side. Her longing for air and liberty had been irresistible, she told him; it was, sometimes: till the last few years, she had led such a free life. She had been thinking, and had not noticed how far she went or how dark it grew. She had paused on the bridge because the following footstep frightened her, and she felt safer there than in the garden.

"How could the bridge save you, my Fraulein?"

"The water might have saved me," she answered.

"Ach Himmel!" She did not catch his exclamation, or know the inward shudder—the inward grasping clasp of her—with which it was breathed. He said a few strong words of the danger she had incurred, but he did not speak any personal reproof—from him to her; that he assumed no right to do.

"I will not do so any more; I will not do anything so imprudent again; I am very sorry," Annie said, with childlike simplicity and fervour of penitence.

"Now, think of it no more, pray!" she added, with some dignity.

"It is not a thing to be lightly dismissed from the mind, Fraulein; but I thank you earnestly for the goodness of your promise, and we will speak of the painful subject no more."

What did they then speak of? Nothing.

Herr von Heilmann was silent—from pain and displeasure, Annie thought. In truth, he was both pained and displeased, but infinitely pitiful too; and the subject of his thoughts was how best to extricate the heedless girl from the unpleasant consequences of her imprudence. They were in the Garten Strasse by the time he had settled that matter with himself.

"It will be best that you come to my mother," he said to Annie. "She will scold you sharply, but you know how good her heart is towards you. You must sup with us, and afterwards our old Hans shall conduct you to Fraulein Grüppe's, and my mother will send with you a note, in which she will apologise for having detained you."

"You are very kind. I am much ashamed to give so much trouble. Would it not, perhaps, be better that I should return at once?"

They stood under the entrance-lamp now, and she was reassured by the kindliness of his face, as he answered, half jestingly—

"To be sent, like a naughty child, supperless to

bed. The frugal evening meal is long over at the Fraulein Grüppe's. No; enter with me; you are half-starved and very tired; let my mother see you rested and refreshed before you return."

So they mounted the stairs, and together entered the well warmed and lighted room where the table was already spread for the friendly evening meal.

Herr von Heilmann hastened to offer to his mother a few words of explanation, adding in a lighter and more familiar tone than he had used while they were alone, and gently laying his hand on Annie's shoulder as he spoke—

"Do not scold our poor little friend much, mother. She is tired and starved and cold, and she has promised, the good child, to be no more so imprudent."

With those words he passed through the room to his own apartments; and poor Annie, overcome by his kindness and the weakness of her own exhaustion, knelt down before his mother, rested her head on her lap, and burst into tears.

But neither those tears nor Herr von Heilmann's intercession saved Annie from a sharp scolding—a stinging reproof: after which the truest motherly kindness was lavished upon her.

Annie spent two very happy hours. It was so warm, so bright, so home-like, so every way pleasant, in Frau von Heilmann's living-room at the restful, comfortful, friendly hour when the Abend-brod

was eaten—the time when, the day's labour done, the mother and son drew nearest to each other. Annie—little, strange, and friendless Annie—was made to feel neither strange nor friendless, but one of the home inmates.

As by-and-by she stepped out into the bitter night, followed by the old house-servant, Hans, she drew close round her the soft warm shawl of Frau von Heilmann's, which her master had himself hung upon her shoulders, and said to herself—

"What do I care for the night or the cold—or her cruelty? Let the night be black and the wind biting. Let the Fraulein speak swords and look poison and daggers. It is well with me—all is warm to me—all is well with me."

This evening Annie's confidences to herself were made, not in the old home-tongue, but in the tongue of the home she had just left, the home which she had been made to feel, if even she had not been told, stood ready for her, waiting to be, when she willed it, her home. Lovingly she dwelt upon some of the homely home-suggestive phrases of the friendly tongue, and she was happy, so happy, till the old doubt returned. How could he love her? How *should* he love her? How otherwise than with "pity and grave kindness" should such a man love a girl like her?

If so—if he loved her so, and only so, well? was not this, from him, enough for her?—for her hap-

piness? For her—for her happiness? Yes. But for him—for his happiness? Annie believed that, through his music, she knew something of her master that obliged her to answer the last question with a fatal "no."

She was at her prison-house.

"Leben sie wohl, my most highly honoured Fraulein," old Hans was saying.

If she were sharply rated or escaped lightly, she did not know.

CHAPTER IV.

On the following Friday Herr von Heilmann and the Fraulein Grüppe had a slight altercation, if such it could be called. The lady was angry and excited (perhaps, beginning to despair of her game, she sometimes let her mask slip on one side); the gentleman was courteous, severe, and resolute.

"You desire that Fraulein Gresham should play at your concert, madame. Well, I think it a pity; she is too nervous for it not to be painful to her to do so—too nervous to do herself or me justice; but if I bow to your desire in this matter, I cannot be dictated to as regards the composition she should render."

"As to her nervousness, mein Herr, she must conquer that. In her position she has no business

to indulge in any such nonsense. Upon her playing I shall insist; and I much desire that she should play the Prelude and Fugue in C minor, composed by my late lamented father on the occasion of the death of the most worthy Princess Wilhelmina."

"Impossible, madame. The merit of the composition is a question upon which I will not presume to enter; but that it should be played by such hands as these" (here, with the most entirely business-like gravity, a complete absorption in the matter under discussion, he took up one of Annie's hands—she was sitting at the piano beside him—and laid it upon his own) "is a physical impossibility. These fingers are lithe, and the wrist" (raising it, and giving it a little shake) "is finely flexible; still the composition of which you speak is not for such hands as these." So saying, he seemed suddenly to awake to the consciousness that the hand he had again placed on his—the more strongly, by force of contrast, to mark its minuteness—was something more than a piece of dainty mechanism. He gently replaced it on the keys of the piano with a look, as he said, "Verzeihen sie, gnädigste Fraulein," that was from him a caress. But Annie, sitting passive while her fate was discussed, did not raise her eyes.

He turned again to the watchful Fraulein Grüppe, and continued, severely—"As to this concert, the credit or discredit of it will be mine: the arrange-

ment of the programme and allotment of the music is therefore wholly my affair, and I cannot submit, madame, to even such judicious and wise co-operation as yours would doubtless be. With my other pupils the playing or not playing on this occasion has been a matter of choice. I do not see why it should be compulsory on the part of the Fraulein Gresham. I therefore ask her—Miss Gresham, is it agreeable to you that your name should be placed upon the programme?"

The question was put in the severe tone which he had used to Fraulein Grüppe, but the thoughtful eyes were full of kindness when they met Annie's. Annie cared for nothing in the matter but to please her master. It was impossible to her, after meeting that look, to answer his question otherwise than with another.

"Do you wish it?"

This time she detected a certain pleasant change in his face, enough to assure her that she had pleased him. Before he answered he appeared to reflect for a moment, then said, "On the whole, I think, yes."

"I must stipulate," he continued, turning upon Fraulein Grüppe, "that Miss Gresham shall have the use of a piano for at least three hours daily." As he rose to go, he added—"I have always had pride and pleasure in my English pupils, finding among them some of the most intelligent and in-

dustrious of my scholars. I assure myself that it is not Fraulein Gresham who will prove the exception."

He did not allow himself to seek an answer in Annie's face, or he would have met a very bright one.

"I cannot make them out!" Fraulein Grüppe remarked to her confidential friend. "If there is anything between them, she is the slyest little thing. I have watched and watched, and I cannot detect a spark of coquetry or consciousness in her conduct. She is altogether the good pupil; sits and looks like a demure baby: 'Mais il n'est, comme on dit, pire eau que l'eau qui dort.'"

"The English women are so controlled, so quiet and so deep, you see, dear Angel," answered the friend addressed. "This girl is no doubt cunning enough to know the kind of manner-of-being (Art zu seyn) likely to catch a grave man of middle age like Herr von Heilmann, who in a wife would probably like to find the docility that other men, who marry earlier, look for in their children."

"'Catch!' 'wife!' You don't mean to tell me, my dearest"—the voice was sharp and angry—"that you think there is any danger—that you fancy he means to marry her?"

"No, no, no; a thousand times no!" cried the alarmed confidante. "Last time I had the happiness of seeing him with you, I thought there was

a decided, a pronounced — in short, a something difficult to describe, but certainly a something in his manner towards you, dearest Angel, very different from his manner towards other women."

