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EIGHTY.

BY MARGARET SANGSTER.

SIT down, my child. Ah! blithe you are, and bonny as the dawn.
I once had roses just as bright, some sixty years agone;
But now I'm old and withered, Jean, and all my life is gray;
I'm restless, restless, little one, I wish myself away.

IS that you, Jean? Come in, my dear. 'Tis kind you are to call
On one so sorrowful as I, so weary of it all;—
Since father went I'm waiting, Jean, just waiting for my end;
I'd take it as a mercy if the Lord for me would send.

I'VE sons and daughters? Yes, my dear. Fine women, too, and men;
But fairer in their baby days—you should have seen them then.
A pleasant home? So Susy says. I'd never any knack
For lots of fancy things about—she calls them bric-à-brac.

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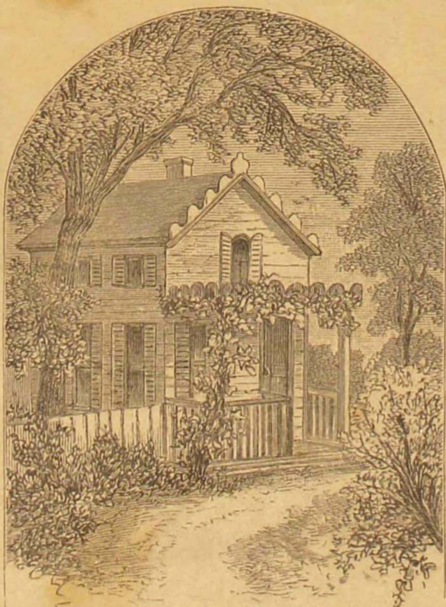
YOU see we came, my John and I, to visit with our son,
And neither of us dreamed that death was hovering over one.
Then, afterward, the children said, "Now, mother, you must stay;
You cannot live alone at home;" and they would not heed my nay.

FOR I knew best, my little Jean, I knew my heart would pine
For the garden, and the wood-lot, and the kitchen that was mine;
And I don't like sitting every day with my fingers in my lap,
Nor dressing in my richest gown, and in my newest cap.

AND I cannot like the city ways, and the city ladies' airs,
Nor shall I ever feel content with the climb of city stairs.
I want my chickens, and my cow, the doves that came at call,
The mint beside the brooklet, and the lilac by the wall.



THE LTTLE COT WHERE HE AND I HAD JOY AND GRIEF TO SHARE.

I WOULD not miss the father so, if only I were there,
In the little cot where he and I had joy and grief to share;
Had grief and joy, dear Jean, you know, as married people must;
But had love and peace through all things, and in God our quiet trust.

WHY not return? I would, indeed, if I were let to go:
It's hard to feel myself a slave, and followed to and fro,
And at eighty treated like a chit, who hasn't wit to guide
Herself; I, Jean, who always had my way quite undenied.

THEY think I do not hear them, with their whispers soft and sweet,
"It is not safe for grandma, she is feeble on her feet;"
So Elsie or Cornelia must coax to walk with me
Whenever I go out, my dear—oh, no! I am not free!

I SLIP away, just like a ghost, sometimes in early morn ;
I hear such voices calling, Jean, across the long miles borne ;
The robins in our apple-tree, the martins in our eaves,
And the tender sighing of the wind in the maples' clustering leaves.

I SLIP away so quietly, I wander out of town,
So glad to leave the bustling streets, the houses high and brown ;
I seek for smiling orchards with white and pink a-foam—
For something like the dear old days, and like the dear old home.

THEY brought my bureau and my clock, and my own rocking-chair,
And Justin says the atmosphere is the very same as there ;
I cannot make myself the same, with not a thing to do,
Except to grumble foolishly to a merry lass like you.

BUT, Jean, one day, though God forbid such fate your steps attend,
You may be old and tired out, then death may seem a friend,
Who, having taken all the rest, you'll chide him if he wait
Too long. At eighty life is apt to be so desolate.

The Trumpet-Major.

BY THOMAS HARDY, AUTHOR OF "FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD," ETC.

CHAPTER I

WHAT WAS SEEN FROM THE WINDOW OVERLOOKING THE DOWN.

IN the days of high-waisted and muslin-gowned women, when the vast amount of soldiering going on in England was a cause of much trembling to the sex, there lived in a village near the Wessex coast two ladies of good report, though unfortunately of limited means. The elder was a Mrs. Martha Garland, a landscape-painter's widow, and the other was her only daughter Anne.

Anne was fair, very fair, in a poet's sense of the word ; but in complexion she was of that particular tint between blonde and brunette which is inconveniently left without a name. Her eyes were honest and inquiring, her mouth cleanly cut and yet not classical, the middle point of her upper lip scarcely descending so far as it should have done by rights, so that at the merest pleasant thought, not to mention a smile, portions of two or three white teeth were uncovered whether she would or not. Some people said that this was very attractive. She was graceful and slender, and though but little above five feet in height could draw herself up to look tall. In her manner, in her comings and goings, in her "I'll do this," or "I'll do that," she combined dignity with sweetness as no other girl could do ; and any impressionable stranger youths who passed by were led to yearn for a windfall of speech from her, and to see at the same time that they would not get it. In short, beneath all that was charming and simple in this young woman there lurked a real firmness, unperceived at first, as the speck of color lurks unperceived in the heart of a milk-white parsley flower.

She wore a white handkerchief to cover her white neck, and a cap on her head with a pink ribbon round it, tied in a bow at the front. She had a great variety of these cap-ribbons, the young men being fond of sending them to her as presents until they fell definitely in love with a special sweetheart elsewhere, when they left off doing so. Between the border of her cap and her forehead were ranged a row of round brown curls, like swallows' nests under eaves.

She lived with her widowed mother in a portion of an ancient building formerly a manor-house, but now a mill, which, being too large for his own requirements, the miller had found it convenient to divide and appropriate in part to these highly respectable tenants. In this dwelling Mrs. Garland's and Anne's ears were soothed morning, noon, and night by the music of the mill, the wheels and cogs of which, being of wood, produced notes that might have borne in their minds a remote resemblance to the tones of the stopped diapason, the organ-pipes of that stop being of the same material. Occasionally, when the miller was bolting, there was added to these continuous sounds the cheerful clicking of the hopper, which did not deprive them of rest except when it was kept going all night ; and over and above all this they had the pleasure of knowing that there crept in through every crevice, door, and window of their dwelling, however tightly closed, a subtle mist of superfine flour from the grinding-room, quite invisible, but making its presence known in the course of time by giving a pallid and ghostly look to the best furniture. The miller frequently apologized to his tenants for the intrusion of this insidious dry fog ; but the widow was of a friendly and thankful nature, and she said that she did not mind it at all, being as it was, not nasty dirt, but the blessed staff of life.

By good humor of this sort, and in other ways, Mrs. Garland acknowledged her friendship for her neighbor, with whom Anne and herself associated to an extent which she never could have anticipated when, tempted by the lowness of the rent, they first removed

thither after her husband's death from a larger house at the other end of the village. Those who have lived in remote places where there is what is called no society will comprehend the gradual leveling of distinctions that went on in this case at some sacrifice of gentility on the part of one household. The widow was sometimes sorry to find with what readiness Anne caught up some dialect word or accent from the miller and his friends; but he was so good and true-hearted a man, and she so easy-minded, unambitious a woman, that she would not make life a solitude for superfine reasons. More than all, she had good ground for thinking that the miller secretly admired her, and this added a piquancy to the situation.

On a fine summer morning, when the leaves were warm under the sun, and the more industrious bees abroad, diving into every blue and red cup that could possibly be considered a flower, Anne was sitting at the back window of her mother's portion of the house, measuring out lengths of worsted for a fringed rug that she was making, which lay, about three-quarters finished, beside her. The work, though chromatically brilliant, was tedious: a hearth-rug was a thing which nobody worked at from morning to night; it was taken up and put down; it was in the chair, on the floor, across the handrail, under the bed, kicked here, kicked there, rolled away in the closet, brought out again, and so on, more capriciously perhaps than any other home-made article. Nobody was expected to finish a rug within a calculable period, and the wools of the beginning became faded and historical before the end was reached. A sense of this inherent nature of worsted work rather than idleness led Anne to look rather frequently from the open casement.

Immediately before her was the large smooth mill-pond, over full, and intruding into the hedge and into the road. The water, with its floating leaves and spots of froth, was stealing away, like Time, under the dark arch to tumble over the great slimy wheel within. On the other side of the mill-pond was an open place called the Cross, because it was three-quarters of one, two lanes and a cattle-drive meeting there. It was the general rendezvous and arena of the surrounding village. Behind this a steep slope rose high into the sky, merging in a wide and open down, now littered with sheep newly shorn. The upland by its height completely sheltered the mill and village from north winds, making summers of springs, reducing winters to autumn temperatures, and permitting myrtles to flourish in the open air.

The heaviness of noon pervaded the scene, and under its influence the sheep had ceased to feed. Nobody was standing at the village Cross, the few inhabitants being indoors at their dinner. No human being was on the down, and no human eye or interest but Anne's seemed to be concerned with it. The bees still worked on, and the butterflies did not rest from roving, their smallness seeming to shield them from the stagnating effect that this turning moment of day had on larger creatures. Otherwise all was still.

The girl glanced at the down and the sheep for no particular reason; simply that the steep margin of turf and daisies rising above the roofs, chimneys, apple-trees, and church-tower of the hamlet around her, bounded the view from her position, and it was necessary to look somewhere when she raised her head. While thus engaged in working and stopping her attention was attracted by the sudden rising and running away of the sheep squatted on the down; and there succeeded sounds of a heavy tramping over the hard sod which the sheep had quitted, the tramp being accompanied by a metallic clanking. Turning her eyes farther she beheld two cavalry soldiers on bulky gray chargers, armed and accoutered throughout, ascending the down at a point to the left where the incline was comparatively easy. The burnished chains, buckles, and plates of their trappings shone like little looking-glasses, and the blue, red, and white about them was unsubdued by weather or wear.

The two troopers rode proudly on, as if nothing less than crowns and empires ever concerned their magnificent minds. They reached that part of the down which lay just in front of her where they came to a halt. In another minute there appeared behind them a group containing some half-dozen more of the same sort. These came on, halted, and dismounted likewise.

Two of the soldiers then walked some distance onward together, when one stood still, the other advancing farther, and stretching a white line or tape between them. Two more of the men marched to another outlying point, where they made marks in the ground. Thus they walked about and took distances, obviously according to some preconcerted scheme.

At the end of this systematic proceeding one solitary trooper—a commissioned officer, if his uniform could be judged rightly at that distance—rode up the down, went over the ground, looked at what the others had done, and seemed to think that it was good. And then the girl heard yet louder tramps and clankings, and she beheld rising from where the others had risen a whole column of cavalry in marching order. At a distance behind there came a cloud of dust enveloping more and more troops, their arms and accouterments reflecting the sun through the haze in faint flashes, stars, and streaks of light. The whole body approached slowly toward the plateau at the top of the down.

Anne threw down her work, and letting her eyes remain on the nearing masses of cavalry, the worsteds getting entangled as they would, said, "Mother, mother; come here! Here's such a fine sight. What does it mean? What can they be going to do up there?"

The mother thus invoked ran up-stairs, entered the room, and came forward to the window. She was a woman with a sanguine mouth and eye, unheroic manner, and pleasant general appearance; a little more tarnished as to surface, but not much worse in contour than the girl herself.

Widow Garland's thoughts were those of the period. "Can it be the French?" she said, arranging herself for the extremest form of consternation. "Can that arch-enemy of mankind have landed at last?" It should be stated that at this time there were two arch-enemies of mankind, Satan as usual, and Bonaparte, who had sprung up and eclipsed his elder rival altogether. Mrs. Garland alluded, of course, to the junior gentleman.

"It cannot be he," said Anne. "Ah! there's Simon Burden, the man who watches at the beacon. He'll know!"

She waved her hand to an aged form of the same color as the road, who had just appeared beyond the mill-pond, and who, though active, was bowed to that degree which almost reproaches a feeling observer for standing upright. The arrival of the soldiery had drawn him out from his drop of drink at the Three Mariners as it had attracted Anne. At her call he crossed the mill bridge, and came toward the window that framed in the two women.

Anne inquired of him what it all meant, but Simon Burden, without answering, continued to move on with parted gums, staring at the cavalry on his own private account with a concern that people often show about temporal phenomena when such matters can affect them but a short time longer. "You'll walk into the mill-pond!" said Anne. "What are they doing? You were a soldier many years ago, and ought to know."

"Don't ask me, Mis'ess Anne," said the military relic, depositing his body against the wall one limb at a time. "I were only in the foot, ye know, and never had a clear understanding of horses. Ay, I be a old man, and of no judgment now." Some additional pressure, however, caused him to search further in his worm-eaten magazine of ideas, and he found that he did know in a dim, irresponsible way. The soldiers must have come there to camp: those men they had seen first were the markers; they had come on before the rest to measure out the ground. He who had accompanied them was the quartermaster. "And so you see they have got all the lines marked out by the time the regiment have come up," he added. "And then they will — well-a-deary! Who'd ha' supposed that Overcombe would see such a day as this!"

"And then they will—"

"Then—. Ah it's gone from me again!" said Simon. "Oh, and then they will raise their tents, you know, and picket their horses. That was it; so it was."

By this time the column of horse had ascended into full view, and they formed a lively spectacle as they rode along the high ground in marching order, backed by the pale blue sky, and lit by the southerly sun. Their uniform was bright and attractive; they wore white buckskin pantaloons, three-quarter boots, scarlet shakos set off with lace, mustaches waxed to a needle point, and above all, those richly ornamented blue jackets mantled with the historic pelisse—that fascination to woman, and encumbrance to the wearers themselves.

"'Tis the York Hussars," said Simon Burden, brightening like a dying ember fanned. "Foreigners to a man, and enrolled long since my time. But as good hearty comrades, they say, as you'll find in the king's service."

"Here are more and different ones," said Mrs. Garland.

Other troops had, during the last few minutes been ascending the down at a remoter point, and now drew near. These were of different weight and build from the others; lighter men, in helmet hats with white plumes.

"I don't know which I like best," said Anne. "These, I think, after all."

Simon, who had been looking hard at the latter, now said that they were the ——th Dragoons.

"All Englishmen they," said the old man. "They lay at Weymouth Barracks a few years ago."

"They did. I remember it," said Mrs. Garland.

"And lots of the chaps about here listed at the time," said Simon. "I can call to mind that there was—ah, 'tis gone from me again! However, all that's of little account now."

The dragoons passed in front of the lookers-on as the others had done, and their gay plumes, which had hung lazily during the ascent, swung to northward as they reached the top, showing that on the summit a fresh breeze blew. "But look across there," said Anne. There had entered upon the down from another direction several battalions of foot, in white kerseymere breeches, and cloth gaiters. They seemed to be weary from a long march, the original black of their gaiters and boots being whitey-brown with dust. Presently came regimental wagons, and the private canteen carts which followed at the end of a convoy.

The space in front of the mill-pond was now occupied by nearly all the inhabitants of the village, who had turned out in alarm, and remained for pleasure, their eyes lighted up with interest in what they saw; for trappings and regimentals, war-horses and men, in towns an attraction, were here almost a sublimity.

The troops filed to their lines, dismounted, and in quick time took off their accouterments, rolled up their sheep-skins, picketed and unbitted their horses, and made ready to erect the tents as soon as they could be taken from the wagons and brought forward. When this was done, and at a given signal the canvases flew up from the sod; and thenceforth every man had a place in which to lay his head.

Though nobody seemed to be looking on but the few at the window and in the village street, there were, as a matter of fact, many eyes converging upon that military arrival in its high and conspicuous position, not to mention the glances of birds and other wild creatures. Men in distant gardens, women in orchards and at cottage doors, shepherds on remote hills, turnip-hoers in blue-green enclosures miles away, captains with spy-glasses out at sea, were regarding the picture keenly. Those three or four thousand men of one machine-like movement, some of them swashbucklers by nature, others, doubtless, of a quiet shopkeeping disposition who had inadvertently got into uniform—all of them had arrived from nobody knew where, and hence were matter of great curiosity. They seemed to the mere eye to belong to a different order of beings from those who inhabited the valleys below. Apparently unconcious and careless of what all the world was doing elsewhere, they remained picturesquely engrossed in the business of making themselves a habitation on the isolated spot which they had chosen.

Mrs. Garland was of a festive and sanguine turn of mind, a woman soon set up and soon set down, and the coming of the regiments quite excited her. She thought there was reason for putting on her best cap, thought that perhaps there was not; that she would hurry on the dinner and go out in the afternoon; then that she would, after all, do nothing unusual, nor show any silly excitements whatever, since they were unbecoming in a mother and a widow. Thus circumscribing her intentions till she was toned down to an ordinary person of forty, Mrs. Garland accompanied her daughter down-stairs to dine, saying, "Presently we will call on Miller Loveday, and hear what he thinks of it all."

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH SOMEBODY KNOCKS AND COMES IN.

Miller Loveday was the representative of an ancient family of corn-grinders whose history is lost in the mists of antiquity. His ancestral line was contemporaneous with that of De Ros, Howard, and De La Zouche; but owing to some trifling deficiency in the possessions of the house of Loveday the individual names and intermarriages of its members were not recorded during the Middle Ages, and thus their private lives in any given century were uncertain. But it was known that the family had formed matrimonial alliances with farmers not so very small, and once with a gentleman-tanner, who had for many years purchased after their death the horses of the most aristocratic persons in the county—fiery steeds that earlier in their career had been valued at many hundred guineas. It was also ascertained that Mr. Loveday's great-grandparents had been eight in number, and his great-great-grandparents sixteen, every one of whom reached to years of discretion: at every stage backwards his sires and gammers thus doubled and doubled till they became a vast body of Gothic ladies and gentleman of the rank known as ceorls or villeins, full of importance to the country at large, and ramifying throughout the unwritten history of England. His immediate father had greatly improved the value of their residence by building a new chimney and setting up an additional pair of mill-stones.

Overcombe Mill presented at one end the appearance of a hard-worked house slipping into the river, and at the other of an idle, genteel place, half cloaked with creepers at this time of the year, and having no visible connection with flour. It had hips instead of gables, giving it a round-shouldered look, four chimneys with no smoke coming out of them, two zigzag cracks in the wall, several open windows, with a looking-glass here and there inside showing its warped back to the passer-by, snowy dimity curtains waving in the draught, two mill doors, one above the other, the upper enabling a person to step out upon nothing at a height of ten feet from the ground; a gaping arch vomiting the river, and a lean, long-nosed fellow looking out from the mill doorway, who was the hired grinder, except when a bulging fifteen-stone man occupied the same place, namely, the miller himself.

Behind the mill door, and invisible to the mere wayfarer who did not visit the family, were chalked addition and subtraction sums, many of them originally done wrong, and the figures half rubbed out and corrected, noughts being turned into nines, and ones into twos. These were the miller's private calculations. There were also chalked in the same place rows and rows of strokes like open palings, representing the calculations of the grinder, who in his youthful ciphering studies had not gone so far as Arabic figures.

In the court in front were two worn-out mill-stones made useful again by being let in level with the ground. Here people stood to smoke and consider things in muddy weather; and cats slept on the clean surfaces when it was hot. In the large stubbard-tree at the corner of the garden was erected a pole of larch fir, which the miller had bought with others at a sale of small timber in Lammer's Wood one Christmas week. It rose from the upper boughs of the tree to about the height of a fisherman's mast, and on the top was a vane in the form of a sailor with his arm stretched out. When the sun shone upon this figure it could be seen that the greater part of his countenance was gone, and the paint washed from his body so far as to reveal that he had been a soldier in red before he became a sailor in blue. The image had, in fact, been John, one of our coming characters, and was then turned into Robert, another of them. This revolving piece of statuary could not, however, be relied on as a vane, owing to the neighboring hill, which formed variable currents in the wind.

The leafy and quieter wing of the mill-house was the part occupied by Mrs. Garland and her daughter, who made up in summer time for the narrowness of their quarters by overflowing considerably into the garden on stools and chairs. The parlor or dining-room had a stone floor, a fact which the widow sought to disguise by double carpeting, lest the standing of Anne and herself should be lowered in the public eye by the use of the room in its primitive state. Here now the mid-day meal went lightly and mincingly on, as it does where there is no greedy carnivorous man to keep the dishes about, and was hanging on the close when somebody entered the passage as far as the chink of the parlor door, and tapped. This proceeding was probably adopted to kindly avoid giving trouble to Susan, the neighbor's pink daughter, who helped at Mrs. Garland's in the mornings, but was at that moment particularly occupied in standing on the water-butt and gazing at the soldiers, with an inhaling position of the jawbone and circular eyes.

There was a flutter in the little dining-room—the sensitiveness of habitual solitude makes hearts beat for preternaturally small reasons—and a guessing as to who the visitor might be was hurriedly made. It was some military gentleman from the camp, perhaps? No, that was impossible. It was the parson? No, he would not come at dinner-time. It

was the well-informed man who traveled with drapery and the best Birmingham ear-rings? Not at all; his time was not till Thursday at three. Before they could think further the visitor moved forward another step, and the diners got a glimpse of him through the same friendly chink that had afforded him a view of the Garland dinner-table.

"Oh! it is only Loveday."

This approximation to nobody was the miller above mentioned, a hale man of fifty-five or sixty—hale all through, as many were in those days, and not merely veneered with purple by exhilarating victuals and drinks, though the latter were not at all despised by him. His face was indeed rather pale than otherwise, for he had just come from the mill. It was capable of immense changes of expression: mobility was its essence, a roll of flesh forming a buttress to his nose on each side, and a deep ravine lying between his lower lip and the tumulus represented by his chin. These fleshy lumps moved stealthily, as if of their own accord, whenever his fancy was tickled.

His eyes having lighted on the table-cloth, plates, and viands, he found himself in a position which had a sensible awkwardness for a modest man who always liked to enter only at seasonable times the presence of a girl of such pleasantly soft ways as Anne Garland, she who could make apples seem like peaches, and throw over her shillings the glamour of guineas when she paid him for flour.

"Dinner is over, neighbor Loveday; please come in," said the widow, seeing his case, and wondering why he called at that unusual hour. The miller said something about coming in presently, but Anne, who always liked his news, pressed him to stay, with a tender motion of her lip as it played on the verge of a solicitous smile without quite lapsing into one—her habitual manner when speaking.

Loveday took off his low-crowned hat and advanced as if he had thought that this might be the end of it. He had not come about pigs or fowls this time, he said. Seeing their door open as he passed he determined to step in and tell them some news. "You have been looking out, like the rest o' us, no doubt, Mrs. Garland, at the mampus of soldiers that have come upon the down?"

She said pleasantly that they had both been doing so.

"Well," said Loveday, "one of the horse regiments is the ——th Dragoons, my son John's regiment, you know."

The announcement, though it interested them, did not create such an effect as the father of John had seemed to anticipate; but Anne, who liked to say pleasant things, replied, "The dragoons looked nicer than the foot or the German cavalry either."

"They are a handsome body of men," said the miller in a disinterested voice. "Faith! I didn't know they were coming, though it may be in the newspaper all the time. But old Derriman keeps it so long that we never know things till they be in everybody's mouth."

This Derriman was a squireen living near, who was chiefly distinguished in the present warlike time by having a nephew in the yeomanry.

"We were told that the yeomanry went along the turnpike road yesterday," said Anne, following out this track of thought; "and they say that they were a pretty sight, and quite soldierly."

"Ah! well—they be not regulars," said miller Loveday, keeping back harsher criticism as uncalled for. But inflamed by the arrival of the dragoons, which had been the exciting cause of his call, his mind would not go to the yeomanry. "John has not been home these five years," he said.

"And what rank does he hold now?" said the widow.

"He's trumpet-major, ma'am; and a good musician." The miller, who was a good father, went on to explain that John had seen some service, too. He had enlisted when the regiment was lying at Weymouth, more than eleven years before, which put his father out of temper with him, as he had wished him to follow on at the mill. But as the lad had enlisted seriously, and without a drop of drink in him, and as he had often said that he would be a soldier, the miller had thought that he would let Jack take his chance in the profession of his choice.

Loveday had two sons, and the second was now brought into the conversation by a remark of Anne's that neither of them seemed to care for the miller's business.

"No," said Loveday in a less buoyant tone. "Robert, you see, must needs go to sea." Loveday was more hopeful, however, in expressing his belief that Bob would not stick to a sailor's life as John had stuck to soldiering. Bob was of an easier nature and more his mother's child than John; and being the youngest they used to call him the 'nestle-ripe,' meaning the last in the nest. All which information, and more, Loveday gave with the greatest readiness, as he had given it several times before.

"He is much younger than his brother?" said Mrs. Garland.

About four years, the miller told her. His soldier son was two-and-thirty, and Bob was twenty-eight. When Bob returned from his present voyage he was to be persuaded to stay and assist as grinder in the mill, and go to sea no more.

"A sailor-miller!" said Anne.

"Oh, he knows as much about mill business as I do," said Loveday; "he was intended for it you know, like John. But, souls!" he continued, "I am before my story. I'm come more particularly to ask you, ma'am, and you Anne my honey, if you will join me and a few friends at a leetle homely supper that I shall gie to please the chap now he's come? I can do no less than have a bit of a randy, as the saying is, now that he's here safe and sound."

Mrs. Garland wanted to catch her daughter's eye; she was in some doubt about her answer. But Anne's eye was not to be caught, for she hated hints, nods, and calculations of any kind in matters which should be regulated by impulse; and the matron replied, "If so be 'tis possible, we'll be there. You will tell us the day?"

He would, as soon as he had seen his son John. "'Twill be rather untidy, you know, owing to my having no womenfolks in the house; and my man David is a poor dunder-headed feller for getting up a feast. Poor chap; his sight is bad, that's true, and he's very good at making the beds, and oiling the legs of the chairs, and other furniture, or I should have got rid of him years ago."

"You should have a woman to attend to the house, Loveday," said the widow.

"Yes, I should, but— Well, 'tis a fine day, neighbors. Hark! I fancy I hear the noise of pots and pans up at the camp, or my ears deceive me. Poor fellows they must be hungry! Good-day t'ye, ma'am." And the miller went away.

All that afternoon Overcombe continued in a ferment of interest in the military investment which brought the excitement of an invasion without the strife. There were great discussions on the merits and appearance of the soldiery. The event opened up to the girls unbounded possibilities of adoring and being adored, and to the young men an embarrassment of dashing acquaintances which quite superseded falling in love. Thirteen of these lads incontinently stated within the space of a quarter of an hour that there was nothing in the world like going for a soldier. The young women stated little, but perhaps thought the more; though, in justice, they glanced around toward the encampment from the corners of their blue and brown eyes in the most demure and modest manner that could be desired.

In the evening the village was lively with soldiers' wives; a tree full of starlings would not have rivaled the chatter that was going on. These ladies were very brilliantly dressed, with more regard for color than for material. Purple, red, and blue bonnets were numerous, with bunches of cock's feathers; and one had on an Arcadian hat of green sarcenet, turned up in front to show her cap underneath. It had once belonged to an officer's lady, and was not so very much stained, except where the occasional storms of rain, incidental to a military life, had caused the green to run and stagnate in curious watermarks like peninsulas and islands. Some of the prettiest of these butterfly wives had been fortunate enough to get lodgings in the cottages, and were thus spared the necessity of living in huts and tents on the down. Those who had not been so fortunate were not rendered more amiable by the success of their sisters in arms, and called them other names than those they had been christened, to which the latter pleasantly retorted, bringing forth rejoinders of the knock-me-down class of speech; till the end of these alternative remarks seemed dependent upon the close of the day.

One of these new arrivals, who had a rosy nose and a slight thickness of voice which, as Anne said, she couldn't help, poor thing, seemed to have seen so much of the world, and to have been in so many campaigns, that Anne would have liked to take her into their own house, so as to acquire some of that practical knowledge of the history of England which the lady possessed, and which could not be got from books. But the narrowness

of Mrs. Garland's rooms absolutely forbade this, and the houseless treasury of experience was obliged to look for quarters elsewhere.

That night Anne retired early to bed. The events of the day, cheerful as they were in themselves, had been unusual enough to give her a slight headache. Before getting into bed she went to the window, and drew aside the white curtains that hung across it. The moon was shining, though not as yet into the valley, but just peeping above the ridge of the down, where the white cones of the encampment were softly touched by its light. The quarter-guard and foremost tents showed themselves prominently; but the body of the camp, the officers' tents, kitchens, canteen, and appurtenances in the rear were blotted out by the ground, because of its height above her. She could discern the forms of one or two sentries moving to and fro across the disk of the moon at intervals. She could hear the frequent shuffling and tossing of the horses tied to the pickets; and in the other direction the miles-long voice of the sea, whispering a louder note at those points of its length where hampered in its ebb and flow by some jutting promontory or group of bowlders. Louder sounds suddenly broke this approach to silence; they came from the camp of the dragoons, were taken up farther to the right by the camp of the Hanoverians, and further on still by the body of infantry. It was tattoo. Feeling no desire to sleep, she listened yet longer, looked at Charles's Wain swinging over the church tower, and the moon ascending higher and higher over the right hand streets of tents, where, instead of parade and bustle, there was nothing going on but snores and dreams, the tired soldiers lying by this time under their proper canvases, radiating like spokes from the pole of each tent.

At last Anne gave up thinking, and retired like the rest. The night wore on, and, except the occasional "All's well" of the sentries, no voice was heard in the camp or in the village below.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH THE MILL BECOMES AN IMPORTANT CENTER OF OPERATIONS.

The next morning Miss Garland awoke with an impression that something more than usual was going on, and she recognized, as soon as she could clearly reason, that the proceedings, whatever they might be, lay not far away from her bedroom window. The sounds were chiefly those of the pickaxes and shovels. Anne got up, and, lifting the corner of the curtain about an inch, peeped out.

A number of soldiers were busily engaged in making a zigzag path down the incline from the camp to the river-head at the back of the house, and judging from the quantity of work already got through they must have begun very early. Squads of men were working at several equidistant points in the proposed pathway, and by the time that Anne had dressed herself each section of the length had been connected with those above and below it, so that a continuous and easy track was formed from the crest of the down to the bottom of the steep. The down rested on a bed of solid chalk, and the surface exposed by the road-makers formed a white ribbon, serpentining from top to bottom.

Then the relays of working soldiers all disappeared; and, not long after, a troop of dragoons in watering order rode forward at the top and began to wind down the new path. They came lower and closer, and at last were immediately beneath her window, gathering themselves up on the space by the mill-pond. A number of the horses entered it at the shallow part, drinking, and splashing and tossing about. Perhaps as many as thirty, half of them with riders on their backs, were in the water at one time; the thirsty animals drank, stamped, flounced, and drank again, letting the clear, cool water dripple luxuriously from their mouths. Miller Loveday was looking on from over his garden hedge, and many admiring villagers were gathered around.

Gazing up higher Anne saw other troops descending by the new road from the camp, those which had already been to the pond making room for these by withdrawing along the village lane and returning to the top by a circuitous route.

Suddenly the miller exclaimed, as in fulfillment of expectation, "Ah, John, my boy; good morning!" And the reply of "Morning, father," came from a well-mounted soldier near him, who did not, however, form one of the watering party. Anne could not see his face very clearly, but she had no doubt that this was John Loveday. There were tones in the voice which reminded her of old times, those of her very infancy, when Johnny Loveday had been top boy in the village school, and had wanted to learn painting of her father. The deeps and shallows of the mill-pond being better known to him than to any other man in the camp, he had apparently come down on that account, and was cautioning some of the horsemen against riding too far in toward the mill-head.

Since her childhood and his enlistment Anne had seen him only once, and then but casually, when he was home on a short furlough. His figure was not much changed from what it had been; but the many sunrises and sunsets which had passed since that day, developing her from a comparative child to womanhood, had abstracted some of his angularities, reddened his skin, and given him a foreign look. It was interesting to see what years of training and service had done for this man. Few would have supposed that the white and the blue coats of miller and soldier covered the forms of father and son.

Before the last troop of dragoons rode off they were welcomed in a body by Miller Loveday, who still stood in his outer garden, this being a plot lying below the mill-tail, and stretching to the water side. It was just the time of year when cherries are ripe, and hang in clusters under their dark leaves. While the troopers loitered on their horses, and chatted to the miller across the stream, he gathered bunches of the fruit, and held them up over the garden hedge for the acceptance of anybody who would have them; whereupon the soldiers rode into the water to where it had washed holes in the garden bank, and, reining their horses there, caught the cherries in their forage-caps, or received bunches of them on the ends of their switches, with the dignified laugh that became martial men when stooping to slightly boyish amusement. It was a cheerful, careless, unpremeditated half-hour, which returned like the scent of a flower to the memories of some of those who enjoyed it, even at a distance of many years after, when they lay wounded and weak in foreign lands.

Then dragoons and horses wheeled off as the others had done; and troops of the German Legion next came down and entered in panoramic procession the space below Anne's eyes, as if on purpose to gratify her. These were notable by their mustaches, and queues wound tightly with brown ribbon to the level of their broad shoulder-blades. They were charmed as the others had been by the head and neck of Miss Garland in the little square window overlooking the scene of operations, and saluted her with devoted foreign civility, and in such overwhelming numbers that the modest girl suddenly withdrew herself into the room, and had a private blush between the chest of drawers and the washing-stand.

When she came down-stairs her mother said, "I have been thinking what I ought to wear to Miller Loveday's to-night."

"To Miller Loveday's?" said Anne.

"Yes. The party is to-night. He has been in here this morning to tell me that he has seen his son, and they have fixed this evening."

"Do you think we ought to go, mother?" said Anne slowly, and looking at the smaller features of the window-flowers.

"Why not?" said Mrs. Garland.

"He will only have men there except ourselves, will he? And shall we be right to go alone among 'em?"

Anne had not recovered from the ardent gaze of the gallant York Hussars, whose voices reached her even now in converse with Loveday as the others had been.

"La, Anne, how proud you are!" said Widow Garland. "Why, isn't he our nearest neighbor and our landlord? and don't he always fetch our fagots from wood, and keep us in vegetables for next to nothing?"

"That's true," said Anne.

"Well, we can't be distant with the man. And if the enemy land next autumn, as everybody says they will, we shall have quite to depend upon the miller's wagon and horses."

"Yes, so he is," said Anne. "And you had better go, mother; and I'll stay at home. They will be all men; and I don't like going."

Mrs. Garland reflected. "Well, if you don't want to go, I don't," she said. "Perhaps as you are grown up it would be better to stay at home this time. Your father was a professional man, certainly." Having spoken as a mother, she sighed as a woman.

"Why do you sigh, mother?"

"You are so prim and stiff about everything."

"Very well—we'll go."

"O no—I am not so sure that we ought. I did not promise, and there will be no trouble in keeping away."

Anne apparently did not feel certain of her own opinion, and, instead of supporting

or contradicting, looked thoughtfully down, and abstractedly brought her hands together on her bosom, till her fingers met tip to tip.

As the day advanced the young woman and her mother became aware that great preparations were in progress in the miller's wing of the house. The partitioning between the Lovedays and the Garlands was not very thorough, consisting in many cases of a simple screwing up of the doors in the dividing walls; and thus when the mill began any new performances they proclaimed themselves at once in the more private dwelling. The smell of Miller Loveday's pipe came down Mrs. Garland's chimney of an evening with the greatest regularity. Every time that he poked his fire they knew from the vehemence or deliberateness of the blows the precise state of his mind; and when he wound his clock on Sunday nights the whir of that monitor reminded the widow to wind hers. This transit of noises was most perfect where Loveday's lobby adjoined Mrs. Garland's pantry; and Anne, who was occupied for some time in the latter apartment, enjoyed the privilege of hearing the visitors arrive, and of catching stray sounds and words without the connecting phrases that made them entertaining, to judge from the laughter they evoked. The arrivals passed through the house, and went into the garden, where they had tea in a large summer-house, an occasional blink of bright color through the foliage being all that was visible of the assembly from Mrs. Garland's windows. When it grew dusk, they all could be heard coming in-doors, to finish the evening in the parlor.

Then there was an intensified continuation of the above-mentioned signs of enjoyment, talkings and haw-haws, running up-stairs and running down, a slamming of doors and a clinking of cups and glasses; till the proudest adjoining tenant without friends on his own side of the partition might have been tempted to wish for entrance to that merry dwelling, if only to know the cause of these fluctuations of hilarity, and to see if the guests were really so very numerous, and the observations so amusing as they seemed.

The stagnation of life on the Garland side of the party wall began to have a very gloomy effect by the contrast. When, about half-past nine o'clock, one of these tantalizing bursts of gayety had resounded for a longer time than usual Anne said, "I believe, mother, that you are wishing you had gone."

"I own to feeling that it would have been very cheerful if we had joined in," said Mrs. Garland, in a hankering tone. "I was rather too nice in listening to you and not going. The parson never calls upon us, except in his spiritual capacity. Old Derriman is hardly genteel; and there's nobody left to speak to. Lonely people must accept what company they can get."

"Or do without it altogether."

"That's not natural, Anne; and I am surprised to hear a young woman like you say such a thing. Nature will not be stifled in that way . . ." (Song and powerful chorus heard through partition). "I declare the room on the other side of the wall seems quite a paradise compared with this."

"Mother, you are quite a girl," said Anne in slightly superior accents. "Go in and join them by all means."

"Oh, no—not now," said her mother, resignedly shaking her head, "It is too late now. We ought to have taken advantage of the invitation. They would look hard at me as a poor mortal who had no real business there, and the miller would say, with his broad smile, 'Ah, you be obliged to come round.'"

While the sociable and unaspiring Mrs. Garland continued thus to pass the evening in two places, her body in her own house and her mind in the miller's, somebody knocked at the door, and directly after the elder Loveday himself was admitted to the room. He was dressed in an intervening suit between sober and gay, which he used for such occasions as the present, and his blue coat, yellow and red waistcoat with the three lower buttons unfastened, steel-buckled shoes and speckled stockings, became him very well in Mrs. Martha Garland's eyes.

"Your servant, ma'am," said the miller, adopting as a matter of propriety the raised standard of politeness required by his higher costume. "Now, begging your pardon, I can't hae this. 'Tis unnatural that you two ladies should be biding here and we under the same roof making merry without ye. Your husband, poor man—lovely picters that 'a would make to be sure!—would have been in wi' us long ago if he had been in your place. I can take no nay from ye, upon my honor. You and maidy Anne must come in, if it be on'y for half an hour. John and his friends have got passes till twelve o'clock to-night, and saving a few of our own village folk, the lowest visitor present is a very genteel German corporal. If you should hae any misgivings on the score of respectability, ma'am, we'll pack off the underbred ones into the back kitchen."

Widow Garland and Anne looked yes at each other after this appeal.

"We'll follow you in a few minutes," said the elder, smiling; and she rose with Anne to go up-stairs.

"No, I'll wait for ye," said the miller doggedly, "or perhaps you'll alter your mind again."

While the mother and daughter were up-stairs dressing, and saying laughingly to each other, "Well, we *must* go now," as if they hadn't wished to go five minutes before, other steps were heard in the passage; and the miller cried from below, "Your pardon, Mrs. Widow Garland; but my son John has come to help fetch ye. Shall I ask him in till ye be ready?"

"Certainly, I shall be down in a minute," screamed Anne's mother in a slanting voice toward the staircase.

When she descended, the outline of the trumpet-major appeared half-way down the passage. "This is John," said the miller simply. "John, you can mind Mrs. Martha Garland very well?"

"Very well indeed," said the dragoon, coming in a little further. "I should have called to see her last time, but I was only home a week. How is your little girl, ma'am?"

Mrs. Garland said Anne was quite well. "She is grown up now. She will be down in a moment."

There was a slight noise of military heels without the door, at which the trumpet-major went and put his head outside, and said "All right—coming in a minute," when a voice in the darkness replied, "No hurry."

"More friends?" said Mrs. Garland.

"O, it is only Buck and Jones come to fetch me," said the soldier. "Shall I ask 'em in a minute, Mrs. Garland, ma'am?"

"Oh, yes," said the lady; and the two interesting forms of Trumpeter Buck and Saddler-sergeant Jones then came forward in the most friendly manner, whereupon other steps were heard without, and it was discovered that Sergeant-master-tailor Brett and Farrier-extraordinary Johnson were outside, having come to fetch Messrs. Buck and Jones, as Buck and Jones had come to fetch the trumpet-major.

As there seemed a possibility of Mrs. Garland's small passage being choked up with human figures personally unknown to her, she was relieved to hear Anne coming down-stairs.

"Here's my little girl," said Mrs. Garland, and the trumpet-major looked with a sort of awe upon the muslin apparition who came forward, and stood quite dumb before her. Anne recognized him as the trooper she had seen from her window, and welcomed him kindly. There was something in his honest face which made her feel instantly at home with him.

At this frankness of manner, Loveday—who was not a ladies' man—blushed, and made some alteration in his bodily posture, began a sentence which had no end, and showed quite a boy's embarrassment. Recovering himself he politely offered his arm, which Anne took with a very pretty grace. He conducted her through his comrades, who glued themselves perpendicularly to the wall to let her pass, and then they went out of the door, her mother following with the miller, and supported by the body of troopers, the latter walking with the usual cavalry gait, as if their thighs were rather too long for them. Thus they crossed the threshold of the mill-house and up the passage, the paving of which was worn into a gutter by the ebb and flow of feet that had been going on there ever since Tudor times.

CHAPTER IV.

WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE MILLER'S LITTLE ENTERTAINMENT.

WHEN the group entered the presence of the company a lull in the conversation was caused by the sight of new visitors, and (of course) by the charm of Anne's appearance; until the old men who had daughters of their own, perceiving that she was only a half-formed girl, resumed their tales and toss-potting with unconcern.

Miller Loveday had fraternized with half the soldiers in the camp since their arrival, and the effect of this upon his party was striking—both chromatically and otherwise. Those among the guests who first attracted the eye were the sergeants and sergeant-majors of Loveday's regiment, fine hearty men who sat facing the candles, entirely resigned to physical comfort. Then there were other non-commissioned officers, a German, two

Hungarians, and a Swede, from the Foreign Hussars—young men with a look of sadness on their faces, as if they did not much like serving so far from home. All of them spoke English fairly well. Old age was represented by Simon Burden the pensioner, and the shady side of fifty by Corporal Tullidge, his friend and neighbor, who was hard of hearing, and sat with his hat on over a red cotton handkerchief that was wound several times around his head. These two veterans were employed as watchers at the neighboring beacon, which had lately been erected by the Lord-Lieutenant for firing whenever the descent on the coast should be made. They lived in a little hut on the hill close by the heap of fagots; but to-night they had found deputies to watch in their stead.

On a lower plane of experience and qualifications came neighbor James Comfort, of the Volunteers, a soldier by courtesy, but a blacksmith by rights; William Tremlett of the Local Militia, and Anthony Cripplestraw of the Fencibles. The two latter men of war were dressed merely as villagers, and looked upon the regulars from an humble position in the background. The remainder of the party was made up of a neighboring dairy-man or two, and their wives, invited by the miller, as Anne was glad to see, that she and her mother should not be the only women there.

The elder Loveday apologized in a whisper to Mrs. Garland for the presence of the inferior villagers. "But as they are learning to be brave defenders of their home and country, ma'am, as fast as they can master the drill, and have worked for me off and on these many years, I've asked 'em in, and thought you'd excuse it?"

"Certainly, Miller Loveday," said the widow.

"And the same of old Burden and Tullidge. They have served well and long in the foot, and even now have a hard time of it up at the beacon in wet weather. So after giving them a meal in the kitchen I just asked 'em in to hear the singing. They faithfully promise that as soon as ever the gun-boats appear in view, and they have fired the beacon, to run down here first, in case we shouldn't see it. 'Tis worth while to be friendly with 'em, you see, though their tempers be queer."

"Quite worth while, miller," said she.

Anne was rather embarrassed by the presence of the regular military in such force, and at first confined her words to the dairymen's wives she was acquainted with, and to the two old soldiers of the parish.

"Why didn't ye speak to me afore, chiel?" said one of these, Corporal Tullidge, the elderly man with the hat, while she was talking to old Simon Burden. "I met ye in the lane yesterday," he added, reproachfully, "but ye didn't notice me at all."

"I am very sorry for it," she said; but being afraid to shout in such a company the effect of her remark upon the corporal was as if she had not spoken at all.

"You were coming along with yer head full of some high notions or other, no doubt," continued the uncompromising corporal in the same loud voice. "Ah, 'tis the young bucks that get all the notice nowadays, and old folks are quite forgot. I can mind well enough how young Bob Loveday used to lie in wait for ye."

Anne blushed deeply, and stopped his too excursive discourse by hastily saying that she always respected old folks like him. The corporal thought she inquired why he always kept his hat on, and answered that it was because his head was injured at Valenciennes, in July, ninety-three. We were trying to bomb down the tower, and a piece of the shell struck me. I was no more nor less than a dead man for two days. If it hadn't 'a been for that and my smashed arm I should have come home none the worse for my five-and-twenty years' service."

"You have got a silver plate let into yer head, haven't ye, corpel," said Anthony Cripplestraw, who had drawn near. "I have heard that the way they mortised yer skull was a beautiful piece of workmanship. Perhaps the young woman would like to see the place. 'Tis a curious sight, Mis'ess Anne; you don't see such a wownd every day."

"No, thank you," said Anne, hurriedly, dreading, as did all the young people of Overcombe, the spectacle of the corporal uncovered. He had never been seen in public without the hat and the handkerchief, since his return in ninety-four; and strange stories were told of the ghastliness of his appearance bare-headed, a little boy who had accidentally beheld him going to bed in that state having been nearly frightened into fits.

"Well, if the young woman don't want to see yer head, maybe she'd like to hear yer arm?" continued Cripplestraw, earnest to please her.

"Hey?" said the corporal.

"Your arm hurt too?" cried Anne.

"Knocked to a pummy at the same time as my head," said Tullidge, dispassionately.

"Rattle yer arm, corpel, and show her," said Cripplestraw.

"Yes, sure," said the corporal, raising the limb slowly, as if the glory of exhibition had lost some of its novelty, though he was willing to oblige. Twisting it mercilessly about with his right hand he produced a crunching among the bones at every motion, Cripplestraw seeming to derive great satisfaction from the ghastly sound.

"How very shocking!" said Anne, painfully anxious for him to leave off.

"Oh, it don't hurt him, bless ye. Do it, corpel?" said Cripplestraw.

"Not a bit," said the corporal, still working his arm with great energy.

"There's no life in the bones at all. No life in 'em, I tell her, corpel!"

"None at all."

"They be as loose as a bag of ninepins," explained Cripplestraw in continuation. "You can feel 'em quite plain, Mis'ess Anne. If ye would like to, he'll undo his sleeve in a minute, to oblige ye?"

"Oh, no, no, please not! I quite understand," said the young woman.

"Do she want to hear or see any more, or don't she?" the corporal inquired, with a sense that his time was getting wasted.

Anne explained that she did not, and managed to escape from the corner.

(To be continued.)

A Dedication.

BY ROSE GERANIUM.

THE greeting of a heart to hearts!
No grosser impulse prompts the hours—
A generous feeling beats and starts,
And throbs along this gift of flowers.

WHO toils for praise or petty worth
With weary hands and scalding sweat,
Must bear across a loveless earth
The galling yoke of sad regret.

A MOTIVE sweeter thrills along
This humble deed, and dares aspire
To nobler servitude and song—
The MASTER pays His daily hire!

The New Year.

(See Engraving, page 2.)

BY MRS. C. S. NOURSE.

FRESH from the hand of God comes to the world another year. What a gift is here, rich with hopes, with possibilities that thrill the soul, with wealth of new-born human thought, and that eternally new beauty, the exquisite development of thought which is divine.

Amid the stillness of seeming death, when the waters are locked in icy fetters and the leafless trees laden only with snow wreaths, the year is born. How many hearts thrill to the thought with bounding hope, how many with only a deeper despair. To the prosperous and the happy it is a promise of gladness, to the busy and anxious, a token of hope; but to the disappointed and discouraged, only the lengthening out of a weary journey. But sad as life may be, there are few that do not welcome the New Year with at least a chastened joy, standing upon its threshold as at the entrance of the temple where they await the voice of the oracle. What may not lie beyond? At least it brings the solemn necessity of living, and those high, noble possibilities which lie hidden within that brief word, life; for to live is a more heroic thing than to die. The daily heroism which meets the inevitable ills of human existence without fear and without bravado, that calmly and quietly fights all evil, and defends the right at whatever cost, makes it a sublime epic, whose stately measures reverberate through all the ages.

A year is "rounded absolute," a perfect conception of beauty, a poem having now the gentle softness of a pastoral, and now the dignity and splendor of a *te deum.*

Watch the gradual unfolding of the power, hidden but mighty, which with quiet and imperceptible touches works the annual miracle of transforming the wilderness into an Eden, and evoking, as with an enchanter's wand, new forms of growth and loveliness, which steal out of the brown mold and intoxicate every sense with delight.

What a creation is a snow-drop, pushing up, with adventurous will, its green stem into the still frosty air, swinging slowly open its

white bells, as though to wake the sleeping flowers with peals of fairy music; and now, keeping close to the earth, to avoid the rough winds of March, comes the arbutus, with a delicate flush of color, showing that the earth's life is quickening into warmth, while its subtle sweetness seems only a prophecy of the rich odors of the violet—odors which betray where the delicate flowers are hiding—that we should hardly find without such guiding fragrance.

What perfection of development, what gradual accession of richness and color, from pearly white through dainty rose to richest purple. These are truly the typical flowers, but they lead a host of fairy followers that wear their livery and form a part of the great Floral train. Every month brings its brilliant cohort, each individual of which has a separate charm of color, grace, and fragrance. April's purple violets give place to the hawthorn's billowy bloom, and June bestows upon her queenly blossom the charms of all the rest. Then succeeds the magnificent and stately sacerdotal flower, high priestess of the sun, the tall, white lily of July. August claims the Cleopatra of the royal race, the voluptuous water-lily, with her supine loveliness, befitting the warm, lapping waters and the soft caressing dalliance of the indolent air. September, as though all the summer sunshine had been garnered in

"—one blazing sheaf,"

gives us the golden-rod, whose wealth of bloom dazzles the eye but offers no fragrance.

Summer, the glorious summer, has no more gifts to give, for we part with the odors of the flowers with the coming of the frost; but frost, like adversity, has sweet uses. The gay and elfin procession has passed by, but for October is reserved the crowning festal of color. To what can we compare it? To the rainbow? To the flame? It leaps and plays amid the foliage; it deepens into shadow and flashes into light, it sparkles in the sunshine and glows in the shade, it seems omnipresent, the air is opalescent and shimmers with a thousand hues; the forest builds up towering heights of gold and jasper, of topaz and of amethyst, like the walls of the New Jerusalem in the apostle's vision, and, like a vision, it melts away and leaves only the gray mists and hard implacable skies of bleak November. Woods are bare, and only the oak keeps remnants of its summer splendor, poor, withered, bronzed leaves, more melancholy than naked desolation, as a wretched and weary life is more sad than quiet and peaceful death. But nature is loth to part with all her tints, and the coral berry, living scarlet, gleams out brightly amid the dull browns and grays, and gives an air of cheerfulness even to autumn's latest month. Truly the landscape needs some cheer.

December comes, and the circle is completed, and only those who know the secrets of her soul can now call nature fair; but those who know her best, looking on her still with loving eyes, believe though she lies still and cold beneath her snowy pall, that "she is not dead, but sleepeth," and that the music of the Christmas bells steals to her heart with gladness that shall one day burst again into a song of deathless joy.

The Red Plaid.

[*From the German of Rudolph Lindau.*]

BY AUBER FORESTIER, AUTHOR OF "ECHOES FROM MISTLAND."

THE picture sent me from Edinburgh, toward the close of the year, evidently designed as a Christmas gift, although without a line of accompanying writing, not even the sender's name, was a master-work. Several competent art-critics who saw it at the time unhesitatingly united with me in pronouncing this verdict. It was quite a large picture, and presented to view a wild, storm-lashed sea, with short, crisp, gray-green waves. In the background was visible a long, narrow, bleak sandy island, on which were erected several tall, black, wooden sea-marks, gallows-like in aspect. These dark objects cast their mysterious shadows against a gloomy, threatening, tempestuous, sky. To the right, the clouds had been torn asunder, and a shimmering gleam of light, such as one might fancy to enshroud some ghostly apparition, broke through their tattered fragments and fell over a portion of the foreground. Within the space thus dimly illuminated was a little overturned boat, whose prow bore the initals H. H. Directly in front of the boat, half engulfed in the waves, was a large, red, Scottish plaid. In the sheen of the spectral light it glistened like blood. So soon as I had taken a good look at the picture, I knew who had painted it, and impatiently awaited the coming of a letter of explanation.

I.

At school he was known as "Hushed Heinrich;" at the university we named him "Holy Hieronymus," not because this designation was justified by any especial sanctity of demeanor, but simply because these words began with the initials of his baptismal and family name, and because he was one of those people whom even slight acquaintances are apt to address by any other than their true name. This was Heinrich Hansen. When he first grew up he studied theology, later medicine, and finally hung both on a nail to devote himself with enthusiasm to painting. When, in the course of time, he discovered that he never would accomplish much of importance in his chosen art—he was already in the thirties—he very sorrowfully, although with perfect resignation, admitted to both himself and his friends, that he was too old to again "shift the saddle."

"I might have been a schoolmaster," he said to me once when I met him after a separation of several years. "I should have loved the naughty lads as well as the good ones, and I fancy they would not have thought so very badly of me, and would have learned something of me. There are so many things not generally taught at school and that are so useful in life, that I feel sure I could have helped them understand. But now it is too late. I never had much book knowledge. The small stock I once had is gone. I could no more pass a teacher's examination than I could go limping to the top of Mont Blanc. No, nothing remains for me but to plod with my painting. Much that is good I shall not create; but, on the other hand, my brush will not be responsible for much that is poor. Each year I turn out one or two little marines for the Exposition, a certain number of mediocre portraits, a few mediocre landscapes. I have tried my hand at sea, land, and the human face, and with the help of a dealer, who has found a market for my wares at some place unknown to me, I can earn from 1,500 to 2,000 *thalers* a year. That is enough for me to live on; more I have no reason to expect. As a schoolmaster I would scarcely have earned so much, but I would have earned it better. What a pity I did not step into the modest place I might perhaps have filled well. Mistaken vocation! It is not the only mistake I have made—but it can do no good to waste words over it."

Raising his slender, delicately molded hand, he musingly stroked back the long, fair hair that had fallen over his brow, and it struck me at once that he regretted having spoken so much of himself.

"Pray forgive me," he said presently, "for having assailed your ears with my little concerns. In my delight at seeing you again I have allowed myself to run on with really unwarrantable verbosity."