After that Friday Annie set her heart to her music more than she had ever done before, though she had always loved it, and often found in it the one delight of dreary days. She no longer meekly relinquished to the first claimant the hours of study to which she had a right, and by rising very early she secured others which no one contested with her. She had set her heart towards her music, and yet, though she loved it, not for its own sake: the heart set towards the art was set upon pleasing the master. With the singular simplicity and singleness of purpose of which she was capable she kept this aim in sight. She was conscious that he especially desired her success; she did not question "why." Also she was conscious that she especially desired to please him; she did not question "why" or "what more." To the publicity of the concert she looked forward with no dread and no pleasure, but with intense anxiety. She would be no more nervous in playing before fifty people than in playing before her master only; their presence would merely affect her in as far as it affected him, making her more desirous to do well because she believed that it made him more desirous that she should do so. The one thing she

cared about was, that she should not shame or disappoint him.

But before that day came other things happened to Annie.

CHAPTER V.

"A visit" and "Fraulein Gresham" were words that fell on Annie's ear as she sat in class one morning—unwonted words, falling there so strangely that she paid them no heed, did not believe that she had heard rightly. But when the class was over, Fraulein Grüppe sent her down to the refectory to receive a visitor. The refectory was a long bare room; long tables and long forms, and the inevitable piano, were its only furniture. Visitors were ordinarily received in the salon, but Annie was so greatly out of favour that any place was good enough for a friend of hers.

"What dungeon do I find you in!" exclaimed a clear ringing English voice as Annie entered the room. Her hands were taken, and her cheeks were kissed by a mustached mouth, before she had time to recognise her visitor.

"Cousin Basil!" her tone was half joyful, half doubtful.

"Do you doubt it? Will you have me turned away as an impostor? Have you quite forgotten me?"

"You are grown from a boy into a man, remember, and I had no reason to expect to see you. Where have you dropped from? Oh, it is pleasant to hear a home voice and see a home face."

"I'm glad you think so. I have had a world of difficulty in finding you out. I am here for a few days *en route* for home. This place is not really *en route*, but I made it so to see you. And now how can I see you in any satisfactory way? Do you ever get out? I am staying in a very pleasant family—the family of a friend of mine out there. They are really hospitable people—will be delighted to see you. Can I speak to the principal here and get you leave of absence? You could tell her I'm your brother if you think she would not trust you with a cousin."

"She knows I have no brother—no near relations," Annie answered, smiling.

"No near relations! What do you call me, then, eh?"

"A second cousin is hardly a near though he may be a dear relation, Basil. Though you used to be like a brother to me, I cannot pass you off as one. Oh, how long do you stay? Of course, I *must* see something of you. I will manage it somehow."

"I only meant to stay a couple of days, but I fancy it may be a couple of weeks. To tell the truth, one of my friend's sisters is an uncommonly nice girl, and she can speak English, and it's un-

commonly jolly to hear her do it. But I must get home before Christmas, however. Annie, what becomes of you in the holidays? Why not come over with me?"

"That is perfectly impossible, Basil."

"I know of old that 'perfectly impossible' of yours; it was always a settler. But how about getting out? Can't you come at once? The day is glorious; it is a shame to lose it in this den. Couldn't you take a good walk with me in those gardens? I have a world of things to tell you about."

While Annie was hesitating, Fraulein Grüppe came into the room, curious as to her teacher's visitor. For some reason of her own she proved wonderfully gracious, accepted the guarantee of cousinship as all-sufficient, was charmed that her young friend should have the pleasure of seeing a countryman, granted immunity from all the duties of the day, and urged that they should enjoy the beautiful weather by going outdoors at once.

"At what hour is it likely to be most convenient for me to take my music-lesson, madame?" Annie asked; "this is Herr von Heilmann's afternoon, you remember, and I shall wish to return for my lesson."

"Excuse yourself that also for once, my too industrious Mees," was the answer in broken English. "I charge myself with your excuses."

"Yes, yes; a whole holiday. As madame is so

good, I claim you for all the day!" cried Basil. "This evening we are going to the opera; you must join us, Annie. There are to be ladies of the party, madame."

"Exactly, sir; I can quite well confide my young friend to your care, I perceive. Go, dear Mees, and prepare yourself; the while I will entertain your cousin."

"An easy-going soul for a schoolmistress," was Basil's comment as they left the house. "Young and handsome herself, she's fond of gaiety, no doubt, and so has more sympathy with the pleasures of other people. Are you comfortable with her, Annie?"

"I might be worse off; on the whole, I am not unhappy," was Annie's evasive answer.

"And that is all you can say for yourself, poor little thing?" Basil drew his cousin's hand through his arm as he spoke. She did not like to withdraw it, though there were reasons why she would not have had it there.

The day was keen and bright. Annie enjoyed the brisk movement through the light clear air, the sense of freedom, her cousin's merry reminiscences of their early happy country life; above all, she enjoyed the befriended feeling his presence gave her, the sense of kinship, of belonging to somebody. A second cousin was something to one so friendless, who so often felt herself so mere a

"waif and stray." But in her enjoyment Annie did not forget her music or her master, or her determination, unrevealed to the Fraulein Grüppe, to be at the school by the time Herr von Heilmann was due there. After her lesson she would go out again — go to the opera, if Fraulein Grüppe chose to permit her. Of this she was doubtful; but she would take her chance — any way not sacrifice her lesson. The schoolhouse was not far from the gardens; the iron gate of its prison walls was visible through the vista of the grand avenue. As they returned towards it, laughing and talking gaily, eyes and cheeks bright with the keen yet sunny air, drawing many eyes (of which they were wholly unconscious) upon them, Annie saw Herr von Heilmann leave the gate and come towards them.

Annie hurried on her companion; she wished to meet her master, to question, to explain. It still wanted half an hour of the time at which he usually began to give his lessons. Just as they were about to meet, Herr von Heilmann, lifting his hat to Annie with very grave courtesy, turned into a narrower side-path.

"I say, Annie, who's your friend? That grand, soldierly-looking fellow?" asked Basil.

"That was Herr von Heilmann," Annie answered, in rather a choked voice.

"Who is Herr von Heilmann?"

"My music-master," spoken with still more difficulty. "I am too late! He has given his lessons earlier, and she did not tell me. I am too late." Annie pulled down her veil.

"So much the better: no need to go in then. That man a music-master! I should not have dreamt it. What a pity; he ought to be colonel of a regiment; he might be a great general. He reminded me of some of the portraits of Garibaldi."

Poor Annie! she felt as if all her pleasure in her holiday were gone; she let her companion take her just where he would. But Annie's was a light, elastic temperament; not fickle, but flexible; true as steel, and bending rather than breaking, as does highly-tempered steel.

The people to whose house Basil took her were friendly and kind. She so seldom had any change or gaiety, so seldom saw kind faces and heard kind words, that when she found herself one of a merry circle gathering round the table where the afternoon coffee was being poured out, and the object of universal kindness and interest, she could not help brightening up again—feeling her own heart expand in that heart-full home-atmosphere. She would be happy, she resolved; yet Herr von Heilmann's grave face and stately bow frequently presented themselves to her; she feared that he was pained and displeased: for the displeasure she did not so much care, because she had not merited

it, and could by a word of explanation remove it; but the pain—she took that to heart, as her pain.

The operetta given that night was a light, sparkling piece—it suited Basil's taste well, and it amused Annie. Without stirring or delighting, it amused her; while the brilliant scene, the dazzle of light, and the mirth of her companions, excited her. Annie was very gay; her look of enjoyment and her sweet yet piquante prettiness drew many eyes upon her. She did not know this, for she was an unconscious little creature, who gave herself wholly, as far as the outer world was concerned, to the interest of the moment—to seeing what she had come to see, and hearing what she had come to hear. So she was unrestrainedly gay till, during the last act, she became aware that Herr von Heilmann was in the house—in the box of the beautiful young Gräfinn Rosalie von Thauenwald. The box commanded that part of the parquet in which Annie sat—he must surely have seen her; but after she became aware of his presence, he did not look towards her. He stood behind the Gräfinn's chair; leaning against a pillar, he looked towards the stage. Again and again Annie felt her eyes irresistibly drawn towards him; his face expressed neither pleasure nor displeasure: he looked quiet, cold, critical, a man of marble. Suddenly the wonderful thought came to Annie of how it was this man who had once drawn her to his

breast, held her against his heart. Should she ever, ever be again so near him? Or would the lovely face of that young Gräfinn some day rest there? How strangely she felt as this thought filled her with its marvellously mingled sweet and bitter.

Annie had looked once too often; she blushed overpoweringly, meeting the eyes of the Gräfinn. She turned away towards the stage, but she was conscious of how the Gräfinn turned to Herr von Heilmann, touched his arm with her gloved hand, offered him her glass, and whispered some words in the ear inclined towards her. Then she was conscious that Herr von Heilmann looked towards where she sat, as if for the first time: she turned to meet the look—she could not help it. With an air of grave respect, the master inclined his head to Annie as he declined the offered glass. No smile of his answered that which rippled all over the face of the Gräfinn.