In former days he had taken—why I am sure I cannot tell—a great fancy to me. I was rather younger than he, and he loved to impart to me the most sage and often highly-impracticable counsels. When he felt especially kindly toward me he showed it by calling me "My son." One day I laughingly took him to task for this form of address, and said to him, "Holy Hieronymus, how have I deserved to be called your son?"

"Try to endure it," he replied. "You shall not regret doing so. I have made you my heir."

"Well, really," I exclaimed; "pray what have you to leave me? Your classical commentaries, your sketches, or your school-books?"

"Many things," he answered gravely; "many beautiful, moral, instructive histories—among others my own."

"Tell them to me at once," I entreated.

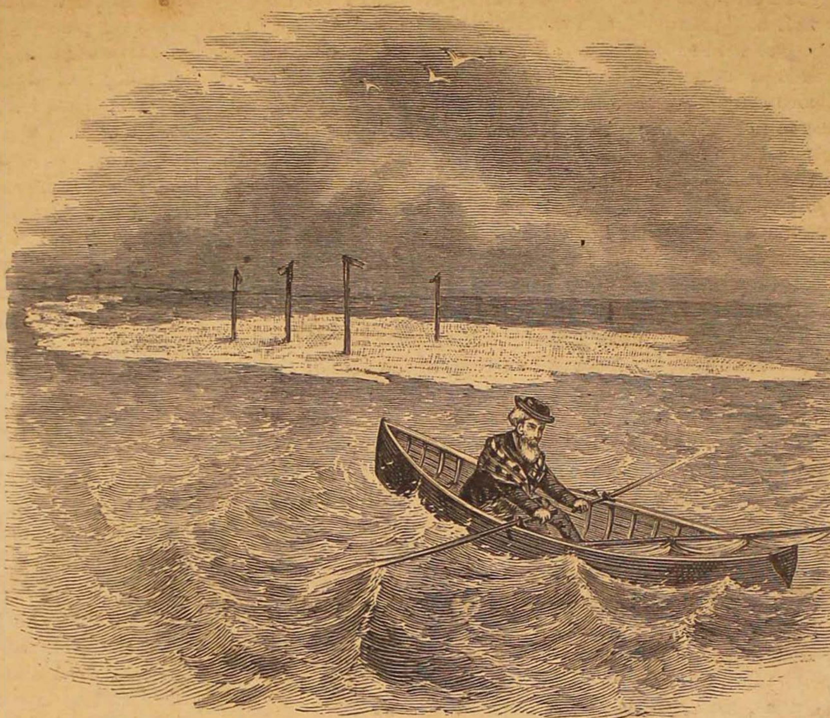
"What a bad son," he replied, "to want to wrest from your poor father his property while he is still living. Have patience! You shall enter into possession all in good time."

"Why you are only five or six years older than I," I exclaimed, not in the least satisfied. "What reason is there to suppose I will outlive you? Come, give me my patrimony at once."

I must here state that I had then for a long time cherished a desire to know something about my friend's history. From time to time, when he chanced to be in a particularly confidential mood, Hansen had made allusions which led me to conclude that his life was not a satisfying one; but to a thoroughly confidential disclosure of his affairs he had never been moved. He was a reserved man, and

seldom spoke of himself. Yet he was not one to keep up any show of mystery. He never hesitated to answer direct questions concerning his outward movements; but what dwelt within the innermost recesses of his heart, what had made him quiet beyond his years, and indifferent to the hopes and pleasures of his age, he never alluded to.

After our school days, "Holy Hieronymus" and I were parted many years, with only this one reunion; but our relations were not wholly broken. At regular, albeit long, intervals, he wrote to me. I usually received his letters about New-Year's time; yet they gave me but little insight into his life. In the last letter I had received from him, he wrote:



EVERY DAY TWO HOURS BEFORE LOW TIDE HE WENT TO THE ISLAND.

"It is now about time to let you know that I am still alive, and doing as well as circumstances will permit. My last picture I sold better than the one before the last, and can state with some satisfaction that I am making steady, if slow, progress in painting, so that I may reasonably hope that toward the end of my life—by the time I am one hundred and fifty years old—to accomplish something worth while.

"I design passing the rest of the winter in Scotland, in view of making studies there for future paintings. As I have been told, the days up there at this season are extraordinarily short, so I shall not have much time for work, and can with all due propriety take a good rest. In the spring I expect to return to Germany; meanwhile your letters will find me at the *poste restante*, Edinburgh.

"Write and tell me how you are, and never forget to write your address clearly and legibly. It might perchance come to pass that I should place you sooner than you expect into possession of your patrimony. Pray do not view this as a foreshadowing of my approaching death. I have never felt better than at the present moment, and have no intention of passing from earth. But there might arise events which would make it seem desirable to me to see you enter into possession of what I have to make over to you during my lifetime. This deviation from my original design has its foundation in various forms not unimportant; circumstances of which you will attain timely knowledge should I execute my last will and testament—as far as you are concerned—before my natural death. And now, fare thee well!

H. H."

During an entire year I had heard nothing further from Hansen. Then I received at Christmas time the picture with the overturned boat, the red Scottish plaid, and, several days later, a voluminous manuscript. The latter I shall give in the following chapters *verbatim:*

II.

Romances, novels, tales and dreams should, in order to be complete, end with the death of the main characters introduced. For as the day should not be praised before evening has come, neither should a life-history be presented for contemplation until the grave has finished it. The life of every human being, however monotonous it may appear, is an unbroken chain of more or less startling surprises. Indeed, the intuitive premonition of these unavoidable surprises is that which beyond all else, if not alone, distinguishes human beings from dumb animals. These live in the present, an example of easy-going philosophy to which man can never hope to attain. Every reasoning human being, on the other hand, however apathetic he may be, must live more or less in the future. All striving and labor, the sowing as well as the reaping, are nothing but manifestations of human care for the morrow. In brief moments of wild joy, intoxicating pleasure, or agonized pain, the animal nature of man may momentarily gain the upper-hand, and deaden for a few seconds thoughts of the future; but these moments of swiftly-fleeting excitement that rob the human creature of his senses, and make him act like one demented, are not what constitute and characterize human life. What distinguishes it from the animal is the possibility, the want, the necessity of the care for—or even more universally the thought of—the future. *Carpe diem*, improve time, is a wise saying. The most superficial reflection suffices to show that it has its origin in the knowledge of the uncertainty of the morrow.

In consideration of this fact I have never laid aside a book, which had interested me in the career of other people, with satisfaction, or, more strictly speaking, with comfort, where it has not led its heroes and heroines to the grave—to their final resting-place. Now the majority of romances, novels, and dramas which I have seen or read in my life, seldom comprehend more than the first, or the first and the second acts of the one or more human lives for which the author has claimed my interest. The finale, which death alone can give, is nearly always wanting. Therefore I am apt to be left by a tragedy better satisfied, with my moral hunger more fully appeased, than by an ordinary drama whose last act ends in uniting the lovers who have sought each other in vain through the preceding scenes. What possible comfort can that afford me? Do I learn whether the lovely sweetheart who has just fallen overjoyed into her lover's arms, does not, before the end of the year, die at the birth of her first child and leave the husband, over whose happiness I am called upon to rejoice, desolate and forsaken? When I have seen Egmont, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Hamlet, King Lear, I go calmly and contentedly home. My friends Egmont, Romeo, Juliet, Othello, Hamlet, Ophelia, Lear, Cordelia, are at rest. Nothing more can harm them; fate has lost its power over them. But what finally became of Valentine, David Copperfield, Minna von Barnhelm, or whatever may chance to be the names of the heroes and heroines whose destinies caused me so much anxiety? Were they happy to the end? For they must all now be dead, or, if living, must have attained a petrified old age. When I parted from them twenty or more years ago all seemed to be well with them. Since then I have heard nothing further from them. Has the ill-luck which seemed determined to pursue them before their respective marriages never assailed them since? I really know as good as nothing of the people whom I had learned to love, since the end of their lives, ay, even the most important parts thereof, are concealed from me. For the fault I have to find with the majority of the romances and novels I have read is that they usually terminate at precisely the point where the lives of human beings first become interesting.

I by no means would maintain that my view is the correct one. When I consider that the best writers have in their works taken an opposite tendency, I am inclined to admit that I am, in all probability, in error, and that a story can never end better than with a betrothal announcement or a marriage jubilee; this is certainly what people call "satisfactory." But no one can see further than his eyes carry him,

and let me strain mine as much as I can, it is impossible for me to discover that a human life usually ceases to be interesting so soon as its possessor enters into the bonds of matrimony. According to my experience and opinion, most people only begin really to live after marriage, or at least after the usual age for marriage. I must confess that the dreams or high-flying plans of a young jurist who has not yet passed his assessor's examination, of a second lieutenant, or youthful clerk, however poetical, touching, and beautiful they may chance to be, only affect me as a melancholy reminder of my own youth; and that my interest in the sentimental enthusiasm, or the philosophic view of life, of a young countess or governess of from eighteen to twenty years of age, is a very faint one. The life of the immense majority of people is, up to the age where the author leaves them, without real conflicts; besides, it is up to that time in most cases an untrue, or, more mildly speaking, an affected one. Genuine simplicity is far rarer in young people than true honesty in those of maturer years. Youth is apt to lightly toy with truth. Not that at this period more intentional lies are told than later—no; but, undoubtedly, there are then played a greater number of wholly groundless comedies than in riper years. Do we not encounter hundreds of vigorous, blooming young folks, who, Heaven knows wherefore, feign to lie in the last stages of consumption? and is it not rare to find such unconscious comedians among men and women of forty years of age? A description, strictly adhering to truth, of a life up to its twenty-fifth year would be little more than the representation of a comedy. The actors languish, declaim, gesticulate, think of ending their own lives, of taking poison, of stabbing themselves; but rarely do any of them do themselves actual harm. The earnest battle of life is not fought by the youth, but by the well-armed, strong man. The former, let him strive to his utmost, great though may be the energy he brings into play, is, in comparison with the latter, as a raw recruit on the parade-ground compared with the trained soldier. He deals in blank cartridges, and takes good heed to avoid all real danger. Sham fighting this.

Be this as it may, before proceeding further I must state that my life did not really commence until after I had become a mature man, or at least after I had reached an age which entitled me to be so considered, and that the woman whose life history became interwoven with my own had been married several years when I made her acquaintance. She was twenty-five years old, looked even older, and was thus altogether beyond the period of interest to most authors. Her name I should prefer to withhold from you, although you will never meet her in life, and will briefly designate her as Johanna, because this name, next to my own, is my favorite among women's names.

She was *petite*, of perfect symmetry of form, and her hands, which she was in the habit of fixedly regarding much as she might have done those of another person, were the most beautiful I have ever seen. Every one who had the least acquaintance with Johanna knew that she was entirely free from petty coquetries, and that this habit of contemplating her hands was by no means designed to attract to them the attention of others. She was extraordinarily beautiful, and she knew it well; but she bore her beauty as a prince bears his name — not as a parvenu displays his wealth.

I can see her now as she appeared the first time I saw her in the house of an old friend, where I was a frequent visitor, and where I at that time went daily, as I was engaged in painting the portrait of his wife.

Johanna sat at the extreme end of the drawing-room as I entered, at the side of the lady of the house, and I had a strong impression that I was interrupting a confidential conversation between the two. Frau von M. introduced me as a friend of long years' standing. Johanna raised her head with an almost imperceptible movement, but I felt her eyes closely scrutinize me for a few moments, as though she had already heard much of me and was curious to know me personally. Then she said in a soft, low voice, that fell as harmoniously on the ear as beautiful music, that she wished me good luck with the work upon which I was engaged, and which promised to be a successful one. I accepted these words as a mere piece of formal politeness, and bowed, without making any reply. Frau von M. asked me, thereupon, whether it would disturb me if her friend remained present at the sitting; and, when I had answered in the negative, we all three betook ourselves into another room, which, for the time being, had been transformed into a studio.

Johanna had taken her place in an arm-chair, which she had allowed me to indicate to her, near the easel. The conversation between her and Frau von M. had come to a standstill. I painted on industriously, and Johanna, left to herself, appeared absorbed in profound meditation. I could watch her without being seen by Frau von M. Her beauty was really startling. I gave myself up to its contemplation as to that of some artistic master-work shown to me for the first time. She sat slightly bent forward, her two elbows resting on the arms of the chair, the palms of her hands pressed together as though in prayer, and her firm, round chin resting on the two forefingers. Her delicate, exquisitely molded rosy lips were tightly compressed, her great calm, dark eyes were riveted upon the floor. The form of her head, the manner in which the thick black hair was arranged about brow and temples, was enough to enrapture any artist. It was a head without blemish. After a long while, during which I might have imagined her to have fallen asleep, so motionless had she remained, she slowly let her hands fall into her lap, and then it was that I first noticed her habit of fixing her eyes on them. Involuntarily I thought of Lady Macbeth, "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." But, no; this dainty young matron could not possibly have any guilt on her conscience. And now I perceived how thoroughly listless was the gaze bent on the hands. In all probability she was thinking of anything in the world rather than of their exquisite form. Now she turned to me. Her movements were so slow that I had time to avert my gaze before she could observe me. She arose, approached the easel, and remained standing behind me. I painted on for half a minute; when I then looked over at Frau von M. I saw that she had fallen fast asleep. I turned around with a smile.

Johanna had observed before I did that her friend was asleep, and said softly, "You have tired your model too much. Let the poor thing sleep. And, pray, give her kindly greetings from me when she awakens. I must go now. *Auf Wiedersehen!*"

She gave me a friendly little nod; and softly glided from the room. I worked on for a while longer, until finally Frau von M. awakened. She jested over her exhaustion, playfully reproved me for not having awakened her, and then asked how Johanna had pleased me. I replied that I thought her excessively beautiful, and inquired how it was I had never seen her before, since she seemed to be such an intimate friend of the house.

"Yes, that she is," replied Frau von M.; "but since her marriage, about six years ago she has lived abroad, and has only returned within a few days to N. She was brought up here in the house of an old aunt, now deceased, with whom I was on very friendly terms. She came to Germany when quite a child, and speaks German, as you have heard, like a native. She is Italian by birth. Her husband is a Frenchman. He is quite wealthy, I believe. I have never known him very well, but I judge him to be kind-hearted and a man of honor. He adores his wife, and she submits to it. She is a singular creature. Even as a young girl she was reserved, and I never could make up my mind whether she really loves her husband or not. He had scarcely seen her half a dozen times when he proposed for her; and she accepted his hand without hesitation, but also without the slightest enthusiasm. She was quite young at the time, wholly inexperienced, brought up by her aunt as in a convent. Time hung heavily on her hands, she longed to get away from here, to visit great cities, to see Paris. I do not know whether she found there what she sought, but I doubt it. She has certainly grown even quieter than she used to be, and it seems to me that this young, rich, and beautiful woman has something positively sorrowful about her. Were not you also struck with this?"

I replied that I could scarcely express an opinion on the subject, as I had not known Frau von O. (for brief I will designate her husband as Baron Gaston O.) before her marriage, and had seen her to-day for the first time and only for a little while.

My communicative friend had to be content with this; but she told me that thenceforth she would talk to me a great deal about Johanna and her husband, as she placed a high estimate on my opinion and desired to know what I thought of the young couple. "Baron O. has rented a villa in the suburbs of the city," she concluded, "and will remain here during the entire summer. You will often see him. I wish you would make an especial point of observing both him and his wife, and then give me your opinion. I take a lively

interest in Johanna and all that concerns her."

On the way home, and, indeed for a while after I had reached my room, my thoughts kept reverting to the new acquaintance I had made. Then I busied myself with other things. At that time Johanna really did not interest me very much more than other women I had known.

I had in my youth fallen in love at least half a dozen times, with all the seriousness with which young people are apt to fall in love; but I was always very shy, and since my eighteenth or nineteenth year had never made a formal declaration. I used to hover about the object of my adoration, very quiet, very much embarrassed, happy if a flower was accepted from my hands and a friendly look cast me in return. The jewels of my secret treasure-stores were at that time withered flowers, cotillon-favors, and a few quite innocent little notes, which I was in the habit of contemplating with an enthusiasm I now believe to have been rather imaginary than real. The love of very young people is in most cases but a weak, marrowless parody on grand heroic poems which have been read or heard without having been fully understood. When I now look back in memory on the young girls whom once I loved, or fancied I loved, and who not infrequently threw me into a state of most blissful excitement by certain silent indications of a readiness to respond to my affection, I wonder what could possibly have attracted me to them. Every one of them, so far as I am aware, succeeded in finding a husband. How it happened that I did not marry, too, or at least become engaged, I cannot tell. Predestination!

Shortly after this period I devoted myself, for a certain time at all events, with my whole soul, to painting. The childlike undaunted courage with which I at that time worked, appears to me now truly touching. This did not last long, however, before I was awakened to a full knowledge of my powerlessness. I made it clear to myself that I could never climb to the highest pinnacle of art, and I became thoroughly penetrated with the wisdom of the fable of the unhappy frog who strove to puff himself out to the ox's size. At first I grew utterly disheartened and dejected. Gradually, however, my spirit became filled with a calm, discreet philosophy, and I succeeded in learning to demand of myself no more than I could perform, and in being tolerably well contented with the best that I could produce.

"When the rose itself adorns,
It graceth, too, the garden,"

said I to myself. My old sentimentality, and the tender susceptibility connected therewith, was now at an end. The recognition of my own insignificance made me see others, too, as they really were. Young girls were henceforth no longer divine beings in my eyes. Those whom I knew ceased suddenly to appear interesting to me. Most of them belonged to the class of those who can be made "so happy" with a new, well-fitting garment, or "so perfectly wretched" if it rains and they cannot wear it. Whatever heartily rejoices or saddens people—that is, whatever deeply moves them—is the measure of their character. The silly creatures whom I had a short time before adored did not become exactly distasteful to me, but I recognized them as inferior beings, and should have deemed myself degraded did I longer crouch in the dust at their feet.

It became clear to me that what men really expect in the woman whom they would choose for a wife has no possible connection with moonshine raving, and that this raving, this sentimental languishing, is only excusable in inexperienced youth; that, in men of riper years, it is simply hypocrisy or absurdity. I thought a great deal, at that time, of making a right sensible marriage; but the gaze with which I now viewed women was scarcely calculated to discover one among them to whom I could intrust the peace—I used the word instead of my former favorite, happiness—of my life.

I had been in this frame of mind quite a number of years when I met Johanna. I was considered eccentric. My friends called me a woman-hater. I was, I believe, neither the one nor the other. I was a very sensible, industrious man, who worked early and late for his daily bread, who had renounced all high-flying and ambitious plans, and who considered women human beings of the opposite sex—nothing more, nothing less.

I now suppose that, before my arrival, Frau von M. had been speaking to her friend Johanna about me. The good lady had known me from my childhood up. My father had great confidence in her, and, after the death of my early-lost mother, she had felt it her duty to bestow on me a mother's care. I am one of those people whom others, I can scarcely tell why, are very apt to feel it their duty to care for. At least a hundred times it has been prescribed for me what and when I should eat and drink; at what hours I should go to bed or rise in the morning. It is, however, a curious fact that the people who have undertaken to care for my health have not infrequently been delicate or positively sickly themselves, while I never had occasion to complain of my health, and, as far as I can recollect, never have complained. I remember a man who was prematurely bald reading me a lecture upon how I was to care for my hair (for which he envied me, he said), in order to prevent it from falling out. Quite as justifiable were the hygienic prescriptions of others. I gratefully accepted all advice, and acted as seemed best to myself. I was rather gratified when Frau von M. mourned, as she constantly did, over my showing no desire to marry, because she thought I would make such an excellent husband. I told her that she was probably right, but I took no steps to follow her well-meant counsels, and finally she became weary of giving them, and set me down as a confirmed bachelor.

She was a very free-spoken lady, was Frau von M., and I have had many proofs, in my life, that she cherished for me a real motherly affection. She looked upon me as an inexhaustible source of all wisdom and learning; and of all the people I have ever known she had the highest opinion of my artistic capabilities. I can well imagine that she had drawn for Johanna a very flattering picture of me.

Several days elapsed before I saw the beautiful young stranger again. I had almost ceased thinking of her, and was quite agreeably surprised when I saw her again in the same place where I had first seen her—in Frau von M.'s drawing-room. She held out her hand, asked how I was progressing with my work, said she would like, if I had no objections, to be present at the sitting, and then followed Frau von M. and me to the studio. There she took her place in the arm-chair which I had drawn up ready for her, and shortly thereupon sank into the position in which I had already admired her, and which seemed the most natural to her.

I observed her attentively, and with artistic satisfaction, and suddenly, without pausing to reflect, I said:

"*Gnädige Frau*, may I ask of you a favor?"

She turned slowly, and looked questioningly at me.

"Will you remain for a few moments in the position you are now in," I continued, "and allow me to sketch you?"

"Yes, do, Johanna," interposed Frau von M.

Frau von O. consented, and I sketched, in a comparatively short time, a right-successful likeness of her. Frau von M. was delighted and overwhelmed me with praise. Johanna closely scrutinized the little work, and only said:

"The sketch pleases me. Will you permit me to show it to the baron?"

I would gladly have made her a present of it, but I dreaded appearing officious, so contented myself with saying that the sketch was at her disposal.

The next morning I received a visit in my studio from Baron von O. He was a tall, distinguished-looking man, of about thirty years of age, with good-natured and rather good-looking, yet meaningless face. He brought me back the sketch I had made the preceding day, and said that it had greatly pleased him, and that he came now to ask me to paint a life-size picture of his wife.

"I have already two portraits of the baroness," said he, "by X. and Y." (he named two celebrated artists), "but neither of them, well as they are painted, satisfy either the baroness or myself. You have been most happy in catching the expression of her countenance. The position, too, is admirable. I recognize the baroness, as she really is, far better in your hasty sketch than in the carefully finished pictures I already possess of her. I shall be, indeed, well satisfied if you succeed as well in the painting as in the sketch you made yesterday."

We easily came to an understanding over the business part of the question. I was thoroughly unconstrained, feeling only the pleasurable excitement experienced by every young artist—and, as an artist, I was still very young—upon receiving a profitable commission which will afford, for a time, agreeable occupation.

(*To be continued.*)

Talks with Girls.

BY JENNIE JUNE.

IMAGINATION.

IMAGINATION is to thought what sunlight is to the earth—it warms, illuminates, and finally transfigures it, until it becomes something quite different, and infinitely beyond what we had looked at only a moment before. Take a dull gray sky, a dull gray earth, a bit of green woods in shadow—nothing attractive, nothing from which you could not turn away with a sort of shudder; yet let the sunlight through, and see what sudden glory is spread over the landscape; how earth, and trees, and sky become transformed with an instant and wonderful life, with thousands of colors, and a myriad forms of expression.

We never can be said to have seen a natural object if we have never seen it in the sunlight—for through this transforming medium it becomes alive, while without it, everything is cold and dead.

Imagination is the sunlight of the mind, and without doubt the most beautiful attribute of human nature. It is the philosopher's stone, which turns whatever it touches into gold. It is a magician's wand, a wave or two of which causes all that is dull, and stupid, and commonplace to disappear—and purity, goodness, strength, nobility, and beauty to take their place.

There are people who go through the world, who live their lives, and never see, and never know more than is to be seen or known from the surface life about them; there are persons so intensely indifferent, or so wrapped up in themselves, that they do not see, or know even so much. Nothing interests them but their own little round of eating, dressing, being amused, or sleeping, and whether they are in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, makes very little difference; they see nothing, and remember nothing but what affects them personally, and spend one-half their time complaining of what they have got, and the other half in wishing for what they have not got.

But how different with the happy individual gifted with a true and vivid imagination. He sees the same objects, or rather he is surrounded by the same objects as his friend who sees them superficially, and the other who hardly sees them at all; but to him they possess a world of meaning. All the past that lives in the works executed by the men of other days, and even in the voiceless rocks and trees; all the present in the ceaseless activities of to-day, and all the future to the sight which can picture what will be from what has been and is.

We cannot over-estimate the gift of imagination, but we can pervert it, we can put it to a wrong and baleful use. This, however, does not discredit the divine nature of the possession. There is no gift of nature that cannot be perverted or put to bad uses. We might as well suppress natural appetite because people will eat what is hurtful to them, or put out the sense of sight because it may be and is used wickedly and unlawfully.

There has been a sort of rage for realism of late years, and a great deal of nonsense written about realism in art, and realism in science, philosophy, and religion. But realism, in the ordinary sense, simply means materialism and mechanism; the obvious forms and facts with which we have to deal, but which are not at all so *real* as much that we do not see. An expressed thought, for instance, is more real than bricks or mortar, and will live longer, yet we cannot see it at all. It is without form, yet lives forever, and has the power of perpetual re-creation, as well as immortality.

Realism is good when it means laying broad and truthful foundations, and does not hinder the outgrowth—the development of a soul from the body—when it discovers through outward and visible forms the interior nature, the light, and sweetness, and beauty within. All mere outward realism is crude, and poor, and unsatisfactory, whether it is found within or without the walls of palace or cottage. Brick and stone, whatever we can touch, taste, and handle, is capable of yielding only just so much of enjoyment, and if we can get out of these things only what comes to us through the meanest of our senses, our pleasure in them is of the most limited and short-lived kind.

Realism in art, as in literature, is almost a misnomer, for where can imagination find a home if not in the work of the intellect? And what is the art of the mere copyist worth, or those who deal only with credited and accepted facts? It is more or less skillful industry, but it is not art.

It is quite time that a sharp distinction was made between what is and what is not true art and true literature; and imagination supplies the test to be applied to work in either department, if we would discover its true quality. Put the same object before an artisan and an artist and see what each will make of it. It is a rude interior, a common room, with nothing in it but a couple of poor chairs and a table. You are not surprised when the artisan says, "I can do nothing with this"—your mere mechanic always wants a great deal to work with, and the poorer he is, the more fuss will he make about his tools and material.

But give the same opportunity to an artist, and we shall see what he will do with it; the bare outline only is there, his imagination fills in the picture. It is the room of a poor woman, a widow, who sews for her livelihood, and the story of the hard, cruel work is told by the dark, heavy stuff which has been thrown upon a chair by the table during her temporary absence, and partly fallen to the floor; a thimble and a spool of thread stand on the table, the hand of a little clock points to the hour of six, and a faint streak of sunlight, the last of the dying day, strikes through the narrow casement to the bare boards of the tenement, lighting up with a red glory the pot of scarlet geranium which stands on the window-sill. A small cupboard door is half open, showing the crust which is all that is left of the loaf of bread. There is no fire, all is poor as utter poverty can make it; but the introduction of a few accessories makes it none the less real to the observer, but more so, because they are natural and what might have been under the circumstances, while without the aid of a human figure they serve not only the purposes of art but to tell the whole of a sad human story. Light is required to exhibit darkness, and the broad effect of contrast is obtained from the one poor little flower-pot and the single streak of departing sunlight that falls upon it.

In this instance accessories are brought in by the artist to fill out the picture which his imagination conceived. But now take another. It is out of doors in summer-time, a bit of tall grass, cats'-tails, and thistle-down stirred by a gentle wind; the mechanician can perhaps draw accurately, and he gives the forms of what he sees correctly enough; but how stiff and wooden they are! there is no motion, no soul in them. The outlines are there, and are exact as to measurement, and even his spaces are filled in with precision, but you feel no interest in his work; it is simply mechanical—a dead copy, not the living thing.

Look, however, at the same thing as reproduced by one who can put feeling, imagination, into his subject. In this instance he adds nothing, he introduces no accessories, the bit of waving grass on a summer day is enough in itself; but it is not wooden grass, it is alive, you can feel the soft breath of the wind that stirs it; you can see the blue sky above, though it is not there, and feel pulsating through every fiber of your body all the sweet influences of hundreds of summer afternoons when the grass waved, the flowers bloomed, and the birds sang.

The same principle may and should be applied to literature. That is not literature which does not stimulate and inspire thought and feeling outside and beyond the mere record of events and the personality of the writer. Imagination must lend its wings to fact, or it becomes but the prosiest kind of detail—bread and cheese without the kisses, that is, without the idealization which renders bread and cheese not only palatable but delicious.

Not that it is right or necessary to idealize or "romance" over every plain fact of every-day life; on the contrary, it would be highly absurd—it would be Don Quixote and his windmills in the kitchen, in the workshop, in the office, in the counting-room, and ledger. Life is very crowded, just now, with hard facts, and we have to deal with them, as a general rule, in too fixed and arbitrary a way to admit of a halo, which, moreover, would seem to be entirely out of place. But what I am contending for is this: that we should not put things out of place, or call them by wrong names; and the most of us are constantly doing both.

Literature and art are great fields of human endeavor—among the highest and noblest that exist in the realm of mind; but they require something more than the child's capacity for imitation—the artisan's, for doing faithfully

what he has been taught and what he has seen others do. There must be the *creative* faculty—that which puts into it meaning, life, power, motion, expression—or it does not belong to the real world of literature, the actual world of art.

News-gatherers, news-retailers, have their use. In old times the news was cried by a man who went through the streets ringing a bell, and, at certain distances, screaming out at the top of his voice the information he had to convey. Now the newspaper does the same thing for us in a much more quiet and exhaustive fashion. But the newspaper is not literature—it is as opposite from it as the poles—for literature deals with and is informed by the imagination, while the newspaper deals in facts, and the less colored they are by opinions and sentiments, the better the newspaper is. Journalists are not necessarily, therefore, literary men or literary women, but a literary man or woman may be a journalist, and *vice versa.*

One of the drawbacks to the exercise of the imagination nowadays is the fact that everything is so completely done, and finished for us. I doubt if the art of the dramatist was not greater when he relied less upon accessories in the way of fine setting and furniture, and of the actor when he was less incumbered with the magnificence, and even the correctness of his surroundings and his clothes. Our interest in a thing is almost always to be measured by the degree in which imagination is exercised in regard to it; when it is done, and there is no more to be said, and nothing to be learned in regard to it, why, interest in a great measure ceases, we are then only held to it by the ties of habit and association.

Children exemplify this fact in the actual exhaustion of life before they are old enough to know what it means, or taste one of its pleasures. They have had it all in embryo: dress, balls, flirting, dainty food, even travel, pictures, books, and society. They know, or think they know, all there is of it, and are tired to death of it. Nothing is left for the imagination to feed upon, and so they are defrauded of their birthright; they have eaten their fruit green, and in large quantity, and will not look at it ripe.

Toys, too, have lost their attraction since they became so plentiful and so perfect in their imitation of the human that nothing is left to imagine or to strive for. The fine lady doll may make a nursery-maid of her little mistress, but she does not tax her inventive powers; the full-sized yacht may excite the boy's pride of ownership, but stimulates no faculties, excites no such worthy ambition as the little canoe which the youngsters used to cut out with their jack-knives, and finish with the aid of a piece of cotton cloth begged from "mother," and sister's needle and thread.

It is imagination which endows all our most cherished projects and ideas with its white wings, which touches the distant isle with the glow of enchantment, which surrounds whatever is to be with a mirage of hope, and enables us to endure much that would be otherwise intolerable, either by veiling it to our eyes or helping us to look over it into a brighter future.

Little Miss Spinner;

OR, THE STORY OF A VOICE.

BY SARAH BRIDGES STEBBINS.

SHE was only a little old maid, living in two rooms of a small house in an obscure street of a great city. She owned the small house, and earned a precarious livelihood by lodging respectable single men, mostly elderly clerks with seedy coats and sad faces, who took their meals at a neighboring restaurant, and paid the smallest possible price for their apartments, which were kept in the most careful and exact order by Miss Spinner herself. They rarely saw her, however, except when admitted to her private parlor in order to settle their dues; then they beheld a graceful, quiet figure, always attired in a neat, plainly-made gray dress, with white lawn folded Quaker fashion over the shoulders, and a simple cap almost hiding the hair which lay in light gray waves over a pale face which might once have been beautiful, but which was now only calm and sweet. She was kind and patient, often generous, as her limited means would admit, to those under her roof, but lived very retired, scarcely ever going out of her own rooms except to perform her household duties. And this was all that they who resided with her, or any one else, ever knew about her. She was small in stature but her gentle dignity commanded respect, while something peculiarly sympathetic in her manner, as of one who had learned tenderness through sorrow of her own, endeared her to those she knew and gave a sense of home to the humble habitation where a few world-weary, hard-working men had for years been growing old.

It was very rarely that any of Miss Spinner's rooms were vacant, but this summer one of her lodgers had suddenly quitted the dreary routine of clerkship for far-off California, where the last of his family, a married sister who had reared a large family there, waited to welcome him. So that in the lower pane of Miss Spinner's window there had appeared the notice of "A room to let," written in a strangely upright and forcible hand, which no one who had not noticed the signature of her bills would have imagined to be inscribed by so small and delicate a woman.

The vacancy of this chamber made considerable difference in a limited income, and the elderly lodgers, who knew this, began to look with anxious interest, on their return each day at dusk, at the particular window-pane that contained the modest advertisement. But the summer weeks slipped slowly by, and there had not been a single applicant. Autumn, however, brought the outside world back to their city homes, and a fresh bill, written more firmly than ever, indicated that little Miss Spinner had renewed hope; and one morning, when she was up-stairs putting the finishing touches of her fastidious care upon the room occupied by the sedate bank clerk, her single servant ushered into her private parlor on the first floor "a party on business."

Miss Spinner slid swiftly down and slipped into her adjoining chamber to adjust with her usual precision the spotless lawn cap and shawl; and in the meanwhile the stranger had looked curiously around him. He was a man accustomed to take things in at a glance, and in a moment he had noticed incongruities that perhaps had never struck the sense of duller visitors. Everything was scrupulously clean, but the carpet was threadbare, and the stiff horse-hair sofa and chairs appeared as if they had never been sat on, while a tarnished gilt ottoman, covered with faded damask, seemed to be the only seat worn by use; an old-fashioned center-table covered with a green cloth held some ancient annuals, with the former glory of their bindings dimmed by age, and a dainty work-basket, and in a recess beside the mantel-piece was hung a full-length picture, before which always dropped the heavy folds of black serge. This alone had excited the curiosity of the lodgers, though no profane hand had ever dared to lift the somber veil; while few perhaps but this *stranger* had ever noticed how odd a thing it was that about one-fourth of the small parlor should be filled by a never-opened but magnificent grand piano.

When Miss Spinner opened the communicating door she was instantly aware of what mystics would term "a new atmosphere;" a sense of something breezy and free seemed to expand the walls with the large presence of this stranger who let his keen gray eyes drop so softly upon her; and when he spoke, his clear resonant voice, so different from the measured monotonous tones of her usual visitors, stirred and quickened her heart's blood as with a leaping up of old memories.

"I have brought, madam," he said, "an introductory letter from our mutual friend, Mr. Larkins, in California. I mentioned to him that I was coming East for a few months on business, and asked him to tell me of a quiet comfortable place where I could just run in and out as I pleased; and he said I might hunt the whole city over and not find as good a home as with Miss Spinner."

The color rose in the little woman's face as she took the proffered missive, indited by the former lodger who had exchanged the seclusion of her third-story front for the noisy society of an extensive troop of nieces and nephews on the Pacific coast, for she felt uncommonly conscious of that waiting and penetrating gaze; but when she looked up she only said, "I will be happy to show you my vacant room, sir."

At the sound of her voice a puzzled expression flashed over his face; he made a sudden step forward. "Did I ever meet you before, madam?" he abruptly asked.

Miss Spinner retreated, rather startled by this unexpected address, which caused her momentarily to suppose that Mr. Larkins's friend was a lunatic. She answered quietly but decidedly, "No, sir; I am sure you have not;" for she was very certain that no such big, free-and-easy, dominant sort of person had crossed her life for many and many a year.

"Ah," he said, "your voice is a peculiar

one, it seemed like an echo from the past. I pray you to pardon an old fellow who perhaps grows fanciful in returning to the scenes of boyhood."

Miss Spinner bowed; she had turned very pale; she was about to tell him that she thought her apartment would hardly suit him, when he anticipated her by remarking in an off-hand way that she scarcely knew how to meet adequately, "Never mind about showing me the room; I know it will do anyhow. Larkins told me how nice everything was here, and I know it will be a pleasure to live in the house with you. I'll bring my traps around from the hotel right off."

Miss Spinner was half-embarrassed, half-indignant; she was not used to have her house and herself taken possession of, as it were, in this lordly style without any positive consent of her own; but the man was at once so boyish and so masterful, seemed to shed about him an influence so different from that to which she had been accustomed, that the femininity in her could not help succumbing almost submissively.

The Californian laughed to himself as he stored his luggage away in his limited accommodations. "Rather different quarters," he said half aloud, "from the boundless space of the prairie, with the sky for a ceiling! But that woman's voice! What a curious thing that this little old maid should have a voice like that! It will be like living with a ghost!" And as he let the lid of a trunk fall he looked dreamily out of the window upon the quiet street. "Is it fate or fortune," he murmured, "that my heartstrings should again vibrate at a tone; and of all places in the world I should have here dropped anchor at an echo?"

An evening or two after his arrival Miss Spinner sat on her gilt ottoman at her usual needlework; for this solitary woman, who had never had a child of her own, spent all her spare time at the dainty embroidery of baby-clothes furnished her by a neighboring store; and many a time as she fastened the delicate sprays, and set in the lace-like wheels, her eyes filled with yearning tears over the unknown little ones, to whom, with her beautiful work, went out the blessing of a tender soul. But to-night she was thinking of her new lodger; thinking of the strong figure that in going up and down seemed to fill her narrow staircase; of the firm footstep that she had heard pacing overhead; of the earnest, clear eyes; of the cordial, hearty way of speaking; thinking how different he was from the subdued spiritless sort of men she had known so many years, that this manliness was quite a revelation in her uneventful life; but why, oh why, had there come back to her with this stranger's presence such a stirring up of dead memories, such a restlessness and longing for times that were gone, and that she had believed she had put away from her forever? Miss Spinner sighed, and as she did so the sigh was almost smothered in an exclamation of surprise occasioned by a vigorous knock at her door, and when she opened it, lo! there was the subject of her thoughts filling up the whole entrance.

"Will you do me the kindness to let me come in and see you awhile?" he asked deferentially, hat in hand; "there is not much that is interesting to be got out of those dry old chaps up-stairs; and I scarcely know a soul in the town; all the friends I used to have here seem to have died off, and as I don't care for haunts of dissipation, my time hangs heavy, and I know there is nothing in the world would be so pleasant as to talk with a good woman like you." It was all said so simply, and with such a manifest assurance of his welcome, that Miss Spinner did not know how to reject this unprecedented intrusion upon her private place and time. Still she was a little stiff in her demeanor as she hesitatingly answered:

"If I can be of any service—— "

"Why, of course, my dear madam," he interrupted, as if inferring consent, and walking straight in, "of course you can; there are no end of people and things I want to ask you about, and I expect you can give me plenty of information." So, almost bewildered at this unexpected event, Miss Spinner found herself seated again on her ottoman, with the new lodger perched on one of her horse-hair chairs directly in front of her, and to her utter astonishment pouring out, in answer to his quick questions, many a bit of forgotten gossip, and explanations about people of the past, and changes in the city, that she had scarcely leisure to wonder how he knew of.

"He had been away," he told her at last, "for twenty-five years; had wandered over many a sea and land; had spent a long time upon the western prairies, and among the mountains and mines; had made and lost money, made and lost it over and over in streaks of fortune or enduring hardship; had been engaged in such gigantic ventures that the account of them almost took the little woman's breath away; that he could never get away from it all till now to fulfill a purpose very near his heart."

He did not tell her what this was, but he talked to her of the great free places of the earth; of the wonderful growing cities of the West, of the boundless plains, the limitless sea, of all the pleasures of a roving, wandering career, till her breast heaved and her eyes danced, and in the repressed excitement of eager listening Miss Spinner looked like an entirely different person from the little old maid whose only business in life was to let lodgings. The almost unconscious recognition of the impression he had made startled him into a long reverie before he slept, but scarcely had he gone out than the woman he had left with her cheeks all aflame and her lips trembling, wrung her hands hard together as she walked rapidly to and fro, crying out in a very agony of remembrance—"Oh, the old life! the old life! my days of beauty! my youth! my youth! my dead hopes!" For she, too, in times of yore, had seen the sea and the plains; had gone from city to city; had known the fascination of new places; had rested in the shadows of mountains, and had set up her tents among unfamiliar people. But it was all so long ago! Why, oh why, should that buried past be thus lifted once more out of the grave of silence and secrecy? And it was late also that night before little Miss Spinner closed her eyes.

But having once got in, it seemed impossible to keep her importunate lodger out of her parlor afterward; evening after evening found him at her door, always with some ready excuse, and in spite of all her remonstrances he would bring in great heaps of superb flowers, baskets of costly fruit, bits of rare china, the latest books, and countless small luxuries, whose reception troubled Miss Spinner greatly. Over and over she declined his generosity, and explained her view of the impropriety of acceptance; he had always a fluent reply for her scruples, or some unanswerable argument for each presentation; he declared that he did not understand conventionalities; was quite impervious to evidences of pride or disapprobation; said it was all selfishness in him; that it was the greatest pleasure he had, and that it would be unkind in her to deprive him of it who had not a bit of womankind in the world belonging to him to give anything to; begged her to let him gratify himself in his own way—well, then, would she just keep these things he liked to pick up, for him—and so he half-pleaded, half-insisted, till the humble room grew rich in color and fragrance. The elderly lodgers began to whisper slyly to each other that the Californian was courting their landlady; and there came such a change in Miss Spinner herself that even the unobservant bank clerk quite wondered at it; the lines seemed to have fallen out of her face; a lovely pink flush dyed the soft cheeks; her eyes shone like stars, and the light footfall gained the spring of a dance step.

But one evening the light went suddenly out of her eye, the color faded from her cheek, her work dropped from her hands, and her breath stopped as, in the course of one of their cheerful conversations, her companion quietly, and, it seemed almost casually, asked:

"Miss Spinner, did you ever see Clara Serle?"

He was astonished at the momentary effect of his question, astonished and excited, so that he immediately cried out:

"Ah! you have known her, have you not?"

The trembling fingers lifted the airy muslin, and drew the needle slowly through the waiting stitch, over which her head was instantly bent, as she answered coldly:

"I knew her, she was my dearest friend."

"I was sure of it," he said as he drew closer to her; "I felt the instant I saw you that some day I should hear something of her from you."

Miss Spinner dropped her work again, and clasped her hands tightly together, gazing straight at him with a wondering look:

"What was Clara Serle to you?" she asked authoritatively, but as one in amazement.

"Ah, madam, it is a queer story," he replied; "no one but a woman would believe it. It is so little to tell, and yet it has been so much, so much to me. Will you permit me to relate it to you, since you only, who have known her, would apprehend it?"

"Yes, tell me about it," she answered decisively; "whatever touches Clara Serle must interest me."

"Ah, madam," he exclaimed, "you must remember how beautiful she was! The very incarnation of lightness and joy! Was there ever any other creature so full of youth and happiness? The heart of mirth was in her ringing laugh; gladness emanated from every graceful movement; merriment twinkled in her buoyant footfalls; care fled before her sunny glances; her accents drove away weariness and worldliness; she made an Elysium of the stage!"

Miss Spinner's face glowed, but her tones were low as she replied, "She was a very happy young girl; she loved her art and lived in it."

"I was little more than a boy," he continued, "when I first saw her; a hard-working, half-paid fellow, whose only delight for months was to spend every evening and all my evenings in the pit of that theater watching this incomparable being. She never knew anything about it, you know; never saw or noticed me, but there was not a turn of her head, or a tone of her voice, that I did not know by heart. Her voice! Did you ever hear anything so rare, so refined, so filled with the ecstasy, the inspiration of joyousness as her wonderful voice? And the pathos in it too; how it touched the hidden springs of tears! Ah, Miss Spinner, many and many a time I have listened to all the birds of nature, the chorus of the forest, the matchless melody of the nightingale, the heavenly morning carol of the lark, and in each and all I have recognized her bewitching tones. She sang like the birds, without effort, and as if it was the natural lifting up of her free spirit, and she looked like some wild, bright tropical bird, half upon the wing, and just lighting on the earth to warble out those marvelous cadences!"

Miss Spinner's breath came quick and fast; her hands were pressed tight upon her bosom as if to keep in there some rising power; he was so full of his theme that her unusual agitation at his words seemed only to belong to it. "You loved her," he said, "you who are a woman! Think what she was to me, a lonely lad starved of all other beauty! I, too, loved her, madam; loved her, but without hope, as I might have loved a star or an angel, for I knew that for me, poor, homely, and awkward, there was nothing but to look on and worship her afar off; for you know that the rich and the high surrounded her, that she was welcome in great houses, and that genius and fame had made her the fashion!"

Miss Spinner smiled a little bitterly, but her eyes were soft with floating tears as she spoke:

"Fashion and fame passed her by at last; but her heart was never in them; all that she really cared for was her music; so that when all these other things left it, her supreme hurt was not there!"

"Ah," he exclaimed, "I can believe that the soul of song in her kept her unspoiled and unspotted by the world! Will you tell me something more of her, madam, for when I was forced to go so far away to struggle for existence, she was in the height of her glory, and her image and voice have lived in my heart ever since."

Miss Spinner shrank back, a half sob rose from her throat; in a moment she looked pale and worn again:

"My friend," she said slowly, "think of her so still; keep her in your memory young, and fresh, and happy, always; a lost illusion is a sad thing in one's life."

But he rose up, and stood over her. "What has become of her?" he asked in his masterful way.

Miss Spinner did not answer. She only kept her eyes cast down, and pressed her hands closer to her breast:

"I have a right to know," he said; "for I loved her, and the sound of her voice in my soul kept me from many an evil. All I could ever hear of her was that she disappeared suddenly from the stage here, and no inquiries I could make discovered anything more! Where is she?"

Miss Spinner looked up at him piteously; her lips quivered, and her lashes were wet. "Clara Serle died long ago!" was all she said.

He sat down, covered his eyes with his hand, and was silent a moment. "I never thought of her as dead," he uttered at last. "See here, madam, I came East on purpose to find her. All these years I have heard her voice in my dreams; and when I had leisure to rest I felt that, though I searched the world over, I must hear it again. I said to myself, 'Perhaps she is married and the mother of children beautiful as herself—or perhaps she is somewhere in foreign lands a great prima donna still—no matter what she is, or where, I shall find her, and ask her to sing once more for me with her living voice those magical strains that entranced my youth!' And you tell me she is dead! Ah! how could Death touch one who was the very ideal of life! Dear madam," he pleaded, "tell me her story; for I know nought of her except that she was Clara Serle, a vision of beauty with a voice that should belong to the immortals."

But Miss Spinner cried out as if in an agony: "Of what use to revive those vanished years and scenes? Let them rest in the grave with the voice that has been so long silent."

"Dear Miss Spinner," returned the persistent Californian, "of course, if it pains you so much I will not press you, but I will seek elsewhere for knowledge of her; for I have thought of her so long that she has seemed almost like a fair young sister whose fate I must trace. I never felt toward her as if she were only a singer; the sweet womanhood in her was a deeper charm than even her voice; as a singer I shall always deplore her loss; but it is as a woman that I am anxious to know something of her life. Tell me at least if so bright a spirit escaped sorrow and suffering."

Miss Spinner sat quite still for a moment; her eyes seemed to look afar off through the vista of time. "I will tell you all," she said sadly at last, "because you have cared for Clara Serle, not only as a voice but as a woman.

"She had never known her mother. Her earliest recollection of herself was as a little child sitting on a stool in front of a farm-house singing as she wove wild flowers into wreaths. Suddenly she saw a stranger coming toward her through the trees; she was not timid, and she did not stop singing. He paused in front of her; she held him up the flowers, still singing. 'There's a fortune in that voice!' he exclaimed, and entered the house, leaving her sitting alone with her blossoms, and singing still. She was told that this stranger was her father, and he took her away with him, away over the ocean, to great cities of the old world, to Paris, to Rome, to Florence. Thereafter all her time was devoted to her education for the stage, and to a childhood so blithe, so innocent, so mirthful, it was all like play. She was precocious; she made an amusement of her work; her nature was so light and airy that labor never was heavy to her, and she had no comprehension of sin or trouble. To do her father justice he kept her happy and surrounded her with delight. It became a study with him, for he understood that the brilliancy of her future would depend upon the happiness of her spirits. She was peculiarly constituted, so suffering would kill her genius, tears would quench her power.

"'She is a flower that must be kept always in the sunshine,' said her old Italian professor to him when they parted; 'a shadow will blast it like a simoon.' And so never a cloud fell across her path that could be smoothed away. Sometimes their means of living were limited and precarious; sometimes they were flourishing, and then their conditions were luxurious. She never knew from whence their resources were derived, and she never thought of asking. She was only a careless child; but poor or rich, in debt or in splendor, in humble rooms or beneath palace roof, somehow or other the acquirement of her art and accomplishments were never remitted. Her début was an unprecedented success; her after career a sweet intoxication of enjoyment. She was passionately, devotedly fond of her profession. She had been taught to think that it was the one supreme thing in the world for her. She reveled in music; the stage was all fairy-land to her, and it never, never lost its illusion. The lights, the faces, the swelling harmony inspired her with such a sense of happiness that she felt sometimes as if she almost soared in the air with the aspiring tones of her own melodies. She gloried in her voice, not with pride, but with actual pleasure, and she used its with a purely innocent glee and delight in its possession and beauty. She loved her art for itself; it brought her fame and flowers, jewels and applause, professional value and social prestige; a great artist painted her picture, and a great queen gave her diamonds; but these were mere accessories and outcomes that she could have been as happy without, with only her music and voice alone in a desert.

"Naturally, being all she had of near human ties, she loved her father, also, with a confiding, tender affection, that he appeared to reciprocate with continual care and attention. She had but little idea of duty outside of her narrow grooves, and she was disciplined only by an innate delicacy that made her very sensitive to anything dishonest or mean.

"She sang for three seasons in Europe; her profits must have been enormous, but she never inquired what became of them; she had hardly ever thought of money; her father managed everything. An immense offer

brought them to this country once more; for though Serle was an Austrian, she had been born here, he had told her, and here her early years had been passed. It was then at that time you saw her. Then they traveled far and wide, and Clara Serle's name rang all over the land. But she began to see that in spite of all her successes her father was often troubled for their expenses. More than once he took some of her jewels away upon some pretext, and they were never returned. A vague uneasiness commenced to dim the gladness of her days, and affected the spontaneity of her singing. Suddenly they returned here. They were met at their hotel by a strange man, from whose forbidding aspect and impertinent scrutiny Clara Serle intuitively shrank, and at whose gruff and coarse greeting her father visibly trembled. When he saluted her she shuddered; she felt as if some horrible snake had crossed her pathway; he fixed his green eyes upon her with a malignant stare divining her repugnance. She turned from him and fled breathless and terrified to her apartment. This adjoined the private parlor always ordered by her father wherever they stopped, for he was a sybarite, and enjoyed whatever good things he could obtain. She was weary and agitated and threw herself upon a couch without striking a light, having dismissed the attendants at the threshold. Into this room the two men entered a few minutes after. They were absorbed—they were excited. Neither of them noticed that the transom over the communicating door was opened, through which Clara Serle heard every word of their interview.

"'You have made her an insolent, uppish imp,' the new-comer angrily exclaimed.

"'She is a born lady; I worked with the materials that I found,' returned the other. 'Can't you understand that this very daintiness and elegance is half the battle in her success? It gets hold of the people in the boxes, and it is the boxes that pay.'

"'It is precisely that I came here to talk of,' sneered the Englishman, recovering himself; 'it seems she has paid, then, pretty well!' and then he snapped out, 'What is my share of the profits?'

"Serle did not answer; he was walking uneasily up and down the floor. Birch—that was the stranger's name—handed him a chair. 'Be seated,' he said in a cold and cutting tone, 'we will recapitulate a little, if you please. I have not crossed the Atlantic Ocean after you without a fixed purpose, and neither sulks on your part nor airs on hers shall defeat it. When you came to me—some fifteen years ago was it not?—and told me that you had accidentally discovered the child of Giulia Lusignan, and that you had spent your last dollar in buying her of the people with whom her dead mother had left her, you proposed to me as a probably profitable speculation that I should pay the expenses of her education, and you, in the character of her father, should take charge of her, and when the promise of her voice was ripe that we should divide the gains. You engaged so to mold her disposition and dependence on you that this should become a matter entirely in your own hands. I believed that with the consummate knowledge and experience of woman that you possessed you could easily achieve this, and I trusted your ability in that direction. I had heard her mother sing, and her father, too, for that matter, and a wonderful tenor he was in his day, and could readily conceive that their daughter would inherit their talent. It was a long investment, but it looked as if the outlay might be repaid about the time when Hamburg and Baden might be getting tired of old stagers, and there might be need of another road to luck. I accepted your proposition, and I fulfilled my share of the contract. Inveterate gambler and voluptuary that you were, I knew you fancied it a secure way to years of comfort, and that you verily thought you were playing for a high stake, and that, somehow or other, with the funds I supplied, you would make the girl ready for it. I never interfered with your methods; I left all that to your penetrating intellect, your interest, your finesse. I was satisfied with your occasional reports and receipts. About the time she was to make her début I was obliged to make a little trip to Australia.'

"'Yes,' interrupted Serle savagely, 'as a convict transported for forgery.'

"'Exactly,' coolly replied the other, 'and having heard of this indiscretion of mine and its consequences, you probably thought I would never return to civilization to demand a settlement, and that you could retain undisputed possession of our fair protégée's proceeds. But you perceive that I have left the colonies—no matter how—and am here to require of you my share in the profits of our prima donna.'

"'There are none,' sullenly answered Serle, in a low tone.

"'Ah,' the other calmly responded, 'I surmised as much. Gone the old way at faro, I suppose! I came prepared, from my former experiences of you, for such result.'

"'What will you do about it?' Serle insolently demanded.

"'This,' returned the Englishman. 'As you, in the guise of father, have had your share of her pecuniary value, I shall now take my turn, in the character of husband. I intend to marry her.'

"Serle laughed a hard sneering laugh. '*You!* It is so likely she will agree to that!'

"The other man did not lose his temper. 'That will be your part of the business,' he said; 'doubtless you have acquired sufficient paternal influence, have not entirely lost your persuasive glibness of tongue that will cause her acquiescence. There would, however, be other ways of managing even without your assistance. You have always known me as a gentleman of resources, have you not?'

"'But if I refuse,' defiantly exclaimed Serle, 'if I assert publicly and privately my authority of fatherhood—if I proclaim your antecedents as an escaped convict—what then?'