After this Annie neither saw nor heard much; she sat surrounded by a dream-atmosphere; between her and all she looked upon there was a haze. All colour and sparkle left her face; she was tired —very tired, she thought; she was glad when the curtain fell, and it all was over. In the corridor, after they had taken leave of their other friends, Basil having to take Annie back to the school, they met Herr von Heilmann. The Gräfinn, richly

shawled, and her lovely face framed by a delicate white hood, was leaning upon his arm. He stopped to speak to Annie.

"You are tired with your day's pleasure, Fraulein," he said, kindly. Then with a sterner air, "Did you know that I had changed my hour?"

"I did not know—I was going back for my lesson when I saw you."

"Good!" Then a moment's pause. "To-morrow at eight, if not too early an hour for you, I can give you the lesson you lost to-day."

Annie had no time to thank him, except by the light flashing all over her face. The Gräfinn murmured something of the draught from the staircase; with a bow he moved on. Annie and Basil, pushed by the crowd, for a moment followed them closely.

"Who is the charming Engländerinn?" asked the Gräfinn, her heart perhaps not at ease. Annie's face, all bright again, had looked too bewitching, shining out of the pale pink hood—a hood that had been lent her by Basil's fair friend; and Herr von Heilmann had looked too kindly upon that little face.

Annie heard the question, and she heard the answer, paternally grave, stern in its earnest repression of any light comment, such as that on which the Countess had before ventured.

"A favourite little pupil of mine—a dear child of whom my mother is very fond."

Then Annie could hear no more, and could therefore attend to Basil. He was saying—

"Your music-master's wife is a very lovely creature; but do you know, I think she is of a jealous temper. I think she is jealous of you, Annie. I saw her watching you perpetually, and she didn't seem to like his stopping to speak to you. The music-masters must have a fine time of it in this place. That woman looks like a born countess at least, and her dress and jewels were magnificent."

"She is a 'born countess,' Basil; the Countess Rosalie von Thauenwald."

"Not Herr von Heilmann's wife?"

"Not Herr von Heilmann's wife."

"A widow?"

"Yes."

"She wishes to be his wife then, I should say."

CHAPTER VI.

Annie hardly slept that night, the day had been one of so much excitement. She was up and in the music-room with the first light of morning. It was piercingly cold, and the stove was not lighted. For a long time it was in vain that she tried to get the stiffness out of her fingers.

As the clock struck eight, Herr von Heilmann

came, the morning fog thickly beading his mustache and beard. Annie's music was open before her, seeing which he said "Good," and she began at once.

He hardly had occasion to interrupt her. When she had finished, and turned to him timidly, she was met by a smile, very slight, but kind and encouraging, and the words—"Right industriously studied."

That was praise enough to make Annie brighten all over. Herr von Heilmann was chary both of praise and blame, a man of few words. How well Annie remembered the first time she had played to him, and the mingled despair and ambition—despair of all her present, ambition for the future—of which that first lesson had left her full.

After letting her play through the Sonata of Beethoven's which had been her ambitious choice then, he had said, with a grim smile—

"All that should be quite otherwise. Put it aside for the present; later you may be able to understand it."

To-day Annie felt that her master was, on the whole, content with her; indeed, when the lesson was ended, he said as much.

Then Annie tried to thank him for his "great goodness" in sparing her an hour when he was, she knew, so fully occupied. She spoke rather blunderingly, and before she had finished what she

had meant to say, she stopped suddenly, for she saw something in the listening face that made her fancy she was paining or displeasing her master. When she stopped, Herr von Heilmann continued silent for a moment. He had risen to go, and stood leaning one hand on the piano; his eyes, contracted in that manner peculiar to him, looked past Annie out of the window behind her, and he gnawed the ends of his mustache with an air of somewhat grim meditation.

"My mother gave to you, Fraulein, the message I left with her for you?" were his first words. He paused, so Annie answered "Yes," in a voice scarcely audible, but which he caught.

"I think you can hardly have understood my message, or can hardly have given me credit for sincerity, if you talk of my 'great goodness' for you, because in so simple a matter I do not choose to see you treated with injustice. I remind you of that message this morning, Fraulein, and beg you to credit its sincerity, because I now have a message to deliver from my mother to you. I demand your permission to repeat a word of warning from her to you on a subject which only one accredited as a friend, in a full sense, could be allowed to touch."

Annie flushed and trembled, but managed somehow to express that she was proud to have him for a friend, ready to listen to him or to his mother on any subject on which they wished to speak.

"I know not the custom in your England, Fraulein"—he spoke with hesitation, studiously avoiding to look at Annie's face, while some heat tingled into his own—"but here, in Germany, a young girl —Ein junges Mädchen—does not before her betrothal appear in public alone with—— In short, to you, my Fraulein, a word is enough. I would not have allowed myself this freedom in addressing you had not the matter seemed to me urgent, and had I not known that the Fraulein Grüppe neglects her duty towards you in many respects. Have I your forgiveness?"

Their eyes met now; his face betrayed the greater embarrassment, though hers was working with emotion.

"No," was her first word. She had meant to explain it by saying how strongly she felt his kindness—had even meant to explain the truth, though in her heart was a painful consciousness of the Gräfinn Rosalie, and a painful doubt as to whether it would not be more generous to her master to leave him in error; but these things were hardly recognised, and truth-speaking was a necessity of her nature. At that moment, just as that "no" had been uttered, Fraulein Grüppe entered the room. She had only just heard of Herr von Heilmann's presence in the house, and entered in a state of great excitement as to what it could mean.

Herr von Heilmann's explanation was as brief and

frigid as was consistent with his invariable courtesy. Fraulein Grüppe escorted him from the room and across the hall, half-deafening him with her exclamations about his great goodness. Having closed the door behind him, she passed into the empty refectory, and, pacing up and down, took counsel with herself. Should she or should she not dismiss Annie?—could she afford this gratification of her rage?—finally, would it be any gratification? What resource would then be open to the girl other than that of taking refuge with Frau von Heilmann, and to what might not that lead? This cousin—who she didn't believe was a cousin at all—if he would but take Annie off her hands! She must wait, she decided; wait and see if he showed any intention of doing so, meanwhile throwing the two together as much as possible.

Herr von Heilmann had forgotten one of his gloves—it lay upon the floor. Annie did not notice it till a few minutes after he had left; she looked to see what it was she trod under her foot. Then she lifted it up, audibly expressed her sorrow that she had trampled upon it, shook the dust of the not yet swept floor from it, smoothed and stroked it; touched it with her cheek, finally with her lips; then, as the door behind her opened, she started guiltily, hid it under her little apron, turned and faced Herr von Heilmann: he had come to seek it. What could she do? She had thought

him already out of reach, or she would have sent after him. For a musician's hand to be gloveless in that climate on such a morning was no light matter, and Herr von Heilmann, she knew, inherited his mother's complaint—was often disabled by rheumatism. Then for so dear a hand to suffer through her fault! What could she do? While she thought, Herr von Heilmann, after a rapid glance round the room, a word explaining what he sought, retired gloveless.

When the door had closed, Annie drew the treasure from its brief hiding-place and ran after him. She held it to him without a word; he took it with only a bow. Did he suspect anything? No; he was far too grandly simple. He merely thought it strange he should have overlooked it.

Annie could eat no breakfast that morning, and again that night she had no sleep. She kept thinking over all that she wished she had said, fretting herself that she had not said it. She wondered, "If he had known that I kissed his glove, what would he have said? How would he have looked?" What would he have thought of her if he had known that, when he was in the house, she crossed the hall oftener than there was any need, just for the chance of being able, unobserved, to lay her hand with a caressing touch upon his fur coat? If he had seen her, once when she had found it thrown upon the ground, hold it a moment in her arms,

burying her face in its soft warmth before she reverently restored it to its proper place?

Had Herr von Heilmann known these things, he might perhaps have hardly found them to his taste, but it is difficult to say how this would have been. He had on some subjects "old-fashioned" and "peculiar" notions. His ideal of womanhood he placed upon a pedestal; before it men were to bow down and worship. But the true knight-errantry in him modified the somewhat cold chivalry. A poor little friendless girl like Annie could hardly be put upon a pedestal for distant worship; if she were, she would feel herself placed in a very comfortless position. Did he not know this instinctively, and long to give her a warmer and lowlier place? When he sat beside her, formal, courteous, kind, was not this longing often very strong within him?

Perhaps Herr von Heilmann was one of those men who, through their own high manhood, are enabled, in their manner of loving, unconsciously to combine the worshipful reverence, which the ideal of womanhood inspires in them, with the tender, protective tolerance for which the faulty weakness of the individual woman so largely calls.

When the man loves in this sort, with what manner of loving can the woman most fitly answer his love?

Should not her life be one *unconscious* effort, by

the intense and utter humility of her love and the religious devotion of her life, to raise herself towards less unworthiness of the higher and more abstract, while she is warmed, fed, and cherished by the dearer and more familiar half of this twofold devotion? And is it unbeautiful that an unreasoning fidelity of allegiance should endow with something of the dearness of the man who so loves her, all things that are or have been his?

CHAPTER VII.

"Do not expect much from it, my mother—not much fame or praise that will reach me in this world." Herr von Heilmann leant on the window near his mother's chair, which he had placed on her favourite estrade in the brief wintry sunshine of the afternoon. It was the time of day when he always spent an hour with her. She had been talking of his opera—the labour of the best part of the last fifteen years of his life; a subject of which all the musical public of Wüstestadt were talking also, for it was now to be produced very shortly.

"Not that I call it 'music of the future;' to that school I do not, as you well know, belong. Neither do I say that I think it has little merit. Had I thought so, I could not have laboured at it as I have done; I would not produce it as I am about to do.

But its merit is of a quiet order, consistent and maintained. It is a result of much deep and vivid musical thought, focussed by intense concentration of purpose, and worked out with that 'patience' which one of your favourite French authors says is but another word for genius; and the possession of which is, perhaps, my only claim to the possession of genius. It has few, if any, 'beauties' to become popular in the concert or reception room. The harmony of just balance and fair proportion is not the beauty that will take the public. I have done what I could towards making it a perfect work of art; and, having striven so hard, I must have attained to something, though only Heaven knows how far I have fallen short of my ideal. And now, this is my prophecy concerning it—mark, my mother, and see if it prove false—that it will fall flat; be, in fact, as regards its reception by the public, a failure. A few musicians and a few musical critics will recognise 'a something' in it of solid and ingrained merit, and the musical papers, those whose editors have not sworn allegiance to the new school, will here and there timidly suggest for it another hearing, while deploring that the stiff-necked classicality of its composer has hindered him from bowing in anything to the popular taste. So much for its present fate. As years go on it will be given another and another trial; and in the end, when I have long been dead, it will win for itself quiet recognition,

and take its place among standard works of acknowledged merit."

"And if, my Gottfried, you expect no more than this, why all the labour of so many years?"

"I have done the work I felt called on to do in the way that it was truest to myself to do it; with the rest I have no concern."

"But if, my son, by a slight concession to the populace, you could have given them a work not beyond the possibility of their comprehension, and yet far enough beyond any practice of their lives to be for them raising and ennobling?"

"Mother, the artist should work only towards his ideal, looking neither before nor after, to the right nor left, straining towards it with every nerve and sinew. God only knows how far short even then he ever falls. As to results, with them he has nothing to do; they are in higher hands."

"You may be right in all, Gottfried; probably you are. I did not expect you to flash out upon the people like a firework and dazzle them half-blind; but I had hoped more than you tell me I shall see realised. If it is to be as you say, so best. Only, Gottfried, the old mother feels it a little hard; her greedy heart craves a little glory for her son." Gathering tears choked Frau von Heilmann's voice; they came hardly and stingingly to one who so seldom wept; and at the sight of them her son was greatly moved. Stooping before

her, he kissed one hand and then the other, one cheek and then the other, murmuring—"Mother, my mother, I beg of thee" (Mutter, meine Mutter, ich bitte dich). The words were nothing; the tone, of such deep and strong tenderness, was everything.

With a fervent blessing she flung her arms round his neck. Then she loosed him, pushed him away. "The old woman grows childish," she said, and resumed her knitting, while he resumed his former position, leaning in the window—savouring the bitterness failure would bring him in her disappointment.

It was some little time before the silence was broken; then it was by Frau von Heilmann asking sharply, "What ails my son?"

While her fingers had plied her needles, soothing him by the familiar click-clack, her eyes had watched his face; and now she saw the contraction of the brow and the twitch of the mouth, which she understood right well.

"What ails my son?" she asked again, as he did not directly turn towards her, or answer. "What did you see? Whom are you watching?"

"The Fraulein Gresham passed down the garden avenue with her friend, the young Englishman of whom I told you."

"Alone with him?"

"Yes."

"You cautioned her, as I bade you?"

"I did."

"Then she's a worthless, headstrong girl."

"Softly, my mother. I am pained by her imprudence, but she is hardly to blame. Fraulein Grüppe drives her to the alternative of choosing between the society of her friend and the observance of foreign conventionalities. A girl too simple, sincere, and pure to be a prude, could hardly hesitate."

"Gottfried, you think she loves him, the young Englishman?" There was a twinkle of amusement in the mother's eye, a suppressed chuckle in her throat.

"I think so. I think too, mother, that it is well she should. His is a trustworthy face: you may believe I studied it the first time I had the opportunity—that night at the opera: he is of her own age, and of her own country. I often pitifully remember her answer once, long ago, when I ventured to ask her, seeing her look sad, was she homesick; she said she did not know, she felt like it; but she did not see why she should have homesickness, having no home in this world to be sick for. He will marry her, and take her home. Think of the dearness one's own tongue must have, heard in a foreign land—a dearness communicating itself to whoever speaks it. It is hardly likely he will not make her love him. I have much doubt if she

would be happy sharing our life, my mother. It seems natural and right that she should pine for her own land and her own people. I am grave and harsh, old enough to be her father almost; sometimes I think she is afraid of me. It will be best that she should love this young Englishman, and return to her own land."

"And you, my son? It is then with you—as I think the child suspects" (these words hardly audible)—"pity, paternal kindness—no more?"

"Your humour is somewhat mocking to-day, mother," Herr von Heilmann returned, with a glance of surprise. "With me and with you it will be as it has always been," he said, sadly. "I have my mother, I have my art; and you, you have your son; it will be with us as it has always been."

"Unless, indeed," said the mother, with a little scornful laugh, "the beautiful widowed Gräfinn should forcibly take possession of my son and leave me nothing. Well, Gottfried, the old woman thinks her own thoughts, hopes her own hopes, and waits to see them realised. I shall have a daughter yet, and not a Gräfinn!"

"Your temperament is sanguine, mother."

"In that it is most unlike my son's."

A long pause.

Then Herr von Heilmann said, "Both her betrothal and her wedding must take place here, my mother; she has no other friends."

"Both shall take place here, then; if my son wills it, it must be so."

"I think, mother, if she does not come soon to see you, you had better send for her. There are many things of which it will be well that you should talk with her. She does not look well or happy; perhaps, the poor child, she is tormenting herself about her duty."

CHAPTER VIII.—THE END.

A few days later Annie was kneeling before Frau von Heilmann caressing her hands, with the words, "Once again, at last. I thought the time would never come. It was very good of you to send for me; unless you had, I could not have got to you, and it seems so long, so long that I have not seen you."

"But Annchen has found time to walk and take her pleasure with other friends!" the old woman answered, with some asperity. Then she took the small face between her hands, and her tone was softer as she said, "But my little one has not thriven upon her pleasure. What have these eyes been doing, child?" she might well ask; they had wept themselves very dim. "And what has your heart been doing, to make the poor cheeks so wan?"

"Breaking, perhaps," answered Annie, the words seeming to burst out unawares. Just then Herr von Heilmann entered, and Annie sprang up in visible, plainly visible, agitation.

"Gottfried will not stay long," said the mother; "he is very busy to-day with the rehearsal—for that he has put off all his lessons; but he means to give you yours here in the evening—that is why I sent for you. The time is short now before the grand event, Annchen, you know."

"Yes," murmured Annchen.

Having seen her seated, Herr von Heilmann took up his usual position, leaning in the window, so appearing as if he had some intention of remaining.

"Fraulein Gresham will honour me by being present on the first night?" he asked, after he had answered a few questions of his mother's about the one topic of all importance to her. "The first night may be the last," he added.

Annie was silent.

"You have a correct judgment, a pure taste, and a truthful tongue, Fraulein." He smiled as he named the last qualification. "I shall greatly value your unprejudiced opinion of my work."

"You do not think of being present?" he asked, in a colder tone, as Annie still remained silent. Then she looked up into his face.

"If you will find me any little hole to creep

into!" she began, with a flash of enthusiasm. Then she let her eyes fall, and explained in a quiet tone, "Fraulein Grüppe says she cannot possibly find room for me."

She did not tell him that she had offered a year's salary for a ticket, and had, before Basil's departure made her again a prisoner, rambled over the town trying to procure one.

"Of course I have reserved places for my friends," Herr von Heilmann answered, the pleasant light shining in his eyes again. "If you will honour me by accepting tickets for three of these places for yourself and two friends."