"'You go too fast, my friend,' replied the other; 'my relationship to a member of parliament did not amount to nothing—your escaped convict has a full pardon, so you may draw in your cloven foot there—and as for the other little plan of yours, I anticipated you in that direction. I have here in my breast pocket a certificate of the marriage of Giulia Lusignan and that of the child's baptism, also our original agreement recapitulating her history, and the whole series of bills receipted by you for moneys furnished for her support and education. Naturally the sight of these documents might affect public and legal opinion of your paternal solicitude, and would open the eyes of our protégée herself. She must be quite a woman now, and women are apt to prove skittish fillies if they have too much knowledge. But if you choose to agree to my arrangement, you shall still continue to be the business manager of the firm, and receive half the profits; only, being on the spot, I shall know how to count them, and as husband, how also to command them.'

"Serle sat silent for a few moments. Then he drew his chair close to that of his confederate, and talked rapidly for some time in low tones. He told him particularly all the peculiarities of this young girl's temperament; how important a matter of calculation it had been with him to preserve her happiness in order to secure her artistic gifts; he pointed out how every study, how every pleasure, every cloud that had entered her life had been a matter of pecuniary consideration; he showed that he had never looked upon her with any real affection, but simply as an article of money value that had been treated intelligently, almost scientifically, solely in regard to the increase of that, and the two men, then and there, laid a most subtle and detailed plan to control together the future of this woman, so ignorant of the world's ways and so helpless in their hands.

"But unfortunately for the success of their scheme they counted almost entirely without Clara Serle herself. During this conversation she had listened intently, scarcely daring to breathe lest they should suspect her neighborhood. In that hour her youth seemed to depart from her; horror and terror seized her over these revelations of her own history and of the wickedness and cupidity of men. The only affection of her life, for her supposed father, was torn up by the roots, as it were, in the storm of bitter indignation that swept over her soul at his duplicity, his depravity, his assumed kindness, which had been but sordid calculation. She suddenly felt herself utterly alone in the world, and beset by a sickening fear of her position and surroundings. Her art lost instantly its charm and its interest to her. She conceived an ardent hatred of her voice, her gift that had usurped the worth and throne of her womanhood. For a little while after these men had left their apartment together her brain was one mad whirl of contending thoughts and sensations; and then there gradually came to her a comprehension of the necessity for resolve and action. At that instant there passed into her something of the wariness, the cunning of her mother's southern race. Her first proceeding was to close cautiously and fasten tightly down the betraying transom; she unpacked from her trunks all her jewels and secured them about her person, changed her whole attire, and then sat down and wrote this note:

"'Messieurs of the firm Serle & Birch. In

calculating your mercantile transactions you forgot that behind the voice was the woman. The woman, in passing out of your reach, registers here an oath for you that by the womanhood you have ignored never again, under any circumstances, shall the voice be heard in public. Rest content, you, Monsieur Serle, with the honor of having been the father of a popular prima donna, and you, illustrious Seigneur from Australia, with your pardon from the member of parliament; for your partnership has opened the cage door, and your singing bird flies out in silence.'

"Then she waited for daylight. She knew that her supposed parent never rose till noon when there was no rehearsal or business to require his attention, and she had thus some hours' start, and soon after dawn she quietly slipped out of the hotel. She had determined not to leave the city, for she felt sure that they would immediately think she had done so, and would search for her elsewhere. She avoided conveyances for fear of giving any clue to her personality, and just walked on and on with no settled purpose at first, except of finding some obscure lodging. She came at last into a part of the town she had never seen before, of narrow streets and rows of small genteel houses all alike. Here she began to look around her for some suitable place to rest in. She saw a sweet-faced old lady, in Quaker dress, going into one of these small houses, with a basket on her arm which contained the results of her early marketing. She addressed her timidly, asking if she could tell her of a quiet respectable place to board. This old lady was one of those pure spirits who had lived so much out of the world that she had never learned suspicion. She looked kindly at the young girl before her, tired, trembling, and ready to weep. 'Thee seems too tender to be seeking a home by thyself, dear child,' she said; 'come in and sit down with me. Perhaps if thee tells me thy trouble my gray head can help thee.'

"At these words of interest, of sympathy, Clara Serle burst into tears. The gentle Quakeress took her by the hand and led her into the house; and then, regardless of all intended caution, for she was only half a child still, she told her pitiful story.

"She had come to a good woman—a woman who had never heard her name, who had been reared to think the stage a pit of darkness, and its votaries children of Belial; yet in the loving charity of a great heart she accepted, without any appearance of doubt, the short history so strange to her, and the desolate waif of humanity thus cast upon her care.

"There was perhaps a spice of romance in her nature which had been repressed by her nurture and associations, and which impelled her interest, and there was unquestionably in her a large motherhood which had never been satisfied. She took the young girl straightway into her heart; she believed her and she aided her.

"As she lived alone in her house, there was not so much difficulty about it. She dressed her in Quaker costume, called her her niece, kept her as much secluded as possible, very cautiously sold and invested the proceeds of her jewels for her, and behaved to her in all respects as if she was her own child.

"The stir that was created by Clara Serle's disappearance soon confirmed all that she had been told, for the newspapers were full of reports and advertisments, and no stone was left unturned by the two men to find her. All this in time, however, died away; and her adopted daughter repaid to the old Quakeress the affection and kindness she received from her, which had extended, years after, to the searching out and procuring of her piano and picture, and even part of her wardrobe, which had been at last sold by the adventurers when they had seemingly abandoned all hope of recovering the lost singer; and when this dearest friend died, it was in her arms, who mourned for her as if she had been indeed the child of her bosom."

Here little Miss Spinner finished her narrative. She had become very pale in telling it, but the Californian was paler than she; he breathed hard with the intensity of his interest and suppressed excitement, and there was almost a sob in his voice as he said when she ceased speaking:

"Ah! madam, if I had only known I would have been too happy to have worked for her. Thank heaven for the refuge she found! God bless her good friend! But, madam, did Clara Serle ever hear what became of those scoundrels?"

"Alas! no," replied Miss Spinner, "she lived always in dread of them; she was afraid to venture in the streets; she became almost a recluse in her fear of them. But after so many years now they are perhaps dead. But who knows?"

"I know, my dear madam, that they are both dead." Miss Spinner rose up—her face had become ghastly—her hair seemed to rise up on her forehead with terror. She put out her hands as if to thrust him from her sight. "Oh, my God!" she cried out, "he knew them—he knew those frightful men!"

The Californian was astounded—he, too, rose up.

"Why, yes, dear Miss Spinner, I knew them, but only as an honest man may know marked and professional villains. I was on a Mississippi steamboat when these very men, known sharpers they were then, came aboard. I caught the name of Serle, and took occasion to ask him if he was any relation to the beautiful prima donna, and I came very near knocking him down for the uncivil way he answered me, with an oath, and on that very trip they got into a difficulty with some Louisianians they were fleecing at cards, and there were pistols and bowie-knives drawn. Serle was shot dead, and Birch was so badly cut up that he died soon after. They made some pretty bad slaughter themselves, and it was a nasty scene altogether. They were both out-and-out rascals that the world was well rid of; but Serle looked like a veritable snake." Miss Spinner sat down—she was trembling violently—two large tears fell from her eyes. "Up to the time that Birch met him, he was always an exquisite gentleman to Clara Serle," she said.

The Californian looked at her curiously—a strange thought flashed through his mind. "Did she really die?" he asked, eagerly.

Miss Spinner returned his look with one that was almost defiant. "The Clara Serle you knew died in this house," she answered, "then there was only Miss Spinner left here." He sighed, and asked in a low tone, "Would you mind showing me her picture?"

Miss Spinner crossed the room, and with a superb gesture threw back the heavy folds of black serge, disclosing the portrait of a woman richly dressed in character, with powdered hair, petite, naive, sparkling. It was the very dream of his youth, and he stood before it transfixed and agitated. He forgot the little faded woman at his side. He saw only the bright beauty of the being who had thralled the fancy of his boyhood. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "she was a lovely woman, and a great singer! I would give ten years of my life to see her alive again, and the million I have won to hear her matchless voice once more!"

Miss Spinner had clutched her throat with both hands as he spoke; a wild light broke over her face. "Wait, oh, wait!" she cried, and flew past him into her adjoining room.

Here she tore off, with feverish haste, her lawn cape and cap, her gray dress; with deft fingers she quickly arranged in old style her abundant hair, white as if it, too, was powdered; drew from shelves of a wardrobe one box after another, took from one sprays of flowers, from another rare laces, from another a costly and elegant dress, from another a fan brilliant with gems. She adjusted everything rapidly, exactly, as one used to donning strange attires quickly—and then—suddenly upon the threshold of the door his astonished eyes beheld, in the very attitude, the very dress, the counterpart of the picture. Her cheeks glowed, her eyes shone, her lips curved into archness: she seemed about to spring into the air upon her tiny slippered feet; her small hands waved her fan with a coquettish gesture he well remembered. She was the impersonation of youth and beauty, mirth and happiness, as she cast upon him the bewildering smile with which the picture opposite also seemed to regard them both.

Then she burst out into a glorious burst of song. Her voice—sweet, powerful, wonderful—seemed to mount into the air as if roofs and houses were annihilated, and only the great space of skies was wide enough for its melodious freedom. It was the song of a caged bird who had regained its liberty; it was as wild, as glad, as vibrating, as thrilling as the tones of a lark soaring from the earth. It was more than magnificent, it was entrancing; it seemed almost miraculous in its swelling harmony. The Californian stood motionless in the ecstasy of this revelation; and she—did she see him?—did she think of him? For her that one face only represented and reproduced the triumphs, the intoxication of her early days. It was not this one man she beheld—it was not a shabby humble room that spread out before her—but a great encircling ampitheater—a countless audience—a sea of passionate, intent countenances. She heard invisible instruments, the thunders of applause was bathed in light and color and mu-

sic. The joy of her life had returned—her perfect voice caroled a poem—her soul seemed to be exhaling from her body, and to be rising—rising upon waves of transcendent sound. Those that heard her—and the amazed lodgers had gathered together at such unwonted attraction, and stood astounded at the door which they had half opened in excitement—knew that never in this world would fall upon their mortal senses again such celestial strains, such a vision of grace. She seemed to float upon her voice—and her voice to have caught the refrain of an angelic chorus of praise and gladness. Suddenly, standing there with lifted eyes, poised as if about to fly—the slight figure swayed. The Californian sprang forward and caught it in his strong arms; he held her just an instant against his beating heart, looking down into the face still full of wonderful light. Then he laid down upon the stiff horsehair sofa the limp form of a withered old woman with tarnished artificial flowers in her gray hair, and a cloud of yellow lace falling round her neck and arms. He stooped upon one knee, and kissed, with tender reverence, the wrinkled hand from which had dropped the jeweled fan. Then he rose, and said to those who gathered near: "She was Clara Serle—she found her voice again tonight, and it brought her back her youth. She has finished her last song in heaven!"

"Specimen Hunting" at the Vineyard.

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

IT was at the camp-meetings at Martha's Vineyard last summer that Captain Harris met the widow Markham for the first time after an interval of twenty years.

The surprise of meeting gave them both such a turn that they had to sit down on the nearest bench, which happened to be the rustic settle just outside the Shortsbury tent, to rest and take breath, and regain their equanimity before they strolled together along the beach to the door of the pretty cottage which Mrs. Markham and her daughter shared with a couple of their Green Mountain neighbors.

It may be inferred that the conversation between the captain and the widow flowed in an interesting direction at the onset, from the fact that an exceedingly handsome young man, who was intently examining a map of the Vineyard just inside the Shortsbury tent, and only separated from the absorbed couple by one thickness of canvas, listened to their talk for a few moments, and then dropping the map and bending himself double with merriment, seized a geologist's hammer and started briskly for the cliffs, laughing at intervals all the way, and saying aloud, "It was almost equal to listening to a conversation between the Fates; ha, ha!"

"We must manage to have them meet quite accidentally," said Captain Harris half an hour later as he was about bidding the widow a final good-morning.

"I will manage that," replied the plump widow, with such a sweet, kindly expression on her lips and in her blue eyes, that the captain wondered, as he hurried off to the presiding elder's tent to attend a committee meeting, how, with all the trouble she was said to have experienced, she had kept the old sunshiny smile he remembered so well when he used to accompany her home from singing-school, on dear, old, narrow, sandy, sea-washed Cape Cod, twenty-five years before.

It is said that when a capable woman really signifies her intention of managing anything, the proposed business is to all intents and purposes closed. That afternoon Mrs. Markham, bonneted and gloved, and Bible, fan, and parasol in hand, stood for a quarter of an hour or more by the little parlor window, ostensibly watching the scurrying clouds, but as soon as she recognized the portly captain's alpaca coat and gold-headed cane, afar off down the avenue, she called to her daughter, who, in jaunty hat and jacket, was assorting sea-weed at the little round table in the back room, saying, "Come, my love, hasten to wipe your hands, and put on your gloves. I don't think we shall have a squall after all."

"I didn't think we should," said the beautiful young girl, as she hurried after her mother, buttoning her gloves as she went, "but you are so weather-wise all at once."

Just as the two were turning a sharp corner, to make a short cut to the preaching tent, the wind woke up out of a short nap and blew a whole gust full of fine white sand, which it had scooped up from the curving shore, plump into their defenseless faces.

After they had finished wiping the irritating substance from their eyes, ears, and mouths, they found themselves standing under an awning in the company of two gentlemen similarly engaged. The two elder members of the quartette ejaculated their pleased surprise at the meeting—although the plump widow's mellow voice did falter a little—as they shook hands as if they would never let go.

"This is my early friend, Captain Harris, from Baltimore, Josephine," said the widow with a glance of pride at her handsome daughter, "and this, Captain Harris, is Josephine, the dearest blessing of my stranded life." Josephine wondered innocently if it was the rapid walk or the wind that made her mother's voice tremble so, and glanced at her with solicitude when she grew suddenly pale as Captain Harris introduced his son, Napoleon. They all looked blurred to each other through the water in their eyes, which, in the general hand-shaking that followed, probably accounted for the fact that the widow and the captain fell to and shook hands again, more vigorously than at first, exactly, Napoleon thought, as if they were sealing a compact. Another gust of wind puffing up from the sea, just then forced the fair widow against the captain's white vest, and made it seem the most natural thing in the world for the two to walk on together, leaving Napoleon and Josephine to take care of themselves, or of each other as they were inclined.

The two young people glanced at each other and smiled. "I have always had it impressed on my mind," said the young man, "that there was somewhere in the world a young lady, who, on account of her name, was destined from the beginning to play Josephine to my Napoleon. I wish I knew if you are in reality the one?" He looked as if he was in earnest, although laughing gleams shot out of his black eyes, which were fixed intently upon his companion's lovely face. "You look as good as gold, and your eyes are as true as steel without its hardness. To insure the fact that we are to be friends, I am going to tell you something."

"*Merci!*" cried Josephine, not sure whether she was being quizzed or not. "This must be what you call taking a lady by storm. Let me catch my breath. You find me entirely unsophisticated. I have never been out of sight of the Green Mountains before since my remembrance. Mother thought it a good plan to join religion with the business of helping on my education, by bringing me here where I might meet people from all over the country, and have an opportunity of noticing their way. Is it the custom in Baltimore to fall to complimenting a lady as soon as you are introduced? Stop a moment please, until I find out into which pocket I put my note-book; and, as I am in pursuit of information, perhaps you will not mind telling me what is the proper attitude for the lady to assume in the premises?"

"Baltimore customs do not vary much from those of other cities of our land," said the young man, still retaining his serious air, "and as for my recent complimentary speech, let me explain: I am here at this time because father was anxious to come, and he assured me that this island was the richest in specimens, both geological and vegetable, of any place of equal area in New England; and although I was out on the cliff with my hammer and chisel for some time this morning, and felt well paid for my trouble and time, I must admit that you are the most pleasing as well as curious specimen that I have yet met with."

"Thanks," said Josephine, "both for the compliment and for the information. I took a lovely sail out to the rocks with a party this morning after sea-weed, and we boarded the most ravishing little yacht called the *Empress*. From her deck we could distinguish through the glass a creature scaling the cliff, and as it crept about into the most impossible places, I suggested that it must be some primordial relic. We had quite a discussion over it, and in the heat of it we left; it now comes to me that I forgot to ask of the man in charge the name of the owner of the gay little craft. I think I must delegate you to ascertain for me. I want to know particularly, because Cousin Marion is coming down in a day or two; she's an old maid, and when she is rallied for not marrying, she always replies that she is waiting until she finds a man who owns a yacht, and the owner of this one might be a single man, don't you see?"

"I see that you seem pre-determined to make fun of me," said the young man, rather stiffly.

"Determined, perhaps, but not pre-determined certainly, for I did not know of your existence a quarter of an hour ago."

"Honor bright?"

"Honor bright."

The two young people now ceased their quipping, and having reached the preaching tent, ensconced themselves in seats directly behind their respective parents. Young Harris rapidly turned the leaves of his Gospel Hymns to find the one the vast congregation were beginning to raise, while Josephine joined in singing at the height and in the rich melody of her clear mezzo-soprano. Presently, pulling a dainty cambric handkerchief from her pocket, a pretty green and gold notebook fell to the ground. As her companion stooped to restore it to her, she caught his eyes bent upon her curiously, and the whole absurdity of their brief conversation flashed through her mind so vividly, that a laugh came bubbling up in her throat, setting her off into such a violent spasm of coughing, that the captain turned around, offered her a troche, and asked anxiously were her father's family consumptive. This set the young Napoleon off the key, and he came so near strangling in his attempts not to laugh, that Evangelist Earle was half through with his sermon before the young man dared trust himself to explain to his companion that his father had a great horror of consumption, even of a premonitory cough, and always kept himself supplied with troches that he distributed indiscriminately on all occasions.

"How did you like young Mr. Harris, Josephine?" anxiously asked the widow Markham late that evening as she unpinned her crape collar, and folded it and laid it carefully away in a pretty lacquer box which she had paid an extravagant price for that very afternoon.

"Oh, he was very curious, looked upon in the light of a representative Marylander; but he seemed to have serious objections to being immortalized in my note-book," replied the daughter, fastening the last crimping pin in place in her golden hair, and adding with a yawn, "There! if that borax and gum-arabic and sugar and soap and bay rum don't keep my hair in crimp through to-morrow, I will make me a white muslin turban, and wear it while here in this miserable humidity of the sea breezes."

"I particularly wish you to make yourself quite agreeable to young Mr. Harris, Josephine," went on the widow, smiling at herself in the dressing-glass, while she carefully adjusted her lace-trimmed night-cap; "in my youth I had great regard for some of the members of his family."

"I wish, mother, that you wouldn't wear that dreadful cap while we are down here," remarked the daughter irrelevantly. "If it should occur that any sort of an alarm should be raised in the camp at night, and we should rush out, it would be dreadful to have the people think that that great ugly idol over in the missionary tent had come to life, been filled with the "sperit" as that old, thin, long-haired minister says."

"*Jo-se-phine!*" exclaimed Mrs. Markham, with a decidedly admonitory intonation of voice. "You are actually profane in your thoughtless speech; you must give more heed to your manner of speaking of sacred things."

"I always fancy my name to be 'ever so fine' when you draw it out to such lengths, mother," went on the gay young woman lightly; "I always have to be kept corked up at home, but now that I am here, out of sight and hearing of our village minister and deacon and Mrs. Grundy, do let me effervesce a little; you will find my true better nature all the sooner, believe me, if you let me throw off the froth as it rises to the surface," and, blowing out the light, she curled into bed as daintily as a kitten. Adjusting the warm light rose blankets about her, she was soon sleeping the unbroken, restful sleep that only comes to youth, innocence, and perfect health.

At the same time, a mile or two away, the captain and his son were preparing for rest. "I hope you found Miss Markham interesting?" said the old gentleman, removing his limp collar and soiled white cambric cravat.

"'Tis a precious specimen," replied the young man sleepily, taking off his hat, being otherwise disrobed, and tumbling into bed. The fond father, as he turned and caught a glimpse of the figure in a night-dress and a hat, was at a loss to know whether his son was lost in the retrospect of that morning's geological research, or whether he had been really smitten with the charms of his youthful companion of the afternoon and evening.

"College boys talk so much enigmatical slang! I hope you will try to overcome it now that you are graduated, Napoleon. But I wish to say, my son, that I expect you to treat that beautiful Miss Markham the very best you know how while we are thrown together here. I used to set great store by some of her relatives," and the captain fell to rubbing his rheumatic knee with sea water and a crash towel, as the widow had recommended, previous to crawling into bed in his turn.

The young people saw much of each other for the next few days, and a hearty, mutual admiration would have been engendered, had they not been respectively ordered at the outset to be agreeable to each other. As it was, they seemed to enjoy themselves in the indulgence of their individual combativeness on all points, and apparently took real comfort in the natural expression of their innate perversity.

Toward the close of the meetings Mrs. Markham's cousin Marion appeared, with a party of friends from Newport, and as soon as she could get Josephine, who was a great favorite of hers, off for a walk she began: "Queer, isn't it, my dear, that your mother and Captain Harris should happen to meet here after so many years?"

"I do not know why it is queer," replied Josephine. "There is somebody here from almost everywhere, and it is natural enough, I suppose, for a body to meet old acquaintances."

"Yes, of course," went on cousin Marion, "but you know theirs was no common acquaintance."

"No, I do not," replied Josephine. "I never heard of Captain Harris until the first afternoon of the week-day meetings when the wind blew him and his son straight out of the clouds and dropped them in our path. The captain and mother now fall to hand-shaking in the real Green Mountain, Methodist style every time they meet at every one of the twenty-four meetings, more or less, of the week, until one can't help thinking that they like it."

"Don't make light of the services, child; rather pray that every one of them may be blessed to some weary soul, and mind what I say—I have thought that, perhaps, you and young Harris being so coincidently named—"

"Oh, good gracious, cousin Marion!" interrupted Josephine, "I gave you credit for more originality. Now, you are only one of ten thousand of my dear friends who are here present on this little island at this time, who have had some like brilliant remark to offer upon my seeming intimacy with young Harris, which all comes about on account of the old-time friendship between our respective parents, so pleasantly renewed here."

"What a fearful habit of exaggeration you are acquiring, child. It is a very harmful manner of speech, and you must have been under unwholesome influences at school. I must speak to your mother about it—for your good only, my dear. But to return to our subject: Your names were not a mere happening at all. When you were about three months old, Captain Harris came home to Cape Cod, where you were born, and your mother before you, to attend his father's funeral. He called at your grandfather's, and said to your mother, 'I left at my home in Baltimore a little brown berry of a boy that I have named Napoleon; now if you will name your little pink sea-shell of a girl Josephine, when, please God, they shall be old enough, we will bring about a match between them.' Your mother assented, saying nothing would please her better."

"I don't believe it," responded Josephine, hotly; "it isn't a bit like mother."

"It was like her *then*, for she said it, and I heard the whole conversation myself," returned cousin Marion stoutly. "Your mother and I were girls together, and what one knew the other knew, and I knew it then as well as they knew it themselves; and I have this much more to tell you—your mother promised to marry Silas Harris (he wasn't captain then) the winter we all went to Provincetown to singing school.

"In the spring he went off on a long voyage, and your father came down from Boston with his money and his debonair ways and his handsome face to stay through the hot weather that summer. He fell straightway in love with your mother's sea-blue eyes, sea-shell complexion, yellow hair and sea-murmuring voice. He took to calling her 'wavelet,' and before any one thought of anything of the kind they went away one day and were married—married in haste to repent at leisure. He died years ago, as you know, and left you with good blood in your veins and plenty of money; but you have never known much about his proud family, for the sea of your mother's married life proved a very stormy one, and among the many untoward events of it was the alienation of the Markham family from your mother.

"Silas became nearly crazy when he arrived home and found his sweetheart married, but

without the least vituperation on his part, without the expression of the first reproach even, he went off to Baltimore on a coaster. He married there, not long afterward, and that city has been his home ever since.

"He and Esther, your mother, in their happy courting days used to read everything that he could buy in the different ports he visited about Josephine and Napoleon. They both had the most enthusiastic admiration for those characters, and especially for their idyllic life at Malmaison, and used to romance about going to Paris together when Silas should be captain of a ship. That is another thing that accounts for your name."

"And it accounts also," said Josephine gravely, "for our Empress Library as I call it, wherein, in its lovely carved case, may be found, I do believe, every kind of a book in which Josephine and Napoleon are mentioned. But I feel in a sort of daze. I don't understand how any one so pious and good as is my mother could have broken her word."

"Oh, she wasn't a Methodist then. After she had seen so much trouble God showed her where to look for comfort. When you was a baby it was thought that Esther was going into a decline, and the doctor ordered her to remove from the sea, so she left Cape Cod and went to the mountains where she and you, my dear, have stayed ever since."

"I hardly think the captain took his trouble much to heart; if he had he wouldn't have married so soon," ventured Josephine presently.

"Spite, spite; just a little, even in the best of folks, dear child. Men often marry so," and Cousin Marion sighed, for she had been something of a coquette, and had had a disappointment of her own in her younger days. "The captain's wife was a very handsome woman, but it is known that she led him an uncomfortable life up to last year, when she died. Don't tell your mother, now, that I told you this story; but as soon as I set my eyes upon Silas Harris, the good soul, I said to myself that you should hear the facts in the case."

"Thank you; thank you, Cousin Marion. What you have told me clears up some of the mysteries of dear mother's early life about which she was always rather reticent. I can now see which way the tide is setting. But I am sorry to know that mother once jilted that dear, good old captain who seems so kind-hearted and so full of beneficence and troches."

"O Josephine, child, what a trifler you are!" and the "child" ran down the slope to the sea where she joined a party of young folks, and an hour later was found there by Napoleon, who had been dispatched with a wrap to protect her from the stiffening breeze.

"Your mother says that you are to come up from the beach immediately, Miss Markham; and my father says that he noticed you were hoarse this afternoon, and begs you will accept of these," and the young man demurely presented her with a small roll of troches.

Josephine gave him a quick glance, and made a wry face as she nibbled at one of the dark-colored pastiles.

"Where have you been?" he asked as they left the merry party and walked in the direction of the Markham cottage.

"Specimen hunting;" she replied, stopping short and poising herself gracefully upon the edge of a dainty skiff which was lying high and dry on the sands, "and I have learned the history of something which had successfully eluded my investigations all my life. As you seem destined, while we are here, to play Napoleon to my Josephine, I have half a mind to tell you a secret."

Here one of those sudden gusts of wind careened the young lady from the narrow edge of the gay little boat where she was balancing herself, and she would have fallen had not her companion caught her, and set her firmly on her feet upon the hard beach.

"Found," he cried, "a specimen Vermont Methodist maiden, born on Cape Cod, who, on the sixth day of her acquaintance with the average young man, throws herself into his arms, and begs leave to disclose to him the secrets of her maiden heart. *O tempora, O mores!*"

"I wouldn't air my school Latin," cried Josephine angrily, and catching a glimpse of Cousin Marion's scarlet and yellow India shawl at a little distance, she took French leave of her attendant, and joining her relative went with her to supper. As usual, however, Napoleon appeared in time to escort the young lady to evening service, and nearly drove her angry again by teasingly begging that she would not allow the sun to go down on her wrath.

The next morning these young people were playing croquet in front of Mrs. Markham's cottage when Captain Harris came to call on the widow, bearing in one hand a tasteful bouquet, and holding in the other a basket of plump, shining blackberries. "Try a game with two balls apiece," he called out to the rather listless players; "make a real battle of it; play so strong a game that you will get mad over it; then there will be some fun in watching you."

It seemed for a time as if the captain's advice was likely to be followed, but they laughed heartily after a war of words had resulted in the amicable adjustment of a contested point, and both paused to take breath.

"I think it was wrong in Esther," suggested Napoleon abruptly, swinging his mallet back and forth, and sending little sand showers to the right and left.

"I think so, too," replied Josephine, quickly turning on her heel, and continuing the game by croqueting the blue ball. "But I don't want to be sacrificed as an atonement for her dereliction of duty. I haven't the slightest inclination to be 'Isaaced' up."

"Isaac wasn't sacrificed after all, don't you know? I'm afraid you are not very well up in your Bible. Thank you, however, for reckoning me as the wooden altar. But don't you see that they might straighten affairs themselves without any trouble, if some one would only put it into their dear innocent old heads?" and Napoleon made a bad stroke at the red ball, and lost the game through looking off a little distance, where, on a rustic seat under the shadow of the missionary tent, the widow and the captain sat intently looking out the morrow's "International Sunday School Lesson" with the help of a Bible, and two or three religious newspapers a fortnight old.

"Should you be willing to have that old unfortunate mistake adjusted in that way?" asked Josephine still persistently keeping her expressive face averted from her partner.

"I should be delighted at any consummation, Miss Josephine, which would enhance the happiness of my dear old father."

"Come, young people, make yourselves presentable. I expect you to accompany me to morning service."

It was cousin Marion's voice, and they were immediately busy with combs and brushes, and in changing hats and gloves. Returning some hour and a half later they found the elderly pair on the same seat, having apparently taken no note of time, and still engaged over the "International Lesson."

"Perhaps you may notice that my eyes are red," began Josephine solemnly, tripping along in front of them. "I have been a good deal wrought upon. The minister, in his sermon, alluded so feelingly to the slaughter of the innocents, that it brought the deplorable situation of Napoleon and myself so vividly to mind, that I could not refrain from tears."

Cousin Marion opened her gray eyes in astonishment, but before she could utter a word of remonstrance, Josephine went on:

"This young man here, and I, have taken affairs into our own hands, and we are resolved, let come what will, that we will not be unresisting Isaacs. If you two parents feel as if a sacrifice ought to be made in compensation for any youthful *errata* of your own, and as if you would be willing Abrahams now, you can each offer yourselves up to the other. I don't think it will be a hard matter, after all the preliminaries of the past week, for you to return to the point where you left off years ago and patch up things satisfactorily to all parties concerned. Come cousin Marion, I am famishing for blackberries and milk. Shall I have the pleasure of your company, and of yours. Napoleon, at my humble repast?" and the trio disappeared within the little cottage, leaving the captain shaking his fat sides with laughter, and the plump widow making little gasps of reproof and expostulation at her irrepressible daughter.

A few hours afterward, as the two young people met on the plank walk leading to one of the landings, they paused long enough for Napoleon to say,

"Father says they are going up to Cape Cod in our yacht, the *Empress*, to have the knot tied. They are to take your jolly cousin Marion along; also that Parson Morrison she admires so much, who belongs up that way somewhere, to perform the ceremony. You and I must go too, father says, and 'stand up' with them. Now, you won't object, I do hope and pray."

Josephine shook her head dubiously and hurried on, saying to herself, "I should like to know if that beautiful yacht belongs to them. It quite takes away my breath; of course he thought I knew it that morning when I talked to him so foolishly about it."

They were all sailing up to New Bedford on a shopping expedition early in the following week, and as the two youngsters of the party were leaning over the railing watching the snow-white trail of the *Empress* as it bubbled and gleamed and vanished upon the blue waters, the young man said:

"Now Joe, that the sacrifice business is

eliminated from our calculations, how do you like playing Josephine to my Napoleon?"

"That is not a fair question. Had you prefaced it, however, by telling me how you have enjoyed the rôle in which you have been involuntarily cast, you poor innocent, in our little play of *Specimen Hunting at the Vineyard*, I would have answered you."

"Very well, I will begin all over again," he said sincerely, with an unwonted tremor in his voice. "I am so much pleased with the part which has been assigned me that I wish with my whole soul that you would consent to be my leading lady forever."

Josephine blushed, and vainly attempted to reply in her usual off-hand way. But Napoleon understood her, for he said presently,

"Then, my love, we will take the parson into the secret, have two ceremonies performed instead of one, and so give the company a surprise."

"Very well," replied Josephine after a thoughtful pause. "But remember," she said, laughing roguishly again, "now that I consent only because I think it would be so pretty for mother and I both to wear the pearl-colored silks we had made to wear at a certain dress occasion in Montreal when we were visiting there last month. They are exactly alike, only mother's is trimmed with black lace, and mine with white lace; and when dressed in them we were taken for sisters."

"It was the jolliest wedding I ever attended," said cousin Marion, after she had returned to the Vineyard, and the yacht with its happy family had sailed away. "The captain made a speech and said, 'He really liked it all better just as it was, and was glad that he and Esther were not married in their youthful days, for now Josephine and Napoleon made a double and twisted compensation'—here he got mixed up and began to clear his throat, when Josephine immediately handed him a troche, and everybody cheered and the captain sat down."

Consolation.

LO! that mother's gentle heart
Now with joy is beating
As she sees her precious child
In the angel's keeping!
As with ear attuned she hears
Clear angelic voices,
Cherubim and seraphim,
How her soul rejoices!

SEE! the little one looks up
As they tell their story,
Gazing with her happy eyes
At the golden glory!
Sweet hands folded on her breast,
Sunny tresses floating,
Childhood's smile upon her lips
Perfect peace denoting.

EVERMORE her feet shall tread
In the paths supernal,
And around her little feet
Blossom flowers eternal.
Mother! ere the vision fades
Hear the declaration
Of the angels: *She is safe!*
Oh, what *Consolation!*

"Scrapsey."

A STORY OF TO-DAY.

BY H.

CHAPTER I.

GOOD-MORNING, Scrapsey, dear, hope I'm not too early; but something's up, something economical that will *just* suit you, and I've come over on the wings of the wind, for fear you might be throwing your rags in the rag-bag instead of putting them to a useful purpose."

The speaker was a tall, fine-looking girl, of stylish appearance, but, as her morning salutation denotes, ready to follow in the wake of any prevailing fashion, slang or otherwise.

Scrapsey held her hand over the mouth of her friend, whispering, "Please, Bel, don't tell it to the whole house," and drawing her into a cosy parlor, made her comfortable with rocking-chair and fan, then seated herself beside her. Bel Brayden had given this nickname of Scrapsey to her friend Mabel Harrison, owing to her remarkable talent for making "auld claithes luke maist as weel as new." And Mabel's talent was not confined to clothing; no indeed! she was too poor to buy canvas and worsteds and embroidery books, yet somehow she contrived to make door-mats and foot-benches, and vases, and lambrequins, and jardinières, and all those dainty knick-knackeries that adorn the rooms of the wealthy, and they seemed to be constructed from what most persons would cast aside as useless.

Mabel and her brother Ralph were alone in the world, and lived in a suite of apartments known nowadays as a flat. She was always busy, and as gay and lively as her own canaries; her acquaintances were from among all ranks of life, from the rich and fashionable who came to her to be diverted from their *ennui*, to the poor or hard workers who were assisted or cheered on their way by her ready sympathy or helping hand. Many a warm skirt or bed-spread had Scrapsey made of old linings and bits of old carpet, to give where needed in winter, and perhaps at the same time she was nursing and encouraging into more healthful growth some rare plant for a rich friend.

We will now return to our morning caller and her errand. Bel, ensconced in her rocking-chair, drew off her gloves and said: "Now, Scrapsey, bring me some pieces of your dresses, silk or woolen, an old pillow-case, some forty dozen pins, a pair of scissors, a spool of cotton, and a needle. By the way, how is Mrs. Henley? does she borrow as much as usual?"

"Oh, Bel, she is perfectly dreadful; she was knocking at my kitchen door this morning before I was up, and as soon as I could slip on my dress I went to the door, and she wanted to borrow some baking soda; I gave her the baking soda, and was returning to my toilet, when a second knock came, and it was Mrs. Henley again; she did not want baking soda, she wanted baking powders, so I gave her my box of Sea Foam, and all was quiet for about ten minutes, when she sent one of the children to borrow an egg. To-morrow, being Saturday, she will send to have some money changed, so as to give the children their weekly spending money, and Sunday she will want a bill changed, so as to have some small coin to put on the charity plate. I suppose some day she will borrow Ralph. She bothers me to death, and I can't refuse because she is always sending me things."

"Well! don't you send her things too, I should like to know?"

"Yes, I always try to return the obligation, and I should like to be on friendly terms with her."

"Now, Scrapsey, I am going to put a stop to this borrowing, not to-day, for I have come on other business, but some day when Ralph is going to be home," and Bel winked slyly at her friend, for Bel and Ralph were expecting to be married quite soon, often telling Mabel that they were only waiting for her to go first.

The business that Bel had come on was patchwork, so bright and yet so blended in coloring that it was called "Mosaic." She took the better portions of the old pillow-case and cut them into diamond-shaped pieces the size of one's hand, then took bits of silk and sewed one on after the other until the muslin was covered, without any apparent design, but with an eye to the blending of colors. "Now," said she, "each piece must be overcasted, and when done, sew them together on the sewing-machine, and neither quilting nor lining is required. Don't think it is silly, but go ahead until you have some three hundred blocks, for I have seen a quilt of this pattern, and it is just splendid."

Scrapsey seemed pleased, and promised to begin some patches that very evening, and then the girls fell to discussing the merits of their respective flats.

"You know, Bel," said Scrapsey, "that Ralph thinks none too highly of our Janitor, and he has written some comical rhymes about him which you must read. Here they are in my desk; I will read them to you:

THE JANITOR.

Oh, master dear!
I pray thee hear,
And get me a situation
In a house of flats
With occasional cats
To help to play tarnation.

I'll tend the door
For every floor
As nimble as you please, sir,
And kindly up stairs
I'll wait on the fairs,
And take their little fees, sir.

I'll fetch the coal,
If tenants pay toll,
Thus earn an honest penny,
But when at the bins,
Oh, forgive my sins
Should I help myself to any.

There's me and Sue,
And children two,
And we must have our living.
When we want a stew,
We will hook a few
Of the good things up stairs going.

When on the elevators
We send the potatoes,
We'll let the basket slide;
And if when delivered
The fruit is uncovered,
We'll have some of that beside.

Then at Christmas time
When the bells all chime
To make the good folks merry,
We'll have many a gift
From the tenants whose thrift
Was laughed at by O'Leary.

"Capital, Scrapsey, I must get Ralph to hit off that family who occupy the flat over us. They shake their mats down on to us, and spill water when watering their plants, and wash their windows at all sorts of unexpected times; but, worse than all, the children spit on our heads if we chance to put them out of our windows."

"Oh, Bel! that is too bad! I could not stand that! why don't you complain to your landlord?"

"Mother did intend to, but she found out that these were the children who were whipped so fearfully, and she concluded not to add to their sufferings, poor little things!"

While they were talking there came a knock at their kitchen door, and it proved to be the borrowing neighbor come for "half a cup of molasses." When Scrapsey was again seated, Bel asked how soon Ralph would have a holiday, and found that it would not be until election day. "I cannot wait all that time, Scrapsey; would you mind if I stayed all day with you to-day?"

Mabel assured her friend that the visit would give her great pleasure.

"And," said Bel, "may I do just as I choose?"

"Yes."

"May I make wheat griddle-cakes for lunch? you are so fond of them."

"Yes."

"Then I will go and borrow the ingredients of Mrs. Henley."

"But, Bel dear, I've got everything in the pantry."

"Never mind, I want to see what neighbor Henley has in her pantry," and she flew out of the kitchen, knocked at Mrs. Henley's door, and soon returned with a couple of eggs, notwithstanding Mabel had brought out some dozen eggs from her pantry. Again she knocked at Mrs. Henley's door, and returned with some baking powder. Before she commenced the cakes she exclaimed, "Let us make believe that we are out of bird seed," and hastened to Mrs. Henley's to borrow. Mabel was so convulsed with laughter that she ceased remonstrating.

Bel mixed and fried the griddle-cakes, and they were delicious; she often did this for her friend, for it was a mode of cookery in which Mabel was not at all expert. From then until her leave-taking toward dusk, Bel invented many wants, and supplied them at Mrs. Henley's. Meanwhile she had taken from the pantry Mabel's largest tea-tray, on which she placed the borrowed articles, and they were a medley indeed; but, as Mabel said, no more than was often borrowed of her in as short a time. There were the eggs, baking powder, black sewing silk, bird seed, white spool cotton, the morning paper, postage stamps, ground cloves, cups and saucers, and a teapot. This time she was obliged to ask Scrapsey to go in advance and knock at Mrs. Henley's door; but Scrapsey quickly withdrew, yet not too quickly to prevent her hearing Mrs. Henley calling Miss Brayden by name, seemingly in apology. Scrapsey shut the door, terribly excited, fearing that Bel's fun had lost her the good-will of a neighbor. Bel on her return looked very serious, and for a while said nothing. Scrapsey was all expectancy; finally she asked if Mrs. Henley had accused them of making game of her.

"Oh, Scrapsey! I was not made for a judge; for, though the sentence be just, I am afraid to pass it. Mrs. Henley behaved beautifully, saying she had thought early in the day I was making game of her, and reflected how much she must have been annoying Miss Harrison, and she says it is all owing to her thoughtlessness, and that she shall turn over a new leaf. I was afraid to look at her, but she said 'Please, Miss Brayden, don't think you have offended me; you have done me as well as Miss Harrison a great service, and I shall try and profit by it.' After all, Scrapsey, I'm satisfied, if you are. Oh, Scrapsey! I brought you that book of Chadwick's poems that you wanted so much. Now don't scold. I can afford it. I have sold my picture of the 'Cottage Door.'"

"Sold your 'Cottage Door,' Bel! Oh, how sorry Ralph will be! I thought you had promised it to him."

"That's a darling little Scrapsey! take up your brother's cudgel! Know, then, that I have painted two copies of the same picture, and by selling one I can afford to frame the other for Ralph. Good-night now, and remember that Friday you are to spend with us, and Ralph is to come to dinner."

CHAPTER II.

Bel had arranged a little plot, thereby hoping to secure Scrapsey's happiness. An old friend of her mother's, or rather a younger member of a family very dear to Mrs. Brayden, had lately arrived from Canada, intending to settle in New York. Mr. Guy Salter had told Mrs. Brayden at his first visit that his sisters advised him to see if she had not a daughter like herself to give him, as one of her blood would be a wife worth having, and Mrs. Brayden then told him of her daughter's engagement, and invited Ralph and his sister to meet him at her house. Bel was so proud of Scrapsey that she felt sure Mr. Salter would also admire her, but begged her mother not to breathe a word to Scrapsey of his wealth, "For just as sure as you do, mother, Scrapsey won't look at him sideways."

Friday came, the introduction took place, and Bel gave Scrapsey to understand that her mother's Canadian friend was a struggling physician, at once interesting the sympathetic girl by the thought of all the chances he would have to do good, and Mr. Salter admired her sufficiently even to satisfy Bel. Bel had the happy faculty of drawing out her friend and showing her off, and this evening she succeeded admirably. Mr. Salter of course inquired why they gave Miss Harrison such an odd name as Scrapsey, having noticed that Mrs. Brayden called her Mabel, and Scrapsey readily answered that it was owing to her economy in saving the scraps.

"But she makes scraps so useful, Mr. Salter," said Bel, "she manufactures the prettiest and most useful little things out of nothing. I intended the name for a compliment; no one else could make such sweet little presents as Scrapsey does with her pin-money."

"But other people have talents that stand them in better stead, Bel, dear. Who was it that showed off the pianos last year at the American Institute Fair? and who made copies of the 'Cottage Door,' and sold them? and who writes stories for magazines?"

Guy listened in amazement to these two young girls. The lack of money had not prevented their preserving a ladylike appearance, neither had their efforts to make it tarnished their hearts. When quite young he had been deeply attached to a young girl who had died on the eve of becoming his wife, and his grief had closed his heart against forming any other attachment; but when his sisters married and left home, and finally when his mother died, Guy began to wish he had a home of his own, and it was his loneliness that had caused the message from his sisters to Mrs. Brayden.

When the evening had closed, Guy had made up his mind to try to win the heart of Bel's friend with the odd nickname, "for perhaps," he sadly said to himself, "she will take my scrap of a heart and make it valuable."

CHAPTER III.

The mild days of early autumn were passing away, the swallows were flying homeward, the days were becoming shorter, and as Bel was busied about her trousseau, the girls had not visited so often as during the summer. One morning Bel came in hurriedly, just as Scrapsey was finishing some ironing, and was invited to look at some new handkerchiefs just laundried. Bel looked, somewhat puzzled, for she surely recognized the handkerchiefs her mother had bought for her some time since and put away to mark, and here was a little bell elegantly embroidered, and looking delicate enough for the flowering arbutus; yes, it was the Chinese bell-flower.

"Don't you like it? are you vexed? it was Ralph's idea, and I begged your mother to give me some nice marking to do," asked Scrapsey, a little frightened.

"Like it! vexed! why I never saw such beautiful marking, and it is so appropriate, too, as my tongue is like a bell-clapper."

"But we did not mean anything of that sort; we meant that you are a belle, for good looks and for attracting admiration, and delicate and lovely as that sweet little flower."

"Oh, Scrapsey, dear, you'll spoil me. To think of you doing all this work for me! And this is why you did not get on with the Mosaic patchwork, which surprised me, as *you* generally *do* a thing while other folks are talking about it."

"But I've done both! the Mosaic quilt is finished, and Guy thinks it so lovely."

"How long since it has been 'Guy'?" inquired Bel archly.

"Not very long; I was going to tell you all about it. Ralph knows. Guy is so kind as to think I'm a nice sort of a girl, and I think he is perfectly lovely, and we are going to be married quite soon."

"Married on nothing! what is going to keep the pot boiling?" was Bel's treacherous question.

"Guy says he has his profession, and as I am such an economical person, we shall manage to keep the wolf from the door. But Guy wants us to live alone, and I should have liked to stay on with you and Ralph."

"Poor Ralph! I wonder if I shall be able to make him as comfortable as you have. Now, let me see; he takes two lumps of sugar in his coffee, and one in his tea, and boiled milk in his coffee, and milk not boiled in his tea, and he is very fond of molasses gingerbread and rice pudding and custards, and never eats ham, nor corned beef, nor pickles, nor cheese, nor any of those horrid unhealthy things that I'm so fond of. Well! I'll have my things for lunch, and he shall have his for breakfast and dinner." Thus Bel ran on, and it was as well, for the girls were in that state of excitement in which tears come as readily as laughter. But Bel sobered down, and proceeded to deliver the message from her mother, to the effect that she and Mr. Salter were coming over to dinner, and that Bel was to stay and help Scrapsey get ready for them. Scrapsey expressed great pleasure in the anticipated visit, and the girls consulted together about the dinner.

"You may arrange about the heavy part, Scrapsey, but I'll see to the dessert."

"Well, Bel, I was to have roast beef to-day, and I will order a larger cut, and we will have mashed potatoes and cauliflower and squash and sweet potatoes. Will that be enough for the first course?"

"Yes, and have some of your pickled peaches, and buy five cents worth of grated horse-radish. And if you have no pies nor puddings on hand, may I make boiled custard?"

"Yes, if I had any milk."

"I'll go out and buy some."

"We'll go together, Bel, for I must get some fruit."

"Ralph is to bring home grapes and bananas, Scrapsey. There now, I've let the cat out of the bag. Ralph knew we were all coming, and asked me to come over early and give you notice."

"It was strange Guy did not tell me last evening," mused Scrapsey.

"Well, you see this is mother's doings, and Guy did as he was bidden."

The evening came, the guests arrived, and everything passed off creditably to Miss Harrison's hospitality. Bel expressed regret to Guy that Scrapsey had to get fresh things for dinner, as her made-over dishes were always tiptop, and when you asked for the recipe, it was "just a shake of pepper, and a bit of sweet herbs, and a clove, and let it stew a long while." While all were laughing over Bel's recipes, Scrapsey was called off to see a poor woman who had come for remedies to apply to her little boy, who had been burnt; and Bel took the opportunity to tell Guy how Scrapsey had made the acquaintance of this poor woman. "You may have read, Mr. Salter, about the excursions during the hot weather for the children of the very poor, and the lunches given them, and the visits to the sick who could not come. Well, our Scrapsey started a company of ladies to take the very small children out to the parks, so as to get them away, if only for an hour, from the terribly bad air of their garrets or cellars; she called the ladies the Visiting Madonnas, after one of George Eliot's heroines, and they met every day at a certain place where the poor mothers brought their babies, and each lady would take two, and walk or sit with them in some park for a couple of hours. Some of the ladies wanted to dress like Sisters of Charity, but Scrapsey, who controlled everything, would not allow it, for two reasons, one being that they did not wish to publish their deeds of charity to the world, and another, that she thought that the children of the poor liked to have ladies visit them for the mere pleasure they took in examining their dresses." Guy listened admiringly to the recital of these kind deeds, and thought how they would in the future work together. And now he must tell her that he was not poor, and how would she receive the intelligence? Would she be glad? Could it be possible otherwise? Yet he felt that he had not trusted her as she was worthy to be trusted.

On Scrapsey's return to the room, Mrs. Brayden spoke first: "My dear Miss Harrison, we have been keeping a secret from you, and you must now be told, as you are the party most deeply interested. Mr. Salter is not poor at all; on the contrary, he has a sufficient income to live on handsomely without the exercise of his profession at all." Then Bel broke in, much shocked at the dull, dazed look on Scrapsey's face. "You know we had dubbed you the Apostle to the Poor, and feared that if you knew Mr. Salter was not of that class, you would take no interest in him at all."

"Oh, that was foolish, just as if Guy did not have traits of character that are far above mere money."

"But you will never take the pains to find out the good traits of rich people."

"I know I liked to go where I was needed."

"You are needed here, dearest and best of women," exclaimed Guy, rising with outstretched arms. "Oh, forgive me for acceding to Miss Bel's plot."

"There is nothing to forgive, Guy, in such a case as this. You know the nickname my economy has won me. I seem better suited to be the wife of a poor man. Yet how much good I could do with money."

"Richard is himself again," put in Bel. "That is the most sensible thing you have said, and now tell us where you and Guy are going to live."

"Where we are going to live! I should like for us all to live here together, and I would keep house, and Guy could have an office down stairs."

"That was a dream, Scrapsey; but now you must dream of marble halls."

"I have a proposition to make," said Guy, "and I think it will suit Mabel. I will furnish a flat for Bel and Ralph, and Mabel and I will live here."

"Yes, Guy, that will be splendid, and we will set Bel up in the medieval style, as that is her admiration."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Ralph, "must we eat off trenchers, and have rushes under our feet?"

"Don't rush at conclusions, Ralph; we shall be intrenched in tapestry, and during the long winter evenings I will illustrate missals while you will make antique carvings."

"Suppose," suggested Scrapsey, "that the medieval style is confined to your parlor and bedrooms, and let modern comfort reign in the kitchen and dining-room."

"Very sensible of you, sister, as we could hardly roast a whole ox in a flat kitchen."

"Have you any choice of a flat, Miss Bel?"

"None; only that I don't want to live in one where there is a fire-alarm."

"Why not? I should think them preferable to fire-escapes, as the laws regulating buildings necessitate one of the two."

"There was a friend of mine lived in a delightful flat last winter, where there was a fire-alarm, and it went off every now and then without any apparent reason. One time the cause was traced to a tenant who was such a notable housekeeper that she rose in the middle of the night and went to sweeping cobwebs from the ceiling, and in her somnambulistic efforts touched the fire-alarm bell; other times it was supposed to have been set off by mischievous boys, but the effect each time was fearful on the nerves of delicate women and children, so deliver me from fire-alarms."

"Mrs. Henley expects to move soon, Ralph; would not that flat suit you and Bel? and then you would be near me."

"Of course it would, sister. How soon is she going? Bel and I will be married the same day, and move in."

"Oh, Ralph! give us a couple of days to hang the walls with tapestry."

"House-cleaning was not much attended to in the middle ages," said Mrs. Brayden.

"Now, mother, don't be hard on me in my esthetic tastes. I wish to combine all the good points of the charming present and the good old past, and since Mr. Salter is so generous, I shall do my best to succeed."

"I feel, I feel, I feel," broke in Ralph, "like the fiddler at a Dutch ball: 'Let each man take his vomans, and schling her arount!'"

"Oh, Ralph! pray be more circumspect in your language in the presence of the wealthy classes," urged Bel demurely.

Here came a summons from the elevator-bell, and it proved to be some charming presents from that one of the wealthy classes, who, until this evening, had been considered too poor to bring bridal gifts. There were a number of choice hot-house plants, some in blossom, others nearly ready to blossom, and a very elegant *jardinière*; and a voice called

up the acoustic tubes: "For Miss Harrison, and I will come upstairs and set them up."

Miss Harrison looked at Guy in delight, that he had so well understood her tastes. Another messenger arrived with a fine stereopticon, and a large number of views entirely American. And still another with a large jar of elegant peaches, "which should have come in time for dinner," said Guy, "as Mrs. Brayden told me this was a sort of surprise picnic."

Never was there a happier party. Guy thought of everybody, asking Mrs. Brayden if she intended to continue housekeeping after the marriage of her daughter.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Brayden, "I must have a home of my own. Ralph is already like my own child, and he had proposed my living with him and Bel; but I think young married folks are best alone; and I don't want to become the traditional mother-in-law."

All remonstrated at the possibility of Mrs. Brayden's ever becoming disagreeable.

"Well, my dear friend," said Guy, "if you would not object to moving, I see there is a flat in this house on the second floor to rent, and if you will occupy it, and give me one room for my office, I will pay the rent, and allow the janitor something extra for opening the door for my patients."

"You are too good to us all, Guy. Of course it would be delightful to be in the same house with you all, and the situation is better than I had dared hope for with my moderate means."

"Then," said Guy, "everything is settled, and as I am going, like my dear Mabel, to practice economy, I propose that, having to pay the rents in order to secure the flats, we occupy them as soon as possible."

The girls blushed, Ralph said, "All right," but Mrs. Brayden, though much amused at the haste of the lovers, and Guy's ready wit, seemed to think Scrapsey could not be ready at such short notice, as she was all the time working for others.

"Why," exclaimed Guy, "let her continue working for others until our marriage morn, only taking a little time to leave her measures at some of those great bazaars where *trousseaux* are prepared at twenty-four hours' notice, and I will foot all the bills. Won't you, dear Mabel, make believe that 'I am sick and in prison,' an 'orphan, a stranger,' anything to secure your entire sympathies?"

Guy pleaded well and won the day. It was settled that the double marriage should take place the week before the great national festival of Thanksgiving. Ralph and his bride were to take a short wedding tour, and, in their absence Guy and Mabel were to furnish the opposite flat for them; and Mrs. Brayden was to move to the flat downstairs, and they were all to eat a Thanksgiving dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Salter.

We leave this united party with every promise of great happiness. Age will never wither Mrs. Brayden, neither can prosperity spoil Mabel; and Bel, with her gay, wild, spirits, will always make home cheerful. Ralph has had heavy cares for so young a man, and now he is reaping a harvest of joy. The gloom is lifted from Guy's soul, and he promises himself light forever more in the society of his Scrapsey.

New-Year's Eve.

BY CRICKET.

FADED the fragrant buds of Spring
That blossomed into Summer's crown,
And Autumn's gorgeous robing
Of crimson, gold, and brown.
From the Old Year's nerveless hand
Drops this last day, dark and brief,
As from a bough by rough winds fann'd
Falls a withered leaf.