"You are too good!" cried Annie; "it did seem so hard not to be able to hear it!" she said, turning to the mother. "But I can only use one ticket. I have no friends. My cousin is gone to England, to be at home at Christmas."

These words, "England," "home," "Christmas," together with the thrill of joy that had been such a revulsion from the other thoughts filling her mind, were too much for Annie to-day; having uttered them in a choked voice, she burst into tears. There was so much pain in the poor little heart which could not be wept away, that grief such as tears could reach *would* pour itself out.

"Your cousin has left. You are alone again!" Herr von Heilmann said, pityingly. Then, as he saw Annie's tears, and heard her convulsive sob-

bing, he moved to her side. He restrained himself, however, so far as to do no more than lay his hand lightly on her head, murmuring, "Poor child! poor lonely little one!" Then, with the words, "Comfort her, mother—you best can; be very kind to her," he left the room.

Annie now flung herself at the mother's feet, and buried her face in her lap.

Frau von Heilmann stroked her hair caressingly, but said nothing. It was Annie who first broke the silence. Lifting up her head suddenly, she asked—

"Does he think I am crying because Basil, my cousin, is gone?"

"It is likely enough he does, my little one!"

"No matter," murmured Annie, drying her eyes, and trying to choke back her sobs; "perhaps it is better he should think so. But do *you* think so?"

"Perhaps yes, perhaps no. Tell me, is it so?"

"No, no, no," sobbed Annie. "I began to cry, because—because I am so lonely, so miserable; because I could not help it. The thought of England and home, at this Christmas time, makes my heart sicken and sink. Last Christmas it was different; I had not then lost all. Was it wrong? Are you angry? My crying can do no harm. Is he angry?"

"It pained him, child; it pained Gottfried. If

you knew him as I do, if you loved him as I do, you would think that was harm enough."

"I do think so—I will not do it again; but——" She paused, then with a great effort she said, "It was not only to have my lesson that you sent for me to-day—you are going to tell me something; but I know it—I think I know it."

"If so, we will speak of something else—of you, of your cousin. He comes back again soon, I suppose—when, child? When he is here again, there must not be so much rambling about together—you must bring him here. Gottfried wishes it. Your friend must not be a stranger here. And then the betrothal—there must be one in our country fashion. It shall be here; Gottfried says so. He will be to you as father, friend, brother."

"Are you—is he—trying to break my heart?" cried Annie. She sprang up in a blaze of indignation, but it soon passed; she sank down again and moaned. "Forgive me. He is very good; you are very good. It is only I——" She wept again, and so convulsively now that Frau von Heilmann strove earnestly to soothe her.

"My child! my poor little one! speak to me. Trust me, tell me all!"

"I must—I must speak, I must tell you, or my heart will burst," gasped Annie. "Oh, I love him, I love him, so dearly, so dearly! I know it; now it is too late."

"Too late," echoed Frau von Heilmann, and over her face gathered a cloud. She spoke abstractedly as she said, "Too late! I do not suppose it is too late. Patience, child. He is gone, you say, but he will write; if he is worth having, he will ask you again. Patience, child. So he asked you, and you refused him; and now he is gone, your heart goes after him; for this I do not see that it need break." In spite of herself, her tone was hard and taunting. After her confession Annie had hidden her burning face; now she raised it, and its perplexity lightened that of Frau von Heilmann.

"You speak of your cousin. Is it not so, my child?"

"No," answered Annie. "It is best, perhaps, you should not understand. I ought not to have spoken, but you bade me, and my heart is so full. Let me go now, and—and——"

She tried to rise, but the old woman's hands, pressing heavily upon her shoulders, held her down.

"You did not speak of your cousin? Töchterchen, is it Gottfried?" The mother bent down, and the last words were whispered in the girl's ear.

"Yes, yes, yes. But I know, oh I know it is too late. I wish, I wish I had not told you. I hope he will be happy; I will pray to God to make him so. She is so beautiful, and she looks kind and good."

"Of whom are you speaking, you poor child? And what do you mean by 'knowing it is too late'? And if you love Gottfried, who loves you, what are you breaking your poor heart about?"

"Is it not true then? Is it not this you sent for me to tell me? Then, what *have* I done? Fraulein Grüppe told me that——"

"That?"

"That your son, my master, would in a few months be married to the Gräfinn Rosalie von Thauenwald. That the betrothal was to be at Schloss Thauenwald, on the first day of next year."

"A lie, a cruel lie! It is this the eyes have grown so dim, the cheeks so wan about. Blessings on them, Annchen mein; his mother has been hard upon you, vexed with you, that you tried him and pained him, and would not at once own that you loved him: his mother has been hard upon you. But, Töchterchen, you are, and will be, my Töchterchen. He loves you; not only as you fancied, poor little one, out of pity and kindness, and in the spirit of self-sacrifice, does he desire to marry you, but he loves you with all that is best in love. His heart opens and closes with difficulty, my Annchen: somehow you, the little stranger woman, got into it, and you are there for ever."

"He cares for me, for me! Oh, Mütterchen, are you quite, quite sure?"

"For you, and, in the same way, for no other."

"But—he seemed so ready to give me up, so pleased—what did that mean?"

"Ready he was, pleased even, because he thought you would so be happier. It means that he does not love with the self-seeking passion some men call love, but with a love, the strongest desire of which is the good and happiness of what he loves. Yes, he was ready to give you up, so far as to be to you only a brother, a friend—whatever you most needed. But, as I said, you are in his heart for ever. Oh, he is good, he is noble, is my Gottfried. Thank God for his love, my daughter."

"Mother, I will. I will, mother. I do, I will—all the days of all my life."

"Gottfried!" the mother called, thinking she heard a movement in his room.

Annie buried her face in the mother's lap.

Herr von Heilmann obeyed the summons. Did Annie ever forget how each step of his, as he came towards them, echoed in her heart? What she felt was like dying into another life, she thought—dying from a dull, cold, loveless world, into a world of love.

"Take this child, this little daughter of mine," Frau von Heilmann said. "Take her; she has been here long enough. Take her away, I say; she wearies me."

"Mother!"

"Take her away, I say," she reiterated in mock anger, while the tears began to stream down her face. "She is more yours than mine: why should I have all the burden of her? Take her; she wearies me."

Herr von Heilmann paused beside the little prostrate figure, and perused his mother's face.

"He does not believe his own old mother! Töchterchen, look up; speak to him."

Annie looked up: she spoke to him, but only with her eyes. It was enough. He bowed down before his mother: the trembling hands were laid upon their heads: by both that blessing was felt to be the true betrothal.

Afterwards he tried to lift Annie from the ground. First she turned, and, bending low, laid her face upon his feet; afterwards she let him do with her what he would.

Frau von Heilmann nodded approval.

"Right, right, my daughter," she said. "Gottfried, for that you shall not chide her. Right, right, Annchen, true daughter of mine. 'A vos pieds et dans vos bras.' When I was a young woman, and I was thought to be a right proud one, I set my pride in this, that no man should ever hold me in his arms, whose feet I did not feel that I could kneel and kiss. I did not marry very early. He was rather long in coming,—the man towards whom I could feel thus. He did come,

however, and he was your father, my son—a father of whom my son is almost worthy."

When Herr von Heilmann's opera was produced, it fared a little better than he had prophesied for it, yet not much. But it was well given, and he saw and heard it with his little betrothed bride at his side — his little betrothed bride, whose heart he now knew to be so wholly, so humbly, so wonderingly his; to whom his love was all-sufficing; who walked softly in the light of the new knowledge of its depth and strength, feeling that it made all places holy, all life sacred.

To a man the happiness of love cannot, and should not, be all-sufficing as to a woman; yet to Herr von Heilmann it was very full and satisfying, making him feel that he could afford to bear all things, even to the disastrous damning with faint praise of his timid friends. He was calmly content; not that his work should die and be forgotten, but that it should bide its due time for such recognition from posterity as its intrinsic merit could justly claim; happily not sharing the opinion of the French cynic, who pronounced—"La postérité n'est pas autre chose qu'un public qui succède à un autre."

As for Frau von Heilmann—the little one, as she is called in Wüstestadt, happy still to need

some such distinctive title—let any who can, doubt of her happiness: the writer of this bit of her story is not one of that number! She is by no means an idle little woman; she is proud to share her husband's labour, happy to know that she lightens it. Annie had played, and played wonderfully well, at that school-concert in her maiden days. Frau von Heilmann has played to larger and more critical audiences: some few times, when he has been incapacitated by sudden attacks of his winter enemy, fulfilling for her husband his engagements to play in public.