THE year has grown old and gray
'Neath the frosts of cold December,
And his pale lips, moving, say:
"Remember, oh! remember,
Each lesson I have taught,
Each hour I gave to you,
Life deeper meaning caught,
Remember, in the New!"

THE dear Old Year is dying,
The year that stole our blisses,
Then wooed us from our sighing
By tenderest words and kisses.
He brought us friendships true,
And love beyond our telling,
And then a branch of yew
He laid before our dwelling.

LIST the bells! The Old Year's dead!
And on his passing bier
For hopes and joys forever fled
Falls oft the woe-born tear.
But tears give place to smiles,
And the cypress wreath to roses,
For the light that breaks on night's defiles
The glad New Year discloses.

THE New Year that to us may bring
All things joyous, pure, and sweet,
Haste we, then, to cast our off'ring
At his light-winged feet.
There are promises false and true,
And hopes which fond hearts cherish,
With flowers that white hands strew—
Fairest things that perish.

Ancient Money.

IT is a historical fact, and one worthy of note, that precisely as the nations of the world have risen from a state of barbarism to a state of refinement, the current money has also improved either in quality or design, or both. And we find that when the emperors of Rome were in the zenith of their power, the coinage was, for those days, handsome and artistic in design; many fine pieces in the British Museum of the reigns of Julius Cæsar, Claudius, and Augustus attest this. But on the decline of the Roman power, and during that subsequent period known as the dark ages, when ignorance and superstition hung as a pall over the whole of Europe, the coinage degenerated into mere shapeless lumps of metal, with oftentimes nothing but a rudely-punched hole for a design.

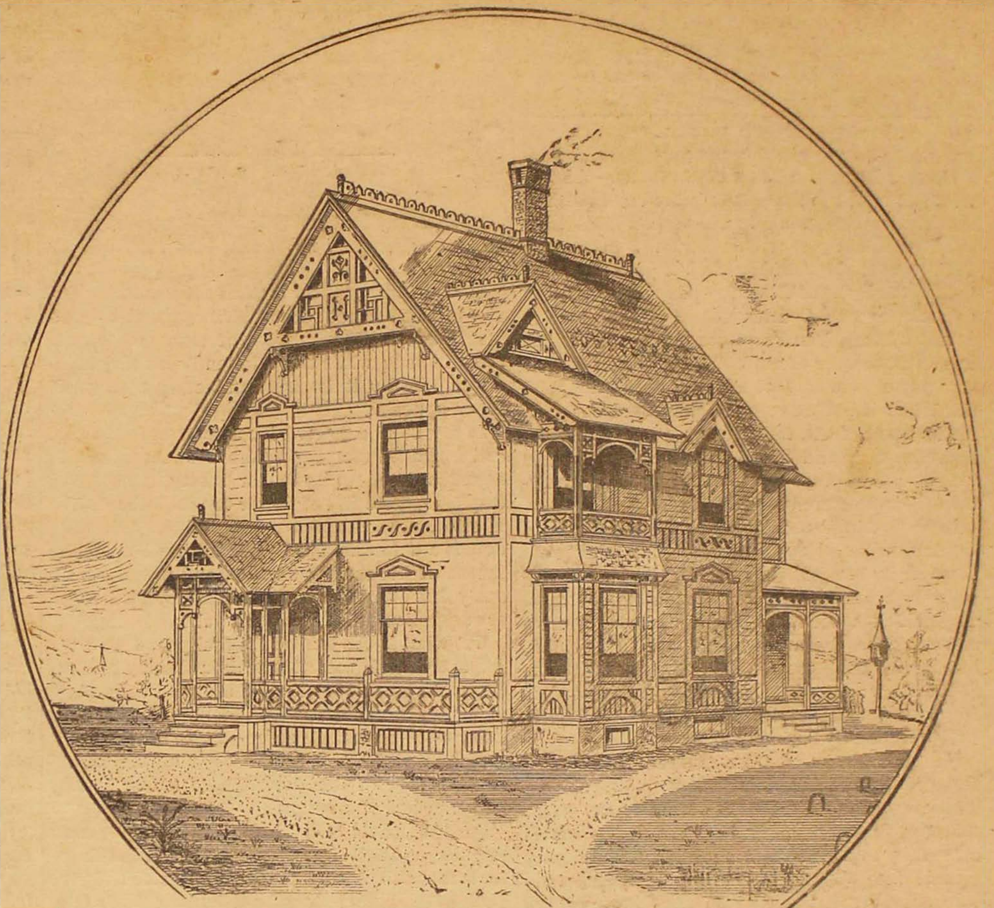
The earliest account of the precious metals, either as wealth or money, is found in Genesis xiii. 2, where it is stated that Abraham returned from Egypt rich in cattle, silver, and gold; and the earliest record of a commercial transaction, where the precious metals were given as a consideration for a commodity, is the purchase of the field of Macpelah, when four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant, were *weighed* to Ephron. Here we see that the money was not counted but weighed, the precious metal being cut into a block, and stamped or marked with the weight. The shekel was the Hebrew unit of weight, and was equal to about half an ounce avoirdupois, which was the weight of the earliest-known coin of that name, the shekel of Simon Maccabæus. Its value was between fifty and sixty cents. The golden shekel was but half this weight, worth about $4. In the Bible we read of the sacred and the royal shekel, supposed by some authorities to have been two separate standards—as our Troy and avoirdupois weight—the proportion between which was as five to three in favor of the sacred shekel. The talent, a measure used by nearly all the nations of antiquity, was a term originally used by the ancient Greeks to denote a balance for weighing, and in this way came to represent a certain quantity, just as the English pound sterling formerly meant a pound of gold. But it would appear that the talent was never coined, it being used simply as a money of account. The oldest talent was the Babylonian, and it may be safely assumed that the Hebrew talent was almost identical with it, and was worth, in round numbers, about $1,500.

The wife of Midas, the legendary king of Phrygia, has been accredited with being the originator of the first coins, but better authority ascribes it to the Lydians, about 1200 B.C., and was probably of electrum, seeing that several of the oldest specimens extant are of that metal. And the Chinese claim an antiquity as great for their small copper coin, the *cash*. While most of the nations of antiquity had coins of silver and gold, Rome, for 500 years after its foundation, had none but copper and brass. The Roman unit of weight, the *libra*, was a pound weight of either of the two metals just mentioned, was oblong, and was cast, not stamped, in the form of a brick. Gold and silver were not coined in Rome till about 250 B.C., and it was not until the time of Julius Cæsar, B.C. 49, that the former came into extensive circulation in the realm. When Cæsar invaded Britain he found a currency of brass and iron, which was measured by weight, in use among the natives; and during the reign of Augustus a mint was established near what is now the town of Colchester, in Essex, and here have occurred some of the richest "finds" of Roman coins in England. Under Claudius the Roman coinage superseded that of the natives, but on the abandonment of the island in the fifth century, it would appear to have gradually fallen into disuse.

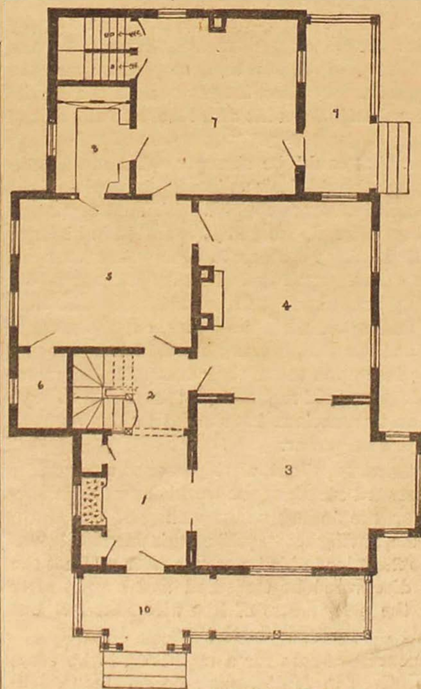
The Norman kings had a curious practice of coining silver pennies so deeply marked by a cross that they were readily broken into half-pence and farthings, and, as might have been expected, spurious fractions of the penny soon appeared. But all this time the circulation of the precious metals, as money, was confined almost entirely to the cities and the centers of buying and selling. Elsewhere a system of barter existed, or else the unit of value was something peculiar to the people among whom it originated. Thus, among the Hebrews, cattle and grain found great favor; in ancient Greece and Rome cattle were also used as money—hence our word *pecuniary*, from *pecunia*, which in turn from *pecus*, cattle. In Greece, before the introduction of coined money, there was a unit of value called a *drachm*, meaning a handful, composed of six iron or copper nails; and the Jews had also "Jewel money." Under the Cæsars, land, or the documents representing land, were made money; the Carthaginians had leather money; and so recently as the Norman Conquest there were in Britain two kinds of money in use, known as "living" and "dead" money; the first consisting of slaves and cattle, and the latter of metal or some other inanimate commodity. At all times and in all semi-civilized nations iron has been highly considered as a standard of value, from the readiness with which it could be converted into weapons for battle or the chase. In India cakes of tea, and in China pieces of silk pass as currency; and curiously enough at a great fair held annually at Novgorod, in Russia, the price of tea is first fixed, and all other commodities are gauged by this standard.

Among the primitive peoples of the American continent it might be said that they had used in turn nearly every product of the three natural kingdoms for money. Almost every mineral, shells, and skins were, and are still to a great extent, used. Among the early European settlers in New England the Indian wampum was used as money, and, ridiculous to relate, was even counterfeited. And at the same time, among the same people, musket balls passed current at a farthing apiece, and were taken in sums of not more than one shilling. At the present day ivory and calico are the money of the interior tribes of Africa, and in the South Sea Islands axe-heads are the one thing sought for. In New England and Virginia, up to the beginning of the eighteenth century, codfish and tobacco were the principal moneys of account; and in 1662 the accounts of the New Netherlands were kept in wampum and beaver skins.

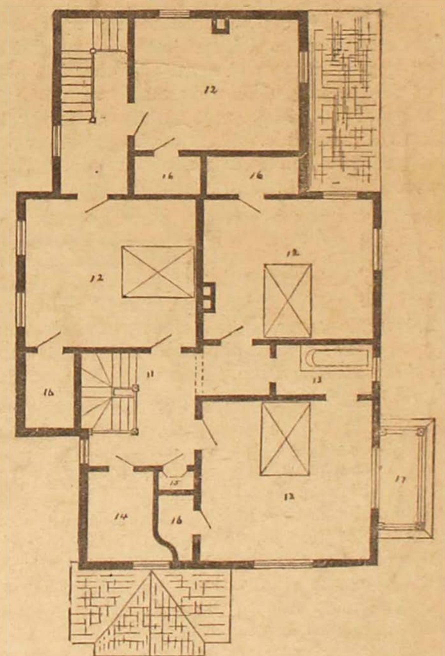
In fact, to conclude, it has been ably said that "anything which freely circulates from hand to hand, as a common, acceptable medium of exchange in any country, is in such country money, even though it cease to be such, or to possess any value on passing into another country."



PLANS FOR DWELLING-HOUSE (BY GEO. B. BLANDEN).



FIRST FLOOR



CHAMBER FLOOR

Explanation of Plans.

FIRST FLOOR.

1. Reception Hall, 6x10 feet (with window-seat and closets on the left).
2. Staircase Hall, 6.6x10 feet.
3. Parlor, 13x14 feet.
4. Sitting Room, 14x16 feet.
5. Dining Room, 12x14 feet.
6. China Closet, 6.6x5 feet.
7. Kitchen, 13x14 feet.
8. Pantry, 6x9 feet.
9. Rear Verandah.

SECOND FLOOR.

11. Stair Landing.
12. Chambers.
13. Bath Room.
14. Store Room.
15. Linen Closet.
16. Closets.
17. Balcony.

Household Art.

Comfit Dishes—Silver Porringers.—A beautiful gift suited to the season is the comfit dish of Austrian crackle, made in the form which dishes used to contain confections assumed in the year 1385. Isabel of Bavaria received from her brother-in-law, the Duke of Orleans, upon the occasion of her marriage to Charles VI., of France, twelve comfit dishes of an exquisite ware, upon which was an embossage of gold. The Austrian crackle is highly ornamented with flower decoration, and the latest importation on dishes used for confection shows fruit, thus giving a choice for the fruit preserved and placed in these elegant table utensils; thus plums for preserved plums, strawberries for preserved strawberries.

Large porringers of elaborately decorated silver, bearing mediæval designs of singular beauty are now largely brought into use by the present caprice for hot and cold milk as a morning beverage. The gift of a porringer of silver bearing a crest and cipher has been long a fashion in England, but this season sees its first adoption with us. Some of our first jewelers have received orders for these very elegant, useful and tasteful gifts which eventually become heirlooms.

Novel Cabinet Ornaments.—For the superb embossed, incrusted, inlaid, or wrought cabinets with glass sides which admit of seeing the entire shelving, there are many new ornaments. It is customary to adorn these shelves as capriciously as were once adorned the shelves of the now obsolete *étagère*. Among these novel articles are boxes representing easels with a couple of paint brushes and with spots of color as if ready for use. These are of biscuit. Another is a hamper also of biscuit out of which projects a clown's head crowned with cap and bells. Another is a swing of filigree in which are seated two wonderful frogs of colored crystal vividly rendering the hues of the reptile. Elves of frosted silver pulling a silver bell form a miniature clock which, abroad, is a favorite ornament of these beautiful cabinets and its silvery *carillon* when striking the hour is very pleasant to the ear. It is admissible to place upon these shelves those miniature bronzes which represent reptiles, birds or very small animals at life-size. A triumph for the *connoisseur*, however, is the discovery of some *genuine* miniature of a noted old-time beauty, such as one by Madame Le Brun. This must be framed in gold and set upright in the place of honor on the highest shelf.

House Decoration.—A novelty in reception-room decoration is a tree of wood imitating ivory upon which are placed a number of little songsters mounted and stuffed with great skill, and to whom in place of the wild-wood notes that nature gave them in life is supplied a perfect imitation of their by-gone vocalization by an unseen musical instrument placed in the tree which represents desolate, snow-bestrewn branches. By touching a secret spring the cat-bird whines, the sparrow twitters, the mocking-bird chirps forth its imitative trills. Besides their music these songsters bring back the Spring again by darting back and forth as far as secret wires will permit. This is a prettier caprice of fashion than that which gives us a stuffed monkey perched in some unexpected corner, as, for instance, upon the top of a picture-frame where it appears to grin and chatter in preparation for a leap at one's shoulder or head, or the startling and now extremely frequent fancy which places a stuffed dog upon the cushion near the fire-place, where his aggressive eyes of glittering glass seem to threaten a leap and a bite besides. Nor is an angry macaw, however brilliant its plumage, a pleasant companion in a reception-room, if too well stuffed and while large as life, "much," as the Hibernian remarked, "more natural upon his swinging ring of plated silver."

Blades of Grass.

"When my husband is in my presence my constant thought must be of him—his comfort—his pleasure."

Some will say, "Now is there not something servile in this? is not such a spirit opposed to self-reverence?" The relation of man and wife is complicated; while this relation is the very highest in ideality it is also imminently nigh at all times opposite.

In my mind a flower of most perfect hue, shape and fragrance swaying before a sweet south, in a garden suited to its tender beauty, is not more exquisite, more full of power to touch the depths of emotion, the keenest susceptibilities to beauty, than is a wife who places her husband upon the throne of her earthly worship, and watches zealously that every throb of her heart, every thought or suggestion of her mind is loyal to her king.

But what if the husband is faulty or weak?

The true wife sees this without seeing; knowing it, the knowledge is all obscured in the blaze of tender confidence to help him out of all. And know this—no truth is surer—a wife of true spirit can and will develop her husband by the unconscious power of this determined, tender loyalty into her ideal of strength and manliness.

For judgment! Oh! for judgment! judgment to guide us at all times, judgment in little things, for is it not the little things that conceive and give birth to the large? Is not our judgment our fate, is it not our providence, do not our judgments alone make our lives?

"By a curious irony of fate, the man who, by his discovery of oxygen, furnished datum for the true theory of combustion, respiration and the composition of water, fought against the inevitable corollaries from his own labors to the end of his days."

Now what could be stranger, what more humbling, what could show us in a more helpless light than such ignorance coupled with such learning? And how often do we find it repeated in history; the blind halting manner in which discoverers of truths stumble upon their discoveries, their feeble groping beforehand, their unconscious perseverance, and at last when the weary, circuitous route ends, and the still, radiant, eternal truth turns its serene face upon them, their incapable, somnambulistic manner of regarding it; they seem to have been an unconscious instrument in the hands of some unseen power.

That strange, silent, alert power at work under the outward course of the world uses the discoverer for the finding and unveiling of the truth, and then, having accomplished this purpose, leaves him to flounder in his ignorance. For will not the truth discovered be treasured and sought after while the petty errors of him who found it out will die an inevitable death?

One excellent rule for a mother is, to be courteous. Even in fault-finding be courteous, delicate, decorous. We should handle these child-natures as tenderly as we would a precious vase of alabaster. There is nothing we can think of that we should deal with such caution and vigilant care. A child cannot sustain remorse; they throw it off, and so the mimosa edge of their conscience receives a hurt. Every time a mother finds fault with a child inconsiderately, she is in danger of rendering her child's conscience in some degree obtuse; but be it less or more, no greater harm than this can a child receive.

"Only magnanimity of heart enlarges the mind." Not so. Perhaps one might say only magnanimity of the heart gave richness to the soil and nutriment to the fruit of the mind; but this also is not so; remember that the acreage of intellect being illimitable through the accumulation of the judgment, the understanding and knowledge can have its soil wholesome, its product nutritious even while the heart remains pinched and mean. What then? What then? This. Only magnanimity of heart enables us to pluck and eat of the fruit of knowledge with a soul digestion. Only magnanimity of heart enables us, having daily sat at the mind's table of royal viands, to arise feeling our spirits have gained strength. Many sit and eat with hilarity and have thereby a rank and noisome growth—wings are given them to cleave the atmosphere near to earth, to whence they drop with frequent eagerness to imbibe its gross interests, not wings of strength to float with full repose, inflated with the soul's best respiration, the higher heights.

I hate tyranny. I adjure myself not to be a severe, repellant mother. I hate absence of order and discipline, but I do not adjure myself not to be a weak, facile mother as I adjure myself not to be a severe one; I well know the evil of the last exceeds far that of the first. Freedom and indulgence generate bad qualities, but they are of the kind that incline to nobility and generosity. Severity breeds the very worst of human nature. Bitterness, gloom, hatred follow in its wake, and all other vices follow in their wake.

"Gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness."

Suppose one should every day after rising have that saying before their eyes, suppose the letters should sink deep into their hearts, suppose that from their hearts they should shine with steady light through the remainder of the day! of great kindness—of great kindness, and gracious! what good music for our souls to walk by!

Gracious is a fine word! graciousness is a fine germinator of good, a quickener of wholesome vivacity, an air and light that dispels vapors. Urbanity answers for this word in worldly parlance. It is a tolerable word, but urbanity may be like a whited sepulcher hiding dead men's bones; as often as not the acutely sensitive are repelled by this world-polish, supposing they inhale odor of dead bones beneath the surface. With graciousness it is never so. Graciousness bears the unmistakable stamp of genuity upon it. Through all the world there is this true and the aping of the true. It seems strange we could never have credited the last when we come in contact with the first. With genuine in all things there exists the subtle effluvia of the spirit wholly wanting in what affects the genuine.

Graciousness never belies itself. Through all the grimy experience it may sometimes have thrust upon it, it shines with a steady redeeming light, with this innate vital quality, "Let everything else be repulsive, I myself will be fair and beautiful." This is never a resolve born of conscience, it is a function of its being. This is why we are often astonished at the lack of genial influence in Christians. Often they are grim stringentees of duty with selfish cold hearts as motors. The kind of sunshine that comes from this straight order, discipline and upright living is more chilly and morally unwholesome than that from the gracious nature wholly ignorant of Christianity.

The mother who has the sweetest children, is the gracious mother.

The wife who has the happiest husband, is the gracious wife.

Who has the best servants, is the gracious mistress.

Who is most welcome in society, is the gracious woman.

Who most purely and beautifully renders life, is the gracious nature.

A Paper of Pins.

Although the use of pins for the toilet may be said to have been coëxistent with that of dress, it is nevertheless a fact that for many centuries, among all but the most highly-civilized people, only such simple substitutes as Nature afforded were used. The thorn of several tropical plants furnished, for want of a better, a very convenient pin; in the tombs of Mexico those of the agave have been found; and it is probable that in that first attempt at dressmaking in the Garden of Eden we might read "pinned" for "sewed." So recently as the sixteenth century the ladies of England, except the very richest, were content to use skewers of wood. But the ancients had pins of gold, silver, and bronze, none of which, however, were much short of six inches in length, while the average length was about eight inches. Doubtless the loose, flowing costume of the time demanded a larger implement than our modern dress; and then it must be remembered that these pins were generally displayed as ornaments, having large heads oftentimes studded with jewels. The Romans used pins of various shapes, with large fancy heads, and made entirely of ivory, bronze, bone, and wood. In the Abbot Collection in New York are a number of pins from some Egyptian tombs at Thebes. They vary in length up to seven or eight inches, and some, those with very large heads, were probably used for the hair.

It was not till the end of the fifteenth century that the manufacture of pins was commenced in England. Previous to that time dependence was placed upon various parts of the continent for an adequate supply, but the importation was stopped in 1483 by a prohibitory law, with a view to encourage the home manufacture. But even then, and for many years thereafter, only the rich could afford their purchase, and the sale was hampered by some foolish restrictions. For instance, only once a year could the pins be sold, namely, at certain fairs. Consequently, at those stated times the ladies of the vicinity would go to the place designated, there to lay in a stock of pins for the ensuing year, the money for which was given them by their husbands; and in this way arose the term "pin-money" as applied to that furnished a woman for her toilet expenses. Of course the absurd restriction did not exist very long, and as pins rapidly became cheaper, the remainder of the money was diverted to other purposes of dress, although the name remains.

In 1543 the manufacture was again regulated by an act of parliament, which provided penalties against those who should place improperly made pins in the market, but in three years after the manufacture had so greatly improved that the statute was needless. In 1626 the industry gave employment to 1,500 persons in the town of Gloucester, and in 1636 London and Birmingham became centers of the trade.

In 1812 the scarcity of pins in the United States, owing to the importation having been interrupted by the war, was so great that an attempt was made by some Englishmen to establish the manufacture in America. The experiment was made in the state prison at Greenwich village, now a part of New York City. Such was the dearth that a paper of pins that can now be bought for five cents readily fetched a dollar then, and of a far inferior quality at that. The enterprise was abandoned, however; was tried again in 1820, and again proved a failure; and it was not till 1836 that the industry may be said to have become established at Birmingham, Conn., which, in common with its namesake in England, has become one of the centers of the manufacture.

By the old system of hand manufacture no less than fourteen distinct processes were required to make a perfect pin. And in addition there was the process of sticking the pins in the paper, which was usually distributed among the women and children at their homes in the vicinity, but which involved great waste and loss of time. The improved machines now in use at Birmingham, Poughkeepsie, and Waterbury, conduct all the processes with scarcely any attention; the wire goes in at one end, and comes out a finished pin at the other. The same with the machine for filling the papers; all that is necessary is to keep it supplied with paper and pins. Black pins are simply the ordinary brass ones japanned.

"World of Science."

THE PETRIFIED FERN.

In a valley, centuries ago,
Grew a little fern leaf, green and slender,
Veining delicate and fibers tender;
Waving when the wind crept down so low;
Rushes tall, and moss, and grass, grew round it,
Drops of dew stole in by night, and crowned it,
But no foot of man e'er trod that way;
Earth was young and keeping holiday.

Monster fishes swam the silent main,
Stately forests waved their giant branches,
Mountains hurled their snowy avalanches,
Mammoth creatures stalked across the plain;
But the little fern was none of these,
Did not number with the hills and trees,
Only grew and waved its sweet wild way,
None came to note it day by day.

Earth, one time, put on a frolic mood,
Heaved the rocks and changed the mighty motion
Of the deep, strong currents of the ocean.
Moved the plain and shook the haughty wood,
Crushed the little fern in soft, moist clay,
Covered it, and hid it safe away.
Oh! the long, long centuries since that day!
Oh! the agony, oh! life's bitter cost,
Since that useless little fern was lost!

Useless! Lost! There came a thoughtful man
Searching Nature's secrets far and deep;
From a fissure in a rocky steep
He withdrew a stone, o'er which there ran
Fairy pencilings, a quaint design,
Veinings, leafage, fibers clear and fine!
And the fern's life lay in every line!
So, I think, God hides some souls away,
Sweetly to surprise us, the last day.

Pressed Ferns for Table Ornament.—The use of ferns for table ornamentation, both pressed and fresh, is more than ever a *mode* in fashionable houses. The fresh are cut to a certain length, placed upon a table in a circle with the points out, then a glass dish filled with moss and shells is set down upon the circle thus formed. This ornament may be called a mat of ferns, and is considered to be equally pretty with those which are pressed. Little wheel-barrows of white wood carved in open patterns are filled with ferns and moss, and set upon a fern mat as above. Small wooden pails are covered with fir cones of two sizes, laid over with gilding, and these are filled with ferns and smilax, and set upon the table. Sometimes an entire growing fern is taken from its woodland home, and with the earth about it placed in the beautiful shells now so much used in household ornament. The plants thus arranged are set upon the buffet. Oil-skin floor cloth mats are placed beneath, concealed by pressed ferns. In a word, there is no way in which to display the fern that is not resorted to.

The Wedgwood Portland Vase.—The well-known Gorham Company of Providence, R. I., has added to its art collection a *fac-simile*, by Wedgwood, of the famous Barberini or Portland Vase. The Gorham Collection is a superb one, and is kept up to serve as models for such artists as make designs in silverware. It comprises reproductions of those art-specimens of the South Kensington Museum, which are most celebrated, and many rare *chef-d'œuvres* in ceramic art as well.

The Portland Vase has a remarkable history. Of all sepulchral vases it is the most famous, and is the identical one in which lay the ashes of the Roman Emperor Alexander Severus, and his mother. Deposited in the earth in the year 235 A. D., it remained undisturbed and sacred for fourteen entire centuries. Through the efforts of Urban VIII. (Barberini), it was recovered about two hundred and fifty years ago. A century later the Duchess of Portland succeeded in outbidding for it at auction, Wedgwood, the great potter, who had an immense reputation. The scene of the rival bidding is said to have been a memorable one, ending in a compromise, whereby the Duchess at last became possessor of the vase, for one thousand eight-hundred guineas, after agreeing to allow Wedgwood to reproduce it if possible. His success in so doing was marvelous, and is said to have been the triumph of his life. It created a great stir among amateurs of art and ceramics in London. The copy, on being taken to London, was exhibited to the Queen. All the nobility and aristocracy rushed to see it. It created the same stir in all foreign capitals. No art-crazed or ceramic frenzy can be compared to that it created.

The sons of Wedgwood have preserved the original molds. The copy owned by the Gorham Company was made by them, and will remain in America. It is nine inches and three quarters high, and twenty-one and three quarter inches in circumference at its widest part. A snowy white band with exquisite figures in bas-relief passes around the body of the vase, of which the color emulates a beautiful blue jasper. The ornamentation has the appearance of being cut from the solid surface, the same as an antique onyx cameo.