On one of these occasions the writer of this small portion of her story last saw her. It was a pretty and pleasant sight; for beside the lovely little childlike woman, whose small fingers did marvels of delicate and intelligent execution, stood the husband, stiff and soldierlike, following the movements of those fingers with unremitting attention; and when all was over it was to him she turned, looking up into his face with eyes that asked plainly as eyes could speak—"Master, have I done well? Husband, are you pleased with me?" The answer of his face left nothing doubtful. It was easy enough to see how completely Annie was mistress of the heart of him she still loved, honoured, and revered as her *Master*.

A FEUILLETON.

BY H. D. W.

[*MAGA*. May 1860.]

THE day was wet, and Lahure (Mathieu) took his place in the omnibus at Enghien. He was late, and chance led him to the remote and dark end of the vehicle. A young lady sat on his right, occupying the corner. Lahure commenced an examination of her face; he was always on the search for a new countenance to adorn his easel. The profile of Lahure's neighbour was worthy the pencil of a Guido. Lahure, a humble follower of that great master, paid homage to his memory by studying the model accordingly.

But artists are not always content with still life. They require animation as well as purity of outline. It behoved, therefore, Lahure, by dint of his conversational powers, to produce that play of feature which perplexes and delights others besides artists.

So he began—about the weather.

"It rains," said Mathieu, addressing his neighbour.

"What extravagance of resource!" soliloquised, spitefully and aloud, a notary's clerk.

"Lucky fellow," murmured an old bachelor playfully, while one or two elderly married couples smiled conjugal smiles on each other's ample proportions, and approved the young gentleman's advances.

"It rains, Mademoiselle," repeated Lahure.

"It does indeed," answered the young lady.

"I fear it will rain all day," continued the artist.

"There is much cause for apprehension," responded the Guido face.

"Bad for the crops," commented an agricultural couple.

"Bad for my digestion," smiled Lahure.

"How do you account for that interesting statistic?" sneered the notary's clerk.

"Because, not being accustomed to trot about the streets with a waggon-load of papers on my back, I enjoy a walk from Paris to Enghien, and rely upon it for my appetite."

A chuckle ran round the carriage, in which the young lady partook with an angelic smile, the clerk having offended her previously by odd smirks in the way of advances.

The culprit relapsed into silence, and, an omnibus

not being incentive to conversation, each relapsed into his own thoughts, except the artist. Bent on exchanging ideas with some one, his right-hand neighbour seemed to present the majority of qualifications.

"Perhaps Mademoiselle will be returning this evening?" hazarded Lahure.

"No, Monsieur, I shall not."

"Does Mademoiselle then not live at Enghien?"

"Only occasionally."

"Perhaps Mademoiselle resides at Paris?" continued the artist, with a copious readiness.

"Occasionally only."

"Ah, I perceive;" and Mathieu smiled as one pleased with his own adroitness: "Mademoiselle divides her time equally between the two fortunate spots."

"As Mademoiselle, she would not admit a compliment." While speaking she arranged her veil in graceful folds on the further side.

"Pardon, Madame, the insipidity of my conversation."

"Make no excuses, Monsieur; its insipidity was the only part of it that pleased me."

"Can I make up for it by offering you this morning's *Charivari?*"

"Thank you; I have seen it."

"Perhaps Monsieur *votre mari* is connected with the press that you receive it so early?"

"I am a widow."

"I beg pardon again, a thousand times."

A face such as that could not seem mortally offended; on the contrary, it spoke in gentle accents.

"I am a great amateur of the *Charivari*, and a friendly publisher supplies me with early copies."

"*Ma foi!*" soliloquised the artist. "A widow, and one who can afford to receive early copies at Enghien. Madame," he continued, "I am enchanted to hear of your *bienveillance* towards the *Charivari*."

"Wherefore this great joy?" asked the widow, in a tone of surprise.

"You said, I think, Madame, that you protected that journal."

"Rather it protects me, by causing me to spend many a pleasant hour. I look on it as one of my best and oldest friends."

"Then, Madame, I have a little right to your goodwill. I am a constant contributor to its pages, and, I trust, to your pleasures."

"Are you really? Then I am indeed glad. I have so long wished to know personally — or at least to see some of the very clever writers who maintain that journal with such unflagging spirit."

"Madame, you will make me appear like one of our favourite idiots."

"Impossible."

A bow.

"But can I ask, without indiscretion, which are your productions?"

"Ah, Madame! The proverb says, '*Chacun a son gout.*' It might add, '*chacun a son secret.*' I know your taste; it is the *Charivari.* In return I will tell you mine. It is to know something more of every beautiful widow I meet with in an omnibus. We are now quits on the score of taste, but we each retain our secret. These we can preserve —or——"

"What?"

"Exchange."

"Let us preserve them, then," rejoined the widow, drily.

"To hear is to obey. But will you give me no indication?"

"Indication for indication."

"Well—agreed."

"Are you a draughtsman or a writer?"

"First tell me whether you live most at Paris or at Enghien?"

"I live equally at both."

"And I write and draw with equal merit."

"Provoking. But I see you must be a *journaliste,* from your self-conceit."

"I have, on my part, long perceived that you were a wit as well as a beauty."

"There you return to your first insipidity."

"For you reduce me to my wits' end."

"Well, to our compact: hint for hint."

"Hint for hint."

"But fair-play."

"What do you mean?"

"Make use only of your wit to discover my secret—no underhand means. Do not follow me when I leave the omnibus, or ask questions about me."

"Madame, I flatter myself I am a man of honour. I give you my promise. In return, you must pledge yourself not to ask any questions about me, or to follow me when I leave the omnibus."

"Monsieur, I am a woman of honour. I give you my promise."

"Then, now for our battle."

"What have you contributed to-day to the journal?"

"You inquire into the past; I only peer into the future. Shall you return to Enghien by omnibus to-night?"

"I do not think I shall ever travel in an omnibus again. It was by pure accident you have met me here this morning."

"A happy accident."

"Insipidity again. But answer my question as frankly as I answered yours: What have you contributed to this day's paper?"

"To answer truly and sincerely, without reserve, equivocation, or reticence—nothing!"

"What am I to do? Here we are close to your bureau—you see I know where it is—and I am no further advanced than I was before."

"No more am I. But it is the easiest thing in the world to arrange. Tell me your name and address; I will tell you mine. We have exchanged a challenge. By the rules of society, we should exchange cards."

"Although a writer in the *Charivari*, you must feel your proposition a little too enterprising. Ask yourself what you would think of a lady who consented to such an arrangement."

"Perhaps, Madame, you are right. But the fear of losing so charming an acquaintance makes me hazard more than perhaps I have a right to stake."

"Well, we shall meet again, depend upon it."

"Is that a promise or a consolation?"

"Take it as you like."

"Will you remember that a letter directed to Mistigris, 180 Rue du Bac, will find me?"

"I will *remember* it."

"Is that an engagement or a *politesse?*"

"A *politesse* may be an engagement, though an engagement is not always a *politesse*."

"The omnibus is stopping for you to alight. *Bon jour*, Monsieur."

"May I not say *au revoir*, Madame?"

"Say what you like."

"Will you reciprocate?"

"Yes, yes; *au revoir*."

"Is that a *politesse* or a——"

He was on the pavement before his sentence was concluded, urged by the rough mandates of the guard.

For a week Monsieur Lahure was desperate; for another week he was anxious; the third he was melancholy; the fourth resigned. At the commencement of the second month, he was drifting into love with another, when a brougham dashed past him in the Rue de Rivoli, and the section of the Guido face greeted him with a bright smile.

Regardless of promises and philosophy, the young man rushed after the carriage. A crowd of foot-passengers intercepted his career, and he returned home more in love than ever—a sadder and a sillier man. For some days he was gloomy, abstracted, and irritable. His thoughts flowed wearily, at a loss for an expedient. He went to sleep one night, and dreamt of Vanity. In the morning he rose rejoicing. The next day there appeared in the *Charivari* a little story in a column of short sentences. The title was taken from the old proverb that every medal has its reverse. It was surmounted by a vignette of the Guido face *en profile.*

CHAPTER I.

It rains.

One jumps into the omnibus from Enghien.

One sits next a pretty profile on one's right.

The profile is a young widow.

A veil hangs in graceful folds on the further side of her countenance.

One falls in love with the profile.

One enters into conversation.

The red lips part, and betray pearly teeth.

One becomes still more enamoured of the profile.

One proposes to the profile an ice at Tortoni's.

Proposition declined.

One offers a dinner *chez Philippe.*

Rejected.

One presses one's suit.

Profile sighs.

Champagne and *marrons glacés.*

Inexorable.

CHAPTER II.

One writes a burning letter.

It is answered.

One entreats an interview.

It is refused.

One writes again.

Protestations doubted.

One adores.

One receives for an answer that love such as this will not bear the test of misfortune.

Further protestations.

A walk to-morrow in the Bois de Boulogne.

CHAPTER III.

The walk begins.

Profile leans on one's right arm. More lovely than ever. Veil still in graceful folds over right cheek.

Adorable creature!

Then you really love me?

One does indeed—and—adorable creature!

Also a little.

May one not see the whole of that adorable face? Will that jealous veil never be removed?

A blush.

Nay—prithee.

Remonstrance and tremor.

A short silence. Distant thunder. Wind blows. Rain falls fast. Shelter beneath a tree. Arm disengaged to run for fiacre. Fiacre found. The door opens. One assists profile with left arm. A gust of wind. Veil flies back. Profile has but one eye.

Adieu, Madame.

One pays the fare of the fiacre, shuts the door, and walks home — alone — blessing the unknown philosopher who invented flight.

At the end of the tale was a vignette of the counter-profile, with a great splotch for an eye.

Sure enough the next morning Monsieur Lahure (Mathieu) received a letter, not Rue du Bac, but at the bureau of the *Charivari.*

If Mistigris went a little into respectable society, instead of secluding himself to write libels, "one" might perhaps meet young widows with two eyes.

Mistigris bought some new clothes, and straightway resumed his lodgings at Paris. He accepted indiscriminately every invitation he received; but he did not meet his widow.

One day a friend of his, a painter, invited him to a soirée. The painter was a rich man, and gave sumptuous parties. Large saloons, flowers, music, lights, everything to intoxicate the mind or stimulate the senses. Lahure (Mathieu) was equal to the occasion. He wished to do honour to his vocation, and draped himself magnificently. In addition to the ordinary costume of the nineteenth century, he adorned his button-hole with two small crosses dangling to a golden bar, the Legion of Honour and S. Gregory—honours gained at the point of his pen and pencil.

The young man entered the ball-room to watch the dancing. His arrival soon became known, and the dancers executed their best steps gloomily, and deployed their best graces, depressed with the incisive reputation of the artist's pencil, and fearful,

as are Parisians, of their own powers of ridicule. Lahure, to reassure them, assumed the smile of a philanthropist, the equanimity of a philosopher, and the abstraction of a poet. Standing half concealed near some flowers, he allowed the dancing to proceed undisturbed, and yielded his mind to pleasure; his vanity somewhat tickled by the sensation his presence had created, and his mind disposed to view with complacency his friend's hospitality. Conversations buzzed about him.

GROUP 1.—*Elderly Gentlemen.* Nos. 1 and 2.

No. 1.—Our friend is giving a brilliant feast.

No. 2.—Lucky brigand! with his pictures and his wife, he must have at least a hundred thousand francs yearly.

No. 1.—At least—and what a charming wife!

No. 2.—Not more charming than himself—I dine here Wednesday.

No. 1.—I agree with you. I dine Saturday.

GROUP 2.—*Younger Gentlemen.* Nos. 3 and 4.

No. 3.—What lovely women! An artist has an eye for the beautiful.

No. 4.—Beauty is enhanced by gold. So thinks our host.

No. 3.—Do you see Lahure? It is not often he goes into the world. Perhaps he seeks for models.

No. 4.—Beware he does not fix upon you.

No. 3.—He might do worse.

No. 4.—Perhaps he seeks, like our host, to unite the profession of a husband with his original career.

No. 2 (*from group* 1).—Well, there is a good chance to-night for some one. Madame Dumesnil-Lacoudraye once more honours society with her presence.

No. 4.—Society will greet with enthusiasm the incarnation of seventy-five thousand francs a-year.

No. 1.—And how very beautiful she looks!

No. 3 (enraptured).—Like a Guido.

GROUP 3.—*A young Lady*, No. 5; *and a young Gentleman*, No. 6.

No. 5.—How very curious!

No. 6.—It is indeed extraordinary.

Nos. 1 & 3. } What { extraordinary?
Nos. 2 & 4. } is { curious?

No. 5.—A lady in the boudoir.

No. 6.—A very beautiful person.

No. 5.—Not exactly beautiful.

No. 6.—Well, perhaps not—but so like.

No. 5.—So like a caricature by Monsieur Lahure.

No. 6.—The lady with one eye.

Group 2.—But has this beautiful lady but one eye?

Group 3.—No; two eyes.

Omnes.—Who can it be?

The sounds murmured in the distance. Lahure, as he afterwards declared, with his heart beating, moved into the boudoir. There—there, occupying a whole sofa, dressed richly and artistically, sat the lady of the omnibus, dazzling in beauty and in diamonds, smiling triumphantly, and surrounded by a platoon of admirers.

Lahure again half concealed himself by a curtain, and gazed on the beautiful vision before him. Her white neck rose majestically from her massive but symmetrical shoulders, which, in their turn, stood out in bold relief from the sharp outline of her velvet dress. Every turn of her head was graceful, and the well-gloved hand that held her bouquet or her fan was small and taper as a child's.

For the first time in his life Lahure felt abashed. He could not hear her words; but as she spoke her admirers laughed in chorus, and Lahure thought she was telling his story, and that the laugh was against himself. He was simple-hearted, though a caricaturist, and he did not yet know that an ample jointure adds a peculiar pungency to the witticisms of a handsome widow. But the idea of

being ridiculed steeled the young man's heart. Girding himself with the armour of his trade, he placed a smile upon his lips and walked jauntily to the sofa. The widow observed him for the first time, and a blush spread over her face and neck. It was a good sign, and Lahure became relentless.

The widow bowed.

"*Bon jour, Monsieur.* It is some time since we met."

He bowed in return, silently.

"We have been laughing almost foolishly," she continued.

"I trust not at the humble individual who now addresses you."

"Ah! you who joke others are the first to resent jokes yourselves. Suppose you were the hero of our dithyramb."

"It would probably supply me with a supplement to a romance."

The widow gazed at the young man with that imploring look common to women and dogs.

"Be reassured," she rejoined, "we were only canvassing a play."

"I did not know you were acquainted with my friend Lahure," interposed the host, who was passing at the moment.

"Oh yes, indeed. We are *collaborateurs.*" As she spoke, she moved her skirts on one side with that gesture peculiar to ladies when they invite

you to sit next them on a sofa. The gesture dispersed the platoon of admirers.

"What induced you to attack me in the *Charivari?*"

"To effect one of two objects; and I have succeeded."

"What were they?"

"Either to pique you, and thus revenge myself; or to flatter you, and thus to find you."

"And you think I was flattered?"

"I am sure of it."

"Do you think it legitimate to bring your powers to bear against a defenceless wôman?"

"As legitimate as you consider it not to keep your word. I gave my word not to follow you nor inquire after you, and I kept it."

"I made the same promise, and kept it."

"But you gave hopes."

"Can one give hopes in an omnibus?"

"Ah, Madame, an omnibus may contain as true a heart as a gilded *coupé*."

"Bravo!—a capital sentence for your next article."

"Brava! You wish to humiliate me by my profession."

"You do me an injustice."

"You have treated me badly, and I cannot trust you."

"If you really knew the truth, you would not think yourself ill used."

"I can conceive no possible excuse."

"What would you have thought of a woman who wrote to you without knowing your name?"

"You might have known me."

"No sooner did I discover your real name than I wrote to you."

"But you did not give me yours. You left my finding you to chance."

"You wish to humiliate me by avowals."

"What do you mean?"

"It was not quite chance that made us meet to-night."

"Why, our host did not know that we had ever seen each other."

"But his wife is a friend of mine."

"When I did see you," burst out the young man in a transport, "my knees almost gave way under me."

"I suppose it was only the *sang froid* of a writer that supported you?"

"As a writer I should have succumbed. It was my artist-half sustained me."

"Then you are two men against one woman. The game is unequal."

"Yet the woman has beaten the two men."

"Explain yourself."

"You have learnt my name, and I am ignorant of yours."

"Really. Do you assert that you do not know who I am?"

"On my word of honour."

"She looked at him fixedly—then continued in a low tone—

"Guess it then."

"I shall guess your Christian name."

"What is it?"

"Constance."

"Then you must know me. I have always been called Julie; but my name is Constance likewise."

"I give you my word it was a guess, but I knew I could not be wrong."

"Then how did you discover it?"

"It is the name I love best."

A pause.

"Now guess my surname."

"I cannot."

"Why?"

"Surnames are vulgar, commonplace. They were invented for purposes of civilisation and utility. We never think of those we love by their surnames—our sisters, our children, our mothers, our wives. If we lived with them in a desert island, we should soon forget any names but those of baptism. It is a Christian name that lies in our hearts. Society may require me to salute you as Madame So-and-So. Shall I thus recall you in my dreaming hours?"