"Chair Scarfs" and how to make them.—Among the new "parlor draperies," and classed with them by dealers in objects for household ornament in its elegant branches, are what are called "chair scarfs," and these supersede the now abandoned tidy. Many of the materials used, however, for the obsolete tidy come into use for the chair scarf, and the softest reps, momie cloth, etc., are used. The strip must be a yard and a quarter in length, and at least two thirds of a yard in width. The ends are heavily fringed. Upon the center is embroidered a group of ferns, a couple of brilliant birds, a bird's nest with butterflies floating above it, a rich cluster of grapes with leaves and tendrils, or, if preferred, a "gonfalon" design in old time colors and outlined with gold "rough." The narrow border is also embroidered and outlined in arabesque. A heavy top is formed by doubling the material over for the depth of a couple of inches, and the scarf is then laid over the back of a chair, with the colors of which it must either harmonize or skillfully contrast. Several different chair scarfs are to be found in many parlors but it will be found with people of taste that all harmonize in design and color both with each other and with the *ensemble* of drapery in the apartment.

YOUNG AMERICA

Right about, Face!

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

RIGHT ABOUT, face, my lad!
Right about, face!
Why should you go at so rapid a pace,
Dashing along like a ship under sail,
Pressed by a hurrying violent gale?
Where do you journey, and what is your aim?
Have you no conscience, and have you no shame,
That you go on in this desperate way,
Thoughtlessly, carelessly, day after day?
Stop and consider, ere ended your race,
Right about, face, my lad!
Right about, face!

BETTER be slow, my lad;
Better be slow
Than hurry along into peril and woe,
Hearing no warnings, and giving no heed
Unto the voices that tenderly plead;
Entering eagerly into the fight,
Aiding the wrong and neglecting the right;
Never pursuing the pleasures that last,
Losing life's sweetness by being so "fast."
While you are able your steps to retrace,
Right about, face, my lad!
Right about, face!

MIGHT is not right, my lad;
Might is not right.
All are not brave who are ready to fight;
For with the crowd we may easier move
Than, single-handed, our variance prove,
Raising the standard of virtue and truth,
Leading the host of irresolute youth
Upward and onward, though fame crown you not,
With the true-hearted ones cast in your lot.
From pleasures that ruin, from scenes that debase,
Right about, face, my lad!
Right about, face!

HE is a coward who
Will not turn back
When first he discovers he's on the wrong track;
Who has not the boldness to settle a doubt
That troubles his conscience, by turning about,
But goes, like the stream that was pure at its source,
Where vice that defiles follows swift in his course,
Till all that was noble is now under ban,
And evil alone has control of the man.
That you may not share in such shame and disgrace,
Right about, face, my lad!
Right about, face!

Parlor Pranks of Dr. Puncher's Boys; or, Christmas in the Old Stone House.

SCENE: A corner of the school-yard belonging to "Dr. Puncher's celebrated Institution for Young Gentlemen."

TIME: Four o'clock of a cold, snowy afternoon, just one week before Christmas.

"I say, Tom, I'd most rather give up holidays entirely, I had."

"Halloa! what's up?" Tom turned around, stared at the speaker, and then gave a low whistle.

"What's the matter?" he repeated, "didn't the hash suit this morning? I must speak to 'Punch' about it! And there it's been rankling and rankling all day, to break out at this time; it's shocking!"

"Tom," said Rex, solemnly, and facing his little roly-poly friend, he took him by the button and gazed steadfastly down from his loftier height, "you mayn't think it; but I do—I honestly do—hate to leave you."

"And so do"—began Tom; and then he winked so violently that it really seemed as if his little blue-eyes would hop right out of his head; and with a quick jerk he twisted away suddenly from Rex's detaining hold, leaving the button as a memento in his hand.

"There, you tore my coat," he said sharply, to conceal his real feeling, "it's the only button I did have on. You *might* have spared *that*."

"I'm sorry," began Rex, looking at the button in his outstretched palm; "never mind, I'll sew it on for you. Tom, don't you suppose we could stay here through vacation? I'll give up my holidays, and be glad to."

"*Whew!*" whistled Tom. The idea of ease-loving, social Rex giving up anything in the amusement line impressed him wonderfully, and he stood regarding him for a moment as if he had never seen him before.

"No," at last he burst out, "that won't do. 'Mrs. Punch' said the other day—it *may* not be regarded exactly as a compliment, Rex—but she did say that she should be *so* glad to get Rex Huntington and Tom Baker out of the house, more than all the rest of the boys put together."

"She did?" laughed Rex. "Thanks, 'Mother Punch,' my compliments to you." He waved his hat with a melodramatic gesture toward the window, where the black, spying eyes of the principal's wife were fondly supposed to be applied. "Well, then, *that's* no go, I see."

"And besides," said Tom, in a dismal tone, "I'm bound for Aunt Betty's. That's as fixed as the law of the Medes and Persians. My folks said so before they went to Europe; and I've never seen her, and don't know in the least what she's like."

"And she's never seen *you*," said Rex, softly. "Poor thing! You'll lead her a life, Tommy, dear."

"I must do *something*," began Tom, in an injured tone.

"And I'm no better off," began Rex, thoughtfully, unmindful of his friend's face, "for I'm booked with that old friend of my father's, or my grandfather's, I'm sure I don't know which!"

"She's awful rich, isn't she?" asked Tom with animation. "Never mind, make her pay you well."

"For the pleasure of my company?" laughed Rex. "Oh, well—and you go to-morrow?" he said suddenly, whirling up to Tom again.

"Yes; I'm to run down to Cousin Winthrop's for a day first; that'll be fun."

"And I start the day after," said Rex.

"Where does Miss ——, Miss ——. What in gracious *is* her name?" cried Tom. "Your ancient friend; where does she live?"

"Oh, I've got her address up-stairs, on a bit of paper," said Rex, carelessly. "I declare, I don't believe I've looked at the name. Father has always called her 'Miss Elizabeth.' She was awful good to him when he was a boy, and it has been arranged now he's in California, that I'm to go there for my Christmas, for she's always wanted to see me for my father's sake."

"She never'll want to see you for your own," put in Tom, as a slight payment of old scores.

"True enough," laughed Rex. "Well, we shan't have another chance for a word—there's the bell. Take care of yourself, old fellow." With a warm grasp of the hand Rex bounded over the snow to the big side door, and Tom bundled after, nearly killing himself to choke back an incipient sniff.

Rex worked like a Trojan after his chum's departure for his cousin's, to reduce order out of confusion, and to select and pack his Christmas wardrobe out of the conglomeration of clothing his three months' term at Dr. Puncher's had reduced his wardrobe to.

"Miss Elizabeth Hollenbeck," he said, taking the bit of paper with the address in his hand, and wrinkling up his brow at the crabbed characters, "Upper Ridge, Carnar's Station, Mooresvile, New York. Good gracious, all that! Well, I'm in for it now—no use to complain. But let me see; isn't it the proper thing for me to take her a present? Holy Moses! what'll I get?"

In sheer despair Rex sat down on the edge of his half-filled trunk, and scratched his head.

"A cat, I suppose, she'd like about as well as anything," he said at last in a perplexed way; "but then I shouldn't know how to get the creature up there; or a work-basket—women can't have too many of them. But perhaps she don't sew; she's rich enough to have everything done for her. Oh, dear! let me see. Oh, a book! there, the very thing! a book. I can't make a mistake there; I'll go right out, and got one now."

Slamming down the lid to his trunk, Rex rushed to the village book-store, and purchased, with much inward pride at his good taste, a volume of "Selections from Ruskin," never noticing that the title read, "Pearls for Young Ladies!" This he packed up with great satisfaction; bade good-bye to the excited crowd of departing school-mates; parted with Dr. and Mrs. Puncher, and the corps of under-teachers, with remarkable resignation, and started for his holidays.

It was snowing determinedly, a heavy, blinding fall, that promised jolly sleighing for Christmas, when Rex jumped out of the train at the little station of Carnar's. He saw his trunk tumbled out on the platform, and picking up his portmanteau started to look for Miss Hollenbeck's coachman, who was to meet him. Rushing around the corner of the platform, with his cap over his eyes to keep out the driving storm, the first thing he knew he came up, in no very gentle manner, against some one else rushing from the opposite direction.

"Beg pardon," he said, and righted himself.

"Per—*simmons!*" came in a gust from underneath a familiar little seal-skin cap, right under his chin.

"*Tom Baker!*"

"*Rex Huntington!*"

"Anybody to meet Miss Hollenbeck?" said a colored man, coming up and touching his hat respectfully.

"Yes, I am," cried Rex, "in a minute."

"Why *I* am!" shouted Tom in a perfect howl. "Why—oh dear me; she's my Aunt Betty!"

"And she's *my* 'Miss Elizabeth!'" cried Rex, And then, despite the presence of the coldly-proper serving-man, both boys sank down on the upper platform step and gave vent to peal after peal of laughter.

"This is better than staying through vacation at 'Punch's,' eh, Rex?" at last gasped Tom, wiping his eyes.

"Yes, but we must go now," cried Rex, pulling himself up by a violent effort. "It's easy to see *this* will spoil our reception." He pointed with his thumb to the sober coachman, who pretended not to have seen anything, but whose back spoke volumes.

"I don't care for anything," cried Tom, bundling into the handsome close carriage, "as long as I've got you, Rex."

"The same for yourself," cried Rex, tumbling

after him. "Nevertheless, its awful!" And then he felt a thrill of delight at the thought of "Ruskin" reposing in his trunk.

"And I'm the most sold of any of you," cried "Miss Elizabeth," or "Aunt Betty," sinking back in her handsome chair to wipe her eyes after the heartiest laugh that could have rejoiced the heart of a boy, "for I didn't know you were either of you friends, or even at the same school for that matter. Now then, I'm 'Aunt Betty' to both—mind you. And the old Stone House welcomes you heartily. Do what you like boys, I'll trust you. Only have a pleasant Christmas, and go back to school with enough of the holiday spirit to remember 'Aunt Betty' for a little while."

How they adored her! From that moment they were slaves to do her bidding.

"I al—most *love* her!" cried Tom, safe in their own room.

"She's a brick!" declared Rex, with his head in the depths of his trunk after his best boots, "clear through!"

The sober old coachman who had on the first encounter with Miss Betty's visitors, inwardly vowed that no more such Christmas guests should arrive safely at the house—"I'll run my horses into the first stone-wall sooner," he had muttered to himself—now whirled suddenly around in his convictions, and became their staunchest ally, waging war "to the knife" upon their common foe, Mrs. Snipkins, the housekeeper.

"An' I say its a shame, Miss 'Lizabeth," cried that individual, precipitating herself in high dudgeon, the day before Christmas, into her mistress's pretty sitting-room, "to have such goings on. To have boys clankin' into your kitchen at all hours of the day, an' —— "

"They're just from school, Mrs. Snipkins," said Miss Betty, soothingly; "a horrible, stiff old school where they don't get too much to eat; and your nice, tidy kitchen fascinates them."

"An' they're that sassy," cried Mrs. Snipkins, too incensed to be completely mollified, by the compliment, but nevertheless a trifle softened, "to live in the same house with a decent body! At least, the short, fat one is. An' they've put a horrid, nasty black cockroach into my bed. An' they call me fifty times down stairs to see some one that ain't there,—an' my life's most wore out!"

"They mustn't do *that*," said Miss Betty, pulling down her mouth smoothly at the corners, "I will speak to them."

"'Twon't do no good," cried Mrs. Snipkins in dispair, "so long as Johnson laughs at 'em, an' eggs 'em on—an' the maids is all with 'em too. Every one! But I'll make it too stiff for 'em, I will! so they won't want to come again! I told 'em so the first minute I see 'em. I *hate* boys!" And the old housekeeper drew herself up to her greatest height with such a jerk that every key at her side rattled like a castanet.

"You told them so when they first came?" repeated Miss Betty, slowly, with a keen glance.

"Yis—m, I did," mumbled Mrs. Snipkins composedly, "I can't help it—they're such a nuisance."

"Then you must expect to be ill-treated," replied Miss Betty coolly. "The average boy doesn't forget an insult like that—and I am glad he don't. Now Mrs. Snipkins, be good enough to remember that they are my guests, and as such are to be treated in the best way I know. Tomorrow they have full permission to do, and be, just whatever and wherever they choose in this house. In short, to have a royal good time!"

"Good *ger-racious!*" exploded the old housekeeper, and without another word, she plunged headlong down to her own domains.

"I'm free from her for one minute," said Miss Betty with a sigh of relief. "Now when she gets obstreperous in the future, I shall threaten to transplant these boys from their school—*that* will do, I think."

The Old Stone House on Christmas night, was fairly ablaze with light from top to bottom. Miss Betty had thrown open its wide oaken doors with most hospitable intent. All the villagers were invited. There was old Mr. Ricketts, who hadn't been anywhere for a twelvemonth. Capital hand he was at stories. The boys, finding this out, had unearthed him long before this as a perfect treasure. And all his grandchildren came, down to the fat baby. Then there was the cobbler who lived over his little shop at the corner of the cross-roads, and *his* family, five or six more. And little Miss Piper, the hard-working dressmaker, who supported a widowed mother out of her scanty earnings. And all the other protégées that Miss Betty could by any chance scrape together. And then, springled in among them, came the dwellers in two or three old stone houses just like Miss Betty's, who formed the society for her lonely hours.

"There's to be a big house," announced Tom, furious in a head gear of feathers, and a thick layer of red paint, as he looked over the railing of the long oak staircase to see the guests arrive.

"And Aunt Betty's so pleased," cried Rex, with his mouth full of pins. "Bless her! she was so good not to crack me over the head for my stupidity about that horrid book, 'Pearls' indeed!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Tom, doubling up on the upper stairs—"it takes *you* to pick out presents for ladies!"

"She's a great deal better than if she *was* young," cried Rex hotly, spitting out the pins with a jerk. "and she *is* young at heart anyway!"

"There's my hand on it!" cried Tom, ceasing his laughter suddenly, and giving Rex such a bang on the back that he nearly fell headlong down the long flight. "Did you pin the programme up?" he asked, changing to an anxious tone, as he shifted off one long feather that threatened to put out his left eye.

"All right—its stuck up tight by the curtain, and they're guessing enough to kill themselves over the different things. Come on now;" and Rex was off down to the green-room, which was improvised out of Aunt Betty's pretty music room.

The programme, pinned up with two enormous black-headed shawl pins, read thus:

A Prison Scene.
A View of the Far West.
Niagara Falls by Gaslight!
What is it? a word of two syllables.
An Extract from "Pinafore."
The Tragedy of the Last Pancake!
A Glimpse at the Stars!

"Hush! *hush!* it's going to begin!"

Everybody on the other side of the curtain was on the tiptoe of expectation. The two actors, on whom depended the success of the evening, could feel the thrill of excitement that urged them on to their best.

"There it goes—*ooh!*" screamed little Peggy Ricketts, as the curtain, presided over by Johnson, the old coachman, no longer solemn, but ready to laugh with the loudest, slowly rose for the opening piece.

"Be *still!*" Poor Peggy sank back to silent happiness, as the audience laughed and applauded.

Nothing was to be seen but a large white placard hung on a dark red background, with the words in big letters

A CELL!

"A View in the Far West," came on rapidly.

A fat, torpid Indian, whose get-up was marvelous in the extreme, lay stiff as a [illegible] middle of the floor. And here a slig[illegible] occurred. Mrs. Snipkins, who [illegible] through the back hall door, was horr[illegible] to see that Tom had purloined her [illegible] coat to knot around his waist, and [illegible] her passion, that he had helped hims[illegible] choicely preserved puffs and "fronts[illegible] switches of her hair to hang on the sa[illegible] for his imposing array of scalps! Indi[illegible] was, and at the risk of Miss Betty's [illegible] she had all she could do, to keep [illegible] rushing in to give the noble red [illegible] where he lay.

"He's a little *villian!*" she cried, at [illegible] the door, and shaking her finger at t[illegible] figure.

"Be still—you'll spoil the play!" cr[illegible] the upper maids, pulling her back. "D[illegible] Miss Betty'll be *so* out with you—th[illegible] favor-*ites* of hers!"

"Favor-*ites* or not!" screamed the ira[illegible] keeper "I don't—care! They've—got—my [illegible]

Mrs. Snipkins, not intending to desc[illegible] poetry at such a time, now had the satisfa[illegible] seeing the attention of the whole audienc[illegible] ed to herself! Seeing this, she ducked, [illegible] universal shouts. Up flew the noble sav[illegible] his recumbent position, to stare with the [illegible]

"Oh, *do* pull the curtain down!" crie[illegible] dismay, flying in and to find Johnson so co[illegible] at his enemy's mortification, that he had fo[illegible] his duties. Down fell the curtain with a r[illegible] somebody on the other side cried out, [illegible] guessed! "*Low!* the poor Indian!"

"Niagara Falls by Gaslight!"

The curtain rose. A large sheet, not of w[illegible] but of cotton cloth, was drawn tightly bene[illegible] row of water-falls, like those that some of us [illegible] member wearing not "so many years ago[illegible] most as big as cart-wheels pinned on our h[illegible] With this difference however, those were st[illegible] with upholstery hair, and could therefore b[illegible] dulged in as regards size, to any extent. [illegible] were light, and dark ones, according to the ta[illegible] of the wearer, pinned on to several of the mai[illegible] and the scullery boy, who were sitting down i[illegible] row of chairs in the foreground. On one of the[illegible] excrescences, was a pasteboard horseshoe, ador[illegible] ed with nails of gilt paper. On another, was a hi[illegible] tower, also made of pasteboard labeled Terrap[illegible] Tower! A railing ran around the tower near th[illegible] summit, which visitors to the old tower will re[illegible] member.

"This," said Rex, who was in front of the curtain as showman—pointing to it with great magnificence, "is not here now—but it used to be, an[illegible] it looked pretty, so we thought we'd put it in."

From the top of a third waterfall, to it's nex[illegible] neighbor, was a long pasteboard Suspension Bridge. Straws ingeniously composed the sides, that if one were disposed to be very critical *might* have been called a little shaky!

Over in the distance, Tom, lying flat on the floor, was rocking back and forth, a small table—The only "Table Rock," they had to show.

As well as he could to the laughing audience, Rex pointed out the objects of interest, like a veteran at the business. At each time that he mentioned "Table Rock," Tom gave such violent flings to the ancient piece of furniture, that it well nigh came down on his nose more than once.

"This Rock is now considered dangerous," said Rex, in a grave tone at that. "In fact, it rocks considerably more this year than ever before, and travelers are advised to keep off from it."

This view brought down the house—and was called for again and again, till the actors cried—"Hold—enough!"

"What is it? A word with two syllables."

Low, dreamy music from a distance, broke th[illegible]

hich the audience fell. Aunt Betty was , touching softly the keys. What *was* ? With pathetic earnestness, as if her as in the thought she was express- e familiar chords of the three little ieir everlasting lament over their un- .ens.

he music ceased—and so suddenly an one of the audience started in their the most unearthly yawling that mor- heard.

racious!" cried old Mr. Ricketts, s a fightin' in the house! Drive 'em and he grasped his cane, with trem-

ather," cried his daughter, pulling it's in the play—don't you under-

ling proceeded with such effect, that for deliverance—when as suddenly it be followed by the tender chords of ejoicing over the restored mittens. as the first syllable.

they were guessing, with a whir like a bird, came an enormous pillow thrown ie stage, either Rex had gotten exhilarat- ccess, or his arm failed by reason of laugh- uch, at any rate, the pillow flew over into ence-room, and knocked little Jimmy the cobbler's boy, clear off his pins.

do beg your pardon!" cried Rex aghast, ing into the room, he tried to lift Jimmy

it hurt him any," cried the cobbler, lift- boy up, who hadn't quite made up his hether to laugh or cry, "There, Jimmy, all in fun."

as that part of the play?" asked little Jim- well pleased if that was the case.

hope not," cried Rex, joining in the laugh broke out on all sides. "Well, if you're not Jimmy, we'll go on. Has any body guessed

nobody had. So they were obliged to give whole word.

ex and Tommy stood in the middle of the floor ectly motionless, when the curtain rose. Sud- ly Rex jumped to Tommy's side and began a ies of violent motions as if he were dusting his t, and then passed to the other side of the ge. And then Tommy did the same kind office r Rex; all silently but as if in dreadful agony to t something obnoxious off from his friend's othing.

"I know," said little Miss Piper, with a pink pot in her cheek, "it's *Caterpillar!*"

"Right!" with such a clapping that the poor, afened little dressmaker regretted her smart- ss. High hilarity reigned till—

"An extract from 'Pinafore!'"

"Why, 'tain't nothin' but an old leaf of a book," aid a big Coogan boy, cramming in by the side of he curtain. "There ain't no 'Pinafore' at all!"

"That's what's extracted," said Aunt Betty, smiling at him.

"What *is* 'stracted?" asked all the small Coo- gans and Ricketts together. "I thought it was a ship. Why ain't it a ship?"

"Look out for the next play!" called some- body. "See, he's a-talkin'."

Rex was saying something. This was it:

"Ladies, Gentlemen, and Friends: On account of the fear of tiring your patience, we will omit the tragedy of 'The Last Pancake,' and proceed to the concluding entertainment on our programme —'A Glimpse at the Stars.'"

"Oh no, *no!* NO!" cried the audience, as one man. "'The Pancake!' '*The Pancake!*' *Do* let us have it!" and all the children screamed in cho- rus till the place resembled a hungry eating-house ore than anything else.

"All right! shove on," cried Rex to Tommy, behind the scenes.

After a great clattering of dishes, the curtain flew up.

A table covered with a long, white cloth, on which were several glasses and a plate, revealed a restaurant.

A cadaverous, gaunt, determined traveler, with an enormous mustache waving in a hungry way, rushed in, threw his umbrella in one corner, his bag in another, and himself in the chair in front of the table—only saying, in fierce, smothered ac- cents—"*Pancakes!*"

"Here they be, sir." A plate on which reposed a cake, was deftly dropped in front of him by a fat servant, who then left the room. The hungry traveler fell to with such will that in a minute he said, "*More!*"

But hardly had he uttered the word, than, pres- to! before anybody could move, another cake ap- peared on the plate! This was speedily dis- patched, to be followed by "*more!*" which was also followed by another cake appearing in the center of the plate, till the traveler seemed to be fast turning into pancakes by the lively work he made in disposing of them!

"Somebody stop him—*do!*" cried Miss Piper's old mother. "He'll kill himself a-eatin'! Mercy, that's the seventh one!"

"Where do they come from?" said somebody on a back seat. "I don't believe he takes it from the plate. He just pretends."

Thereupon the traveler cut, with great delibera- tion, the cake before him into smaller pieces than ever, swung the bits up toward his mouth, which he opened like a wild animal's, and deftly slipped them back of his long mustache into a bag under- neath his traveling cloak!

"I'm most dead," said the scullery boy, in a smothered whisper, under the table, or rather *in* it, which was a huge dry-goods box, "a chuckin' 'em through. Ain't you goin' to stop?"

"Go on!" commanded Rex, between terrible slashes on the present pancake, "*more!*"

"They *are* pancakes," cried one, "and he *is* eat- ing them. I saw that go into his mouth."

"I'm agoin' in," screamed one of the boys, pre- paring to jump into the restaurant unbidden. But, on the traveler brandishing his long knife in his direction, he changed his mind, and precipitately tumbled back again.

Still they came—twenty-one, twenty-two, twen- ty——

Laughing and shouting, with their faces crammed close to the curtain, the audience was in such a state, by this time, that it was wholly incapable of good behavior. It was useless to *at- tempt* to restrain the children. They one and all scampered in, and, rushing around the table, dis- covered the scullery boy crammed into the dry- goods box, pushing up through a hole just big enough to admit it, up through another hole in a *wooden* plate, a fresh cake; that immediately had a little round door, just the size of the hole, clapped to on its hinges, till the signal "*more!*"

"Go away!" cried the scullery boy, whose tem- per was never of the best—now thoroughly exas- perated—"or I'll shy 'em all at you!"

"He's a-pushin' up the pancakes," cried one urchin, skuttling back as fast as his legs could carry him—"up through a hole in the roof—I seen him!"

"The *last!*" said the traveler in a mournful voice. "The die is cast! No more—no more!" He glanced sadly at the empty plate, just as the door of the room opened, and the restaurant keeper rushed in with a bill as long as his arm.

"My money or *your* life!" He shook a rolling- pin at the traveler, who only winked at him and laughed.

"You mistake, kind friend," he said cooly. "I merely dropped in a moment in a social way. Hospitality is the soul of life!"

"That may be," cried the restaurant-man, "but pancakes ain't—pay me—or die!"

He shook the rolling-pin in dangerous proximity —to the traveler's nose—but he never stirred.

"Forty-seven ca-akes," cried the irate landlord, flourishing his long bill, "at twenty-five cents apiece, and——"

"STRIKE!" cried the traveler, getting up with magnificent courage, "if that's the way you treat a stranger!" and he presented the side where re- posed the bag of pancakes under his traveling cloak, to his enraged host.

Down came the rolling-pin with a heavy thud on the pancake bag! The traveler sank down as if in a swoon. Round and round, flew the distracted restaurant-man, tearing his hair; and beseeching in heart-breaking language, the stranger to "get up and live!"

"I've killed him! I've jammed in his ribs! Ow —*ow!*" he cried like a crazy creature.

He never knew how it happened, but in bending over to peer into the pale visage of the traveler, he found himself suddenly bereft of his rolling- pin, and as suddenly jammed into the vacated chair at the mercy of the revengeful traveler!

"*Pancakes!*" ordered the traveler in stentorian tones.

Up came a cake, as if the first of the season.

"Eat it!" ordered the traveler; with a grip on the other's shoulder, not to be mistaken.

"Oh, I *can't!*" groaned the miserable man. "I don't want it—I know what's in 'em!"

"*Eat* it—or DIE!" The traveler in turn bran- dished the rolling-pin. The unhappy restaurant- man had nothing to do but to swallow with enor- mous gulps, the big pancake!

"*More!*" ordered the traveler at once. Up came another.

"Eat it!" with another pinch, came the order.

"Oh, that's too much. I *won't!*" flatly refused the wretched landlord, squirming all over his chair.

"EAT it!" "Down came the rolling-pin, close to his ear.

"Oh, I will—I *will!*" he cried, stuffing it in— *to his bag!* "Don't hit a fellow—I *will!*"

"*More!*" Still the traveler ordered. Still the miserable landlord ate.

"What'll you—take—to *stop?*" at last he roared with as much strength as he could muster.

"Just the price of the forty-seven pancakes at twenty-five cents apiece—and good bye to your last pancake!" cried the stranger with a smile.

"Here 'tis," cried the landlord, chinking down a handful of money in sheer desperation. "Now you GO—for you and I have about eat this house *out!*"

"That's very true," cried the traveler, turning around with a bow. "Ladies and gentlemen there *is* nothing more to eat. This is truly—*The Last Pancake!*"

With a squeal of delight from the children, fol- lowed by all sorts of choruses from everybody else, Tom and Rex were dragged into the audience room to shake hands and be congratulated, till their heads spun on their shoulders.

It wasn't till half an hour later, in the midst of the festivities over Miss Betty's bountiful supply of refreshments, that somebody remembered the closing piece.

"Never mind," said Tom, philosophically be- gining on his fifth slice of loaf cake. "You'll all see that going home!"

"We'll have it next year!" cried Aunt Betty, coming up to "her boys" with a soft light in her eyes, "closing piece and all!"

"Hurrah for Aunt Betty!" cried the boys in en- thusiasm, one on each side, and "three cheers more for Christmas in the Old Stone House!"