Another pause, and the widow, in a tremulous whisper—

"Then I must tell you myself. My husband

was an old man, who treated me as his daughter. His name was Dumesnil-Lacoudraye."

"In that case, Madame, I must bid you good-bye."

"Why?—why?"

"Madame Dumesnil-Lacoudraye is in every one's mouth, the beautiful widow and the rich one, with seventy-five thousand francs a-year, and the world at her feet. I thought I was speaking to my companion of the omnibus, equal to myself in fortune, and perhaps not above my love. No, Madame, I will not contend with the world, where there are so many rivals to mortify my pride during the race, and to win it at the end. Let me stop short at the starting-post, not to lose my self-esteem as well as my happiness."

The handsome features of the young man flushed as he spoke, his eyes half filled with tears.

"So farewell, Madame," he continued.

"No, Monsieur. I will not say farewell. It is not thus I part with Mistigris. Stay!"

Not many months afterwards Monsieur Lahure (Mathieu) gave a ball on his own account, and the Guido face received the guests.

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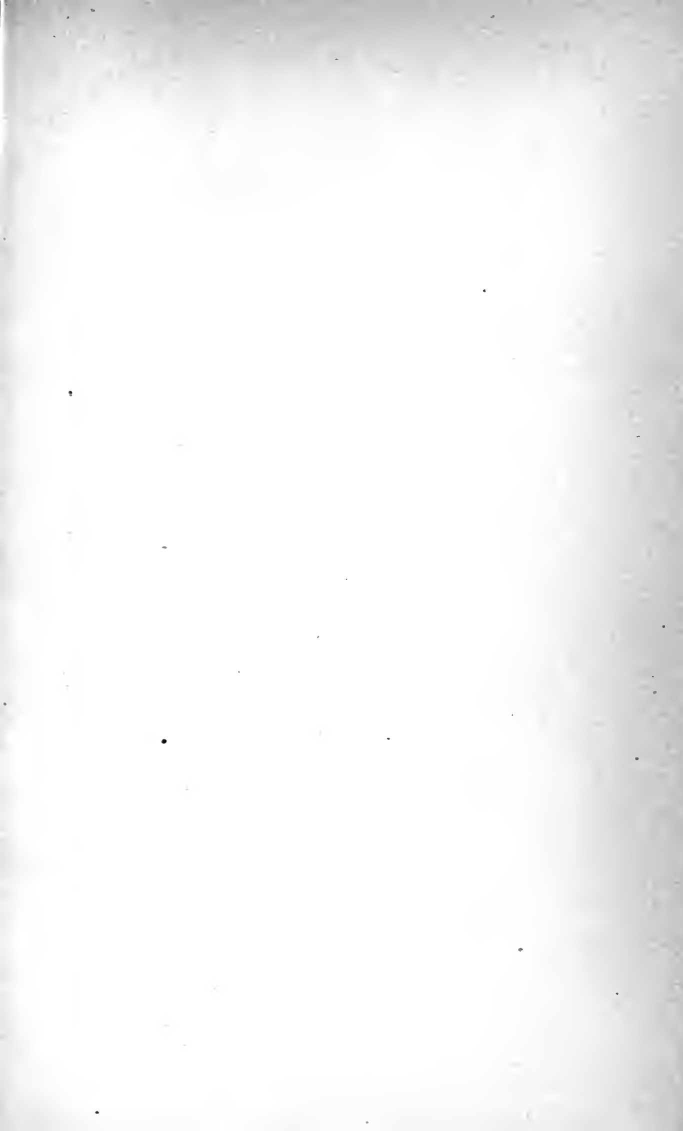

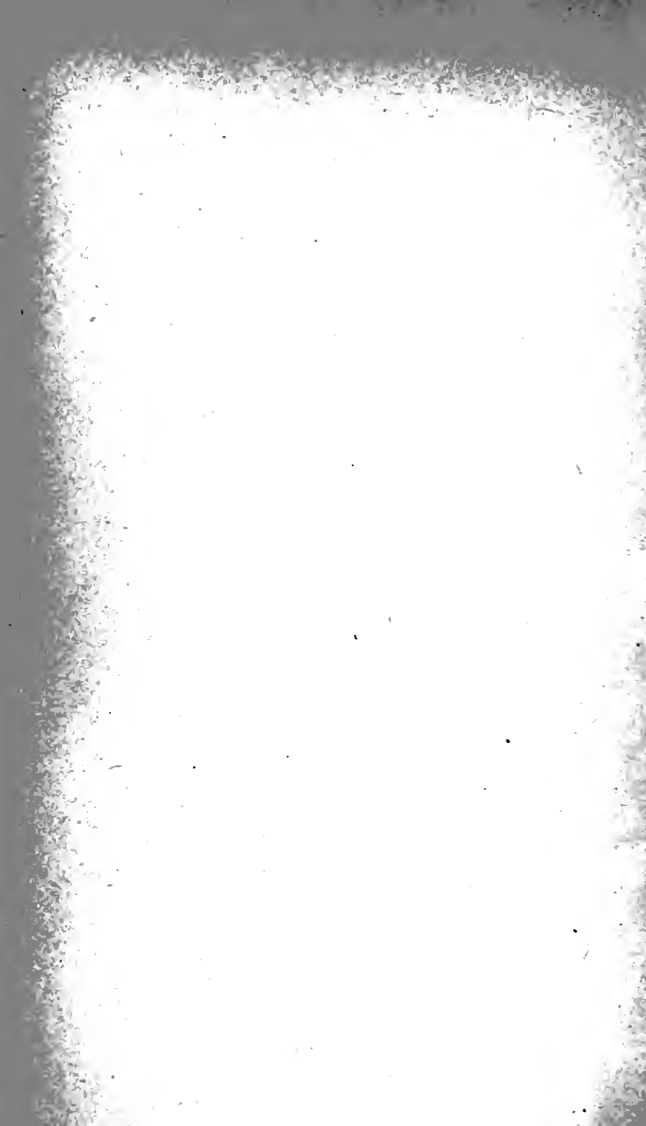

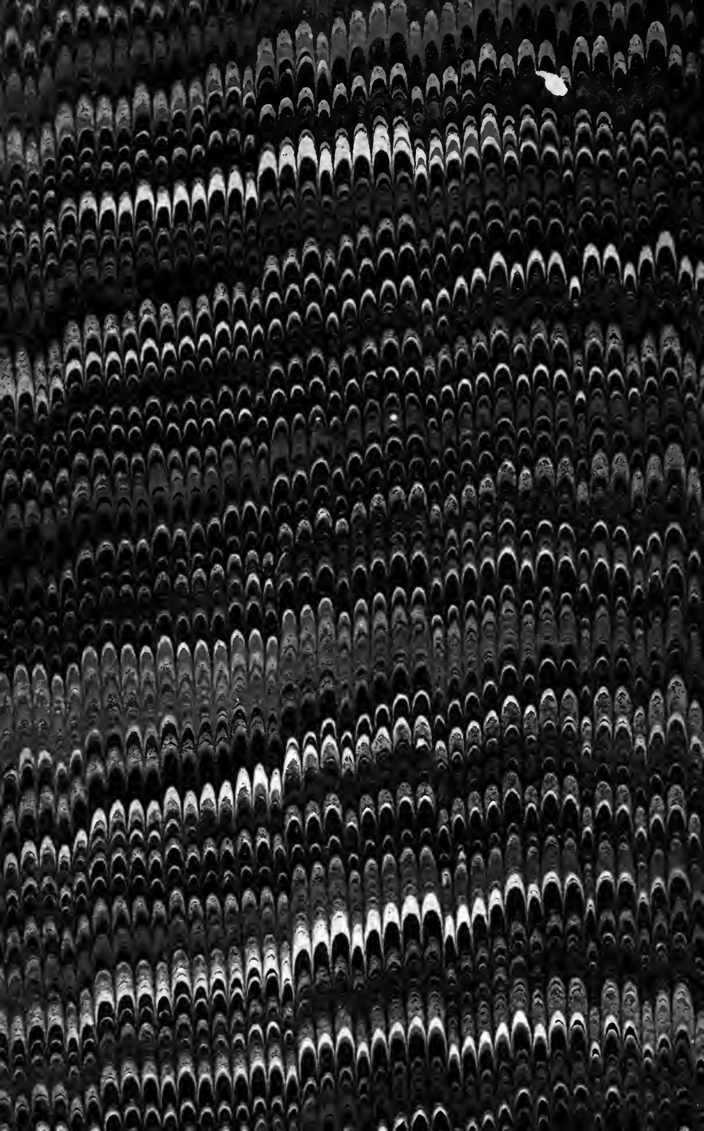

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